

The Gissing Journal

Volume XLV, Number 2, April 2009

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

Gissing’s Scarcest Story: Redemption “At Nightfall” or Tribute to a Virtuous Woman

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George Gissing, according to Pierre Coustillas’ incomparable bibliography, wrote 115 short stories.¹ After initial publication in periodicals, seventy-four of these were published in the four main collections of his stories between 1897 and 1938² (twelve had a second outing in book form in the 1929 volume, *Short Stories of To-day and Yesterday*).³ The twenty-three stories known to have been written for American periodicals in 1877 were collected in three volumes between 1924 and 1992.⁴ Sixteen of the remaining works appeared in *Essays & Fiction* (7 stories), *My First Rehearsal and My Clerical Rival* (2 stories), *A Freak of Nature* (1 story), the *Gissing Newsletter* (1 story), the *Gissing Journal* (3 stories), and *Spellbound* (2 stories).⁵ At the time of writing the various volumes of stories listed above can be bought at *AbeBooks.com* from between £4 and £70 each. In fact one could purchase all twelve books for roughly £350! Of course, this would be rendered unnecessary, were a complete edition of the stories to materialise – and it would seem that this is in the offing.

To continue with my account of the accessibility of Gissing’s stories: before the advent of the Internet, obtaining a copy of “An Heiress on Condition” was virtually impossible. Though written in 1881, it was never published in Gissing’s lifetime, and only printed once in a limited edition for the Pennell Club of Philadelphia in 1923. Today a copy of the extremely scarce first edition (there were 48 numbered and some unnumbered copies) is obtainable for about £250, while a xerographic reprint will set one back £35⁶: a third possibility (booklovers will despise themselves) is to acquire for about £20 the *books on demand* reproduction, which is a drab, grey-covered reprint of copy number 16 of the Pennell Club edition on acid-free paper.⁷ However, if one is willing to make do with a *pdf. file* version, thanks to Mitsuharu Matsuoka, who has made nearly all of

Gissing's works available as e-texts on the Internet, a copy can be downloaded free of charge at

<http://www.lang.nagoya-u.ac.jp/~matsuoka/GG-Heiress.pdf>

Four other uncollected stories, “Joseph”, “Simple Simon”, “The Grandfather’s New Year’s Story”, and “The Muse of the Halls” were printed in these pages in 1988, 1995, 2003 and 2006 respectively—the first three being also accessible in digitised form on Matsuoka’s Gissing web site.⁸ So far, then, I have accounted for 114 stories. The story I have left to last, “At Nightfall,” is undoubtedly the scarcest of Gissing’s stories. After all, it has never been published this side of the Atlantic, and until I wrote the final draft of this essay, it was thought to have appeared in print only once – over one hundred years ago.⁹ So, following the recent publication of the aforementioned uncollected stories,¹⁰ the present time offers the perfect opportunity to bring this story back into the fold.

George Gissing wrote “At Nightfall” from 24 to 26 May 1898, a month after returning from his winter tour of Italy via Germany, and two weeks after moving into a house at Dorking. On 3 June he sent the manuscript along with two others to his agent William Morris Colles, to whom he wrote: “Herewith I send you three stories: The Elixir. At Nightfall. The Peace-Bringer. If you can dispose of these for good terms, I shall be glad. If you can dispose of them speedily, I shall be gladder.”¹¹ The letter betrays Gissing’s anxiety about his financial situation, as he felt keenly the need to increase his income. However, it was no easy task he gave Colles. Though he eventually sold “The Peace Bringer” to an English periodical later that year, he had greater difficulty in placing the other two stories.¹² In February 1899, now become impatient with Colles’ seeming inertia, Gissing sent him a forthright letter inquiring about these stories. Colles’ stinging reply, in which he insensitively catalogues the names of those magazines that had rejected “At Nightfall” and “The Elixir,”¹³ though he had since found a home for the latter, disgusted Gissing. Two and a half years previously, in a scathing letter Morley Roberts had dramatically broken ties with Colles, his agent then, for failing him in his hour of financial need, ending his letter thus: “I suppose I shall have to go over to Watt much as I dislike the idea.”¹⁴ Feeling the force of Roberts’ blast Colles was compelled to note on the back page for his records, “I think we had better take this for a congé.”¹⁵ Gissing steered a different course, replying at once, in an act of appeasement, to express his satisfaction with Colles’ efforts on his behalf, and his relief that only one story remained to be sold.¹⁶ On 10 June 1899, a

year and a week after he received the story, by which time Gissing had left Dorking and was residing in Paris with his new wife, Gabrielle, Colles dispatched a note informing him that he had finally disposed of the story (just the day before) to an American periodical for \$65. Prior to its sale, the story had been sent out to eight publishers: the *Pall Mall Magazine*, the *Windsor Magazine*, Charles Frederic Moberly Bell at *The Times*, the *Library Review*, Edward G. Hulton of *The Sporting Chronicle*, the *Cornhill Magazine*, *Madame*, and *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine*.¹⁷ Over the next ten months, up to the end of March 1900, Colles continued to send the manuscript out in the hope that an English magazine would take it. Seven more are known to have rejected the story: the *Windsor Magazine* (again), the *Fortnightly Review*, *Literature*, the *Graphic*, the *Teller*, the *Speaker*, and *Longman's Magazine*.¹⁸ At Christmas 1899 and again in February 1900, Gissing wrote to Colles asking about payment for the story. In the event he had to wait until the first week in May before receiving a cheque for £11.11.6 from the Authors' Syndicate. "At Nightfall" appeared belatedly in *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine* that same month, two years after Gissing had written the story and eleven months after the Philadelphia-based magazine had acquired it.

As I hinted just now there is a surprising coda to the publishing history of this story. Whilst researching Gissing on the Internet I was able to discover a second abridged appearance of the story in America. "At Nightfall" was published in the *Northern Tribune* precisely one hundred years ago, on 21 July 1909, with the copyright of J. B. Lippincott duly acknowledged.¹⁹ This was a weekly newspaper in the tiny town of Gouverneur, St Lawrence County, New York State, 243 miles to the north-west of Troy, where Gissing was engaged as a photographer's assistant exactly thirty-two years previously. Under the editorship of Colonel Martin Russell Sackett (1853-1941), a distinguished political figure locally and nationally, who had been appointed Consul to Prescott in Canada by President Roosevelt in 1903, the newspaper prospered from 1895 to 1929. And how did Gissing's story come to appear in Sackett's newspaper? Evidently, since advertisements of *Lippincott's Magazine* featured occasionally in its pages, Sackett had dealings with the Lippincott publishing company, and was at some point offered Gissing's story. It is even plausible that he knew Jay Bertram Lippincott, who at that time helped run the publishing company with his father, Craige, and assumed full control on his death in 1911, as both were prominent members of masonic lodges. Sackett's obituary reports that by 1909, owing to his efforts, the *Northern Tribune* had the

largest circulation of all weekly newspapers in St Lawrence County. It is pleasing then to note that Gissing's story had a wide readership, even if, unfortunately, large chunks of it were excised.

The history of the manuscript's arduous journey from one publisher to another in England, by contrast, suggests that "At Nightfall" had little to recommend it to the readers of English reviews and periodicals at the turn of the nineteenth century. How does one account for this wholesale rejection of a story by one of England's leading contemporary writers? The story in a nutshell relates the death-bed broodings of a fifty-year-old man concerning his love for a woman, who dutifully renounced him so as to stay loyal to the moral principles of the late-Victorian social code, even though her millionaire husband had abandoned her for his mistress. Inevitably, the story is downbeat in tone, and clearly some of the ideas about marriage and duty, and the representation of the wife as the victim of a blackguardly husband, would have been frowned upon by male editors of English periodicals. Might not also the absence of any religious soul-searching play a part in its rejection? Perhaps potential readers would have been outraged that the dying man was trying to redeem himself in the eyes of his beloved rather than before God. In any case, the emphasis on renunciation and resignation would scarcely have appealed to the average reader during 1898-1900 (in which period the story was rejected on fourteen occasions), at a time when imperialist Britain was belligerently pursuing its expansionist policy against the Sudanese and had embarked on a protracted war against the Boers in an attempt to annex the Transvaal and the Orange Free State.

Be that as it may, "At Nightfall" is of especial interest to those who cherish the works of George Gissing. It is, manifestly, in terms of narrative structure and mode of telling, an atypical Gissing story. This is foreshadowed by the contrast between the downstairs flat in which a party is in full swing and from where the animated sound of "a piano and a singing voice" comes and the completely static bedroom scene in the upstairs flat (a contrast reminiscent of the scene in *New Grub Street* in which Reardon sits paralysed before a blank sheet of paper while over the way people are playing billiards).²⁰ And whereas there are just two characters on stage, as it were, the narrative is essentially a valedictory and monologic admission of, and atonement for, unpardonable conduct, which is only interrupted by the narrator's exposition or the nurse's interjections. In effect the inciting incident is the news of the millionaire's sudden death, though he, his mistress, and his wife, who are after all at the heart of the story, remain

offstage throughout. I use the language of the stage intentionally because the story might well have been conceived by Gissing as a one-act play or a dramatic monologue, were it not for the depressing setting. As he, with seeming irony, has the dying man say, “Who likes death-bed scenes?”²¹ As it happens, after finishing his trio of stories, Gissing was to spend the next month in a futile attempt to write a play. What further contributes to the uniqueness of this story and distinguishes it from his more idiosyncratic stories which, with few exceptions, are of a humorous, pathetic, or ironic vein and structured around mundane incidents and everyday events, is the seriousness of tone and the focus on introspective self-examination: in this respect “At Nightfall” looks back to the completely monologic “The Tyrant’s Apology.”²² Above all, however, in terms of its intense reflection on and analysis of bitter experience and its overriding story structure, it looks forward to *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*.²³ Thus, while the sick man’s preoccupation in relating the details of his thwarted passion to the nurse enables him both to acknowledge the inherent decency of the woman he loved and to come to terms with his loss in the face of death, Ryecroft, too, in reminiscence makes his peace with the past as death slowly wings its imminent approach.

“At Nightfall” has likewise a recognisable kinship with the two other stories Gissing wrote at the end of May and beginning of June 1898. “The Elixir,” similarly a tale of redemption and partly a reflective monologue, concerns a fellow who is saved from going to the devil by a young woman representing his ideal, and whom he sets his heart on marrying and, in this instance, by contrast, does. The other story, “The Peace Bringer,” while being a traditionally chronological narrative, obviously resembles “At Nightfall” much more closely with regard to theme and content. The story is also about a bed-ridden invalid, this time a dying poet, Jaffray, who behaves intolerably towards his good and devoted wife. For, having come to dislike her presence around him, he more or less banishes her from sight by persuading her to regularly visit friends in town. Then, as Barbara Rawlinson points out in her recent study of Gissing’s short stories,

Jaffrey cruelly arranges for a former lover to visit him almost daily, ostensibly to play soothing music. Out of pity his wife accepts her husband’s disloyalty without recrimination. It is only when his paramour reveals that she visits him only for the money he provides, and then deserts him as he nears his end, that he realises the pain he has caused his wife and at what cost his selfishness has been gratified.²⁴

Like the dying man in “At Nightfall,” Jaffray behaves despicably towards the woman he loves, and it is through an analogous process of giving and receiving pain that he finally comes to his senses and redeems himself.

