

# The Gissing Journal

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

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## Two Unpublished Gissing Letters in the Beinecke Library

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Unpublished Gissing letters have rarely turned up on the market in recent years and it is well known that in the last few years of his life his only regular correspondents were his relatives and his two literary agents, James B. Pinker and William Morris Colles. So the present availability of two four-page letters to his old friend John Wood Shortridge, whose chaotic life remained for long imperfectly known, definitely fills a gap in our knowledge of Gissing's last few months.

The connection between the Wood family and Gissing's family in Wakefield would not have deserved a mention in a detailed account of the novelist's life had not the long arm of chance brought them close or rather closer to one another by semi-geographical, semi-artistic factors. The extraordinary story of their meeting is so striking that Gissing turned it at once to good account in his novel *The Emancipated*, published by George Bentley in 1890. When Gissing returned from Italy in early 1890 he promptly realized that Shortridge, whose acquaintance he had made by chance in an inn within sight of Vesuvius, was practically ostracized by his English relatives. Each man's life followed its own unpredictable course, and Gissing found it easier to relate the spiciest details of what he had observed in his new friend's home so beautifully situated on the Sorrento peninsula than to give his family a sober idea of the unconventional world he had come across in the barely unified kingdom of Italy.

Shortridge's adventures were an excellent subject for salacious conversations between men who had cast prudery to the winds, emancipated free thinkers such as Edward Clodd, Grant Allen and George Whale, and readers of a later age are bound to deplore the censorship which makes certain forms of candour a crime. In these letters Gissing deftly skirted all subjects whether in his own life or in that of his correspondent which might prove embarrassing. On one of them—his own health, which he did not

hope to recover, he was candid. Of seeing again his old friend he knew that he could not entertain the slightest hope. Carmela is not even mentioned in his letters. She is deservedly ignored as an unspeakable creature. That the girls who had known Gissing in infancy prompted his interest is not surprising. For one thing the fate of children never left him indifferent; for another he pitied that brood of Capri children whose future was so unpredictable but could by no means be bright.

Pathetically Gissing imagined himself where he knew he would never be or hope to be again. Doubtless Gabrielle was right when she wrote that happiness for him could only be found where he knew that he would never have a chance of settling. His second letter is one among many examples of wishful thinking. It was something of a consolation for him both to know that never again would he revisit Capri and that anyway the place was more and more invaded by wealthy Germans who cared only for sunshine and cheap homesteads. Their presence, he was masochistically convinced, could only desecrate a place he had loved.

These two letters were the last Shortridge ever received from Gissing. Gabrielle evokes him in her Recollections of Gissing and their life at Ispoure. The two men were destined never more to meet again, but Shortridge's family did not lose sight of Gissing and his family. To them the Wakefield writer remained something of a *feu follet* occasionally mentioned in conversations, a will-o'-the-wisp that successive generations bore in mind. In a much more modest manner than Gissing J. W. Shortridge is sure never to be totally forgotten. He will be remembered as a satellite of the novelist in whose diary and correspondence he figures in a memorable manner. His name is also attached to Massa Lubrense, the beautiful place in sight of Capri on the Sorrento peninsula, a shooting star in the cultural firmament.

Note: A detailed account of Shortridge's life is to be found in an article published in the July and October 1999 numbers of this Journal, "The man is a Born Artist': The Relationship between George Gissing and John Wood Shortridge," by Pierre Coustillas and Russell Price.

The young Frenchman mentioned in the first letter that Gissing thought of as a potential expatriate to New Zealand was probably Gabrielle's brother, René Fleury (1876-1936).

Ispoure.  
St. Jean Pied de Port.  
Basses Pyrénées.  
France.

July 24, 1903

My dear Shortridge

Only a few days ago I was talking about you, & thinking much of you, & now I have your card [in *German*, according to Gabrielle], greatly to my joy. It is my own fault that I have not long ago had news of you. Many months ago, my agent Pinker wrote to tell me that you had called on him, & sent me your address. When that letter arrived, I was ill, at Arcachon, & when I felt able to write—alas! your address was lost. And now you tell me that you are going to New Zealand. Is it for good? I most earnestly hope not, for in that case I could not hope to see you again. But write & tell me everything. A long, long time since we parted in Italy. Tell me all about your adventures since, I beg of you.

