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

Vanity Fair: A Source for *The Whirlpool*

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There is little disagreement about the major focus of Gissing's last considerable novel. Some critics may write of the competing appeals to a country at peace for sixty years and more of a possibly moribund civilisation on the one hand or an energised skull-breaking jingoism on the other, or of Gissing's jaundiced view of the very possibility of married happiness, or the importance of education, or the eye-opening delights of fatherhood. But few would dissent from the claim that *The Whirlpool* deals primarily with the degrading moral effects of the greatest conurbation then known, of, in H. G. Wells' comment, “the fatal excitement and extravagance of the social life of London” (Wells, p. 297). In Gissing's eyes, these effects are associated with an increasingly ambitious imperialism, driven both by the temptations and demands of speculative capitalism and by the social ambitions of selfish and corrupt women. *The Whirlpool* contrasts baneful influences of the metropolis with beneficial emanations from the countryside, the latter attracting weakly submissive, if good, men and a quietist withdrawal from the horrors of human existence. Furthermore, it would seem to be agreed that any exegesis of *The Whirlpool*'s theme must take into account the novel's title, which, as more than one contemporary reviewer and subsequent critic has seen, is Zolaesque in its one-word identification of a contemporary social problem as starting point. Wells, in the article already cited, compares the *modus operandi* of Gissing's work—“a group of typical individuals at the point of action of some great social force”—with that of novels by Hugo, Balzac, Tolstoy, Turgenev, and Zola himself (p. 297).

No one will deny the specifically *fin de siècle* themes and atmosphere of *The Whirlpool*, nor the Continental literary influences brought to bear upon its composition: Gissing's strengths include his acute apprehension of what was going on around him and a cultivated awareness of what was written

outside his native isle. But, as I have tried to point out before in these pages, the hopelessly bookish man and the over-strained author, compelled to produce at a killing rate, sometimes allowed characters and scenes from his reading to suggest characters and scenes in his own works. A juxtaposition of the climactic scenes of *Vanity Fair* and *The Whirlpool* throws a sad and ironic light on the world depicted in the later novel.

What, then, are the links between Thackeray's splendid mid-Victorian war horse, read and loved for more than a century and a half now, still a staple of university literature courses, repeatedly adapted for the silver screen and televised, and Gissing's slighter work? Perhaps a good point of entry would be one of Alma Rolfe's more vulgar daydreams.

After conversation with Harvey about servant troubles (good servants are rarely to be had nowadays, he says, except by long-established and therefore secure or prestigious families), she speaks of the desirability of having "ancestors," failing that, of becoming ancestors to her own descendants: "But one ought to have an interesting house to live in. Nobody's ancestors ever lived in a semi-detached villa. What I should like would be one of those picturesque old places down in Surrey—quite in the country, yet within easy reach of town; a house with a real garden, and perhaps an orchard. I believe you can get them very cheap sometimes. Not rent the house, but buy it. Then we would have our portraits painted, and—" (Gissing, p. 368. All future references to this edition). The embarrassing *arrivisme* of this vision—complete with "ancestral" portraits!—fits thematically with Gissing's repeated references in *The Whirlpool* to the ugly lodging houses, flats, or suburban "villas" most of the novel's metropolitan characters are condemned to live in, suitable emblems of the rootless and emotionally sterile nomadicism of their lives. (One remembers Gissing's own longing finally to own a house and its fulfillment only in *Ryecroft*, Winter XV.)

Possibly the most famous *arriviste* in English literature, ejected from the bourgeois opulence of Russell Square, arrives in Hampshire to take up residence as governess to the two daughters of Sir Pitt Crawley. A howling snob, Becky Sharpe congratulates herself, admittedly in a somewhat sour-grapes manner, upon having left "vulgar city people" to be amongst "*gentlefolks*" (Thackeray, p. 103. All future references to this edition). Indeed, Sir Pitt and his establishment, his dirt, greed, and accent notwithstanding, embody the apparently timeless confidence of rank. But the borough of Crawley has become Queen's Crawley because the first

Elizabeth was pleased by some good local beer and the handsome scion of the family who presented it to her, and Thackeray has already made it clear to the alert reader before Becky even sees Sir Pitt that the significantly-named Crawleys have made the subsequent social progress they have by trimming, compromising, and betraying (pp. 101-102). Nevertheless, the Hall, with its genuflecting servant at the lodge gate, its mile-long avenue to the house, its park, its meals served on old plate, its heritable title, represents the sort of snobbish fantasy that so appeals to Alma, the daughter of a speculator who commits suicide but who might himself have ended up a baronet had things turned out differently.

Alma, beautiful, ambitious, and self-regarding, cold to her son, a talented amateur musician as Thackeray's creation is a talented amateur actress, is not the only Becky figure in *The Whirlpool*, although, as we shall see, it is she who is placed in a version of Becky's most compromising situation. The adventurer who rivals Alma in beauty and outshines her by far in self-possession, guile, and social success is, of course, Sibyl Carnaby, so shut off from the maternal instinct that she has apparently used artificial methods to avoid maternity. Sibyl, who could be described in the words Thackeray applies to Becky, "very vain, heartless, pleasure-seeking . . . without faith—or love—or character" (p. 738), not only survives the catastrophe of Cyrus Redgrave's death but actually consolidates, even enhances, her position in society. After her husband's trial, she wins the support of an aristocrat, another canny operator who has married into money and can therefore unite social prestige with the power of finance, who lives, indeed, the sort of life that would have exalted Alma to the skies. Lady Isobel Barker, Dymes tells Alma, is a daughter of the Earl of Bournemouth. She has married "a fellow on the Stock Exchange. . . . Barker is by way of being a millionaire, and they live in great style; have Royalties down at Boscombe, and so on." Sibyl "got hold of her" just after "that affair" (406). Sibyl herself will later give her broken and manipulated husband a carefully massaged account of the beginning of the alliance: "It was life or death, dear boy, and I had to fight for it. So I went to Lady Isobel Barker. I only knew her by name. She, of course, knew *me* by name, and cold enough she was when I got admitted to her. But half an hour's talk—and I had won! She was my friend . . ." (p. 434).

In the scene in which we first meet Sibyl, Harvey puzzles himself as to why this elegant if apparently shallow socialite has married his worthy but unfashionable friend, and tries to interpret the union charitably, hoping that

she had “just enough of warmth to be subdued by the vigorous passion of such a fine fellow as Carnaby” (p. 34). In fact, Sibyl comes to regard her marriage as a mistake in much the way Becky Sharpe does hers. Again like Becky, she acknowledges the misstep to herself without bitterness and without resentment of the man to whom she is now tied, prepared to make the best of things. After Hugh’s release from prison,

She went softly into [his] room, lighted by the sun’s yellow glimmer through blind and lace curtains, and stood looking at him, her husband. To him she had given all the love of which she was capable; she had admired him for his strength and his spirit, had liked him as a companion, had prized the flattery of his ardent devotion, his staunch fidelity. To have married him was, of course, a mistake, not easy of explanation in her present mind; she regretted it, but with no bitterness, with no cruel or even unkind thought. (p. 432)

Here is exactly the attitude of Becky to Rawdon Crawley, the beefy, unintelligent, but finally decent soldier she secretly marries when she considers him her best bet. Here too is mirrored the bewitched response of Rawdon to his clever little wife before the break-up. When irrevocably separated from Rawdon, Becky thinks of “his honest, stupid, constant kindness and fidelity; his never ceasing obedience; his good humour, his bravery and courage” (p. 742). Hugh Carnaby is a late-Victorian version of Rawdon Crawley, not an untamed veteran who is scarcely fit for the drawing room but an Englishman of the heyday of Empire, “a fair example of the well-bred, well-fed Englishman Something more of repose, of self-possession, and a slightly more intellectual brow, would have made him the best type of conquering, civilising Briton [, although] Hugh had never bent over books since the day when he declined the university ” The type of colonial life for which he is best fitted is impossible after his marriage to Sibyl, before whom he nevertheless “bowed in delighted subservience” (pp. 8-9).

If we now have two Becky figures and a Rawdon, suitably married to one of the Beckies, we still need a seducer figure, a Lord Steyne. Cyrus Redgrave is no aristocrat: his power comes from mere wealth. Indeed, his American first name perhaps suggests the transatlantic millionaire, up from nothing, sans family background or social pedigree.

The pivotal scene of *Vanity Fair* occurs in Chapter 53. Rawdon, unexpectedly released from the sponging-house to which the machinations of Becky and Lord Steyne had committed him, walks home to find his wife and the Marquis alone together. Becky swears she is innocent but Rawdon strikes Steyne twice across the face and throws him to the floor. The

narrative persona wonders, “What *had* happened? Was she guilty or not? She said not; but who could tell what was truth which came from those lips; or if that corrupt heart was in this case pure?” (p. 622). (These authorial questions suggest that of Harvey to his exposed wife about her “corrupt” former friend, “What is it to you and me whether she was guilty or not?” [p. 447])

In Gissing’s novel the adulteress is Sibyl. As we have seen, she carries off successfully her betrayal of Hugh, both hoodwinking him and imposing upon the world. It is Alma, technically innocent of bed-breach, who is accused before her husband of possible infidelity. The germ of Gissing’s decision that she will play with fire, that she will flirt with Redgrave and use his desire for her to advance her career, is to be found in the words Becky disingenuously speaks to the younger Sir Pitt after the *débâcle*: “Becky owned, and with perfect frankness, but deep contrition, that having remarked Lord Steyne’s partiality for her . . . and being secure of her own virtue, she had determined to turn the great peer’s attachment to the advantage of herself and her family” (p. 636). Alma “had never been able to endure the thought of mediocrity. One chance there was; she must grasp it energetically and without delay. And she must make use of all subsidiary means to her great conquest—save only the last dishonor. . . . Her battle had to be fought alone; she was going forth to conquer the world by her mere talents, and can a woman disregard the auxiliary weapons of beauty?” (pp. 228, 240).

Gissing eschews the mid-Victorian simplicity of the scene in which Becky is caught with her presumed lover by her outraged husband. We have in *The Whirlpool* indirection and a subtlisation of the earlier melodrama. The seducer figure is not present when Sibyl forces Hugh to reveal to Harvey what he has hitherto concealed; one Becky figure works against the other, the real adulteress against the merely apparent one; the role of deceived husband too is divided between Hugh and Harvey.

But what a falling off from the colourful vigour of Thackeray’s characters to their late-Victorian derivatives! Gissing conceives neither Sibyl nor Alma as having the wit, the guts, the dash of their partial inspiration Becky Sharpe. Sibyl has Becky’s social ambition and emotional coldness with none of the latter’s occasional generosity to others. Alma’s blunders ignobly lead her to “a small house at Gunnersbury, a baffled ambition, a life of envy, hatred, fear, suffered in secret, hidden by base or paltry subterfuge” [p. 418] and an ambiguous death.

The men are even less impressive. Hugh Carnaby once threatens violence to those who repeat gossip about Sibyl (“Tell me a name, and if it’s a man—” “Don’t! I can’t bear to see that look on your face, Hugh. You could do nothing but endless harm, trying to defend me that way” [p. 434]), an echo of Rawdon’s feeling “very acutely the slights which were passed upon his wife He talked of calling out the husbands or brothers of every one of the insolent women who did not pay a proper respect to his wife; and it was only by the strongest commands and entreaties on her part, that he was brought into keeping a decent behavior. ‘You can’t shoot me into society,’ she said good-naturedly” [p. 441]). But in the climactic scene of the novel Hugh “slouched” into the room and “stood tottering like a feeble old man” (p. 439). He will spend the rest of his life as Sibyl’s credulous dupe. No principled separation from the woman who has cuckolded him for the self-deceived Carnaby; and his wife’s lover almost risibly helps finance a bicycle factory in the Midlands rather than bringing about the offer of the governorship of a tropical, if unhealthy, Coventry Island that Rawdon is eventually prevailed upon to accept.

Harvey is little better. Told that his wife has secretly seen another man, he tells her “imperatively, but not unkindly” [p. 443] that he will believe what she says. Becky, admittedly caught almost in the act, had “stood there trembling” before her husband, admiring him, “strong, brave, and victorious” after his striking Lord Steyne to the floor. “Don’t kill me, Rawdon,” she will exclaim a few seconds later [pp. 620-21]. There is never any possibility of Harvey, as feeble before his wife here as he has ever been, striking or killing anyone. He does not even raise his voice.

But it is in the contrast between Steyne and Redgrave that we seem most obviously to be in a diminished and suburban world. Lord Steyne may be something of a stereotypical Wicked Marquis but he lives vividly in the novel and commands credence. The sulphurous glory about “the great nobleman . . . a great prince” (p. 751), reflected in his subsidiary titles of Viscount Hellborough, Baron Pitchly and Grillsby (p. 753), helps make him unforgettable. But what is to be said of the capitalist Redgrave with his “thin hair” (p. 32) and his sub-Paterian line in seductive chatter?