Although the twin themes of redemption and renunciation are stressed throughout, “At Nightfall” is essentially about that rare breed of fictional heroine: a virtuous woman. The wife of Clifford Bates (the name derives from Gissing’s *Scrapbook*)²⁵ is, according to her dying admirer, “beautiful! – and strong and honest.”²⁶ When her husband leaves her for another woman, he does not do so openly, but denies her the release and freedom that divorce would have brought. He even lies about her to keep his good name, and she, rather than denounce him, withdraws quietly from the scene to take up an anonymous life among her friends. Some time later the unnamed hero, now dying, but then moneyed and vigorous, assails her with the outpourings of his love until at last he wrings from her the declaration he has sought, but “only in writing; never face to face.”²⁷ That is as far as she will let things go, despite his violent protestations, for her absolute belief in the social laws and her duty to herself lead her to make the ultimate sacrifice: to turn away from the primrose path and so deny the passionate beating of her heart. Thus she sets sail for India, irrevocably cutting all ties with the one man who might have given her fulfilment. As he explains to the nurse, “... she loved me. I tell you, she loved me, and loves me now, and will to her last breath.”²⁸ During the past three years since he was forsaken by her, he admits to gnashing his teeth at fate, and suffering agonies of despair. But now, on his deathbed, he realises that it was his destiny to have loved a good and irreproachable woman, one who had the strength and honesty to resist him. It is this thought which, at the end, reconciles him to his fate and helps him to accept that she was right in choosing to go her own way.

If the nurse is merely a marginal figure, she nevertheless embodies in person all the characteristics of purity and goodness, which her patient regards as the ideal of womanhood and which remind him of the woman he has loved and lost. “She was a woman of kind and comely face, still young; the best type of nurse, – professional aptitude and gentle manners combining in her to make an ideal attendant upon the sick.”²⁹ She is solicitous and a good listener and it is because “one can talk to a woman like”³⁰ her that her patient is able to unburden himself. He says it to her again a little later, but more explicitly: “You’re the sort of woman a man can talk to about a man’s life.”³¹ At one point he tells her that she is “the same type of woman,”³² that is a woman of “a real working faith – something you live by.”³³ And sure enough, she has an ideal which she tries “to live by.”³⁴ Later he even imagines she is the “sister”³⁵ of his beloved. And when life has all but seeped out of the dying man’s veins, the nurse “promises to find and

tell her”³⁶ soul sister her patient’s last message. And so the story ends, a story that in its positive and sympathetic portrayal of two strong and good women ought to convince any doubters of Gissing’s pro-feminist outlook.

Among Gissing’s latter-day stories, this one shows what a thoroughly accomplished and versatile short story writer he had become by the end of the 1890s. The development of the story, from the setting of the scene and introduction of the main characters to its denouement, is masterly. And the use of repetition, for example of the *idée fixe*, “She was right ... But I wasn’t wrong”³⁷ which later becomes “in her it was right. But *I* was right too”³⁸ and his repeated request that she pass on his message, brilliantly captures the feverish excitability of the dying man. These recurring words and collocations run through the story adding layers of meaning. Furthermore, as the story builds to its climax and the sick man is filled with humility, his narrative becomes a rapturous tribute to his beloved until all passion spent, his voice fails him.

Gissing is frequently charged with dismissing his stories as mere pot-boilers and the haste with which he wrote them is equally often used as an argument to support this view. For example, on 23 June 1895, he wrote to Eduard Bertz, “The small stories are, for the most part, poor stuff, but they keep me alive.”³⁹ Such comments ought not to be interpreted at face value because they are so often throwaway remarks, recorded in times of frustration or unhappiness – the majority of his stories being written during the period of his disastrous second marriage. Moreover, he had from the beginning of his career an ambivalent estimation of the short story form, which in many respects he saw as equivalent to the kind of journalistic hack work he so detested. By the early 1890s, when the short story had established itself as a credible artistic form in England thanks largely to the influence of Turgenev, Flaubert, and Maupassant, whose stories were then first becoming widely known, and after the emergence of brilliant home-based practitioners such as Hardy, James, and Kipling, Gissing began to see things differently. The change in his attitude toward short story writing came full circle in 1893, once magazine editors started to beat a path to his door. From this point on Gissing was as much a short story writer as a novelist. And even if he could never quite free himself of his ambivalence about the genre, this does not mean that he would have rejoiced to see his stories thrown on a bonfire. Far from it, as he wrote many fine stories, which he could look upon with pride, and not least such a work as “At Nightfall.” Unappreciated though the story was in 1900 – Joseph M. Stoddart (1845-1921), the managing editor of *Lippincott’s Monthly Maga-*

zine must be applauded for giving it a chance –, it is nevertheless a minor gem and fully deserving of more attention. The oftener one reads it, the more it rewards one. Despite the cheerlessness of the scene, one comes away inspired with a feeling of consolation. Gissing would have been pleased to know that.

“At Nightfall”

The sick man had lain still for several hours: an ominous stillness, understood as such by the nurse, who moved silently about her duties, occasionally speaking low with someone at the door. The light of a close-shaded lamp fell upon the corner table covered with sick-room appliances, but as yet it was only afternoon – the afternoon of an autumn day in London, cold, gray, turbid; the bedroom window, high above the neighbouring houses, framed a space of sullen cloud.

In the flat beneath, a hostess was entertaining. There sounded a piano and a singing voice.

The nurse looked at her watch and compared it with the clock on the mantle-piece. Then the door softly opened, and an elderly man, the expected doctor, came in. His visit lasted only for five minutes; he asked about as many questions. When he was gone the nurse seated herself by the fireside and in its light glanced over a newspaper.

“Is it evening or morning?” was spoken in a clear but faint voice.

She rose and approached the bed.

“Evening. Nearly half-past five.”

“And the morning and the evening were the – last day.”

The man murmured it to himself, smiling a little. He seemed to be about fifty years old. A face much shrunken; eyes with the look of long pain; mouth relaxed from the half-sullen energy which had been its wonted character. Resignation, self-abandonment, spoke in the changed features, and in the voice a mildness strange to it before.

“Do the servants wait upon you properly?” he inquired, after gazing half absently at the nurse’s face.

“Very well indeed.”

“Good girls. If I haven’t another chance, tell Moreland to pay them well. Give them enough to let them take a good holiday. You won’t forget?”

He closed his eyes, and kept them closed whilst answering the inquiries about his feelings which the nurse put to him.

“I’m quite clear-headed, but seem to be all head. You can hear me? I seem to myself to speak indistinctly. The old cotton-wool feeling in the ears. Legs gone – simply gone.”

He kept silence for some moments.

“What’s the world doing? Any news?”

His voice was stronger, with a note of the old irony. The nurse told him briefly what the newspaper contained.

“Anyone dead?” he asked, again smiling.

“No one in particular, I think. Some millionaire. Yes, Mr. Clifford Bates—”

She was stopped by a movement of her listener. He had thrown up both his arms and raised himself from the pillow, but in the same moment fell heavily back. His face was deeply flushed, his mouth quivered; upon the outside of the bedclothes his hands clutched and struggled. The nurse believed that the end was coming; she had been prepared for some such paroxysm as this. But the eyes that were fixed upon her kept the light of life; a new and wonderful vitality appeared on the haggard features. One or two efforts to speak were unavailing; at length his voice became intelligible.

“How? Where?”

“Thrown from his horse.”

“Dead? Not only injured?”

“Killed.”

He breathed quickly and irregularly. Again his hands were thrown up, but more feebly. He turned his head this way and that, as if endeavoring to raise it. When the nurse exerted herself to tranquillize him, he kept his look steadily upon her, and the expression in his eyes grew to one of passionate entreaty.

“What chance have I? He asked in a whisper, – “any? Is there one in ten thousand?”

“You mustn’t excite yourself —”

“I know. I’m getting quiet. Is there a shadow of a hope?”

The nurse answered only by gently sponging his forehead and hands. He took the silence as it was meant, let his eyelids fall, and seemed to relapse into the comatose condition in which he had spent half the day.

After a long look at him the nurse turned away with a suppressed sigh. She was a woman of kind and comely face, still young; the best type of nurse, – professional aptitude and gentle manners combining in her to make an ideal attendant upon the sick. Presently she glanced again at the newspaper, wishing to re-read the paragraph which had so strong an

interest for her patient. The rustle caused the dying man to open his eyes again, and again he gazed hard at the woman's face, now visible by lamplight.

"Come and sit by me."

At once she did so.

"It always has to be a woman," pursued the unsteady voice. "I could always tell a woman anything – men nothing. You know the world; you see a great deal, of course; one can talk to a woman like you."

"If it will ease your mind."

"Good God! But that'll come soon, as you know. We all have our minds put at rest, sooner or later."

He tried to laugh, and it ended in a sob-like choking.

"She is nearly forty, – ten years younger than I, and ten years since we met, and seven since she lived alone."

"Who are you speaking of?" asked the listener gently.

"Of his wife – that fellow's that's dead. Is he really dead? Then she will come back at once. I suppose they have cabled to her. She went to India three years ago. I am glad she won't see me. I have one more day, perhaps. It will be an old story by when she gets home. I want you to promise that you'll find her, when she comes back, and tell her something from me. It'll be easy enough. Moreland will let you know her address; I can't give the message to him. From you it'll come naturally when you've explained."

The nurse promised to do his bidding. But a minute or two passed before he again broke silence. His features reflected the working of his mind, a tumult of thoughts and passion.

"You're not unlike her," he resumed abruptly. "The same type of woman, I mean. I've known the other kind mostly. You have a faith of some kind, haven't you? I mean a real working faith – something you live by?"

"Something I try to live by."

"Yes. I know the look. I've watched you when you thought I didn't. Don't tell her about the bad time I've had; not a word of that, mind. Make her believe it was short and effectual. And then just say this: Say I came round to her way of thinking – that she was right, and I knew it at last. You understand?"

He struggled so hard to raise himself, in the desire to emphasize what he was saying, that the nurse helped him into another position. She tried by assurances that his message should be faithfully delivered to soothe the agitation which grew upon him.

“She was right,” he repeated after a few inarticulate murmurs. “But I wasn’t wrong. I meant it with all the life that was in me – I meant it!”

“Rest a little now,” said the nurse, “and tell me more presently.”

He looked a scornful impatience, a flash of the man that had been.

“What’s the good of dribbling out another hour of life? It’s all over; the time has come. When I was a strong, healthy brute, and something came that I’d been waiting for, I used to say, ‘Death will come too.’ I always had that thought – something amiss in me, I suppose – even when I seemed healthy. It made me mad to get the most out of life. If you had known me a year ago, you’d have understood what it meant to me – to love that woman as I did. And as I do – as I do!”

The nurse touched his hand, a touch all kind and womanly.

“Thank you. I never cared a hang for a man’s sympathy; but a woman’s – and the right kind of a woman. Now I’ll tell you all about it. You’re the sort of woman a man can talk to about a man’s life. Do you know anything about that fellow that’s dead? Good God! to be *her* husband, and yet a mean, drivelling skunk. How was it possible? He liked someone else better. No harm in that: he couldn’t help it. He wanted a child too, and she had none. What was the honest thing to do? He had only to say good-bye to her and live openly with the other woman; then, if she wished, she could most likely have got a divorce. But he wouldn’t. He was afraid of the scandal; he wanted to keep in with society, and when she left him he lied about it – about *her!* We know the kind of woman who would have spared him the need of lying. Plenty such nowadays, and a rare good sort too. But *she* didn’t see it like that!”

“She left him openly?”