My own life, save in one respect, has not been cheerful. Four years ago I married again; my wife is French, &, since then, I have lived in France. Unfortunately, I have lung trouble, & have to lead the existence of an invalid. For more than twelve months we have been here in the country of the Basques. I wonder whether you know it at all. The climate is very temperate, quite unlike that of the other side of southern France, the Riviera. Here I think I have got a good deal of benefit, & I can now work 3 or 4 hours a day. At present I am engaged upon a story of Italy in the 6<sup>th</sup> century—a book for which I have been preparing for many years. As it opens near Sorrento, I have often had my thoughts turned to Massa Lubrense. I see the glorious views over land & water. Shall I ever see them again, really? Sometimes I fear not, for, even if health allowed me to travel again, I don't know whether I should have the means. Somehow I have managed to earn a certain reputation by my books, but it is the kind of reputation which brings very little money. I envy the authors who make their thousands a year—as a good many do nowadays; for my part I have to be content with a very few hundreds.

What a talk we should have if only we could meet! I fear there is no possibility of your coming this way on your long journey—it would be too indirect.

The address which Pinker sent me from you was in Cornwall. Have you lived there long? But I should never have done with questions.

By the bye, I am asked to suggest some kind of employment for a young Frenchman who wants to go abroad, & who knows a little English, & has some commercial experience in Paris. Could you tell me whether such a man could find anything whatever in N. Zealand? I fancy he is not at all particular, & would take a very modest position. I myself know so little of the commercial world, & I fear his chances in London would be small. Tell me, if you are better informed on such matters than I am.

Write, then, before you leave England, & let me know all about yourself & your family; every word will be welcome. Ah! The old Albergo del Sole, at Pompeii!—It seems yesterday.

Always sincerely yours,  
George Gissing

[Shortridge's long reply, dated 11 August 1903, can be read in volume 9 of Gissing's Collected Letters. Gissing answered it immediately as Shortridge and his children were to sail for New Zealand on 10 September]

Ispoure  
St. Jean Pied de Port.  
B.P.  
France.

Aug. 16. 1903

My dear Shortridge,

Your letter is—as I knew it would be—full of interest; but I had not foreseen such a lamentable experience as you have gone through. Indeed you have had a bad time of it all these years. But, as you say, the worst is over, & I heartily hope that many years of great happiness are before you. It is a splendid thing that most of the children are so healthy, and that they give you no anxiety. As for Kate, assuredly you may hope that the warm

climate will do her good. I was delighted to hear that the elder children—*children* indeed!—remember me. Give them all my very kindest wishes.

Yes, let me have news as soon as you have arrived in N.Z, for I shall be anxious to know how little Kate has borne the voyage. It may do her enormous good.

As for myself, it is now some years since a doctor told me that I had decided weakness of one lung, &, like Sam Weller, “had better be careful.” I tried first of all passing the winter in Devonshire, but I got rather worse, &, though I have never had bleeding from the lungs, they are both “affected,” & with that goes a wretched difficulty of breathing. I can’t climb a hill, & I can’t walk more than a mile or two. Still, this year I am stronger. I can only hope to be able to work on for some time yet.

My marriage is fortunate. A young French lady, who translated some of my work into French, came to see me about literary matters; hence an acquaintance which soon took a serious turn. She is of good family, very well read, & is liked, I think, by most people who know her. I heartily hope you may some day be one of those. In the meantime she tells me to send you her very kind regards & all good wishes.—No, we have no youngsters.

When you have time to write from your new home, pray tell me something more about the *climate* of your part of Derbyshire. I know, of course, that in summer it is delightful; but is not the winter very severe? Comparatively dry, I dare say, which is a great thing. Who knows whether I shall ever be able to live in England, but I should much like to know of some place, cheap & of fair climate, in pretty surroundings. I know Eyam by reputation (& even know how to pronounce it) & I believe the valley of the Hope is almost as beautiful as Dovedale.

All you tell me of Capri is wretched. I fear the invasion of vulgar people will become more & more irresistible. But that does not spoil my memories of the place. How I remember our walk to the Campanella! I still have the bit of ancient pot I (or you) picked up there.

I cannot remember the name of the bee-keeping German [Hugo Fink], but *him* I see very clearly. He was a good fellow, & I am glad he is doing well.

I shall look forward then from more from the other side of the world. May you have a good voyage, & may all go well with you over there.