The triangle formed by Becky Sharpe, Rawdon Crawley, and Lord Steyne suggests plot and phrase for Gissing. But it says something about the timid and circumscribed milieu of *The Whirlpool* that these three would burst the seams of the later novel. Gissing sees the England of his day,

urban, democratic, and capitalist, in colours more muted and subfusc than those in which Thackeray saw the England of his.

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Two Early Gissing Reviews Discovered

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If in the old days you wanted to consult a complete file of a weekly like *The Examiner*, a trip to the British Newspaper Library at Colindale was indispensable and by the end of a long day's research there was often little to show for your efforts apart from a shower of bits and pieces of crumbling paper that had rained down on the floor of the desk you occupied. But a splendid place Colindale was and still remains. The life of the modern scholar is very different though. He can stay at home and save himself a trip to London. The material he needs to consult is delivered to his computer thanks to the amazing and explosive expansion of the digitization of hundreds of British periodicals undertaken by firms like ProQuest, Cengage Learning, Chadwyck-Healey and many others. Now a single exploratory search command for "Gissing" will reveal unsuspected treasures. Two of such recent finds I should like to pass on to the readers of the *Gissing Journal*.

Somehow there is a particular satisfaction in the discovery that one of the oldest and most prominent radical (liberal) weeklies from the nineteenth century, the *Examiner*, in July 1880 made room for a review of Gissing's first novel, only six months before it hopefully announced its temporary discontinuation on February 26, 1881. Sadly, the periodical was never to be revived after an influential life of 73 years. Under the Hunt brothers in the early years of the nineteenth century it had promoted the poetry of Shelley

and Keats, and over the years it had always fiercely defended its political independence. Given the political views of both Gissing and his father it remains puzzling that no reference at all to the *Examiner* can be found in any of the standard works on Gissing, such as the *Collected Letters of George Gissing*, *Gissing: the Critical Heritage*, *George Gissing: the Definitive Bibliography*, or *Gissing's Diary*. The sole exception is a passing reference to the weekly in Gissing's *American Notebook*.

The *Examiner's* reviewer must have been one of the first to link suggestively the names of Zola and Gissing, and despite touches of Grundyism the review may be read as a somewhat grudging appreciation of a novice's novel. It can now be added to the twelve reviews of *Workers in the Dawn* retrieved in *Gissing: the Critical Heritage*.

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THE EXAMINER

JULY 17, 1880.

Workers in the Dawn.

By George R. Gissing.

Remington.

Mr. Gissing evidently wishes to rank as a British Emile Zola, with a stronger touch of morality. He gives us plenty of good, broad description, and no lack of strong language. He boldly displays the poverty, shellfish, and drunkenness of Whitecross Street, and doesn't even draw the line at an exposure of the mysteries of Leicester Square and all its wickedness. When there are words beginning with a big, big "D" Mr. Gissing puts them in all their original force; he even uses stronger and wickeder words beginning with other letters, but want of courage prevents any reference to them. A description of a Leicester Square restaurant of the worst class and of the *tableaux vivants* may succeed as a warning to wickedness, but most of us would not care to take as drawing-room sermons on morality. Yet Mr. Gissing has many claims to excellence as a writer. It would have been better for him, perhaps, if he had never published "Workers in the Dawn" at all. It is so very suggestive of what he might have done, and has not done; of what he might have avoided, and has not avoided. Some of the pictures of the life of the lower orders are as vigorous and faithful studies as they well could be. But the fairest criticism on "Workers in the Dawn" must be, that it is a curious and unsatisfactory display of undoubted ignorance and undoubted talent, although thoroughly undeveloped.

No. 3,781, Saturday, July 17, 1880

The Examiner. An Independent Weekly Review of Politics, Literature, Science, and Art. Established 1808. Editor: Robert Williams.

The second review, this time of *The Unclassed*, was found in a relatively unknown periodical called *To-Day: the Monthly Magazine of Scientific*

Socialism. It was published from April 1883 to June 1889 and the list of its contributors reads like a veritable roll-call of the radicals of the day. Among them were William Morris, Karl and Eleanor Marx, Annie Besant, Stewart Headlam, Havelock Ellis, Henry Hyde Champion,¹ H. M. Hyndman, Edward Carpenter and G. B. Shaw. The magazine was at first edited by Ernest Belfort Bax (1854-1926) and James Leigh Joynes (1853-1893), but when in 1884 it was acquired and financed by Champion's The Modern Press, he also became joint editor. Years later, after Champion had emigrated to Australia, he remembered in a review of *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* for the *Melbourne Book Lover* how he had discovered and first read Gissing's *The Unclassed*:

I was at the time well-known to the late James Leigh Joynes, an Eton master who threw up his appointment to come up to London as a journalist. He dropped on "The Unclassed"...which he made me read. I was immensely struck by it, and often as I have read it again, have never altered my opinion that this book would outlive all its competitors. It was true to life, and, though I did not know it then, contained more than one life-like presentment I was thereafter to meet and recognise. I made Joynes write to the author and thank him for his great gift.²

From these remembered facts we may conclude that the review from *To-Day* that we print below was written by Joynes, whose initial enthusiasm was so contagious that it infected Champion to the end of his days. Yet prove it we cannot, and there is something of a beginner's quality about its style that does not go well with the style of an old Etonian.

In May 1884 Gissing had written to his brother Algernon about William Morris's contributions to *To-Day*, which proves he was aware of its existence and contents, but there is no indication that he saw/read the review of *The Unclassed* published in its columns in September 1884. With pleasure we can now add this tenth review (whose substance and tone surely must have pleased Gissing) of the three-volume edition of *The Unclassed* to the nine mentioned in *Gissing: the Critical Heritage*.

To-Day: the Monthly Magazine of Scientific Socialism.
Vol. 2: 9 (1884: September) pp. 304-08.

“THE UNCLASSED,” A NOVEL.³

“Let me get a little more experience, and I will write a novel such as no one has yet ventured to write, at all events in England. I begin to see my way to magnificent effects; ye gods, such light and shade! The fact is, the novel of everyday life is getting worn out. We must dig deeper, get to untouched social strata. Dickens felt this, but he had not the courage to face his subjects; his monthly numbers had to lie on the family tea-table. [...] Not *virginibus puerisque* will be my lay, I assure you, but for men and women who like to look beneath the surface, and who understand that only as artistic material has human life any significance. Yes, that is the conclusion I am working round to. The artist is the only sane man.” [*Unclassed*, Vol. II, pp. 33-34]

After a perusal of “The Unclassed,” we may safely say that its author has “worked round” to a conclusion both more human and more humane than this which he puts into the mouth of his hero. He may once have attempted to cultivate a divine indifference to human affairs, a cruel callousness to human suffering, but that this is not the frame of mind in which he wrote “The Unclassed” his readers may well be sure. Yet he has certainly endeavoured to “dig deeper, and get to untouched social strata,” and his success in this line makes his book extremely interesting, though not always pleasant reading.

The scene of his first chapter is laid in a girls’ school-room in Lisson Grove, “a spot not to be judged of from its name by those ignorant of the locality, in point of fact a somewhat dingy street,” a description which any of Miss Toynbee’s volunteer sanitary inspectors could fully corroborate. In this school-room we are at once introduced to three girls who are to be the chief female characters in the book. Harriet Smales, whose character is a compound of all that is most vile, accuses the mother of Ida Starr of being “a bad woman who gets her living on the streets.” Ida Starr, in energetic defence of her mother’s honour, stuns the accuser by smiting her on the forehead with a slate, and is consequently dismissed from the school, in spite of the intercession of her friend, Maud Enderby, who in justification of the outbreak of passion pleads that Ida’s mother is a lady, and does not get her living by selling things in the streets. The two girls are parted, “never again to meet, but each to be an unperceived agent in the other’s lot; to suffer, without mutual knowledge, on each other’s account.” The entire plot of the book turns upon the relations between the hero, Osmond Waymark and these two girls.

Their training was widely different. The accusation against Ida’s mother was true enough, in spite of Maud’s plea. Lotty Woodstock had been seduced, under promise of marriage, by a medical student called Starr, and then deserted. Her father offered to get her a situation, and to provide for her child, on condition that she never saw it again. This condition she refused, and he ejected her from home with the certainty that she had no resource but the streets. “To do her justice, she did not take this course at once. She tried to obtain work, but was far too weak. She

got into debt with her landlady, and only took the inevitable step when at length absolutely turned adrift.”

Even then she determined that Ida should always live with “respectable” people, cost what it might. But this resolution was not kept long.

“Lotty could not do without her little one, and eventually brought it back to her own home. It is not an infrequent thing to find little children living in disorderly houses, and the sight of them arouses strange speculations. But Ida’s lot was to be better than that of the average prostitute’s child. In the profession her mother had chosen there are, as in all professions, grades and differences. Lotty was by no means a vicious girl,—please learn to make these not unimportant distinctions, good madam,—she had no love of riot for its own sake; she would greatly have preferred a decent mode of life, had such been practicable. Hence she did not associate herself with the rank and file of abandoned women; her resorts were not the reeking centres of dissipation; her abode was not in the quarters consecrated to her business. In all parts of London there are quiet by-streets of houses given up to lodging-letting, wherein are to be found many landladies, who, good easy souls, trouble little about the private morals of their lodgers, provided and so long as no positive disorder comes about and no public scandal is occasioned. A girl who says that she is occupied in a workroom is—alas!—never presumed to be able to afford the luxury of strict virtue, and if such a one, on taking a room, says that “she supposes she may have friends come to see her?” the landlady will understand quite well what is meant, and will either accept or refuse her for a lodger as she sees good. To such houses as these Lotty confined herself.” [*Unclassed*, Vol. I, pp. 55-57]

Such were the surroundings of Ida Starr’s childhood. But her mother dies, and she is left to herself. Let us now turn to consider the kind of training which Maud Enderby received. As a child she lived alone with her aunt, who is one of the strictest sect of those Christians who teach that renunciation of all pleasures is the only end of life. We will quote a few of the sentences in which she shows Maud how wrong it is to make Christmas a time of merriment.

“In the true Christian, every enjoyment which comes from the body is a sin. If you feel you *like* this or that, it is a sign that you must renounce it, give it up. If you feel fond of life, you must force yourself to hate it; for life is sin. Life is given to us that we may conquer ourselves. We are placed in the midst of sin that we may struggle against its temptations. There is temptation in the very breath you draw, since you feel a dread if it is checked. There is temptation in the love you feel for those around you; it makes you cling to life; you are tempted to grieve if you lose them, whereas death is the greatest blessing in the gift of God.”

Then follows a warning against snatching at this greatest blessing before its time, and the little Maud is solemnly told that she must not kill herself, since that would be to escape from the tasks which are set her. In an interval of this gloomy instruction we have one of the unpleasant pieces of sensationalism which the

author unfortunately thinks it necessary to intersperse. Maud's mother, whom she does not know, enters the room with incipient lunacy written on her face, and announces that she has to go out and meet her husband, he having fled from justice to California years ago. At that moment a knock is heard at the door, she runs to open it, "and then—then a fearful shriek which rang through the still air with blood-thrilling horror." Mr. Enderby has returned, and his wife is temporarily a maniac. Mr. and Mrs. Enderby are both very unpleasant characters, and seem only introduced into the story for the sake of occasionally doing a little 'blood-thrilling' business, which we might well have been spared. A certain Mr. Mellowdew is another character who seems shrouded in some mystery and has a great capacity for making himself generally objectionable, but his presence is unnecessary to the development of the plot, and appears merely a blemish in the book.