“Just went quietly away, to live on her own little income among her own friends. Not the woman to make a fuss and call out for people to pity her. Fools said she had married him for his money; it didn’t look like it, after all. Not the first woman who has made a mistake. I don’t pretend to know what he looked like to her when she accepted him. We can’t take the woman’s point of view about another man. Why, I dare say anyone would find it hard enough to understand how she came to care for *me!*”

“When?”

“Long enough after their parting – long enough. We had known each other, but— ”

His voice had been failing. For a moment his head dropped pitifully; then he pointed to his dry mouth, and the nurse brought him a glass, from which he took with difficulty a few sips. There followed an interval of

exhaustion. He stared at the circle of lamp-light on the ceiling and seemed to close his train of thought.

“No chance?” he whispered at length. “Not now he’s dead, and she’s coming back?”

The nurse had no answer.

“Tell her what I have said.” He turned his eyes towards her again. “To be honest – to have something to live by – that’s everything. In another woman it would have been obstinate folly and cruelty; in her it was right. But *I* was right too. I wanted her, more than I ever wanted anything since I was born, – the one woman in the world that I wanted. I should have been a poor creature if I hadn’t fought for my desire. How I fought for it! A year, before she would speak to me or answer my letters. I made her at last – I made her own it. Only in writing; never face to face. I believe I *could* have – who knows? I believe I could. But I was ashamed. I felt myself a brute. I had done all I dared.”

“She left England on that account?”

“Yes. Or partly. I might have followed. Perhaps I was a fool. Who knows?”

He moaned and moved his arms wildly.

“Hold to the better thought,” said his companion. “Remember what I am to tell her.”

“You think she was right?” he asked, with sudden burst of scorn.

“Because you do – you who know her and love her.”

“Yes.” He was quiet again. “And if I could only ask her pardon! I can’t write, not one line, if it would give me years with *her*. And I have written her a thousand letters. Think! The very last time I saw her I railed and raged at her like a madman. I called her a hypocrite – good God! I did; I talked like a ruffian – mad as I was with need of her. I felt as men must feel when they have killed women they loved – just like that, a hypocrite! And she with the noblest, frankest face I ever looked on. I didn’t mean that; but all the rest I meant. It seemed such accursed folly. A woman, still young and childless, her husband living with someone else, and me with money enough, with pluck enough for anything! And she loved me. I tell you, she loved me, and loves me now, and will to her last breath.”

He spoke in a hoarse panting till his voice failed. The listener rose, trembling a little with emotion; she withdrew quietly, and as he lay still regarded him from a distance.

“Who is knocking?” were his next words, irritably spoken.

“No one.”

“Someone knocked, I tell you. I beg your pardon, nurse; I thought I heard it at the outer door. Isn’t Moreland coming to-night? How long is it since he came? He’s right to keep away. Who likes death-bed scenes? Be honest – that’s everything.”

Nearly an hour elapsed. The dying man often moved his hands and his head and suffered pain; his attendant gave him what help she could. When he grew easier a few muttered syllables betokened the clouding of his mind. At length there sounded distinctly a woman’s name; it was several times repeated, as though he addressed someone and hoped for an answer. The nurse spoke to him, and he replied intelligibly.

“Her name, yes – I remember. I had something more to tell you. Is it night? I suppose I shall go before daybreak, as men often do. Now I have it again, the thought that I want to keep in my mind if I can. It’s all over, and I see things in a new way – as *she* saw them. I want to tell her how glad I am she held her own against me. I am glad, glad! Not that I think I was wrong; it’s no death-bed twaddle; I think as I always did. But she had *her* belief, and she held to it through as hard a struggle as ever woman endured. I’m glad! Remember to tell her that. If I had won she must have lived against her conscience. She told me, once and for all, she believed in social laws and duty and all the rest of it – believed with all her soul. God bless her, my noble darling! We might have gone to the other side of the earth, where no one would have known anything; but she recognized a law and obeyed it. I don’t think it was a better law than mine, but she believed in it, and in mine she couldn’t. I should have led her to unhappiness, say and do what I might. And now it’s all over; now that the day’s done and the night is coming, I glory in her honesty and her strength. I called her hypocrite; now I would throw myself at her feet, and beg her forgiveness, and worship her strong, pure mind. You don’t know her. Don’t think of the woman who is afraid of what people will say. Not she, the woman I love! All that was nothing: if she had thought it right, she would have come to me in the face of the world. And how glad I am that she held her own against me!”

“She shall know; I promise to find her and tell her.”

“You will; I trust you; you have the same look in your eyes when you speak earnestly. You’re not her sister, are you? No, no; I remember. It’s good to end with that thought. She can never be sorry when she knows how it helped me at the last. If I had had my way, I couldn’t have gone into the darkness with a mind so easy. I should have left her with her self-reproach, her broken conscience. Let women act as they believe, and be strong. No pretending, out of fear of the world, if they don’t hold the world’s faith.

Brave rebellion or brave loyalty in the old ways. It was my fate to love the woman – the one woman – who loved me but could resist me. I see the good in it now. It’s helping me at nightfall. I have her image before me; beautiful – good God, how beautiful! – and strong and honest. She was doing the best for me, and I daresay she knew it. The other woman – gone and forgotten! But she is with me to the end – helping – forgiving –”

Another long silence. When the nurse bent over him again to cool his forehead he moved a hand towards her. She took it and held it in her own, and saw the smile that thanked her when his lips could not move in speech.

¹ Pierre Coustillas, *George Gissing: The Definitive Bibliography* (High Wycombe: Rivendale Press, 2005).

² George Gissing, *Human Odds and Ends* (London: Lawrence and Bullen, 1898); *The House of Cobwebs* (London: Constable & Co. Ltd, 1906); *A Victim of Circumstances and Other Stories* (London: Constable & Co. Ltd, 1927); *Stories & Sketches* (London: Michael Joseph Ltd, 1938).

³ George Gissing, *Short Stories of To-day and Yesterday* (London, Bombay, and Sydney: George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd, 1929). Three of these stories appeared for a third time and thirteen others for a second time in book form in Pierre Coustillas, ed., *The Day of Silence and Other Stories* (London: J. M. Dent, 1993).

⁴ George Gissing, *The Sins of the Fathers and Other Tales* (Chicago: Pascal Covici, Publisher, 1924); *Brownie* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931); Robert L. Selig, ed., *George Gissing: Lost Stories from America* (Lampeter, Wales: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1992).

⁵ Pierre Coustillas, ed., *George Gissing: Essays & Fiction* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Press Ltd, 1970), includes “All for Love,” “The Last Half-Crown,” “Cain and Abel,” “The Quarry on the Heath,” “The Lady of the Dedication,” “Mutimer’s Choice,” and “Their Pretty Way”; Pierre Coustillas, ed., *My First Rehearsal and My Clerical Rival* (London: Enitharmon Press, 1970), includes the two title stories; Pierre Coustillas, ed., *A Freak of Nature or Mr. Brogden, City Clerk* (Edinburgh: The Tragara Press, 1990), includes the title story; Christine Huguët, ed., *Spellbound, George Gissing* (Haren, the Netherlands: Equilibris, 2008), includes “A Midsummer Madness” and “By the Kerb”; Pierre Coustillas, “‘Joseph’: A Forgotten Gissing Story of the Mid-Nineties,” *Gissing Newsletter*, January 1988, pp. 1-14; Bouwe Postmus, “Mr Harmsworth’s Blue Pencil: ‘Simple Simon’ Revisited,” *Gissing Journal*, January 1995, pp. 1-10; Barbara Rawlinson, “‘The Grandfather’s New Year’s Story’: An Unpublished Story from Gissing’s Juvenilia,” *Gissing Journal*, April 2003, pp.1-5; Pierre Coustillas, “‘The Muse of the Halls,’” *Gissing Journal*, July 2006, pp. 1-14.

⁶ *An Heiress on Condition*, University Microfilms Limited, no date. Authorised xero-graphic reprint of the original edition).

⁷ *Ibid.*, Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Books on Demand, a Bell & Howell Company, 2001).

⁸ The three stories can be downloaded on the *Gissing in Cyberspace* web site as pdf. files at :

<http://www.lang.nagoya-u.ac.jp/~matsuoka/gissing/newsletter-journal/contents.html>

For publication references see note 5.

⁹ “At Nightfall,” *Lippincott’s Monthly Magazine*, LXV, May 1900, pp. 795-800.

¹⁰ I am referring to “The Grandfather’s New Year’s Story,” “The Muse of the Halls,” “A Midsummer Madness,” and “By the Kerb.”

¹¹ 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. 98.

¹² “The Peace Bringer,” *Lady’s Realm*, IV, October 1898, pp. 634-640.

¹³ “The Elixir,” *Idler*, XV, May 1899, pp. 430-444.

¹⁴ Morley Roberts to William Colles, 12.8.1896, unpublished letter in the William M. Colles Collection at the University of California.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Letter dated 20 February 1899, *Collected Letters of George Gissing, Volume Seven, 1897-1899*, pp. 299-300.

¹⁷ See Frederick Nesta, *The Commerce of Literature: George Gissing and Late Victorian Publishing, 1880-1903* (Aberystwyth, Wales: Unpublished Phd, 2007), pp. 95-96, p. 170, and p. 241.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ “At Nightfall,” *Northern Tribune*, 21 July 1909, p. 7.

²⁰ George Gissing, *New Grub Street* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 46-47.

One is also reminded that at Cornwall Residences from 1884 to 1888, Gissing lived above a popular composer, Procida Bucalossi (1834-1918), whom he often heard practising at his piano and who was noted for his dance music, especially *Les Manteaux Noirs*, *La Gitana Waltz*, *The Mikado Valse*, *The Regatta Galop*, and *Ole Kentucky: Barn Dance* as well as his comic opera, *Delia*, which was staged at Bristol on 11 March 1889. He tended to write quadrilles and waltzes based upon the music in Gilbert & Sullivan’s musical comedies and operas. As a result he was immensely popular in the 1880s and 1890s. The superb lithograph covers of his folio music sheets depicting scenes from *The Mikado* and other Gilbert & Sullivan operas sell today for between £50 to £150 and are much sought after by collectors. Possibly his most famous work, *A Hunting Scene*, was arranged and recorded on CD by Andrew Glover in 2008 for the “Gems of the Concert Band” series. If one wishes to hear the kind of music Gissing heard in his flat, it is now possible to order the CD and score online at <http://www.music44.com>. Procida’s son, Ernest (1863-1933), followed in his footsteps as a composer and is the better known today. Often using the pseudonym “Ernest Elton,” he became famous in 1886 for “Sly-Boots. Polka for Orchestra,” several waltzes, and his now world famous 1905 orchestral composition, *The Grasshopper’s Dance*. The latter, a catchy, tinny, fiddle-like piece, which is aired from time to time on BBC Radio Three, can be bought at mainstream online stores such as <http://www.amazon.co.uk> on numerous CD compilations, including “British Light Classics Volumes 1 & 2” for £8.99.

²¹ *Lippincott’s Monthly Magazine*, p. 799.

²² “The Tyrant’s Apology,” *English Illustrated Magazine*, XIII, July 1895, pp. 297-304.

²³ *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* (London: Archibald Constable & Co. Ltd, 1903).

²⁴ Barbara Rawlinson, *A Man of Many Parts: Gissing’s Short Stories, Essays and Other Works* (Amsterdam and New York: Editions Rodopi B. V., 2006), p. 169.

²⁵ Bouwe Postmus, ed., *George Gissing’s Scrapbook* (Amsterdam, Twizle Press, 2007), p. 473.