Always yours,  
George Gissing.

## Homage to George Whale (1846-1925)

[Gissing and George Whale met for the first time in London, on 26 September 1894, at a dinner given at the National Liberal Club by their common acquaintance C. K. Shorter. From that day and to the end of Gissing's life the two men remained in touch, and met again a number of times before Gissing left for France in 1899. Whale would invite Gissing to dinner at one of his Clubs or at his home at Blackheath, when Gissing would stay overnight and leave after lunch. On those occasions Gissing delighted in looking at some of the thousands of books Whale had in his library. They also met at some of the famous Omar Khayyám dinners, like those held at the Burford Bridge Hotel in July 1895 or at Frascati's on 20 November 1896—on which occasion Gissing met H. G. Wells. And of course Whale was present at Aldeburgh in June 1895 when Edward Clodd gathered some friends for the Whitsun week-end at his seaside home. Whale it was who, as a solicitor, drew up Gissing's will. The location of Gissing's letters to him is unknown, and all that remains is a number of extracts reproduced by Alfred Gissing in the unpublished biography of his father, reprinted in the *Collected Letters*. The last extract is dated 15 February 1903, but Whale, writing to Gabrielle on hearing of Gissing's death, said that he had last heard of his friend in August.

In homage to George Whale we reprint below the tribute of E. S. P. Haynes, contributed to the book devoted to him and edited by his wife Winifred Stephen Whale, Edward Clodd, and Clement Shorter, *George Whale 1846-1925*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1926. The book also contains tributes by Augustine Birrell, Edward Clodd, George Haven Putnam, Clement Shorter, H. G. Wells, and Whale's wife. Edmund Sidney Pollock Haynes (1877-1949) was a lawyer and like George Whale a solicitor, having succeeded his father at his offices in Lincoln's Inn. He was also the author of some twenty books, on subjects like divorce, liberty, and law. The tributes were followed by nine essays by George Whale, out of which we have selected one as a sample of his writings.]

Mr. Whale, the late Chairman of the R.P.A. [Rationalist Press Association], was a versatile person; he was both a man of ideas and affairs. He achieved unusual success as a solicitor and as a municipal

administrator; he became a popular Mayor of Woolwich. He was a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society and a member of the Council of the Folklore Society; he was part Founder of the Omar Khayyám Club and of the Pepys Club; he was also one of the most prominent members of the Johnson Club. He had innumerable friends in the law, in the arts, and in politics. It was only in politics that he had any sort of failure, for he unsuccessfully contested Marylebone in 1892 and Oxford City in 1906 and 1910. He was to the last a stalwart Liberal; but he also preserved the optimistic impulses of the Victorian Collectivist. In the very last letter I received from him, two days before his death, he gravely regretted that I did not believe in progress.

Perhaps we need not complain that his beneficent activities were not drained away in the House of Commons. I do not know much of his work as a solicitor, except that he was always a *persona grata* in Woolwich, and that he had a most appreciative client in the person of Mr. H. G. Wells, who is supposed to have portrayed him as the benevolent solicitor in *Joan and Peter*. Undoubtedly the R.P.A. had reason to be thankful that Mr. Whale devoted his last years to the welfare of the Association. At the age of seventy-five he would take the trouble to preside at the reading of any little paper to the R.P.A., and to pronounce one of his inimitable discourses on the subject; his urbane common sense made his services on the Board invaluable, and he may almost be said to have given his life in the Cause, considering what a physical strain post-prandial oratory to a large audience must be at his age; and he must have had warnings of heart trouble in the last days before his death.

Mr. Whale wrote but little, though he read voraciously. He was, however, certainly in the first rank of post-prandial orators, and, much as I dislike public dinners, I would always go to one if I thought that there was any chance of hearing him. He would begin quite unobtrusively, and then rise on wings to the most marvelous flights of eloquence and humour. He would unite the fervour of a fine preacher with the most Voltairean jests, and also emerge as a superlative *raconteur*; but, on the other hand, he was wholly free from verbosity. His last speech of all was not, perhaps, at his highest level, in spite of the purple patches so carefully reported in the *Daily Express*. There were signs of fatigue; and genial allusions to 'Brother Clodd' recalled *cænas noctesque deum* at the Johnson and Omar Khayyám Clubs. Nevertheless, the Voltairean rapier was well in evidence, and I

wondered, as often before, whether there was not some French strain in his ancestry.