The way in which the hero Osmond Waymark is introduced to the young Italian Julian Casti, who is to be his bosom friend, is ingenious and original. It is by an advertisement running thus:—

"WANTED, human companionship. A young man of four-and-twenty wishes to find a congenial associate of about his own age. He is a student of ancient and modern literatures, a free-thinker in religion, a lover of art in all its forms, a hater of conventionalism. Would like to correspond in the first instance. Address O. W., —News Rooms." [*Unclassed*, Vol. I, p. 107]

The above is decidedly an unusual advertisement to find in the columns of a daily paper, and it has the effect of bringing together the two chief characters of the book. The author's remarks upon general advertising are worth quoting:—

"The advertisement columns of the newspaper press present us with a ready-made index to the social history of the time. Glance over these sheets of closely-printed matter, and be initiated into the secrets of the most pitiless age the sun ever calendared. See here disclosed, working without disguise, the central motor of our common life. Science, formulating the machine's operation, teaches us to speak politely of the survival of the fittest. The lecture platform resounds its praises in economic eloquence, lauding the principal of universal Competition. Every-day experience, and its concentrated index the advertisement column, put the matter in plainer language, do not care to hide the fact of a brutal fight for livelihood, and sum up in intelligible terms all the meanness, ruthlessness, anguish, and degradation which such a system implies." [*Unclassed*, Vol. I, pp. 106-07]

No Socialist could put the position more forcibly; but it is not only in recognition of the evils of the competitive system that our author is at one with us, since he puts into the head of his hero, as he walks up Tottenham Court Road, sentiments which show that he does not regard Competition as an inevitable curse. The following extract proves as much:—

"Again amid the crowd. All at once he found himself laughing aloud, and had to turn aside to a shop window, lest he should attract attention. The idea was too absurd! What in the name of sense and reason did it mean, this hustling and

bustling of the people on all sides, these grave-set, often fierce-set, faces, this desperate seriousness in pursuit of a thousand conflicting ends? Among all these sweating millions not enough wit to perceive that it was themselves plying the whip upon their own backs; that with themselves lay the choice between this insensate rush and welter, and a calm pilgrimage from cradle to grave. Life, woeful in its essence, they were making vile and hateful by their own brutish greed, their muddy intelligences incapable of wide views, their monstrous superstition of the saving grace of labour. Surely some day, Waymark said to himself, a sudden light will break upon the world, and men fall to laughing so consumedly at their own folly that the very earth will dance, greeting a new era.” [*Unclassed*, Vol. I, pp. 227-28]

Osmond Waymark has just escaped from the intolerable drudgery of the position of usher at a sort of ‘Do-the-boys Hall,’ with a Dr. Tootle for its Mr. Squeers. He is making an attempt, which proves successful, to discover the abode of Maud Enderby, whom he has met as a governess in the school which he has left. It is at this juncture that he is accosted in the Strand by Ida Starr under peculiar circumstances, and not at all in the usual fashion of such greetings. He visits her merely as a friend, learns the story of her life, and justifies the course she has taken by the quotation from *Hamlet*, “There’s nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.”

At her lodging he makes also the acquaintance of a certain Sally, with whom he has a conversation calculated to enlighten him as to the ways and means of earning a livelihood, which are open to an industrious girl in London.

“What do you do?” he asked.

‘Machine work; makin’ ulsters. How much do you think we get, now, for makin’ a ulster—one like this?’ pointing to one which hung behind the door.

‘Have no idea.’

‘Well, – *fourpence*: there now!’

‘And how many can you make in a day?’

‘I can’t make no more than two.’

...

‘But you can’t live on that.’

‘I sh’d think not, indeed. We have to make up the rest as best we can, s’nough.’

‘But your employer must know that?’

‘In course. What’s the odds? All us girls are the same; we have to keep on the two jobs at the same time. But I’ll give up the day-work before long, s’nough. I come home at night that tired out I ain’t fit for nothing. I feel all eyes, as the sayin’ is. And it’s hard to have to go out into the Strand, when you’re like that.’”

[*Unclassed*, Vol. II, p. 6]

Osmond falls in love with Ida in spite of himself, being also in love with Maud Enderby at the same time, and this gives rise to all the complication and interest of the plot of the novel. Meanwhile he must work for his own living, and he is

employed by Mr. Woodstock to collect his rents for him in Jubilee Court and Litany Lane, two choice specimens of the ordinary slum. He has the hardihood to hint to his employer his opinion that Government ought to interfere with such places, but his employer replies with irrefutable logic:—

“These are affairs of private contract, and no concern of government at all. In private contract a man has only a right to what he’s strong enough to exact. If a tenant tells me my houses ain’t fit to live in, I tell him to go where he’ll be better off and I don’t hinder him; I know well enough in a day or two there’ll come somebody else. Ten to one he can’t go, and he don’t. Then why should I be at unnecessary expense in making the places better? As soon as I can get no tenants I’ll do so; not till then.” [*Unclassed*, Vol. II, p. 57]

This is perfectly unanswerable. Osmond corresponds with Maud on the subject, but she is still in the bonds of her early religious training, and her point of view differs widely from his. She considers what is called ‘Progress’ to be the veritable kingdom of anti-Christ, since only by renunciation of the very desire of life can the Christian idea be fulfilled; and she pertinently asks:—

“What then of the civilization which endeavours to make the world more and more pleasant as a dwelling-place, life more and more desirable for its own sake? ... You say you marvel that these wretched people you visited do not, in a wild burst of insurrection, overthrow all social order, and seize for themselves a fair share of the world’s goods. I marvel also;—all the more that their very teachers in religion seem to lay such stress on the joys of life.” [*Unclassed*, Vol. II, pp. 25-26]

And there follows much more in the same strain, but this phase of thought is not destined to be permanent, and the reader becomes strongly interested in the development of Maud’s character. This development is perfectly legitimate until the end of the book; but we must protest against what seems to us the final sacrifice of all her aspirations upon the altar, not of the necessity of things, but of the exigencies of the novelistic situation.

Meanwhile the story of Ida cannot fail to rivet the reader’s attention. One of the results of her varied experience is, that she is “sure that people who work with their hands are much better than those who live by buying and selling.” If daily occupation has any result at all on character, there can be no reasonable doubt that she is right.

But times and circumstances change, and Ida obtains by inheritance command of wealth and leisure. She cannot, however, rest content upon the bed of roses which is supposed to be the legitimate and well-deserved reward of those who rise, whether by accident or cunning, by force or fraud, from the ranks of the poor into those of the capitalist class.

“The old sense of the world’s injustice excited anger and revolt in her heart. [...] What of those numberless struggling creatures to whom such happy fortune could never come, who, be their aspirations and capabilities what they might, must struggle vainly, agonize, and in the end despair? [...] Sometimes it half seemed to

her that it would have been the nobler lot to remain as she was, to share the misery of that dread realm of darkness with those poor disinherited ones, to cherish that spirit of noble rebellion, the consciousness of which had been as a pure fire on the altar of her being.” [*Unclassed*, Vol. III, p. 132]

For the result of her aspirations, and for the unravelling of the somewhat slight plot of the story, we must refer our readers to the book itself. The development of Osmond Waymark’s character is well worked out. He passes through the stage of enthusiasm, of which destructiveness is the chief feature; he arrives at the period of his worship of art for art’s sake, when he is driven to declare that “art nowadays must be the mouth-piece of misery, for misery is the key-note of modern life,” but does not recognize that this is the very reason of the decadence of modern art, and of the impossibility of its revival without a complete change of social conditions; and at last he reaches the stage in which there comes back upon him the old desire “to battle with the rampant monsters of the world. After all; perhaps art for art’s sake was not the final stage of his development. Art, yes; but combat at the same time. The two things are not so incompatible as some would have us think.” At this excellent sentiment we will take leave of him, hoping that after this introduction our readers will be inclined to make the personal acquaintance of the characters of this remarkable book. It is one which is only rendered possible by the times in which we live, when the social question is to the front, and when the overthrow of outworn institutions, and the upheaval of time-honoured relations of society is felt to be hard at hand.

¹ Pierre Coustillas devoted two articles to the correspondence and connections between Gissing and Champion: 1. Pierre Coustillas, “Three Letters from Gissing to H. H. Champion,” *Gissing Newsletter*, January 1972, pp. 12-15; and 2. Pierre Coustillas, “People Gissing Knew,” *Gissing Newsletter*, July 1975, pp. 11-18.

² H. H. Champion, “Comments,” *Book Lover*, Melbourne, 1 April 1903, p. 326. Quoted in Pierre Coustillas, “People Gissing Knew,” *Gissing Newsletter*, July 1975, p. 18.

³ By George Gissing, London: Chapman and Hall.

“Turning Over a Score of Letters ...” and the Pages of a Diary: The Friendship of George Gissing and Arthur Bowes¹

MARKUS NEACEY

1871 to 1876, the Alderley Edge and Manchester years of George Gissing, are of necessity thinly documented in the various biographies. Our knowledge of his life during these five and a half crucial years depends mainly upon a few articles in the Cheshire press, the examination results in the *Manchester Guardian*, the archives of Wilmslow Library and Owens College, Morley Roberts' "fictional" account of Gissing's affair with Nell, the eighteen letters to Arthur Bowes, the six to family members, several others from his brother, William, and the four from John George Black. In 1963 Pierre Coustillas published Black's letters in his article "George Gissing à Manchester."² This scholarly offering and the first volume of the *Collected Letters* confirm the importance of these documents to our understanding of Gissing's mindset during the period of his involvement with Nell.³ Yet, a greater debt is owing to Arthur Bowes for preserving the letters he received from Gissing most obviously because they are the only ones to come down to us from the period 1873 to 1874, apart from two to his mother. More than anything, they are invaluable in that they offer a contemporary insight into Gissing's activities inside and outside Owens College, and reveal his absorption in his studies, in those halcyon years before Nell crossed his path.

Despite the best efforts of scholars over the past five decades, Black remains an obscure figure, though reappearing in Gissing's life on two occasions. Considering one of his sons, John Paul Black (1895-1965), managed the world-famous Standard Motor Company from 1930 to 1954 and was knighted in 1943, it is surprising that so little is known about him. Moreover, while Coustillas' 1969 book, *George Gissing at Alderley Edge*, unearths valuable reports from the local English press after Gissing's death by his former schoolfriends, Arthur Bowes and T.T. Sykes, it is greatly to be regretted that no similar reminiscences from James Wood, Harold Macbeth, Leonard Cockayne, George Brook, or, for that matter, from his Manchester compatriots have emerged. Black's silence is, however, understandable as he was expelled from Owens College for being "privy to, and an abettor" of Gissing's immoral actions and likewise "guilty of profligate conduct" – indeed he knew the story of his friend's association with Nell better than anyone. In the end his father intervened on his behalf, persuading the senate to readmit him.⁴ Thereafter Black led a respectable life. He got his B.A., joined the Inland Revenue in 1878, then the Public Records Office in 1880, married Ellen Elizabeth Marian Smith in 1884, and

later lectured and published several essays on Edward I and other thirteenth-century subjects.⁵ He died in 1922.

Recently two articles in these pages have provided new biographical details about Arthur Bowes and other Lancashire contemporaries.⁶ Now I can contribute further information about Bowes, having recently traced two direct descendants of his family. Against expectation, on writing to these persons I received replies informing me that they had something of interest to show me. In Manchester the great-granddaughter of Arthur Bowes possesses his 42-page diary covering the years 1873 to 1875 and an heirloom album of his family circle. In Crailsheim, West Germany, the grandson of Arthur's youngest sister, Lilly, owns an archive comprising Lilly's post-1900 correspondence with Arthur, many family photographs, and an original "Stickarbeit" (a piece of embroidery) by his great-grandmother, Margaret Bowes (Arthur's mother), which hangs on his wall. Although this archive is of lesser relevance, the photographs of Arthur at various ages are particularly helpful. The most valuable discovery is obviously his diary which, complementing George's letters to him, gives a revealing picture of a former Lindow Grove schoolboy on his daily round and following similar pursuits to those that the future novelist pursued.

I

When they first met at Lindow Grove School in 1872, Arthur Bowes and George Gissing had much in common. While George's father was a chemist, town councillor, and minor poet, Arthur's father, Isaac, was a bookseller, town councillor, and minor historian. Born at Nunnington, Yorkshire, on 6 December 1822, Isaac, like Thomas Waller Gissing, grew up in modest circumstances. His father, Richard, was a labourer, and there were five other children. Though handicapped by his start in life, Isaac eventually transformed himself through self-help, thrift, and industry into a mid-century success story. His career began on Easter Monday in 1837 when he signed up as an apprentice millwright at Stockton. Two years later he became a patten maker (a maker of iron soles for shoes) for an iron founder. On 6 January 1845, after a three-year courtship, he married Margaret Bennett, an eighteen-year-old local girl, daughter of a master mariner, at the Stockton Holy Trinity Church. They soon moved to Middlesborough, where a first son, Henry, was born in 1848.



Isaac Bowes



Margaret Bowes

During this period the autodidactic Isaac improved himself by reading in his spare time. In December 1849, he was rewarded for his efforts, finding work as a clerk at William & John Pile, the shipbuilders at Monkwearmouth. In February 1850 he moved his family to the region to be closer to his work. Three months later the company folded. Thereafter he joined another shipbuilder at Ayres Quay in Sunderland for one guinea a week. In August 1851, a second boy, Alfred, was born. In September he made an important journey to London to visit the Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace, spending a day examining “the wonderful display of machinery all at work.”⁷ The following day he sailed down the River Thames, landing at Woolwich. Of his arrival at the dockyards he wrote,

We saw two Noble Men of War building, the "Queen" 90 guns and the "Prince Albert" 120, the latter had been on the stocks 10 years. The Forges, Docks and Blockmakers Shops are all on the newest and best principles, but the gangs of Convicts labouring in the Yard is not altogether a pleasant addition to the scene! After spending about two hours in the Dockyard we entered one of the Steamboats proceeding up the River and landed at the Tunnel of one of the most wonderful feats of Engineering skill in the World and a lasting memorial of the skill and perseverance of Sir I.K. Brunel the celebrated French Engineer.⁸

In November 1852 Isaac was invited to the new iron works of W. & J. Barningham in Salford and offered the post of bookkeeper with a starting salary of £80. In June the following year, his wife gave birth to a third son,

Edward. In 1854, he opened a bookseller and tobacconist shop at 11 High Street, Pendleton, which his sister, Ellen, managed. Thereafter he took an interest in the Pendleton Mechanics' Institute, where for many years he acted as secretary and then chairman. Keen on providing education, he introduced evening classes for adults. His employer's estimation of him at this time can be measured by the rapid increase in his salary: on 30 June 1856 he received £110 p.a., by 8 December £120, and a year later £135.