²⁶ *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine*, p. 800.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 799.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 796.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 797.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 798.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 797.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 800.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 797.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 798-799.

³⁹ Paul F. Mattheisen, Arthur C. Young, and Pierre Coustillas, eds. *The Collected Letters of George Gissing, Volume Five, 1892-1895* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1994), p. 351.

Gissing's Membership of the Association for the Improvement of Public Morals

BOUWE POSTMUS
University of Amsterdam

In the 1880s the English purity movement was beginning to make great strides in its campaigns against the injustice of society and legislation in allowing and protecting in men those sins for which women were branded as outcasts. In the spring of 1879 a number of individuals chiefly recruited from the ranks of professing Christians established a new vehicle for the purity movement, calling it the "Association for the Improvement of Public Morals." They were aided by the generosity of a few Quaker bankers and built upon the work of the indefatigable abolitionist Mrs. Josephine Butler, who had worked tirelessly through the 1870s to get the Contagious Diseases Acts repealed.

In the first number of its new monthly journal, the *Sentinel*,¹ published in May 1879, the editor, the Quaker Alfred S. Dyer, included by way of a programmatic manifesto an "Address" containing the following considerations and aims:

In presence of the prevalent immorality in our land it is not desirable or wise to trust, as has been too much our habit, to the action of the State, and

to measures promoted by Parliament for the repression of the social evil and impurity around us. It is time that an Association should be formed to act by moral force on public opinion, and to seek to apply remedies much more radical than any legislative measures can be, and at the same time to seek the reform or abolition of all existing public institutions or laws which can be proved to be based on false principles, and to be corrupting in their effects.

It has, therefore, seemed desirable to a few persons who have given a careful consideration to this matter in its various aspects, to form the above-mentioned Association, by which we all who may wish to aid the object in view may be uniting their efforts the better to obtain the results so much required.

These persons do not disguise from themselves the arduous nature of the task to be accomplished; but they believe that with God all things are possible, even the redemption of our country from that impurity and vice, which, arising in the midst of wide-spread civilization, are a scandal and reproach to the human race. And they further believe that it is a great evil that immorality of the kind in question should remain so much unproved and unchecked, because of the shrinking which many have from dealing with the subject. While acknowledging the natural delicacy which causes these persons to shrink from dealing with this question, they reprove in themselves and others that want of true courage in combating evil, which is gained by trust in God.

The Association must primarily strive for the elevation of the standard of morality among *men*. It must uphold an absolutely equal standard of moral purity for men and for women, seeing that the admission of a double standard has been the cause of so much mischief in the lowering of the moral character of our people.

To the Victorian reader it was perfectly obvious that the persons who had taken the initiative to start the new publication were above all concerned with fighting the great curse of prostitution, not only in London, but all over England. In the more euphemistic terms of the editor: "Our war is against a no less formidable foe than Immorality." In the opening article of the journal, entitled "To Our Readers, Friends, and Fellow Workers," the author emphasizes the Christian inspiration behind the newly-established Association:

"The watchword of this band of volunteers is 'CHARITY'...that *real, whole souled* charity which was defined and delineated once for all, by Paul the apostle. *This* charity has one source, the *Love of Christ*. That alone gives it life. Faith in Christ alone will keep it burning."

Requests to join and assist the new Association were regularly made, sometimes together with the membership form below:

ASSOCIATION
For the Improvement of Public Morals.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP.

*I enclose _____ for £ : :
and shall feel obliged by your enrolling me a member of the Association.*

Name _____

Address _____

Date _____

*To Mr. Geo. Armatage,
Hon. Secretary,
1, Amen Corner,
Paternoster Row, E.C.*

In the September issue for the year 1880 such a form must have caught the attention of George Gissing, as in the October 1880 number of the *Sentinel* his name appears with six others in a list (“The following subscriptions and donations received since our Aug. issue, are gratefully acknowledged”)² compiled by Mr. Armatage the Secretary of the Association. Gissing’s name is given as “George R. Gissing, Esq.” and his subscription amounted to 5/-, which entitled him to receiving the *Sentinel* post free. The modest eight-paged journal was sold for the price of one penny and we may conclude from Gissing’s subscription that it was intended to express more than a passing interest in the aims of the Association for the Improvement of Public Morals. For their part the members of the Executive Committee of the Association may have felt that the inclusion in their membership lists of the name of the author of a novel that had dealt exhaustively with the horrors of prostitution in London might serve to promote and broadcast their objectives.

This should not surprise us in view of the domestic and professional developments in Gissing’s life in 1880. The excitement and pride over the

publication of his first novel in May of that year had soon turned to disappointment and disgust about the conduct of his publisher Remington, and the litany of Nell's ailments culminated in her prolonged stay in the German Hospital at Dalston. There were some really positive developments too: he had obtained a footing among people worth knowing, like Frederic Harrison and John Morley, and having come into his great-aunt's inheritance the year before, his financial position was apparently secure enough to silence his habitual expression of worries on that account. His fortnight's holiday with Nell in Hastings had been a success, but soon after their return Gissing writes on an ominous note to his brother Algernon: "I am afraid Nell is very much as before."³ Their rooms at 5 Hanover Street were quite comfortable and this hard-won comfort must have contributed to the great burst of creativity, resulting in a series of short stories written during the early months of 1880, soon after he had finished his first novel. Perhaps the most distressing event of the year was the death of his brother William in April, whose kindly and loyal brotherly support he had come to rely on since his year in America. Yet, from a variety of hints we feel that Gissing's greatest dread throughout the year 1880 is that Nell will persist in her self-destructive conduct despite all his efforts to the contrary. It is these growing fears amounting to despair that may account for Gissing's hopes of some concrete and constructive assistance from the new Association in his fight to save Nell from her life on the streets. Three of the Association's special objectives must have held a particular appeal to him: the closing of public houses on Sundays, the suppression in all cases of the sale of intoxicating liquors at places of public amusement and the suppression of "solicitation," either by man or woman, and of the congregating of immoral characters in the public street.

Yet there would appear to be a curious inconsistency between the Gissing who, in a letter to Algernon, soon after the death of their brother William described himself as an agnostic, who "knows & cannot know" anything of things beyond his senses⁴ and in an earlier letter had argued that the world—at all events the thinking portion of it—had outgrown the dogmas of the Christian religion⁵ and the Gissing who, only four months on, decided the time had come to subscribe to a publication which explicitly embraced and articulated the faith that "with God all things are possible," not excluding the redemption of England from the vice of prostitution. Was he moved to take the step by his memories of the Quaker kindness, practicality and generosity his father's friends at Wakefield had

demonstrated by enabling him and his brothers to continue their education at Lindow Grove school, Alderley Edge? Or had he come to the end of his tether in his efforts to re-educate Nell? His twice-weekly visits to Eduard Bertz at Tottenham, which left Nell to her own devices for as long as six to seven hours at a time, cannot have helped him in his desire to accomplish the reform and rescue his wife.

In the *Sentinel* for August 1880 the following poem was published:

WHO SLEW ALL THESE?

At noon in our City's stateliest street,
Where marts with the nation's wealth replete,
How brilliant the scene while bright fashion's throng,
Wife, Mother and Maiden pass gaily along!

When the stars look down on that gaslit street,
Still it echoes with sound of pacing feet,
Still woman and girl and *child* are there,
Whose lot now is shame, whose sad future, despair.

Shame! that England unmoved such sights can see,
Shame! that Husbands and Fathers let such things be.
Shame! that lawgivers stir not in such a cause,
But to make sin safe frame their Godless laws.

But a day shall come—though it tarries long—
When each must account for his share of wrong.
When the Judge shall be God, who, when time began
Gave woman as helpmeet, not slave, to man.

When those slaughtered souls at His bar shall stand,
Their blood at man's hand will the Judge demand.
When the slayer his victim accuser doth see,
Then the measure he meted HIS measure shall be.

M. E. B.

Did the poem perhaps make him suddenly aware of his shame as a husband for “letting such things be?” It is impossible to answer the question, but there is little doubt that the discovery of Gissing's subscription to the *Sentinel* does reveal an unexpected dimension to his sense of guilt and growing despair about Nell's future.

¹ Were it not for the growing number of enterprises making it their business to digitize the data that in the pre-digital days could only be consulted at a great cost of time and labour in the great libraries of the world this article could not have been written. Thanks to the amazing collection compiled by ProQuest called *British Periodicals*, an electronic archive of hundreds of digitized journals has been made available, forming an unrivalled record of more than two centuries of British culture. The author gratefully acknowledges the help of Mr. Tomislav Dalic, ProQuest's representative in The Netherlands. A visit to the ProQuest's *British Periodicals* site is unreservedly recommended:

<http://britishperiodicals.chadwyck.com/marketing.do>

² *Sentinel*, No. 18, October 1880, p. 12.

³ "To Algernon," 11 July 1880, *Collected Letters of George Gissing*, vol. I, p. 290.

⁴ "To Algernon," 16 May 1880, *Collected Letters of George Gissing*, vol. I, p. 273.

⁵ We find Gissing using the same phrase and expressing a similar sentiment in his second letter to Frederic Harrison: "And whether it be, in my case, youthful presumption, or [...] inherited temperament, I have never, since first I reasoned on such things, known one moment of enthusiasm for, one instant of belief in, the dogmas of religion" (23 July 1880, *Collected Letters of George Gissing*, Vol. I, p. 294).

"A very decent fellow, intelligent and cordial" Gissing's Contact with the American Journalist Joseph Anderson

PIERRE COUSTILLAS

There is in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library an interesting unpublished Gissing letter which was discovered too late for inclusion in the *Collected Letters* and which shows one or two aspects of his personality rarely seen in the bulk of his correspondence. It was known to have been written, but whether it had been preserved by the recipient was most uncertain though he was identified in the novelist's diary. Also thanks to several allusions that Gissing made to him in letters of the period as well as the article which appeared in the *Boston Evening Transcript* for 13 June 1896, p. 24. The article, which we reprinted in the April 1996 number of this journal, is of exceptional interest in that it is, to the best of our knowledge, the only one which was submitted to Gissing before publication and which incorporates his corrections and suggestions.

Its author, Joseph Anderson, was the brother of the once famous American actress Mary Anderson (1859-1940), whom Gissing had seen on the stage in London and who after her marriage had retired in Broadway, Worcestershire, a picturesque village familiar to the Gissing family. He appears briefly in his sister's volume of memories published in 1896 under

the imprint of Osgood, McIlvaine and Co., in which she wrote that her brother Joe, born in 1862, had given up college to adopt the stage and so be near her at the height of her fame. Joe, at the time he wrote to Gissing, requesting an interview to be published in the *Boston Evening Transcript*, lived in London at an address which appears on the envelope in which Gissing sent his short letter: 6 Sandwell Mansions, West End Lane, Hampstead, London NW.

The letter is interesting for several reasons. Gissing invited his interviewer to have “a chop” with him at the Café Royal, a favourite resort of artists, where he and Roberts had entertained John Davidson a couple of years earlier. He described himself unpretentiously as a man who manages “to live without a Club” and an individual recognizable by “a certain ruffianly aspect.” It is a pity no photograph of Joseph Anderson is available, but it is at least attested that together with Gissing’s letter and its envelope he kept several press-cuttings with as many portraits of Gissing in 1895 and 1901, the last of which, taken by Elliott and Fry, shows him sitting at Wells’s desk, as he appears in the frontispiece to the *Letters to the Family*.

Eversley,
Worple Road,
Epsom.
Ap. 28.96.

Dear Sir,

Could you do me the pleasure of having a chop with me at the Café Royal, Regent St, on Friday next, at 1.30? I am one of the men who manage to live without a Club.

A postcard will suffice for reply. I would meet you in the vestibule, & you would know me by a certain ruffianly aspect—soft felt hat &c.

Very truly yours,
George Gissing

Joseph Anderson Esq.

Those were the days when, after his restful trip to Wales during which he saw again his old schoolmaster and his family, he was busy planning his next novel, *The Whirlpool*, often thinking of his elder son in Wakefield. What Gissing, who always referred to his past life and career sparingly, told the young man can be inferred from his article. It was flattering to hear that he was becoming “popular” in America, but such good news was only half confirmed by the statements he received from his publishers across the

Atlantic. At least he could not fail to be pleased when he received from his old Boston friend Miss Sprague a copy of the article she had read in the *Transcript*.

The long arm of chance contrived two more encounters between the two men, which Gissing recorded in his diary. On 9 January 1897 they happened upon each other at the British Museum, on which occasion Anderson told Gissing that he spent his days in the Reading Room to save a fire at his lodgings. The second encounter took place on 4 February, again at the British Museum, when Anderson introduced Gissing to his brother-in-law Antonio de Navarro, Mary's husband, who had been a Papal Chamberlain, "an insignificant little man," as Gissing described him in his diary, adding that the only good thing about him was his firm hand-grasp. It is clear that Gissing had no use for Papal chamberlains. His sympathy for Joseph Anderson probably stemmed from the certainty that the journalist lived in the vicinity of a world that he himself knew all too well, the world of Grub Street.

A Collector's Lament

BOUWE POSTMUS
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I was reminded of the truism that book-collectors will be lucky one day and frequently desperately unlucky the next, when in Catalogue 43 of the Dutch antiquarian bookseller Fokas Holthuis, I came across the following item:

269 BERTZ, Edward *The French Prisoners. A Story for Boys*. London, Macmillan & Co., 1884. First edition. 19 x 13 cm. Three-colour cloth (unsurprisingly blue, white and red, with gilt title). (4), 236 pp. Somewhat soiled and a bit stained.

€ 85

- German boys in the French-German war of 1870-1871 befriend a French prisoner-of-war. Bertz, a born German, friend and correspondent of George Gissing, lived in Britain and the USA from 1878-1884, when he wrote this book in English.

I instantly feared my discovery might have come too late, as the catalogue in question dated from November 2007 and sadly my fears were confirmed after I approached the bookseller. So my search for the elusive Bertz book for boys would have to be continued.

However, to my great surprise there was some consolation just around the corner. Two copies of the title, after drifting into the nets of one of the major literature sites on the net, had apparently been available as digital books since 2007. The Internet Archive (<http://www.archive.org/index.php>) is a non-profit organisation that was founded to build an Internet library, with the purpose of offering permanent access for researchers, historians, and scholars to historical collections that exist in digital format. Founded in 1996 and located in the Presidio of San Francisco, the Archive has been receiving data donations from Alexa Internet and others. In late 1999, the organization started to grow to include more well-rounded collections. Now the Internet Archive includes texts, audio, moving images, and software as well as archived web pages in its collections. Most of Gissing's novels are to be found on the Internet Archive and in addition there are quite a few older critical books dealing with Gissing not otherwise easily found, e.g. Edwin Björkman's *Voices of To-Morrow* (1913), Arthur Waugh's *Reticence in Literature* (1915), G. C. Williamson's *Behind My Library Door* (1921), and Douglas Goldring's curious essay on Gissing in *Reputations* (1920). Another noteworthy item is the digitalized first edition of *Sleeping Fires* that once belonged to the linguist and collector C. K. Ogden (1889-1957), the greater part of whose collection ended up at UCLA.

Of the two copies of *The French Prisoners* used for digitilization one was taken from the shelves of the Bodleian Library at Oxford (stamped "Bodleian Library Oxford 20 Dec. 84") and the other had originally found its way to the New York Public Library. Why it was decided to include these two digital versions of the same title is not clear. They would seem to be absolutely identical in every respect. The copy provided by Oxford University was scanned on 15 January 2007, and the NYPL copy on 15 May 2007, but it was not until October 2008 that the digital books could be accessed on the net.

Quite apart from the intrinsic merit of *The French Prisoners* (which is negligible I'm afraid), the book does doubtless throw a welcome and revealing light on the character of Gissing's faithful German friend and correspondent.

Obituary
Francesco Badolato (1926-2009)

With great regret we have to announce the death on 2 January, in Besana Brianza, of Dr. Francesco Badolato, certainly the best known commentator on Gissing's works in Italy. Very bad health in the last few years prevented him from attending conferences and symposia away from his home in northern Italy, but he went on publishing books and articles until recently and, although he said remarkably little about his declining health, he knew that his days were numbered. In a country where the differences between Northerners and Southerners are so noticeable, he was spontaneously identified as a Calabrian, and he was discreetly proud of his geographical origin. Indeed he was an embodiment of the best qualities of his fellow-countrymen—always prepared to help his friends, to give them books he knew they might need or appreciate, and to receive them in the old house where he was born, Via Calfapetra, Bovalino Marina, on the shores of the Ionian Sea. His unexpressed notion that Calabrian hospitality should be exemplary could lead him to reason in a way that a foreign traveller was bound to find extraordinarily generous. Once, when he had joined Hélène and I at Metaponto, he said he consented to let me pay some bill only because, coming from Taranto, we were still in Basilicata, that is not his native province, Calabria, where letting a foreigner pay a bill would have been bad manners. This irresistibly reminded us of one of François Lenormant's experiences well-known to readers of his remarkable three-volume history of Magna Græcia. Francesco was familiar with Lenormant's masterpiece, and he had once sent me copies of both the French original reprinted in Cosenza and the Italian translation by Armando Lucifero.

Francesco was born at Bovalino, in the province of Reggio Calabria, in 1926 and most of his career took place at Besana Brianza, near Milan, where he was headmaster of the local college, but before he settled in the north of Italy he had studied at the University of Messina and spent a year as assistant lecturer at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth. He discovered Gissing through his travel book in the early sixties, and promptly wrote to Jacob Korg and to me. He was the sort of man who never spurned, indeed constantly sought encouragement, which he invariably received. Not that he was ever slow in taking initiatives, as the history of all his books would show eloquently. One of the latest examples was his Italian edition of Gissing's letters sent from Italy and Greece. I remember

his consulting me about a possible title and we agreed that Gissing himself might have liked *La terra del sole*, which was nicely published by Rubbettino, probably the best known publisher in the deep Italian south.

There was a time when, feeling he was on safe ground with Gissing's works set in Italy, Francesco contemplated translating *The Emancipated* and *Veranilda*, but as a matter of fact he preferred to deal with shorter texts, and the bibliography of his works shows that the short stories particularly appealed to him. Throughout his writing career he liked to contribute articles to Italian newspapers and periodicals and he apparently produced such articles without the slightest effort. He took such things in his stride, each time feeling, though never saying so, that he had rendered Gissing a new service. I recollect how, after Princess Diana was dramatically killed in Paris, and all of a sudden the word *paparazzo* became an international word about the origin of which many journalists were puzzled, how gladly he bombarded Italian editors in whose eyes he was the authority on a then very curious linguistic problem.

Very few people in the Gissing world must be aware that under circumstances of which I must confess total ignorance, he was led to write a biography of Gariberto di Milano, a tenth-century archbishop of Milan. Together with what might be called Francesco's collected articles (actually a substantial selection of them), it is surely one of the most tastefully produced books of his. Rubbettino, the worthy publisher of Soveria Mannelli, a picturesque little town in central Calabria, did Francesco more than one good turn. But of all his writings, a number of volumes will remain landmarks among Italian efforts to increase the appreciation of Gissing's works after Cappelli had sold 30,000 copies of Margherita Guidacci's translation of *By the Ionian Sea*. The main ones we owe to Francesco are *Da Venezia allo stretto di Messina*, which consisted of the Italian portions of Gissing's diary, his *Critical Anthology*, in which many articles difficult of access are to be found, notably by Jacob Korg, J. W. Blench, Jerome H. Buckley, David B. Eakin, Mario Praz, Gabriele Armandi and Desmond MacCarthy, the selected passages from *Henry Ryecroft* he edited for Dante Alighieri, the Roman firm, various anthologies of short stories which appeared from 1970 to 1991 and were intended for teachers of English in secondary schools. He honoured Gissing in a way that would have moved him could he have dreamt that his letters from the land of the sun would ever be published in *La Terra del sole* (1999), then, after doing justice to a number of Gissing's admirers, Francesco judiciously collected his main articles in

George Gissing, romanziere del tardo periodo vittoriano (Rubbettino, 2005). However, his most original publication may well be his edition of *The Paying Guest*, that typical novel of middle-class life in the 1890s.

Francesco Badolato was a modest, hard-working man on whom his friends could rely unreservedly. He declared himself a patron of the Gissing Trust and was indeed faithful to the author he loved best in more ways than one. He was a model of loyalty. But for his disinterested initiatives, Gissing would not be commemorated in two Calabrian towns on plaques which testify that his passionate, if often frustrated, attachment to the land of Horace and Cicero had not been obliterated by the relentless passing of years.— Pierre Coustillas

Wulfhard Stahl has sent this farewell to our Italian friend:

Caro Francesco,

I may hardly maintain that I knew you well, but I knew you well enough to be allowed to say that you were a man of exceptional aura and grandezza, of warm hospitality and untiring helpfulness—in short, un vero uomo I shall dearly miss. We only met in person four times, once in Besana Brianza (MI), twice in Bovalino Marino, Calabria, once in Amsterdam on the occasion of a Gissing Conference. It was in your hometown that you assisted me in compiling footnotes, and sketching the first draft of an introduction to what was to become part of the first German edition of *By the Ionian Sea*. Then, in 1996 and 1998 respectively, such a publication project seemed impossible to realize. Without your private library, without your connections in, say, Sibari and Reggio di Calabria, my researches would have been less substantial or might have taken me to a dead end. Your commitment to the cause of Gissing was invaluable, and you widely and unflinchingly supported a great number of people both intellectually and materially. Your books and the spirit that animates them will remain living contributions to Gissing studies, just as your soul will live on.

RIP, caro Francesco!

Cordialmente, Wulfhard

Book Reviews

Lewis D. Moore, *The Fiction of George Gissing: A Critical Analysis*, Jefferson NC and London: McFarland & Co., Inc., 2008.

In the "Introduction" to this study the author reminds us that he first discovered Gissing's novels in the early sixties of the last century. Almost half a century later Lewis Moore has become a familiar face and voice among the Gissing *cognoscenti* through his active participation in the three Gissing conferences organized since 1999 and his regular contributions to the *Gissing Journal*. Since his recent retirement from the University of the District of Columbia in Washington, he has found the time to collect the fruits of his long years of studying Gissing in this wide-ranging monograph. In a "Preface" the author expresses the hope "that an examination of [the] principal themes and ideas in [Gissing's] novels and short stories will enable the critic and reader to recover a sense of the lived feel of [Gissing's] world."