54 Broad Street, Pendleton

At 6.0 a.m. on 22 February 1858, three months after Gissing came into the world, Isaac's fourth son, Arthur, was born at 11 Bellevue Terrace in Pendleton. In 1860 Isaac was offered the managership of the Clayton Iron Works. To persuade his indispensable bookkeeper to stay, Barningham raised his salary to £200, promising a further increase to £250 the following year. Isaac remained. In 1861 the family moved to a white-stone terraced house at 54 Broad Street, Pendleton. A year later he purchased eight cottages in nearby Frederick Street for £420, which he rented out. In 1863, he offered to buy the West Hartlepool Steam Navigation Company. Barningham increased his wages to £300, and he ceased negotiations. In 1863 and 1868, respectively, two daughters, Annie and Lilly, were born. In 1870, Bowes entered local politics, gaining election as a town councillor. About this time, his eldest son, Henry ("Harry") was diagnosed with consumption. To improve his health he was sent on a voyage to Venice and

the Black Sea, alas, to no avail. He succumbed to his illness in December 1871, aged 23, having spent the last eight months confined to his bed. Two years later, the family was again afflicted by misfortune. As one of Gissing's letters informs us, Arthur's mother, Margaret, died after years of ill health. Two years later Isaac married Harriet Hughlings at Ormskirk.

In 1874, Barningham's became a limited company and Isaac was installed as the managing director. After receiving the title of alderman in 1880, he was for several years chairman of the Building and Improvement Committee, as such overseeing the introduction of local tramways and free public libraries. Moreover, as deputy-chairman of the Museum, Library, and Park Committee, he arranged for the planting of trees in Broad Street and promoted the cultivation of window gardening. For many years a vocal Liberal Party member, in spite of a "by no means unpleasant North Country accent" the *Salford Chronicle* reported in 1901, "he was heard pretty frequently both on the platform and at the Council meetings and though anything but an indifferent speaker the matter was generally even more engaging than the manner."⁹ A devout Unitarian, he co-founded the Pendleton Unitarian Church. He read voraciously, in time becoming an expert on steam travel, and giving a series of lectures on the Suez and Panama Canals and the Stockton and Darlington Railways. An authority on the innovations of George Stephenson and Ferdinand de Lesseps, he published in 1883 *George Stephenson: The Locomotive* (Manchester: John Heywood), and later collected several papers under the title *Rails and Waterways* (Manchester: John Heywood, 1893). He wrote for *The Library* and *The Journal of the Manchester Geographical Society* and issued pamphlets on subjects of local interest. A notable figure in Manchester by this time, he was the subject of an 1893 article in *Manchester Faces and Places*. The following year, along with Arthur, in his official role as alderman of Salford, he attended the opening of the Manchester Ship Canal by Queen Victoria. Isaac Bowes died at South Shore on 31 December 1900, a much admired local figure. His progress from a lowly background to middle-class respectability and a position of responsibility in the local community draws comparison with the life of Gissing's father. Had Thomas Waller Gissing been granted a longer life, he might have achieved similar success. Surely, like the guiding inspiration Isaac was to Arthur throughout his formative years, Thomas' moral influence would have kept Gissing from sacrificing his career to save a prostitute, the consequences of which so blighted his adult life.

II

Isaac Bowes' industry provided Arthur with a privileged upbringing in comfortable surroundings. From 1866 to 1871 he attended Mr Maddrick's class at the Pendleton Mechanics' School. In 1872 he entered Lindow Grove School, where he came to know George Gissing. The friendship which grew up between them at James Wood's establishment is recorded in an article Bowes published a few weeks after learning of Gissing's death.¹⁰ Coustillas reprinted the article in *George Gissing at Alderley Edge* in 1969. I quote it *in extenso*:

George Gissing's School Days

Thirty years ago George Robert Gissing was counted amongst my dearest friends, and his character and guidance exerted an influence on my life for which I am still his debtor. We were then fellow-students at a private school at Alderley Edge, in Cheshire, and although George had a higher place in the school than I had, we were, from the first, close friends. Energy of character, self-reliance, and an exorbitant passion for study were his chief characteristics at this time. Into whatever task he entered he threw his whole soul. On the great 'speech nights' it was Gissing who mouthed the most brilliant Greek and Latin orations, and who filled the most important parts in the French plays. With equal zest he was the leader in the play-field, and in escapades amongst the Cheshire country folk. The ingenuity with which he devised hoaxes for the bewilderment of the farmers – as on a memorable occasion when he and another with measuring tapes surveyed a farmhouse upstairs and downstairs, and upset the nerves of the tenant with the assurance that the building had to come down to make room for railway extensions – is still a matter of local memory.

In the dormitory of eight beds, into which I was drafted, Gissing was an occupant, and one of my first recollections of the school was that of being installed official 'story-teller' to the dormitory to beguile away the hours after lights were out. My qualifications for the post were a very thorough knowledge of the 'Arabian Nights', and a rich and comparatively unworked field in stories from the Greek mythology. Two younger brothers of Gissing, Will and Algernon, were in the school at the same time. The latter is now a novelist of repute. Will Summers was also there, and will be remembered by many as a brilliant Oxford man and M.P. for Huddersfield. At the time of which I write he was known as a hero of the football field.

Turning over a score of letters which I received from Gissing after our ways of life had divided, I find references to many incidents in his early career. He had entered as a competitor in some open scholarship – I forget exactly what it was, but the principal feature was the composition of a poem on the subject of ‘Ravenna’. George was enthusiastic on this subject, as on most others, and many a night I remember him waking me up to hear him declaim in the darkness of the bedroom the new stanzas he had just evolved in his study down below. Only half awake I was supposed to exercise a critical judgement on the workmanship. It was agreed between us that if he succeeded in carrying off the prize he would write me out a copy of this wonderful poem as a reward for my patience under tribulation. He did succeed, and before me now lie the two hundred lines in the neat and scholarly writing of George Gissing. This scholarship and others led to his entering Owens College, Manchester, though without entirely severing his connection with the school, for on certain days he acted as an assistant master.

There now commenced for Gissing a series of brilliant triumphs at Owens. His natural ability and great energy enabled him to carry off many honours, and everything pointed to a bright career for him. In a letter from him about this time he says, ‘I have taken to a new plan of study, viz., going to bed at 10 p.m. and getting up at 4 a.m. I can assure you it has been toughish discipline through the winter, in fact, quite Spartan. On Sundays I get up at 6 o’clock, so that I have already (8 a.m.) had two hours reading ... How the dickens did Gladstone find time to write that glorious article on the *Shield of Achilles* a week or two ago?’ Later he writes, “Can you inform me of a plan of getting up geography in a night? I find some is required, and longer than two hours I cannot possibly devote. I now limit myself to five and a half hours’ sleep, which is not enough.’ Occasionally I would persuade him to spare a night for recreation, and I find in his letters references to visits to the Manchester theatres to witness Phelps in ‘A Midsummer Night’s Dream’, to ‘Hamlet’, and ‘Twelfth Night’.

Just before this time I had left the school, and in his good nature Gissing wrote: ‘I must tell you in good truth, that you are, perhaps, the only fellow whose absence from the school I have seriously felt. Yours, I have, whether it be when I call the boys in the morning, when I return from Manchester, or lastly, but by no means the least important, when I come to bed at night. I keep finding articles, quotations, pictures, &c., and from habit turn to that desk on the sixth form nearest the blackboard, but in vain.’ Although shortly afterwards I was myself at Owens our studies lay in different directions, and I saw little of Gissing after this time.¹¹

Arthur’s reminiscence reflects their time together at Alderley Edge. Their continuing relationship, after he left Lindow Grove School, is recorded in

the 18 letters from George. These are now complemented by the diary of Arthur Bowes, which opens up to us a contemporary view of Gissing's friend in his everyday life. If one cannot help wishing he had begun his diary a year earlier and ended it a year later (who would not like to know his reaction to Gissing's tragic fall?) – it runs from April 1873 to August 1875 – it is, nevertheless, a fortunate coincidence that Arthur commenced his diary the same month George opened their correspondence. According to his article above he left Lindow Grove School shortly before receiving this letter, but his diary indicates that he left at the end of 1872. To fix Arthur's position in the world at this time, I cite his first entry in the diary:

Before commencing any regular Diary I think I might as well just give a few particulars of the age in which it is written. At present the main topic is the Tichborne trial. The Shah of Persia has lately been in England. The great Franco Prussian War is finished. Paris fallen & all France in a state of discord as is also Spain. So much for politics! I was born in Pendleton about 15 yrs. since, after living in Hartlepool, came back to Pendleton & settled there. Was sent to Mr. Maddrick's school 5 yrs. & then to Lindow Grove, Alderley Edge for 1 yr. where I formed the acquaintances of George Gissing & many others. On returning from there was sent to Mr. Barningham's, in the Drawing Office principally for a little shorthand correspondence, of which I could do a little. Wages to commence 6/- but soon raised to 8/- per week. – New offices built, much safer and better than the old ones.¹²

Upon leaving school Arthur was attached to "the Drawing Office" at Pendleton Iron Works. Gissing was still living at Lindow Grove School, despite having attended Owens College in Manchester since October 1872. While geographically nothing prevented their seeing each other, Arthur's bondage to office hours meant that opportunities to meet were few. So they began to write to each other. And it is here in Gissing's letters to Arthur that his remarkable personality and his prodigious talents first reveal themselves. As Bowes admitted later, he was in awe of Gissing. Is it any wonder? Confidence in his abilities and in whatever task he undertook, he had in abundance. And veritably his thirst for knowledge was unquenchable and his industry in gaining that knowledge staggering. Yet, these letters show that he made time for his friends, for theatre-going, and for marathon walks through the countryside. In them we encounter a raw youth whose every thought is quickened by the desire for knowledge, a boy with few equals, moving irresistibly towards a future of unparalleled scholarly success. But, while reading these letters, as they pull at one's heart, one cannot help noticing what a difference there is between the passionate

college boy at his desk and the scarred young man of just five years hence hiding himself away in the poorer districts of London like a social outcast.

At the end of his 1904 article, Arthur quotes from Gissing's first letter of 23 April 1873, in which he expresses how keenly he has missed his company since he left the school. Modestly he refrained from adding the final sentence of that passage. Gissing continues, "& I turn again to enjoy it by myself, knowing that there is no other, no, to the shame of the school be it said, not one other, who would intelligently appreciate what I know *you* would."¹³ Clearly he had a strong rapport with Arthur at this time, and he felt too the loss of those classmates who had moved on to other spheres of activity whilst he remained a boarder. As Wakefield was too far away for the fatherless fifteen-year-old to be able to travel from there to Manchester every day, it was decided he should stay on at Alderley Edge. This arrangement suited both Gissing and James Wood, who, recognising his brilliance, accorded him a privileged role as a senior boy, provided him with teaching experience as an assistant master, and treated him like one of the family. As he tells Arthur, he was just returned from an Easter excursion to Mr Wood's house at Colwyn Bay in North Wales. After staying two days, on the Tuesday afternoon, at Wood's suggestion he returned from Colwyn Bay to Alderley Edge on foot – a journey according to his own estimate of 67 miles, which he accomplished in 46 hours – arriving back safely at 1.00 p.m. on Thursday afternoon, one hopes to the headmaster's great relief. Gissing signs off by adding rather nonchalantly that he has just finished a 68-page essay for Adolphus Ward, his professor of English and History at Owens College. Going on to dispute Arthur's belief that he possesses a "great mind,"¹⁴ he cites "Hamlet":

"To be truly great
Is, not to stir without great argument,
But, greatly to find quarrel in a straw
When honour's at the stake."¹⁵

On 4 May, replying to an invitation by Bowes to see "Hamlet" performed by the well-known Bandmann acting troupe at the Prince's Theatre, Gissing writes that he "shall be very glad to go" though he cannot fix an exact day.¹⁶ Two days later he penned a hurried note to arrange to see the final performance of the play that very evening. The two boys' shared fascination for the theatre had its origin at Lindow Grove School.

Gissing studied hard over the next weeks and did not write again until 13 July, an omission for which he asks Arthur's "forgiveness."¹⁷ He

explains that he has just joined his family at Ilkley after another visit to the Woods at Colwyn Bay, this time accompanied by a mutual friend, William Summers. Next he describes his success on the Owens College Prize Day – he carried off sixteen volumes in prizes. The previous autumn Arthur had given “critical judgement on the workmanship” of a poem Gissing entered in Adolphus Ward’s poetry competition, on condition he receive a copy, should he win the prize.¹⁸ Having won the prize with “Ravenna”, he duly promises to make a copy on his return to Wakefield. Buoyed by his good fortune, and now aiming for the Shakspeare Prize, he adds, betraying a trace of superstition, “Since it seems a lucky thing to promise something if I get so- & so-, I will send you a copy of the papers if I get the ‘Shaksp.’”¹⁹ Even so he admits to being none too hopeful of his prospects in the October examination. Back at Wakefield a fortnight later, he offers advice about studying for exams. Arthur had written that he was considering going in for the Joseph Whitworth Scholarship for mechanical engineering, a prize worth £300 in 1873-74. Spurred on by his friend’s achievements, he was also thinking of applying to Owens College. Gissing stresses that foremost one requires “sound practical knowledge” and “book knowledge” to succeed in exams.²⁰ He again promises the poem “in due course.”²¹

Weeks later, Arthur having reminded him he is still owed the poem, George finds time away from his studies to urge patience. He writes, “I shall *soon* send the poem. Pray think not upon the slightness of the task over which I take so much time, but consider the various duties, which, I think I may see [sic] it without stirring up wrath unquenchable, are more important.”²² Arthur then invited him to see a performance of “Twelfth Night” at the Prince’s Theatre. Gissing replies on 12 September that presently he has no time for distractions. He tells of James Wood asking him “to deliver three lects. on Hamlet to the assembled inhabs. of Lindow Grove. My first has just come off, & was well received.”²³ Woods possibly proposed the idea to concentrate Gissing’s mind on the Shakspeare examination. On 18 September, Gissing reverses his decision, writing that he can join Bowes that evening to see Samuel Phelps in “Twelfth Night.” Considered one of England’s finest interpreters of Shakespeare’s tragic roles from the early 1840s, by the 1870s the sixty-nine year old Phelps was preferably seen in comedic parts. Of the performance Bowes and Gissing witnessed, the *Manchester Examiner and Times* reported the next morning:

In returning to the consideration of the acting itself, the Malvolio of Mr. Phelps naturally claims the first notice. It is scarcely possible to speak too highly of this masterpiece of genuine comedy — an impersonation carefully and profoundly

studied, consistent in all its details, and wonderfully in harmony with the true rendering of the author. We have seen more courtly, and perhaps more mirth-provoking Malvolios, but certainly not one which so thoroughly satisfies the most exacting demands of art. The keynote of Mr. Phelps's conception is found in a passage of one of Olivia's reproofs —

'O, you are sick of self-love, Malvolio,
And taste with a distempered appetite.'

We have, indeed, the embodiment of a narrow-minded man, utterly devoid of imagination, without a spark of humour, and puffed up by unbounded self-conceit ... Like all narrow-minded creatures, he is prone to suspect, and jealous of anybody else's influence in his own concerns; but his exalted sense of his own importance renders him liable to be tricked by any one who will flatter him. Mr. Phelps carries out this idea of the character with unfailing consistency; every movement and gesture, every glance and expression, eloquently indicate outrageous self-conceit and innate pomposity. He will barely condescend to speak to his fellow-servants before the vision of his future greatness dawns on him; and from the moment he begins to picture himself as the future Count Malvolio, condescension is converted into contempt, and the assumption of a noble manner heightens the ludicrousness of his heroic swagger.²⁴

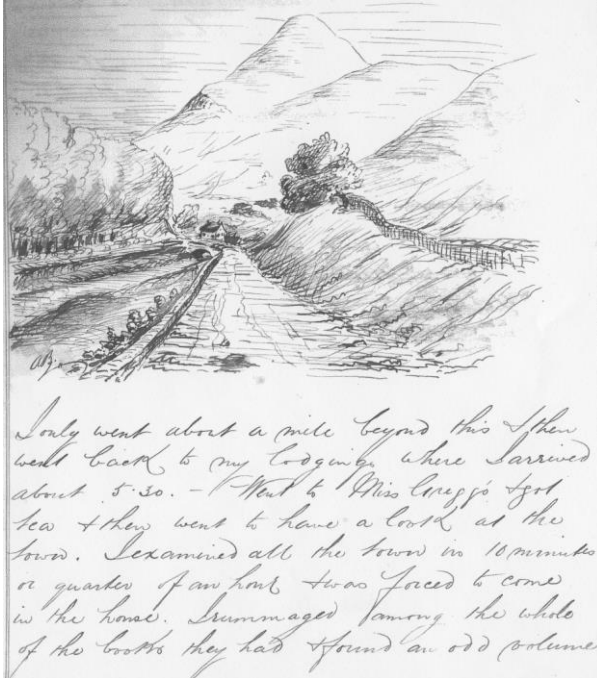
And Arthur's report? He wrote, "Went with George Gissing to the Prince's Theatre to see Phelps in the character of Malvolio in 'Twelfth Night.' Enjoyed ourselves immensely. It is the annual Shaksperian revival."²⁵

On the following Sunday afternoon, Bowes and his father went "to see the new Owens College up Oxford Rd."²⁶ Being on holiday after Monday Arthur determined to make a walking tour of North Derbyshire, weather permitting. On Tuesday morning the "weather proving fine"²⁷ he started out as planned for Buxton, a spa town 17 miles to the east of Alderley Edge. Since his journey echoes similar walks by Gissing and describes how a contemporary nature-loving fifteen-year-old boy set about going a walk, I cite the entire record of Arthur's trip. He writes,

23rd Sept, Tuesday. Set off from London Road Station at 9.55 a.m. for Buxton. Money £2.0.0., Luggage 2 pr. Cuffs, 2 collars, 2 hand'chiefs, telescope, Ref. Guide, map, comb & stationery all in a small satchel on my back. Arrd. there some time in the morning & proceeded to look for a Miss Cregg, confectioner, with whom Ma & Miss Smith had lodged, but was unsuccessful for about ½ an hour, being repeatedly assured that no such person had ever existed in Buxton. At length I flatly put a stopper on these assertions by producing the person in question, alive & kicking tho' rejoicing in a more euphonious name [than] I had thought, for she was Miss Gregg. However her house was full & I had to go at her recommendation to a Mrs. Marsden, where I hired a bed for 1/6- per night. As it was only abt. 1 o'clock I set off for a walk up the Ashwood Dale Rd. on the road to Miller's Dale & Tideswell, - on one

side of the road the R. Wye runs & on the other side of the river great high cliffs rear up their gaunt grey sides like spectres of ages gone by (see Abel Heywood's P. Guide). – I had some dinner with me so sat down & devoured it, by portions, in various places, then made a sketch as per other side:-

I walked some 6 or 7 miles up this road till I came to Miller's Dale or one end of it; there was a pretty nice view just there & so I sketched it. Like the one above it is looking right along the high road. The River Wye is down in the Dale at the left – behind the big hill & in the distance is a living stone quarry or lime-kilns, of which I saw dozens about that part of the country.



Arthur's Sketch of Miller's Dale from 23 Sept 1873

– I only went about a mile beyond this & then went back to my lodgings where I arrived about 5.30. – I went to Miss Gregg's & got tea & then went to have a look at the town. I examined all the town in 10 minutes or quarter of an hour & was forced to come in the house. I rummaged among the whole of the books they had & found an odd volume of the "Phonographic Journal" & "Bradshaw's Manchester Journal" containing some views of Manchester places which I recognised. There was another lodger – a gruff old gouty customer who had been there since July & he soon got very friendly. He came from Glasgow – but had a heap of Irish papers. Read & talked some time & then retired to my hired bed.

Sept 24th, Wednesday. Got breakfast at Mrs. Marsden's & after reckoning up with her set off for Axo Edge. It is about 2 miles from Buxton & is very stiff walking up to the top there being no paths at all & covered with stiff heather. Very good view from the top – 2.100 ft. above level of the sea (see “Heywood”). After coming down, by a little “speering” among the wild inhabitants I managed to find out “Poole’s Cavern” & went thro’. Good stock of stalactites, stalagmites, vast halls & vast holes etc. etc. etc. – all lit up with gas – about as interesting as any places I saw the whole time.

The day before, I had asked Miss Gregg, if I could have my dinner there & supposed I should have it nice & quietly by myself. But, on going there, I was surprised to find 4 of them already – at a table about 3ft. area. Victuals – roast bird of some kind, they’re all the same to me – I don’t like ’ens, potatoes, & abominable melted butter & greens which they had heaped on my plate before I got there. – I didn’t feel at all in an adequate state of mind to undertake the singing of “Oh, be joyful!” Not by any means!

Afternoon. Did the “Lover’s Leap” & then tramped ever so many miles till I lost the track & had to pelt steam on to get back in good time.

Note. Not seen one single hedge by the road yet – all stone walls. Must look for one & “when found, make a note of.”

Tea’d at Gregg’s, read, talked, slept. –

Sept 25, Thursday. Breakfast at Mrs. Marsden's & then took train to Hassop on route to Chatsworth. When I got to Hassop walked about 3 or 4 miles to Chatsworth, along a road with real hedges & blackberries growing. Got to Chatsworth before 11 o’clock when they open, & after walking about the grounds got through with the first party. I dare say, it is a very grand place, as regards rich furniture, but I don’t care about it. Left Chatsworth about 1 & walked a good 3 miles to Rowsley. Here turned off to the right to Haddon Hall (about 2 miles), a very fine old Baronial castle which I examined myself as the guide was not there. I then returned to Rowsley & walked to Matlock Bath (7 miles) where I succeeded in getting a bed & tea.

Sept 26, Friday. I went up to the heights of Abraham & Masson (part of the same hill). Very misty morning & as I was up very early I saw all the hills tips come up thro’ it. While I was up, explored an old Roman lead mine, very extensive, but not so interesting as Poole’s Cavern. – Got dinner & tea at the entrance-lodges & in the afternoon went to see Petrifying Wells. At night, as it is very quiet, I walked about the station for 2 hours (nearly) & then took train to Buxton. Bed at Marsden’s.

Sept 27. Walked to Macclesfield past “Cat & Fiddle”, thence to Alderley & got some of lads to come with me to Wilmslow (A. Sumner, Jackson, & Bottom), then train to M’ster and at home about 6.30. –²⁸

On the Thursday after his return, Arthur “joined a Machine Drawing Class at the Grammar School under Mr. Pritchard.”²⁹ In 1874 he would sit an examination in freehand drawing at the School of Art and receive the mark “excellent.”³⁰ At the beginning of October, his mother accompanied by a nurse, Miss Smith, stayed for health reasons at Southport, the Lancashire seaside resort, where in more ominous days two and a half years hence Gissing would holiday with Nell.

Following diary entries describe the ups and downs of his mother's illness – she had been suffering from chronic bronchitis for over ten years. On 9 October she returned home “very much worse than when she went.”³¹ The next day Dr. Robinson, the family doctor was sent for, and she was told “to keep to her room.”³² By 13 October “Ma was much worse,” Arthur writes.³³ The day before he had received a letter from Gissing, singing the praises of Owens College. He also mentions seeing “McBeth”³⁴ at the Royal Theatre. He then reminds Arthur that “it is the Shakspeare on Wednesday & Thursday.”³⁵ With his customary exuberance before examinations, he continues, “I am preparing with McBeth to ‘screw up my courage to the sticking place,’ & burnishing my arms for the glorious conflict.”³⁶ The letter ends with a reassurance that “The poem will come soon!”³⁷ On 19 October, Arthur notes, “Ma getting very slowly better.”³⁸ Four days later, Gissing reports his failure to win the Shakspeare scholarship, having attained third place. He concedes philosophically, after learning that all three of his combatants, unlike himself, had already passed the 1st. B.A., that “the fellow” who came first, Thomas Wilson Dougan, was a worthy winner “for he really is badly in want of money ... but now has become a new man.”³⁹ Arthur had invited him to the theatre again, but he could only reply “I have not time.”⁴⁰ He also told of his mother's condition and Gissing writes in return, “I was sorry to hear the bad news in yours; I hope the same reports will not continue.”⁴¹ In his diary on 29 October, Arthur states, “Miss Smith gone home to Stockton as Ma is much better. – G. R. Gissing came out only 3rd. in Shaks. Exam–.”⁴² Gissing was to win the Shakspeare Scholarship in October 1875, gaining first place.