In the opening chapter "Gissing and the Imagination" Moore emphasizes that Gissing was well aware of the crucial role of the faculty of the imagination for the writer. To any literary artist the imagination is the major instrument for the imaginative conversion or transformation of what is given (Latin: datum) into what is made (Latin: factum). Such a transformation can never be a merely technical or mechanical act, independent of the artist's personality. Moore quotes approvingly a passage from Gissing's essay "The Place of Realism in Fiction": "However energetic and precise the novelist's preparation for his book, all is but dead material until breathed upon by the 'shaping spirit of imagination,' which is the soul of the individual artist." In his study therefore Moore expresses a great faith in the ability of poets and novelists to construct and reconstruct their worlds with the help of the creative faculty. It is not quite clear how such an artist can be an "unconscious reflector" of his world at the same time, as Moore claims in the opening sentence of the book. Who could ever associate the condition of unconsciousness (in all its various meanings) with a writer like Gissing?

The book has been subdivided into three parts. "Part One: The Social Imagination" consists of seven chapters and focuses on groups, institutions, and the class system through the exploration of Gissing's insights into the dramatization of the public lives of his characters. "Part Two: The Personal Imagination" consists of five chapters, dealing with the personal imagination as subject. In this Part the author concentrates on the individual's feelings, emotions and ideas, the latter either separately or organized into coherent philosophies. Finally, in "Part Three: The Cultural Imagination," containing seven chapters, Moore addresses late-Victorian culture as idea

and manifestation, and more specifically Gissing's characters' "understandings of their developing and changing worlds" (p. 6). Though this tripartite division may be generally useful, some of the chapters illustrating it occasionally lead one to question their inclusion in any particular Part. E.g. chapter 2, "The Triumph of Mediocrity: Gissing's *New Grub Street*," is placed in "Part One: The Social Imagination," but one is tempted to think it might equally well have been put into "Part Three: The Cultural Imagination," as an illustration of Reardon's and Milvain's "understandings of their developing and changing world." Similarly, it would seem to me that there is enough justification for transferring chapter 5, "The Loss of Innocence: Progress, Science, and Technology" from "Part One" to "Part Three," where it would fit in well with chapters 14 and 17 respectively, "Against the Modern: Rural Idylls and Urban Realities," and "The Natural World in Human Time." The move would also make sense on account of the fact that in chapters 5 and 14 certain themes and paragraphs from *Demos* are treated from a comparable perspective. And this brings me to a more fundamental reservation.

The structure and approach adopted by Moore necessarily lead to a great fragmentation of the overall understanding and analysis of each individual novel. One is impressed by his perceptive and sensitive readings of character, often expressed in humorous terms. By way of example, here is his summary of "the good-hearted vulgarian, Polly Sparkes": her "manner of expressing her economic and other concerns rests on the volume used to state them. An increase in the auditory level of the utterance substitutes sound for thought" (p. 100). But I feel that these attractively phrased partial insights would have benefited from being embedded in a more comprehensive reading of the novel. As it is one needs to refer to chapters 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 14, 17, 19 and 20 to piece together Moore's partial insights into a more coherent whole. Another less positive result of this method is the occasional repetition of the same phrase or information in the space of a few pages. E.g. we find on p. 169 "The illegitimate Piers Otway, with his disreputable brothers Alexander and Daniel" and two pages on we find the minimal variation "Otway's illegitimacy and his disreputable brothers, Daniel and Alexander" (p. 171). Surely, small blemishes like these should have been spotted by the critical eye of an editor.

In his preface Dr. Moore takes sides with those critics who have expressed a reluctance to using Gissing's texts as the starting point for (auto)biographical speculations. Their preference is for an assessment of

the works independent of the biographical details of the writer's life. One of the early proponents of this approach was Frank Swinnerton, who in his study *George Gissing: A Critical Study* (1912) formulated the contrast between critic and biographer: "If [Gissing's work] is good, as I believe some of it is, the question of the travail behind its production can only interest the biographer. The critic's business is to assay the work, not at all to inquire into the conditions of the author's life" (p. 194). The debate about how to arrive at the best reading of Gissing's novels has been with us from the time they were first published and will I think remain unsolved, if only because the critics who emphasize the autonomy of the text do not always practice what they preach. David Grylls has pointed out to us that despite Swinnerton's disclaimers he could not resist making "shadowy biographical assumptions." Dr. Moore too, the title of whose book must be an allusion to Swinnerton's study, does not always resist the temptation to bring biographical details to bear upon his critical analysis of Gissing's novels, as these few instances may illustrate: "While it might be difficult to see Carrie Mitchell as more than a reflection of Nell, Gissing's first wife (p. 34)"; "Echoes of Edith Underwood, Gissing's second wife, sound throughout Ada's portrait (p. 38)"; "Whelpdale's recitation of his American exploits (mostly Gissing's own) (p. 170)"; and, finally, "Gissing studied in the British Library and was acquainted with the backwaters of literature" (p. 158).

Yet despite these caveats one wishes *The Fiction of George Gissing* in the hands of all readers in search of an intelligent and knowledgeable guide to Gissing's novels, primarily as imaginative works of art.

Bouwe Postmus

Richard Dennis, *Cities in Modernity, Representations and Productions of Metropolitan Space, 1840-1930*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Readers of this journal, especially those who attended the last two international Gissing conferences held in London and Lille, are familiar with Richard Dennis's work, which is interdisciplinary in the most attractive sense of the word. Just as some scholars' work pertains to biography, literature, history and bibliography, the fields covered by Dr. Dennis's research extend over geography, urban history, fiction and bibliography. In his preface to his latest volume, *Cities in Modernity*, he informs us that the book's origins go back to the mid-1980s, at which time the list of his

publications already commanded attention. “This is a book,” we are told on p. 1, “about the spaces of ‘modern cities’ in Britain and North America during the second half of the nineteenth and the first third of the twentieth centuries, a period often identified as quintessentially ‘modern’ by cultural historians.” Like his acknowledged predecessor Marshall Berman, Dr. Dennis declares his interest to lie in the “relationship between the modernisation of environment and society, the introduction of new ways of making sense of a changing world, and the development of new forms of self- and group-consciousness through the experience of modernisation.” We are taken to London, New York and Toronto as geographical and historical entities in the eighty-odd years concerned, and Gissing is allowed the space he fully deserves by an author whose knowledge of the novelist’s work cannot fail to satisfy the most demanding of his devotees. The very thorough index and the extensive bibliography list 15 of the novels, ranging from *Workers in the Dawn* to *Will Warburton*, and it clearly appears that the titles which are left unmentioned, *Isabel Clarendon*, *A Life’s Morning* and *Denzil Quarrier* among others, are not novels of London life.

The many aspects of urban life taken into consideration are all the more impressive as they rarely earn the attention of critics and reviewers, not to speak of those readers who, sadly enough, are primarily, if not exclusively, interested in the narration of events and in the description of states of mind. A casual look at the index will immediately reveal areas of material life for which literary criticism has no use: advertising, domestic appliances, housing, apartment names, the social level of tenants, public houses, public transport, department stores, shopping. “Reviewing the cast of characters in Gissing’s novels,” Richard Dennis writes, “we find Edwin and Amy Reardon beginning married life in a three-room flat on the edge of Regent’s Park; the widowed Mrs. Frothingham in a flat in Swiss Cottage; another widow, Mrs. Luke Widdowson, still in her 30s, in a flat in Victoria Street; two bachelors, Bevis and Barfoot, in separate flats in the same block in Bayswater; the reclusive Lord Polperro, who has abandoned his wife and lives the life of a middle-aged bachelor in a first-floor flat in ‘Lawndes Mansions,’ Sloane Street; another bachelor, Will Warburton, in a flat by Chelsea Bridge; the ‘new woman’ Beatrice French in a ‘bachelor’s flat’ in Brixton; and the childless Hugh and Sibyl Carnaby, newly returned from a round-the-world-trip, in a flat in Oxford and Cambridge Mansions.”

Servants receive their share of attention and we are glad to meet Mrs. King, Gissing’s faithful and devoted servant in his days at 7K, a woman

whom both Bouwe Postmus and Markus Neacey have commemorated in the novelist's Scrapbook and in a biographical article which does her full justice and throws pathetic light on the lives of servants in a country which claimed to be the most civilized in the world. The Farringdon Road Buildings, notoriously present in *The Nether World*, can be seen in a contemporary illustration dated 1874 which makes one smile at what the Victorians regarded as model housing for the industrious classes. The buildings have a "philanthropic" air which could profitably be revived in some future reprint of Gissing's novel. Jerry-built though they were, they nevertheless look decidedly better than the cellars in which some of Elizabeth Gaskell's characters lived in *Mary Barton* or *North and South* or that horrible cellar in Colville Place, one of Gissing's "homes" shortly after his return from America where Matthew Bussey Hick visited him.

Some of the many illustrations in the book—78 in all, maps, striking photographs from periodicals, and reproductions of work by well-known artists like Gustave Doré, William Powell Frith, Whistler and John Sloan—are of special Gissing interest. Figure 4.6 shows "The London of George Gissing: Sites and Journeys" in *The Odd Women*, *In the Year of Jubilee* and *The Whirlpool*. On that map, besides the railway lines along which the characters travel in the three novels, we read the names of places printed in bold below blobs (for *The Whirlpool*), squares (for *The Odd Women*) or stars (for *In the Year of Jubilee*). Thus ● Wimbledon (Redgrave), * Camberwell (Nancy Lord), ■ Lavender Hill (Madden sisters). Throughout the book references to Gissing are numerous and invariably significant. Thus on p. 70 we are offered a recapitulation of the apparently obscure praise of *Demos* in Booth's *Life and Labour* and of the role played by Clara Collet in her capacity as a member of Booth's team of researchers. The significance, literary and sociological, of the domed Reading Room of the British Museum is briefly analysed on p. 85, where we renew our acquaintance with Marian Yule and Biffen as well as Jasper Milvain who, we are reminded, is described by Adrian Poole as raiding "the reading room for smatterings of knowledge to flavour his facile concoctions." We are invited to revisit the City with Piers Otway, Gissing's own lodgings at Gower Place, Harrow with Nancy Lord, Walworth Road with Monica Madden, Oxford Street with the volatile Polly and the voluble Gammon (but we are not taken to see those admirable specimens of the canine species, the bow-wows, perhaps because Gissing preferred cats like his Grimmy Shaw to Dash, who sought refuge in one of his brother's early novels). In one of the

many guided tours in which we are invited to participate we go shopping with Gissing to the Brixton Bon Marché, where he bought some inexpensive items of furniture that would not bear too heavily on his ever meagre finances.

An especially rewarding feature of Dr. Dennis's research is his use of censuses. No one need take the trouble of offering to send him the returns for Cornwall Residences. He knows exactly who and what were the tenants of those apartments in 1891, that is a few weeks after Gissing's departure for Exeter. Statistics relating to the population and other subjects such as wages and salaries are also precious information. For instance we read on p. 250 that Gissing, who was no sweater and merely followed current practice when it was up to him to decide on the weekly wage he could offer to his servant, paid Mrs. King five shillings per week. Little enough is known about her education, but it is clear nonetheless that she could both read and write and make herself understood when she had to communicate with her part-time employer in writing and he happened to be away from home.

As one reads chapter after chapter, one is bound to consider with admiration the extraordinary amount of work that must have gone to the preparation of this quarto volume. It is a wonderfully perceptive study, richly informed, which enables Gissing readers to reconsider his work from an unexpected angle, an exemplary work in all respects, a book to be read and read again, sparkling with intelligence, which takes us into innumerable unpredictable directions—thus we are made to learn about the building and/or development of bridges and sewers, roads and streets, public and home lighting by gas or electricity, office blocks, headquarters of banks, newspapers, insurance companies and other big firms, model dwellings and mansion flats, telephone and telegraph, lifts, gardens and parks. Needless to say, Gissing is only one of the writers whose works Dr. Dennis has combed with profit, but there is none about whom he is so eloquent and so generous. Indeed there is no other novelist, English or North-American, with whose achievement he deals with equal intellectual fervour.