His next letter, of 15 November 1873, sees him setting his sight on matriculation with the aim of joining “a long list of successful candidates for honours at the London University.”⁴³ Referring sympathetically to Charles Harold Herford, “who came out second” in the examination, he writes, “Off & on he had been grinding for the Shakspeare for 3 years, & felt as sure of it as if he saw his name written up. He had made extensive plans as to what he would do when he got it, & now – Well! He hasn't been seen out since the Exam., &, everyone says, is very ill in bed!”⁴⁴ The irony is that Herford and Dougan went on to enjoy great academic success, whilst Gissing's scholarly hopes sank in the mud. Forty years later, in another ironic twist of fate, it was mainly owing to Professor Herford's efforts, especially in gaining Clara Collet's support, that a George Gissing Memo-

rial Prize in English Literature was established in 1914 at the University of Manchester.⁴⁵

On 27 November, Arthur records in his diary, “George Gissing sent the long promised copy of his prize poem ‘Ravenna’ in his own writing & with the author’s best wishes. It got the first prize last exam. at Owens College.”⁴⁶ This copy is now held by the George Gissing Collection at Yale University. On 30 November his mother’s illness worsened. He writes, “Ma had three bad fainting fits in the afternoon.”⁴⁷ Then, on 3 December, he reports, “Ma died about 3 in the morning – just 2 years after Harry died. – Funeral next Saturday.”⁴⁸ Her death certificate states that Arthur was at her bedside at the time of death from anasarca (extreme generalised edema). She was forty-five. The day before Gissing had written to arrange to see Phelps as Bottom in “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” at the Prince’s Theatre. Bowes immediately called off their meeting. The very next day Gissing sent his condolences, writing,

December 4, 1873

Dear Bowes,

I really cannot tell you how shocked I was to receive your letter just now. How foolish it was of me to think of asking you at all under the circumstances; but I really had no idea that your mother was so ill.

A long letter would at present be unreasonable, but believe me when I say how sincerely I sympathise with you in your great loss.

I hope it will not be long before I see you in Manchester.

Please do not trouble to reply to this note, & believe me

Yours very truly,

G. R. Gissing

As I have just this minute returned I have only now received yours.⁴⁹

In the days following his mother’s death, Arthur sought diversion by practising shorthand and joining a French course at the Mechanics’ Institute. His teacher was “a young Parisien working at Lightbourn’s Paper Mill. I told him when I first saw him I wanted to talk with him more than just write the exercises, as I have done enough of that before.”⁵⁰

Arthur found further distraction, on Wednesday, 17 December 1873, at the annual soirée at Lindow Grove School. Since Pierre Coustillas was unable to find newspaper reports of this event at which George played a leading role, it is pleasing to find mention of it, though brief, in Arthur’s diary. “Speech night at Lindow Grove,” he writes. “French Play ‘Monsieur de Pourceaugnac’, English ‘Love’s Labour’s Lost.’ I went with Mac(beth), Fletcher, Oldham, & Whaite, the acting came off gloriously, & then we had

a playful gorge & speechifying. ¼ past 12 when I went to bed in No. 5 as of old.”⁵¹ This was the major event in the school calendar, which the best families in the region attended. Gissing’s annotated copy of *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, now held by the Beinecke Library, shows that he assumed the role of Biron, a lord attending on the king, and, according to Bowes’ later reminiscence, also played a leading part in Molière’s play, which was performed in French. William and Algernon Gissing appeared alongside their brother that night as they would in 1874. Of those accompanying Arthur, Harold Macbeth and Abraham Fletcher were well-known to Gissing, the one being an old friend and the other having made a strong impression upon him on his arrival at the school in 1871. After a convivial reunion, Arthur stayed over in Gissing’s dormitory “as of old.”⁵²

Two months passed before Gissing next wrote to Bowes. By now they are gradually drifting apart, inhabiting as they do two different spheres, the one immersed in his studies at college, the other in his office duties at Pendleton Iron Works. In January, with one eye on world events, Arthur notes successively in his diary the “marriage of Prince Alfred with Princess Maria of Russia”, the “Dissolution of Parliament”, and the belated report of “Livingstone’s Death” – the famous explorer having died the previous May.⁵³ On 21 February 1874, Gissing again regrets the delay in writing, which he evocatively attributes to being “encircled with a somewhat gloomy atmosphere of Greek Irreg. Verbs. In plain language I am working confoundedly hard for Matric.”⁵⁴ He refers to his “new plan of study” of “going to bed at 10 p.m. & getting up at 4 a.m.”⁵⁵ Of further interest is his mention of reading Forster’s *Life of Dickens*, which, inspiring to him as a novelist, he abridged 28 years later. Arthur received the letter on his sixteenth birthday, when, touchingly, as he writes, “Pa gave me Harry’s watch” – his late brother’s.⁵⁶

There is another break until Gissing wrote again, though the correspondence briefly picked up. Arthur meanwhile took up chemistry, bought himself a microscope, and went on several long walks, among others along the Mode Wheel Lock in Manchester to Eccles, and via Stockport Station to Disley and then on to Lyme Hall in the Cheshire Plains. Gissing’s message of 26 April reminds him that he is still studying hard, is currently admiring the Romantic poets, and has discovered that “Mr. & Mrs. Bandmann are at Manchester again.”⁵⁷ Eleven days later, having been told off for neglecting his friend, Gissing replies that once term is over at Alderley Edge he would find time to “come over & see” him.⁵⁸ On 24 May, upon receiving Arthur’s

portrait, he regrets not having one to send in return. He is also mightily pleased to hear that Arthur still has time for literature – he was then reading *The Task* by William Cowper, which the examwise Gissing has already identified as “one of the subjects for the Shakspeare next year.”⁵⁹

At the end of May Arthur made a four-day excursion with a friend to North Wales, scene of Gissing’s earlier sojourn. The highlight of their wanderings mostly in driving rain was a visit to Caernarvon Castle. On returning to Manchester he attended the opening of the new Unitarian Chapel at which Reverend Robert Collier Laird from Chicago preached the opening sermon, and then a soirée at Pendleton Town Hall. A fortnight after this he remarks in less than kindly terms the arrival of “a new servant, name of Emma Jakes, in place of Rose, this one is lumpish, deaf & rather dumb.”⁶⁰ On 27 June 1874, Gissing posted his eighteenth and final letter of their correspondence. Without further ado he plunges straight into an account of his success in the Owens College examinations, in which he won five prizes and carried off thirteen volumes – a performance he depreciated, seeing that he had claimed sixteen volumes the previous year. He further describes an evening at Professor Greenwood’s to which only the best students were invited. Brimming with confidence two days before the week-long Matriculation examinations, Gissing invites Arthur to see “Madame Angot” with him and a few friends to celebrate end of term. Finally, he refers to Arthur’s walk in Wales and praises his continued interest in literature – he was currently working his way through Shakespeare. Thus ends their correspondence. Arthur’s last mention of Gissing in his diary occurs on 17 October 1874, when he writes, “Went to hear the Tyndall lecture at the Free Trade Hall, on ‘Molecular Forces’ – saw George Gissing there.” By then he was regularly attending evening classes at Salford College in chemistry, French, English Literature (Shakespeare course), music, and technical drawing.

The extant version of Arthur Bowes’ diary continues until August 1875. On 19 August he set out with his father on an extended Cook’s tour of Belgium and France. The last entry, in which he describes travelling to St Cloud by steamboat and seeing Madame d’Aulnoy’s “La Chatte Blanche” at the Théâtre de la Gaîté, is dated 27 August, just six months before Gissing began his liaison with Nell. There is a tantalising postscript: “For succeeding years see ‘pocket diaries.’” Should these ever come to light, we may discover Arthur Bowes’ reaction to Gissing’s tragic fall. In his 1904 essay he wrote that, after their correspondence ended in June 1874, they

saw little of each other even though “I was myself at Owens” as “our studies lay in different directions.”⁶¹ In fact, Bowes did not attend Owens College until 1877, by which time Gissing had long since departed the scene of his academic triumphs. And apparently they never met again. Nevertheless, as his article confirms, Bowes forever remained in Gissing’s debt and cherished the memory of their friendship.

III

Arthur’s unflagging efforts during the late 1870s to better his chances in the world of work soon paid off handsomely. Aiming to become a civil engineer, he attended lectures for four calendar years from 1877 at Owens College under Professor Osborne Reynolds on engineering and under Professor Roscoe on chemistry. At the same time he was engaged under William Barningham in the design and construction of iron roofs and bridges for the War Office, Admiralty, and Colonial Governments. In January 1880, he took on extra work as a part-time schoolteacher at Lloyd Street School, Salford, where he taught mathematics and science. His starting salary was 6/- per week. In May 1881 he joined the school board and his wages were increased to 10/-. Three months later, his studies at an end, he gave up teaching, to enter the service of the Salford Corporation at the local town hall, where he would earn £110 p.a.

Around this time Arthur met Jane Anne Brigham, the twenty-three-year-old daughter of James and Isabella Brigham. Her father was a commission agent and she was brought up at West Hartlepool where, on 5 September 1883, Arthur and “Jennie” married. Their wedding photograph shows them together with family members in the garden of her father’s house. Arthur, slim with short cropped hair, and a thin moustache, is standing with folded arms in a detached, studied pose. Eight years later, in the photograph below, he has scarcely changed. In middle age, however, though only five foot eight, he filled out to more than fifteen stones. The early years of marriage were spent at Pendleton. In 1884 a first child, Stanley, was born. The couple had twelve children in all: Florence (1886-1973), Mabel (1889-1971) and Olive (1889-1981), James (1891-1915), Jessie (1892-1965), Dorothy (1893-1968), Ernest (1894-1958), Percy (1895-1983), Vera (1897-1987), Roland (1899-1955), and Cecil (1900).

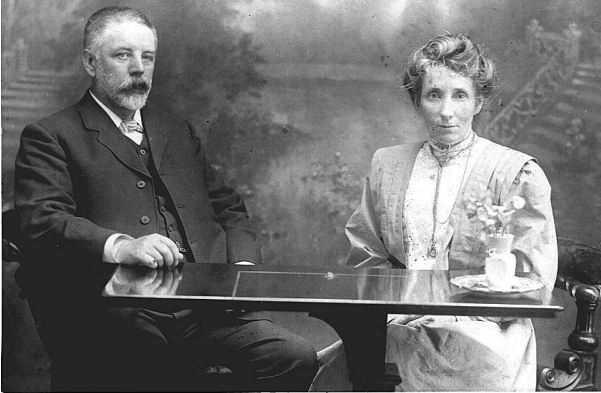


Arthur in 1891

On the work front Arthur positively prospered in the last decades of the century. During the 1880s he superintended the building of an outfall sewer costing £7,500, the re-lining of a service reservoir costing £1,500, the construction both of 15 miles of street tramways, and of a sewage treatment works costing £200,000. In 1887 he was a member of the Reception Committee of the Manchester Corporation, then deciding the route through Manchester of Queen Victoria's coach and her guard of honour of 4000 troops to celebrate her Silver Jubilee. Arthur then joined the Ordnance Department as a surveyor to help compile data for a new map of central Salford and Manchester. The following year he gave a lecture at the Cross Lane Literary Society on "The Ordnance Survey of the United Kingdom" in which "he reviewed the history of the Survey, beginning with the year 1783."⁶² In describing his present work, he remarked,

It was matter for regret that the Survey had not been able to keep pace with the growth of the towns in busy manufacturing districts such as South Lancashire and Yorkshire. Up to the present time it has been our misfortune in Manchester to have no later survey of the district than the six-inch map compiled in 1845, which was necessarily a very inadequate representation of the district as it now stands.⁶³

That same year he set up home at 19 Claremont Road, Irlam o' th' Heights, Salford. In 1889, he moved to 14 Irwell Grove in Eccles, where Jennie's recently widowed mother, Isabelle, joined them. Arthur was by now employed in the Borough Engineer's Office at Earlestown Town Hall. On 6 October 1891 he was elected an associate member of the Institute of Engineers (AMICE), two years later publishing a paper on "The Treatment of Sewage by Polarite."⁶⁴ In 1897 he was appointed surveyor to the urban district of Newton-in-Makerfield.



Arthur and Jennie in 1910

1900 was a terrible year for Arthur: his son, Cecil, aged three months, and his father died. Four years later he also lost his eldest child, Stanley, from a sudden illness at twenty. On a happier note, in February 1903, Arthur attended his youngest sister's wedding in Manchester. Lilly, then thirty-five, married Rudolph Karnowsky, a Latvian shipping merchant. After the wedding they set up home in Riga. Arthur was very close to Lilly and over the next fourteen years they corresponded frequently. His sister's letters have survived. These documents give a contemporary view of a tumultuous phase in the region's history. During 1905-1906 Lilly's letters often refer to the unrest in Riga and the sound of gunfire at close quarters.

In private life Arthur was a Freemason of the Makerfield Lodge and later Worshipful Master. An avid writer of articles, he contributed to *Chambers's Journal*, *Blackwood's Magazine*, *Work*, *Discovery*, and the *Manchester Guardian*. As a keen photographer, he wrote for *Photography: The Journal of the Amateur, the Professional, and the Trade*, publishing some of his own work. Two images: "Photograph of boy smoking in an

easy chair” and ”Photograph of boy preparing to shave at a dressing table in bedroom” are held in The National Archives at Kew Gardens. He passed on to Lilly a strong interest in Gissing. Over the years he supplied her with magazines, newspapers, and books. In 1905 she asked him for the “6d edition of Gissing’s *New Grub Street*”, also enquiring about Algernon Gissing.⁶⁵ In a 1907 letter to Florence, Arthur’s daughter, she writes, “I think after all 6d editions are the best & I do like G. Gissing’s.”⁶⁶ She was then reading *Our Friend the Charlatan*.