As he leads us into all sorts of places, including public toilets, and tells us of drinking fountains and water troughs which were part of the nineteenth-century scientific and sanitary discourse about improvements in public health, or guides us into shops and new department stores, one is tempted to ask him archly whether he knows that Selfridges, which appears on pp. 133-34, 298, 302, 309, 311-12, 316-17 and 320, sold Gissing's *Short Stories of To-Day and Yesterday* in the 1930s. They sold the volume in at

least three different bindings, scarlet red, apple green and chocolate brown. Whatever his reply may be they can be shown him on this writer's shelves across the Channel.—Pierre Coustillas

Martha S. Vogeler, *Austin Harrison and the English Review*, Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2008.

It had been known for a few years that Martha Vogeler, whose biography of Frederic Harrison is the definitive study of the subject, was preparing a book on Austin, his most distinguished son, and anybody to whom Austin's name has a meaning is generally aware that he was in the 1880s one of Gissing's pupils. Some nonspecialists would also volunteer the information that as an adult he made a name for himself in literary journalism, notably as editor of the *English Review* after Ford Madox Hueffer, later Ford had vacated the editorial chair. Records tell us as well that there were a few contacts between Gissing and the Harrisons after Frederic's two eldest sons began to make their way in life but the present book has nothing new to offer on this question; all the information available had been published in the *Collected Letters of George Gissing*. Bernard, whose conversion to Roman Catholicism had been noted in his tutor's diary, is even more of a lay figure in this new book than he had been in previously published material. We are told that he dutifully attended the funerals of all his relatives, but wherever he appears he is a mere walking gentleman. One would have liked to know what he thought of Austin and his activities. He would seem to have been as colourless as his sister Olive, who became the prey of some ecclesiastical buzzards who were only interested in her money. The two small amateurish paintings of Westminster Bridge he gave Gissing in 1885, when he was still his pupil, are the only evidence we have of his budding talent as an artist. Most decidedly—perhaps the publishers are responsible for this—the book strictly focuses on Austin whom we can now imagine at different ages. But it is only fair to say that the volume deals as much with the England that Austin knew as with Austin himself. So we come across a large number of figures known to Gissing personally or through their writings. The number of writers somehow connected with him that are listed in the carefully compiled index is considerable, including in particular Max Beerbohm, Arnold Bennett, Conrad, Norman Douglas, Justin McCarthy, A. R. Orage, Morley Roberts and May Sinclair.

Naturally, Austin never forgot Gissing, who appears off and on in the book and his articles are not overlooked, although some readers will regret that Martha Vogeler all too charitably chose to ignore a serious factual error and a no less serious misdating to be found in Austin's main article on his tutor, being also unfair to both Austin and his tutor when she fails to stress the importance of the pages on Gissing in *Frederic Harrison: Thoughts and Memories* and in *Pandora's Hope*. The truth is that both Austin and his father, though often regarded as authorities on Gissing's works after his death, had read only a few of his books and misunderstood much of what they read. Present-day readers have an impression that they tended to look down upon him on account of his poverty and of the judgments he passed on his country and its huge social inequalities. When they convinced each other, because their undeniable generosity blinded them to reality, that from 1880 (not 1882!) onwards Gissing's poverty was "fiction of fiction," they were shockingly unfair to him. Their thick wallets were a barrier which stood in the way of a subtler understanding of his aims and achievements. Gissing and the Harrisons belonged to two worlds that could not be reconciled, and even posthumously they cannot be.

So much for the Harrisons and Gissing, but even more than for readers interested in these three writers, the book will be compulsory reading for scholars and literary historians of the years 1890-1930. Austin worked for the *Times*, then for the *Observer* before he succeeded Ford at the head of the *English Review*. His father, who was not above boasting when his family's capacities were under discussion, had some illusions about his son's knowledge of French and possibly German. Austin was never quite at ease in Berlin, and indeed life in Germany in those days of political intolerance was anything but attractive. Nobody has claimed that he became a famous editor; yet, as Martha Vogeler has easily proved, he was much better as a manager than Ford Madox Ford had been. Most commentators on the history of the *Review* had been grossly unfair to him, betraying a degree of ignorance which has had a boomerang effect. Unlike his father in some respects, he could look forward in politics and he often welcomed novelty in literature. Martha Vogeler is certainly lucid when she writes in the conclusion of her introduction that he evolved into "an able though not faultless editor." The two versions of Gissing's poem "The Death of the Children" which he published in 1914 and 1920 betray some carelessness which would have shocked Austin's former tutor. Austin, like most literary journalists of his day, was no scholar. By present-day standards his notion

of scholarship would not pass muster. As for his father, his criticism of Gissing's coaching of his two eldest sons merely reveals his own doubtful competence. What was wrong, one wonders, with the children being asked to learn some Latin conjugations by heart? Apropos of the geographical position of Rhodes in Greece, which Austin had been unable to define correctly, why should Austin's tutor be blamed when only the child's memory was at fault? Gissing, contrary to what the Harrisons thought, was not a duffer at teaching. They would have been contradicted by Dolbey, James Gausson and Walter Grahame among other pupils, not to mention the Lushington girls' father. The Harrisons were very often most generous to Gissing, but one cannot help thinking that they could be misled by purse-pride. However, Austin certainly understood Gissing better than his parents did. As late as the mid-1920s, when he was in his fifties, he wrote a congenial essay entitled "Memories of Gissing: London Rambles with My Unconventional Tutor" (*T. P. 's and Cassell's Weekly*, 24 April 1926, p. 23).

Some readers will wonder why the author of the book, apropos of the circumstances of Frederic Harrison's hearing about Gissing's expulsion from Owens College, refuses to consider that C. H. Herford was Harrison's only likely informant. Austin explains the circumstances without giving the visitor's name in *Frederic Harrison: Thoughts and Memories* (p. 84), but the man concerned revealed himself in a letter to Percy Withers of 25 January 1912, a letter complemented by the second paragraph of Gissing's letter to Harrison of 24 June 1884. (The other former Manchester student and Positivist, mentioned as a possible informant, Charles Gaskell Higginson, is not known to have belonged, like Herford, to Gissing's circle of friends.)

This small blemish notwithstanding, *Austin Harrison and the "English Review"* can be warmly commended as an exemplary study of a kind we come across too rarely. It is well-known that studies of periodicals and their editors are seldom attempted by academics. Professor Vogeler has read the whole file of the *English Review* and consulted dozens of newspapers and periodicals of the years 1890-1930. She quotes an impressive number of unpublished letters and she is anxious to do justice to a man who never sought popularity and merely played an honourable part in the cultural life of his time. Unlike his father, he was not prepared on certain occasions to side with Mrs. Grundy, that symbol of English narrow-mindedness, and unlike his mother, who was blandly hostile to the right to vote for women,

he would seem to have realised that conservative opinion was bound to be condemned by future developments. When he died in 1928, aged fifty-five, England as he had known it in childhood was scarcely recognizable. Political instability had become a new national problem. Although strictly speaking Nazism was still unborn, its threat was perceptible and Harrison, who wrote his most interesting books after giving up his editorial labours in the mid-1920s, would soon have had to clarify some of his cultural choices and probably to reconsider some of his friendships, but he did not have time to do so, and obituaries were rather tepid. No one thought it possible to write that a great man had died.— Pierre Coustillas

Marta Salís, ed., *Cuando se abrió la puerta, Cuentos de la Nueva Mujer (1882-1914)*, Barcelona : Alba Editorial, 2008.

There was a time, fifty years ago, when collections of short stories were looked at askance by publishers if potential translators offered them to bring out either a volume of stories by one author or a selection of tales by various writers with an obvious thematic unity, which, for some reason or other, might appeal to the reading public. I remember a Paris publisher of the old school to whom I offered an anthology of stories by Thomas Hardy, unquestionably a writer with an international reputation, and whose response was typical. The negative reply I received was followed by a sop to Cerberus—why not translate *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*? Unfortunately I knew someone who had undertaken this attractive task. However, my offer was gladly accepted by a broad-minded firm and the book sold so well that it had to be reprinted. That was several decades ago, and I always rejoice when I see a new collection of short stories for sale.

The anti-short story prejudice, like so many others, would seem to have died down and to be ignored by the distinguished Barcelona firm Alba Editorial, which in recent years published translations of *The Odd Women (Mujeres sin pareja)* and *New Grub Street (La nueva Grub Street)* as well as a selection of Victorian short stories (*Cuentos de amor victorianos*) which contains “The Scrupulous Father” — three beautifully produced volumes, the third of which is now available in paperback. Gissing is again treated handsomely in a collection we announced last autumn, *Cuando se abrió la puerta: Cuentos de la Nueva Mujer*, selected and introduced by Marta Salís, a 518-page volume which includes “A Daughter of the

Lodge,” translated by Miguel Temprano García. Among the twenty-four other authors in whose company Gissing appears are to be found Olive Schreiner, Edith Wharton, Hubert Crackanthorpe, Thomas Hardy and Henry James.

This is again an excellent choice, the story having become a favourite among publishers and translators: Japanese, Italian and French translations are on record. As could be expected señor Temprano García came across a problem in the very title and we may wonder whether Gissing, when he wrote his narrative and found that the original title, “The Rash Miss Tomalin,” would not do after all because he had used the name Tomalin in his latest novel, *Our Friend the Charlatan*, was conscious that some people might have difficulties with it in the future. The French translator of the story, Daniel Nury, rightly thought that a literal translation was impossible, and the Spanish translator, like his Italian predecessor, is seen to have had some trouble, writing “La hija de los guardeses,” whereas the original version clearly implies that the keepers of the lodge had more than one daughter, consciousness of which situation justifies the clever title of the French translation, “La loge et le château.” Stressing this linguistic difficulty conveys no criticism of the capable translation under review; it more modestly aims at pointing to a *nuance* expressible in English, but neither in Spanish nor in French. If “A Daughter of the Lodge” is ever turned into another European language, it will be interesting to see how translators—perhaps Dutch, Swedish or German—will solve in their native languages the problem unconsciously placed by Gissing in the way of his foreign interpreters.

With this volume of twenty-five short stories covering the years 1882-1914 in hand, one is prompted to ask what other major work by Gissing might conceivably succeed *Mujeres sin pareja* and *La nueva Grub Street*. We venture to suggest that *The Whirlpool*, which offers a thoughtful representation of English life in the mid-1890s, if it became available in the language of Cervantes, which Gissing greatly appreciated, would be a good addition to the series of titles in Alba Clásica Maior.— Pierre Coustillas

Notes and News

John Spiers wishes to clarify a statement which in the 1981 Harvester Press edition of *Will Warburton* is bound to have puzzled some readers. He has entitled his remarks “Five Cuckoos a Shilling:

“Gissing and the Independent State of Cuckfield.” “What connection does Gissing have with the Independent State of Cuckfield? And what, indeed, is this entity?”

The answer to this obscure conundrum concerning a very minor but intriguing political authority lies on the back of the title-page to the Harvester Press edition of *Will Warburton*. This was published in 1981. Rather to my surprise no one has ever queried this connection. As a publisher I always read the information on the back of a title-page. Who was the first publisher? Who printed and bound the book? And what is all this about “The Independent State of Cuckfield”? This is clearly very much a minority concern! However, to add to the complete picture of all things Gissing which the *Gissing Journal* seeks, I send this note.