Lilly Karnowsky

Heaton Edward von Stürmer, whose name appeared in these pages in a 1994 article about his son Herbert Heaton Stürmer, an acquaintance of Gissing’s in the late 1890s, receives occasional mention. From 1897 to 1918 Reverend von Stürmer was chaplain at St Saviour’s Church then the focal point of the English community in Riga. In a 1905 letter Lilly writes,

It is a lovely day & I want to get through dinner early & go & call on Mrs von Stürmer the clergyman’s wife. They came not long ago & say I never go but it is rather awkward for me to go out much & you have to call on Mrs von S. before 4 because then *she* goes out calling. She has the nicest tea & bread & butter I’ve ever tasted (her servant bakes *every* day) & such pretty China. She is such a dear little old lady & Mr von S. is as lively as a young man tho’ he is 72.⁶⁷

Over the years the von Stürmers made numerous pastoral visits to Lilly's house.

The second decade of the century brought Arthur much sorrow. In 1912 Jennie, his wife of almost thirty years, died. Three years later, on 3 March 1915, his son, James, was killed during the second battle of Ypres, aged twenty-four. Already a professional soldier with three years' service in the Lancashire Hussars, he enlisted at the outset of the First World War. As his body was never recovered, he is commemorated on the Menin Gate to the missing at Ieper (Ypres), Belgium. News of his death was all the more devastating because he had been publishing his letters home in the *Newton and Earlestown Guardian* telling of his experiences on the Western Front. In the last of these, published six weeks before his death, he writes,

We do four days in the trenches, then come back for four days' rest. The firing line is about eight miles away. The other day we had our pay, and we are now spending it. I and two others go down to a small farm. French woman; eight children; husband a captain in the French army. There we have what we can get – café-au-lait, bread and butter, and eggs. As the eggs are 3d. each, there is, of course, more bread than eggs. Everything is very dear; penny chocolate is 2d., bread 8d. a loaf, butter 2s. per lb. At night we are able to get chips. Most of the houses and "pubs" or "estaminets" are wrecked, and so are the churches and farms, but the people are coming back to the places they left. Nearly every farmer here has two or three Belgian refugees employed. Dirty farms, very, compared with English. Sanitation is not considered here, anywhere. Good job it is winter and not summer. I have moved my little bed from the loft with the battered roof down to the cow-shed, and I am sleeping with a long row of cows about three yards from me. It is better, as there was no roof over my head before. The socks will be very welcome, as my feet are always wet. Although my boots are good, they get sodden. For the trenches we have rubber jack boots, so they are alright. The other night some of our chaps in getting to the trenches had to climb over an obstacle. One of them was holding up his hand in the dark to be pulled up by his mate, when he grasped what he found by the touch was the hand of a chap who had been covered up; - one who had "gone on". They are very plentiful, and you see different parts sticking out of the soil. The Germans, if you shoot one of them, will signal a "bull" with a spade and shortly afterwards will throw the body over. It acts as a sandbag, and helps stop bullets.

I am longing for the time when we will be coming back. Tell O. [his sister, Olive] to fill the pantry, but she needn't get any jam in, or biscuits, at any rate not "Army No.4" 4 in. by 4 in. by $\frac{3}{4}$ in. "bullet proof". I am "in the pink", and could eat ten Germans - not to mention killing. Glad to hear Ernie [his brother] is all right at Pembroke Dock. I expect he will be out here soon.

Private No. 2155 James B. Bowes
3rd Monmouthshire Regt.⁶⁸

Shortly after his death the *Newton and Earlestown Guardian* stated in a report on the Highways Committee of the Council that “Mr Bowes thanked the Chairman and members sincerely for their expressions of sympathy. His son had only a short career, but he had given his life for his country, and he was proud of him.”⁶⁹ The bitter irony is that, in 1917, Ernest, a Lance Corporal in the South Wales Borderers Regiment and a veteran of Gallipoli, was injured in both legs at Pilkem Ridge. After lying in a wet pool at the bottom of a shell hole for fourteen hours before being discovered, he had his left leg amputated above the knee. Unbeknown to him, his cousin, Arthur, the son of Arthur’s brother, Edward, lay in the same hospital suffering from thirty wounds. In September 1917 the Germans marched into the Latvian capital occupying the city for fourteen months. Throughout this time no letters got out and Arthur heard no news of his sister. When the German troops withdrew in November 1918, the Bolsheviks moved in. Riga was finally liberated on 22 May 1919. That day Lilly was buried, having died three days earlier.

In December 1920 Arthur, who had worked from 1897 as a surveyor on the Urban District Council of Newton-in-Makerfield, resigned his post owing to ill health. He died aged sixty-seven on 21 March 1925 at Wargrave Cottage in Newton-le-Willows, after a short illness. He was buried in Newton Cemetery. In his will he left £1543. The last years of his life were devoted to his hobbies. Once in 1921 he responded to a query by A. Egerton in *Notes and Queries*, who asked whether *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* was autobiographical.⁷⁰ He replied,

The ‘Private Papers’ are not to be taken as strictly autobiographical, but they contain references to certain passages in the writer’s life. I have not the book at hand, but I recollect that some of the incidents of early school life were drawn from Gissing’s experience at Lindow Grove School, Alderley Edge, where I was a fellow-pupil.⁷¹

Appropriately, it is as “a fellow-pupil” and close friend of Gissing’s that Arthur Bowes will always be remembered.

¹ Pierre Coustillas, *George Gissing at Alderley Edge* (London: Enitharmon Press, 1969), p. 17.

² See above and Pierre Coustillas, “George Gissing à Manchester,” *Etudes Anglaises*, XVI, July-September 1963, pp. 255-61.

³ Paul F. Mattheisen, Arthur C. Young, and Pierre Coustillas, eds., *The Collected Letters of George Gissing, Volume One, 1863-1880* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1990).

⁴ *Etudes Anglaises*, p. 261.

⁵ About 1882, when Black re-established contact with Gissing, he was living with his future wife in Chelsea. On 3 September of that year Gissing wrote to his brother Algernon that Black had got himself married (see Jim Moske, “New George Gissing Letters at The New York Public Library,” *Gissing Journal*, April 2002, p. 3). Actually the marriage took place only over a year later on 21 January 1884 at Chelsea, but Black may have been unwilling to reveal the true nature of his relationship to his friend or more likely Gissing was to Algernon. As it happens, at the time of the 1881 census Black was living with friends at 1 Cambridge Terrace, Fulham, their domestic servant being listed in the census as one Marian Smith—that is no other than the young woman Black married in 1884. There can be no doubt about this because the names and ages match, and the two other occupants of the home at Fulham were witnesses at the wedding. Ellen Elizabeth Marian Smith was born in Battle, Sussex, on 26 August 1862, the daughter of John Smith, a journeyman shoemaker. She may have been one of the working-class girls Gissing was referring to when, justifying his decision to marry Edith Underwood in a letter to his sister Ellen on 7 October 1890, he wrote: “It happens that two of my intimate acquaintances in the past have married work-girls, & with tolerable success.” See Paul F. Mattheisen, Arthur C. Young, and Pierre Coustillas, eds., *The Collected Letters of George Gissing, Volume Four, 1889-1891* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1990), p. 240.

⁶ See “Three Lancashire Advocates of Gissing,” *Gissing Journal*, October 2005, pp. 18-27, and “Arthur Bowes Again,” *Gissing Journal*, January 2006, pp. 28-29.

⁷ Quoted from “The Diary of Isaac Bowes” in the possession of Carolyn Brigham-Bowes.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Salford Chronicle*, 2 January 1901.

¹⁰ See *T.P.'s Weekly*, 22 January 1904, p. 100, and the *Alderley and Wilmslow Advertiser*, same day, p. 4. It also appeared in abbreviated form in the *Dinglewood Magazine*, April 1904, pp. 107-09.

¹¹ See note 1.

¹² Quoted from “The Diary of Arthur Bowes” in the possession of Carolyn Brigham-Bowes.

¹³ *Collected Letters 1863-1889*, p. 15.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

¹⁸ *George Gissing at Alderley Edge*, p. 17.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*, p. 20.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

²⁴ *Manchester Examiner and Times*, 19 September 1873.

²⁵ “The Diary of Arthur Bowes.”

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

- ³⁰ *Manchester Guardian*, 29 July 1874, p. 7.
- ³¹ “The Diary of Arthur Bowes.”
- ³² *Ibid.*
- ³³ *Ibid.*
- ³⁴ *Collected Letters, 1863-1880*, p. 23.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*
- ³⁸ “The Diary of Arthur Bowes.”
- ³⁹ *Collected Letters, 1863-1880*, p. 24.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 25.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴² “The Diary of Arthur Bowes.”
- ⁴³ *Collected Letters, 1863-1880*, p. 25.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁵ For information about the Shakspeare Scholarship and Professor Herford’s involvement in the setting up of a Gissing Memorial Prize see Pierre Coustillas, “Gissing and the Shakspeare Scholarship, *Gissing Newsletter*, July 1988, pp. 5-26.
- ⁴⁶ “The Diary of Arthur Bowes.”
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁹ *Collected Letters, 1863-1880*, p. 27.
- ⁵⁰ “The Diary of Arthur Bowes.”
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁵² *Ibid.*
- ⁵³ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁴ *Collected Letters, 1863-1880*, p. 27.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁶ “The Diary of Arthur Bowes.”
- ⁵⁷ *Collected Letters, 1863-1880*, p. 31.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 32.
- ⁶⁰ “The Diary of Arthur Bowes.”
- ⁶¹ *George Gissing at Alderley Edge*, p. 18.
- ⁶² *Manchester Guardian*, 17 January 1888, p. 7.
- ⁶³ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁴ Arthur Bowes, “The Treatment of Sewage by Polarite,” *ICE Minutes of Proceedings*, Vol. 117, 1893-1894, pp. 305-11.
- ⁶⁵ From the letters of Lilly Karnowsky in the possession of Frank Karnowsky.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁸ *Newton and Earlestown Guardian*, 19 March 1915.
- ⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 14 May 1915.
- ⁷⁰ See *Notes and Queries*, 26 November 1921, p. 435.
- ⁷¹ See p. 19 of the first essay referred to in note 4.

Book Reviews

Debbie Harrison, ed., *Workers in the Dawn*, Brighton: Victorian Secrets, 2010.

Gissing's first novel was published 130 years ago but Debbie Harrison's new edition is only the fourth to appear. Those of us whose pockets are not deep enough for purchase of a copy of the first edition of 1880, issued by Remington & Co. in return for payment of £125 by the hitherto thwarted author, those of us who might even have to think twice before buying the Doubleday, Doran & Company edition of 1935, edited by Robert Shafer, and, finally, those of us who are aware that the Harvester Press editions, including the 1985 version of *Workers* edited by Pierre Coustillas, are now themselves collector's items will be grateful to Victorian Secrets for making available a relatively cheap paperback edition of *Workers in the Dawn*. The book is attractively presented and it comes with a preface by Coustillas, long the doyen of Gissing studies, an introduction by Harrison, who has also provided explanatory endnotes, a map of "Arthur Golding's London" (this a definite and intriguing first) prepared by Richard Dennis, a brief note about Gissing's life followed by a "chronology," and suggestions for further reading. Harrison writes that she has incorporated changes in the text made by Shafer and Coustillas and "has made further corrections of her own," which, unfortunately, are not listed (p. xxv).

To reread *Workers*, more manifestly autobiographical even than most first novels, is to be struck again by a forceful apprehension of what those terrible yet germinative early years in London must have been like for Gissing. Rarely can such precocious learning, such commitment to a high ambition, such heroic *effort*, have been combined with such naïveté, such ignorance of life, and such submission to literary representations of it. One reads the novel alternately incredulous at the stagey implausibility of the West End and Arthur-Helen scenes (what human being ever talked like this?) and the callow mockery of the Church of England, on the one hand, and impressed by the felt life and authenticity of many of the low-life scenes, not least those between Carrie and Arthur, on the other. The author, clearly, is a very young man but, equally clearly, a young man who has what a certain great artist in a different medium once called "the divine spark."

Harrison's wide-ranging introduction, which examines the themes of poverty and wealth (the latter as liable to corrupt as the former), the efficacy of charity to the poor, education, and the possibility of Christian faith brings to bear upon *Workers* the critical preoccupations with class, gender, and power with which today we are so familiar. London is criss-crossed by "social and gendered boundaries": Helen Norman's ventures east illustrate the growing freedom and mobility of a woman of her class, at least when engaged in philanthropic activity, such activity being directed, of course, at the lowest levels of the working class. *Workers* was written in the wake of the storm created by Darwin, who posited a common ancestry for man and animals; its author seems to have little faith in reason or free will and his novel is "historically specific in the ways in which it theorises the pitiful dehumanising effects of sexual and social powerlessness in the Victorian metropolis" (p. ix).

This perspective prompts Harrison to a revaluation of Arthur and Carrie. She sees in the latter not a fictional portrait of Nell, whose failings and their catastrophic effects on the life of the Gissing-figure are to be lamented, but a heroine whose intermittent attempts at reform, scanted of full and sympathetic treatment by her creator, make her worthy to rank with the upper-middle class Helen. Arthur makes no attempt to understand his wife, although he too has suffered the disabling experience of early and chronic deprivation. Indeed, Harrison asserts, in strong language, that he "tries to reclaim her in ways that are as brutal and selfish as they are ostensibly altruistic and kind." Our editor offers an "alternative reading" in which "Carrie is the victim of a young man driven to the brink of insanity by his sexual passion, who pursues and stalks the vulnerable young woman with the intention of conducting a social experiment worthy of the Rougon-Macquart novels by Emile Zola." Furthermore, Arthur "demands a return on his investment" in "the only currency he recognises—a love of literature, which is inaccessible to the uneducated girl, and abstinence from alcohol, which has become her only source of solace" (p. xi). Harrison's interpretation will urge readers to a reexamination of the power dynamics between Arthur and Carrie, not to mention Gissing's possible class and gender predispositions, a reexamination that may lead to the striking of a more just balance. But, surely, her recuperative thumb here weighs a little heavily on the critical scale. The horrors of Carrie's life before her marriage cannot all be ascribed to her degraded position in an exploitative society and the depredations or callousness of the people who surround her (for

example, Augustus Whiffle is a heartless cad but there is no evidence that he is a rapist), nor is she by any means guiltless in the failure of that marriage, even if her husband does at first see her through a mist of infatuation, sexual desire, and the priggish intention of “improving” her. To one reader at least, Carrie’s stupidity, laziness, and tendency to promiscuity can as reasonably be perceived as innate as they can be seen as the consequences of social injustice, to make an admittedly simplistic contrast. (That her environment does her no favours is not denied.) She does not merely show herself insensible to Arthur’s regard for “literature”; she is unwilling or unable even to devote half an hour a day to elementary study. And her indulgence in alcohol as a “solace,” itself, in the vicious circle of alcoholism, partly the origin of the problems from which she must seek solace, hardly takes the form of a glass of wine or two too many at dinner and a pardonable tipsiness. It has become, by an infinitude of tiny steps, each the result of conscious decision or yielding, a coarse and degrading addiction for which she must bear some culpability. It makes impossible any honest human relationship.

Harrison sees the novel as a “destabilising” of the literary subgenres of *Bildungsroman*, sensation fiction, romance, and realism: for example, conventional readerly expectations of the protagonist’s social ascent through education or earnest effort are not met. But it is open to debate whether this is conscious subversion on Gissing’s part or the result of green youth and inexperience with a pen.

The explanatory notes, in addition to making clear the extraordinary breadth of Gissing’s reading even at this early stage of his life, will be a great help to readers of *Workers*, and Harrison is to be thanked for the obviously considerable toil exacted in preparing them. The decision of what to annotate is necessarily subjective but she has probably got it about right. A careful check of each of these 177 items has not been possible but Genesis 34.18 should be Genesis 35.18 (n. 10) and note 170 refers to Chapter 44, not 43. Substantively, not all the caliphs were, or represented themselves as, “descendants of Muhammad” (n. 124).

Finally, none of us is entirely without sin in this regard but I regret to have to point out that the text of the novel itself has more than forty typographical errors. All are minor—“schoolmasters” for “schoolmaster’s” (p. 32), “saw of clergyman” for “saw of the clergyman” (p. 209), “arras” for “arms” (p. 341)—but the cumulative effect is both to distract and to sap confidence in the integrity of what one is reading to the extent that one

actually checks in earlier editions words one now suspects of being corrupted (but “scene” is indeed “scene” and not “sense” [p. 421]). One of the typos is, alas, unintentionally comic: Mark Challenger wishes to “better” the “wrongs of the poor,” not “batter” them (p. 281).

M. D. Allen, University of Wisconsin-Fox Valley

NOTE: Debbie Harrison (d.harrison@bbk.ac.uk) writes: I am very grateful to Malcolm Allen for drawing my attention to the punctuation errors and the eight spelling mistakes in *Workers*, three of which I allowed to slip through from the 1880 Remington text. The new edition is ‘print on demand’ and the corrections have been made with immediate effect. I have also put a note on the publisher’s website (www.victoriansecrets.co.uk). Importantly, Malcolm identified the underlying technical problem – the scanning of the text – when minor blemishes can result in the corruption of punctuation marks and confusion between certain letters, for example ‘b’ and ‘h’, double ‘r’ and ‘m’, and ‘a’ and ‘e’. I have battered/bettered the production process for *Demos*, which, I am delighted to report, Malcolm has offered to proof. Thank you, Malcolm.

George Gissing, *New Grub Street, The 1901 Revised Text*, edited by Paul Delany, Victoria, B. C.: ELS Editions, 2009.

Paul Delany is known to a few Victorianists as the author of a scurrilous biography of George Gissing, the intention of which was to deal the Victorian novelist a blow from which he might not recover. It will therefore be something of a surprise for most admirers of this major figure of late nineteenth-century fiction to hear that Delany has stooped to realizing a project about which he had once consulted this writer, to whom he is indebted for photocopies of the translation by Gabrielle Fleury (the Bibliothèque Nationale had flatly refused to oblige).

In his editing of *New Grub Street* as revised by Gissing in 1898, Delany reveals some objectionable practices, both intellectual and ethical. Although he (grudgingly) thanks the supplier of Gabrielle’s translation for the photocopies, he systematically leaves out his name in references to his edition of Gissing’s diary and of the novelist’s *Collected Letters*, which he co-edited with Paul Mattheisen and Arthur Young. It is clear that Delany, whose insolent boldness appears on almost every page of the biography, now reveals himself as a cowardly and unfair academic. In his introduction

to the new curtailed edition of Gissing's classic masterpiece he generally refrains from throwing mud at Gissing's face, perhaps lest the general editor of ELS Editions should enquire into the reasons of such hostility. Yet the mendacious allusion to a disease from which Gissing never suffered shows that his *intention de nuire* is still extant though camouflaged under apparent objectivity and cravenly toned down. It is of vital importance that the publishers of this otherwise well-produced edition should be aware of what the editor has certainly blazoned forth neither in Vancouver nor in Victoria.

The puff printed at the top of the back cover was obviously written by some friend of the editor who has not taken the trouble to read Delany's sickening biography of Gissing very closely. However, this curtailed edition of *New Grub Street* has no chance of replacing the version of the novel as it has been known since 1891. Dozens of editions have been published, not to speak of the many translations of which Delany has nothing to say. The Notes to the Text are barely elementary; they ignore previous annotated editions and indeed could have been written fifty years ago by a compiler more interested in his subject. Further Delany still has to learn that such equivalents between Victorian prices and to-day's currency as he offers are absolutely unreliable and therefore worthless.— Pierre Coustillas

Notes and News

On 18 March Richard Dennis, distinguished professor of human geography at University College, London, delivered his inaugural lecture, entitled "No Abiding City: transience and transfiguration in 'modern' cities." Also known as a valued Gissing scholar, Richard Dennis did not fail, on this occasion as on preceding ones, to pay homage to Gissing. Robin Woolven, who was in the audience, tells us that the lecturer's "opening and closing slides were made-up photographs with Richard Dennis on the left and Gissing on the right in a similar pose, a clever way of introducing their similar interests in London and the transience of the working classes a century ago."

The new edition, previously announced, of *Isabel Clarendon* will be published this spring. For the first time the novel will be issued in one vol-

ume, the text being reset. The introduction and the other editorial material to be found in the Harvester edition (1969 and 1982) have been updated. Textual difficulties which had remained unelucidated have now been explained in new footnotes. Quotations from Gissing's correspondence are accompanied by references to the relevant passages in the *Collected Letters*. The bibliography has been revised. Since examples of Gissing's handwriting have rarely been reproduced in facsimile, the first page of the manuscript of the novel (formerly in the Carl H. Pforzheimer Library, New York, and now in the Lilly Library) will be reproduced.



We hear from the Gissing Trust in Wakefield that the Centenary edition of *A Life's Morning* under whose imprint it was published in 2003 is now available from Ros Stinton: (e-mail: books@idlebooksellers.co.uk) at the reduced price of £10. The volume, a hardback bound in green cloth with gilt titling, is a reprint of the 1984 Harvester Press edition, edited by Pierre Coustillas, with historical and topographical notes by Clifford Brook, an authority on Gissing in Wakefield.



Vincenzo Pepe, who lives near Naples at Nocera Inferiore, a small town known to Gissing, tells us that an Italian version of his article on Gissing and Horace is to appear in a special publication associated with the Certamen Horatianum, a national competition of Latin translations which takes place every year at Venosa.

Christine Huguet has drawn our attention to an announcement on the internet for the Fourth International George Moore Conference: George Moore and "The Discovery of Human Nature," which took place at Almería, Spain, on 25-27 March 2010. Two papers were partly devoted to Gissing: "George Moore and George Gissing: Two 'modern' sociolinguists at the end of the 19th Century," by José Antonio Hoyas Solís, University of

Extremadura, and “New Woman Heroines in Male Writing: Fiction at the *Fin de Siècle*: George Moore, George Gissing, Grant Allen and Thomas Hardy,” by Carmen Bretones Martínez, University of Seville. José Antonio Hoyas Solís, it will be remembered, published in 1985 *Estandar y dialecto en la narrativa de George Gissing*, a linguistic study of Gissing’s works which was reviewed in the January 1987 number of the *Gissing Newsletter*.

Francesco Marroni’s study of *Victorian Disharmonies* (University of Delaware, 2010) contains a chapter on *The Whirlpool*. The book was originally published as *Disarmonie vittoriane* by Carocci in 2002.

Recent Publications

Volumes

George Gissing, *Workers in the Dawn*, edited with an introduction and notes by Debbie Harrison. Preface by Pierre Coustillas. Maps by Richard Dennis. Brighton: Victorian Secrets Limited (32 Hanover Terrace, Brighton BN2 9SN. Website: www.victoriansecrets.co.uk), 2010. ISBN 978-1-906469-13-9. Stiff pictorial paper covers. Pp. xxviii + 618. The maps of Arthur Golding’s London are on pp. xxvi-xxvii. £17.10 on Amazon.co.uk.

George Gissing, *New Grub Street, The 1901 Revised Text*, edited by Paul Delany, Victoria, B. C.: ELS Editions (Department of English, University of Victoria), 2009. ISBN 978-1-55058-384-7. Stiff pictorial paper covers. Pp. xv + 333. \$20.

Articles, reviews, etc.

David McKie, *Great British Bus Journeys: Travel Through Unfamous Places*, London: Atlantic Books, 2006. Chapter 2 is partly devoted to Gissing in Wakefield. The author’s congenial approach, which accords well with that in some of his articles which appeared in the *Guardian* a few years ago, is praiseworthy.

Maria Teresa Chialant, “‘Under the Volcano’: Il Vesuvio nella rappresentazione di scrittori inglesi dell’800,” *Fogli di anglistica* (rivista di studi inglesi semestrale), Anno II, n. 3-4, 2008, pp. 11-35. This periodical is published in Palermo by Flaccovio Editore. The present article is a study of literary representations of Vesuvius from the age of the Grand Tour to Gissing. Among the writers concerned are Goethe, Madame de Staël, Shelley, Bulwer-Lytton and Dickens.

Lawton A. Brewer, “George Gissing’s Manifesto: *The Odd Women* and *The Unclassed*,” *Nineteenth-Century Gender Studies* (on-line journal), Issue 4.1, Spring 2008, 12-page article.

Wulfhard Stahl, *Kindlers Literatur Lexikon* (3rd edition, 2009), pp. 272-77. Entries on Gissing, *The Nether World*, *New Grub Street*, *Born in Exile*, *The Odd Women* and *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*.

Frank Kermode, *Concerning E. M. Forster*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009. Passages on Gissing, pp. 86 and 94.

Diana Maltz, “Book Reviews,” *Victorian Studies*, Summer 2009, pp. 734-36. Review of Molly Youngkin’s *Feminist Realism at the fin de siècle*, with a paragraph on Gissing.

Jay Neugeboren, “Dark Comedies in the City,” *New York Review*, 17 December 2009, pp. 66-68. Review of *Beg, Borrow, Steal* by Michael Greenberg (Other Press, 2009), with a long quotation from *Henry Ryecroft*. The book is a collection of articles originally published in the *Times Literary Supplement*.

Klaus Lang, *Von Frau von Staël zu D. H. Lawrence: Literarische Bilder von Natur- und Kulturlandschaften Italiens und ihre englandkritische Funktionalisierung in repräsentativen Romanen* (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 2009). Contains a chapter on “George Gissing: The Emancipated,” pp. 279-339. Other chapters are devoted to Madame de Staël’s *Corinne ou l’Italie*, Dickens’s *Little Dorrit*, George Eliot’s *Middlemarch*, E. M. Forster’s *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, and D. H. Lawrence’s *The Lost Girl*.