We look back 28 years. As we were preparing our edition of *Will Warburton*, Harvester’s marketing director Mark Holland was seeking to be elected as Mayor of Cuckfield, where he lived in mid-Sussex. The village is best known as the home (and burial place) of the Camden Town group painter Robert Bevan (1865-1925). But it is also noted locally as the home of the Independent State, lying just to the west of the market-town of Haywards Heath. The village remains virtually unspoilt, as it was when visited by the bicycling and encyclopaedic architectural historian Sir Nikolaus Pevsner in the early 1960s. The independence of the Independent State persists. Its chief building remains the 16th-century Cuckfield Park with its fine twisted chimney-stacks. Nearby Nymans, which Pevsner called “this amazingly deceptive evocation of a major manor house of the C14 to C16 by Sir Walter Rapper” was built c. 1925-30, mostly burned down after the second world war, and was the childhood home of Lord Snowdon. There is Kempe glass in Cuckfield’s Holy Trinity 13th/14th century church, often compared with that of William Morris. But the chief Cuckfield dignitary is its own Mayor. The election of the splendidly robed and ermined Mayor is an opportunity to raise funds for local charities. Mark did not win, but his endeavours contributed to these funds.

The Mayor’s election is open to any individual who is permanently resident there. Each vote now costs 1p. Vote-raising involves running local events, opening fêtes, planting trees, lighting bonfires and doing all you can to get your picture in the local newspapers. The Independence of Cuckfield was declared in the year 1965, the same year that Rhodesia had declared its independence from Britain. The tiny Sussex state has issued its own passports, stamps (which were used to deliver mail during the postal strike in

the 1970s) and currency. Five cuckoos equalled one shilling. This money was accepted in local pubs and shops, although mostly kept as souvenirs. And so this is the origin of the publisher's own wording (which amends the Berne Convention on copyright) on the verso of the title-page of the Harvester *Will Warburton*: "This book may only be distributed in the Independent State of Cuckfield and be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise circulated by way of trade or otherwise provided that the purchaser, the vendor, and other users, have contributed to the Independent State of Cuckfield Charities Fund. The Independent State of Cuckfield is not a signatory to the Berne Convention, but is recognised by all known banking systems."

Gissing was thus a posthumous and involuntary contributor to these local funds. Rycroft would surely have approved. And Harvester itself contributed a decent sum to Mark's funds, on behalf of all Gissing readers!"

Readers looking for articles published in the *Gissing Newsletter/Journal* are informed that they will find on the internet contributions published from 1965 to 2003 included.

Clara Collet emerged from relative oblivion a few years ago when Deborah McDonald published her biography of Gissing's friend. A recent article on her appears in some bibliographies: Clive E. Hill, "A Radical in Retirement: Clara Collet, 1920-1948," *Women's History Review*, November 2006, pp. 681-700. Hill teaches historical political theory in the Department of History, Royal Holloway, University of London, UK. This is a summary of his article: "The subject is a neglected period in the life of the prominent feminist social investigator, Clara Collet (1860-1948). The article establishes a narrative account of Collet's life in retirement from primary and secondary sources, which then provides a context for an evaluation of the most notable political ideas found in her later texts. Some Colletian writings from before 1920 are also discussed, partly because previous Collet scholarship has neglected her connections with the Women's freedom league and the feminist wing of the labour movement during her middle-age years. Like many progressives of her vintage, Collet's political opinions were an amalgam of liberal and socialist ideas, and the article also makes connections between her views and wider debates within intellectual history, for example, the 'new liberalism' and 'new feminism' debates. The article concludes that Collet's political opinions during her old

age were in many ways more radical than those she had expressed during the earlier stages of her lengthy career.”

Maria Teresa Chialant of the University of Salerno, Italy, has been asked by Professor Francesco Marroni (University Gabriele d’Annunzio, Chieti-Pescara) to edit a collection of critical essays on *Eve’s Ransom* to be published in the series “Studi di Anglistica” for which the Roman firm Aracne Editrice is known. Contributions—for which the deadline is the end of September—should naturally be connected with the novel or specific aspects of it in relation to other major novels by Gissing or by some of his contemporaries. Among the topics which might be dealt with Prof. Chialant suggests: Eve Madeley, the New Woman and the fin de siècle metropolis; women as consumers and urban culture at the turn of the century; women, work and education in late-Victorian England; Maurice Hilliard and the crisis of masculinity; figures of exile; urban and industrial landscapes in Gissing’s novels; circulating libraries and women readers in the last decades of the nineteenth century.

Most potential contributors are probably aware that Maria Teresa Chialant has translated and edited *Eve’s Ransom* for Liguori Editore (Naples, 2005; reprinted 2008).

The contents of private libraries usually remain unknown until they are put on sale and they sometimes offer surprises to browsers. Recently a 1933 Travellers’ Library copy of *By the Ionian Sea* was offered on Abebooks; it had on the front free endpaper the signature of Hugh Dalton (1887-1962) and his address at West Leaze. Dalton, later Baron Dalton, was a Labour Party politician; among various appointments, he held that of Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Attlee government from 1945 to 1947.

Recent Publications

Volumes

Oxford University Press reprinted in a new format their three Gissing titles in the Oxford World’s Classics, *The Nether World*, *New Grub Street* and *The Odd Women*. Internally the three volumes are almost identical with those of the previous impressions, but except for the illustrations, the covers are conspicuously different. A new characteristic of the whole series is

the presence in the lower part of the front cover of a white band 4.4 cm high on which the author's name and that of the series are printed in red and the title of the novel in black. Except for the top part, which consists of a red band 5 mm high below which a small detail of the front cover illustration is reproduced, the spine of each volume carries Gissing's name in black, the book's title in red and OXFORD in black. The three reissues are dated 2008 and the back covers have been entirely reset. At the top of each, under the red band running on from the spine, a very short quotation from the novel concerned is printed, also in red. "To write—was not that the joy and the privilege of one who had an urgent message for the world?" in the case of *New Grub Street*, and the memorable last sentence of *The Nether World*. The books are markedly cheaper than their Penguin equivalents, £8.99 for the first and third titles, £9.99 for *New Grub Street*. The critical edition still available from Penguin was first published in 1968 and no effort has been made by the firm to bring it up to date.

Articles, reviews, etc

Chambers. *Dictionary of Literary Characters*, Edinburgh: Chambers, 2004.

Contains a number of Gissing characters in six of his works: *Born in Exile*, *In the Year of Jubilee*, *New Grub Street*, *The Odd Women*, *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* and *The Whirlpool*. The choice of characters is often arbitrary, and the empathy with Gissing strikes one as minimal. In a headnote the reader is told that Gissing wrote a critical biography of Dickens. The blurb on the jacket says of the dictionary that it is "unsurpassed in scope and detail." This is mere wishful thinking.

John Barnes, *Socialist Champion: Portrait of the Gentleman as Crusader*, Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2006. Henry Hyde Champion, a former officer, was a friend and correspondent of both Gissing and Morley Roberts. He left England for Australia in the 1890s. He was one of the few literati who could claim to have read *Workers in the Dawn* in 1880. Passages from Gissing's letters to him were published in the *Collected Letters*. His review of *The Crown of Life* was reprinted in *Gissing: The Critical Heritage*.

Patrick Parrinder, *Nation and the Novel: The English Novel from its Origins to the Present Day*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. Contains a number of passages about Gissing.

Linda Griffiths, *Age of Arousal*, Toronto: Coach House Books, 2007. This is apparently a sort of update or modernized version of *The Odd Women*, at all events a parasitic rewriting of it, published simultaneously with the dramatization to which we referred some time ago.

Christine Huguet, "Figures de l'exil dans *New Grub Street* de George Gissing," *Cahiers Victoriens et Edouardiens*, no. 67, April 2008, pp. 67-77. The same number, pp. 521-22, contains an abstract of an article by Fabienne Gaspari entitled "'This is Hell, Hell, Hell': les éléments dans *The Nether World*."

Eileen Cleere, "Book Reviews," *Victorian Studies*, Summer 2008, pp. 691-93. Review of *Cleaning the City: Sanitary Geographies in Victorian London*, by Michelle Allen (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2008), which contains a chapter on *The Nether World*.

Arlene Young, "Book Reviews: Gissing's Short Stories," *English Literature in Transition 1880-1920*, Vol. 51, no. 2 (2008), pp. 222-25. Review of Barbara Rawlinson's book *A Man of Many Parts* (Rodopi).

Vincenzo Pepe, "Alla scoperta del sud: Un grand scrittore in viaggio tra Nocera e Paestum," *Magazine 05* (Salerno), Winter 2008, p. 17.

Asa Briggs, *A History of Longmans and their Books 1724-1990. Longevity in Publishing* (The British Library and Oak Knoll Press, [2008]). Gissing is mentioned on several pages.

J. C. [James Campbell], "Books by the ton," *Times Literary Supplement*, 2 January 2009, p. 32. Five paragraphs revived the well-known controversy in the *Times Literary Supplement* (13 April to 4 May 1933) between Virginia Woolf and Alfred Gissing apropos of her fourth essay on his father, which had already been used twice. The quarrel was triggered by Jonathan Cape's unfortunate decision to reprint it once more as an introduction to *By the Ionian Sea*, as it somewhat cheekily ignored the travel book and contained various factual errors about Gissing and his family. She misquoted Gissing's letters, claimed that his education suffered from family need, declared that Gissing visited Sicily, which he never did, etc, etc. Worst of all, which J. C. does not say, she refused to read Gissing's travel narrative.

- Claudia Corbetta, "Addio al prof gentiluomo," *Giornale di Carate*, 6 January 2009, p. 1. Obituary of Francesco Badolato.
- J. C., "Money worries," *Times Literary Supplement*, 23 January 2009, p. 32, comments on Roger Milbrandt's second article in the January number of the *Gissing Journal*. In the same number of the *TLS*, Martha Vogeler's recent book on Austin Harrison was reviewed by Gordon Bowker ("The Man Who Came After," p. 23).
- George Gorniak, "Ivan Turgenev 1818-1883," *Dickens Magazine*, Series 5, issue 3, February 2009, pp. 26-28. Gissing's affinities with Turgenev are pleasantly mentioned. The excellent portrait of the Russian novelist c. 1880 shows him as he was when Gissing was personally in touch with him at the time the articles for *Vyestnik Evropy* were planned. The next issue of the *Dickens Magazine* will contain an article on John Forster.
- J. C., "Great Stuff," *Times Literary Supplement*, 6 March 2009, p. 36. Apropos of a recent book entitled *501 Great Writers* J. C. regretted a few serious omissions. "Poor George Gissing has never been fashionable, though he wrote at least three novels with claims to greatness (*New Grub Street*, *The Odd Women*, *The Crown of Life*)." The first two titles are available from both Penguin and O.U.P., but a kind word about Gissing's courageously pacifist novel with a romantic impulse is particularly welcome.
- Clotilde De Stasio, "Comptes rendus," *Cahiers Victoriens et Edouardiens*, no. 69, April 2009, pp. 296-98. Review of Christine Huguet's *Spellbound. George Gissing* (Equilibris, 2008).
- Michel W. Pharand, "Book Reviews: No Mere Pot Boilers," *English Literature in Transition 1880-1920*, Vol. 52, No. 1 (2009), pp. 95-97. Review of *Spellbound. George Gissing* (Equilibris, 2008).