Then just as Major Putnam was proposing his health Mr. Whale fell forward in his chair and was swiftly carried out of sight. To all appearance he must have died instantaneously. I suppose that many of those present were haunted as I was in the interval of sickening suspense by a vision of George Whale, the gayest of men, lying paralysed and possibly speechless for years in a sick-room, and cut off from all his accustomed joy in life. In those moments I felt that death was a better alternative for him, though when the tidings of death came the tragedy seemed unbearable. It is not what he would have chosen for himself, for he was full of consideration for others, and he would have deplored the sudden distress of his friends. But if his span of life had to end that day it is certainly the end that would have been desired by all who loved him. He died with the applause of an appreciative audience fresh in his ears and during the opening words of a speech by his distinguished friend Major Putnam proposing his health.

I imagine that many of his friends slept as badly that night as I did; but towards the early morning I dreamed that I was walking with him by the sea, as I occasionally did when staying with Mr. Clodd at Aldeburgh. He told me that the report of his death was false and entirely due to a medical mistake, and that he hoped it would be corrected at once in case some fanatic attributed the event to divine wrath.

It was painful to wake and surprising to find that the *Daily Express* bore out the prediction in the dream by printing a large headline, 'Death after Denouncing Religion.'

God moves in a mysterious way  
His blunders to perform

are lines which Mr. Clodd has often quoted to me. But it is certainly strange that God should have taken more than forty years to discover the existence of the R.P.A. I doubt if the editor of the *Daily Express* has ever read about the Tower of Siloam; but the episode sheds an instructive glimpse on what still passes for religion among Lord Beaverbrook's employees. The incident would certainly have amused Mr. Whale, and there we might dismiss it from our minds if the writer of the headline had not proceeded to imply that Mr. Whale was a kind of Hyde Park orator.



On that point I think everyone will agree with me that Mr. Whale's intelligence was in complete harmony with his natural amiability. I have known very few men who were so tolerant and sympathetically intelligent. Among his intimate friends were Sir Frederick Pollock, Major Putnam, Mr. Edward Clodd, Mr. H. G. Wells, Mr. Clement Shorter, Sir George Frampton, and Mr. Thomas Seccombe. The list is not complete, and I have taken the names at random, for I am writing at short notice. But this inadequate list testifies to the real humanism of his character and excludes all suggestion of any sectarian bias. Mr. Whale represented a type of modest and unpretentious Englishman who achieves far more than he knows—by sheer honesty, unflinching benevolence, and well-informed sagacity. He was through all his life distinguished by what Dante described as

Luce intellettuale piena d'amore,  
Amor di vero ben, pien di letizia.  
(Light intellectual, full of love;  
Love of true good, full of gladness.)

I have only once quoted these lines before, and then it was in homage to Rupert Brooke; but that is no reason for not quoting them again about George Whale; and indeed both my friends, widely separated as they were by age and circumstance, were certainly endowed with that rarely combined capacity for affection and understanding which appealed as irresistibly to the age of St. Thomas Aquinas as to all other ages.

Mr. Whale always appealed to me as a living example of sweet reasonableness. Quiet, level-headed, amiable men of his time probably do more in the long run to promote good causes than the martyr, just as the cause of international peace is better promoted by an efficient diplomatist than by a fire-eating patriot. Mr. Whale would, I think, have supported Erasmus against Luther. The martyr is often rather an ignorant fanatic and seldom a man who has to choose between death and honour like the incomparable Sir Thomas More. Mr. Whale sought neither martyrdom nor publicity, though he may well have shortened his life by his zeal for the R.P.A.; but the memory of his urbane satire and warm-hearted humanism will inspire many champions yet to come of all that intellectual freedom and honesty without which life should scarcely be deemed worth living.

The Burgomaster of Middleburgh [Middelburg] wrote to Voltaire, asking him, ‘in confidence, whether there is a God or not; whether, in case there be one, he takes any heed of us; whether matter is eternal, whether it can think, whether the soul is immortal.’ Finally, he begged an ‘answer by return of post.’ Perhaps Voltaire’s Dutch burgomaster was a philosopher without knowing it. Certainly he raises many of the perennial, and perhaps insoluble, problems of philosophy, religion, and theology. But, as is plain, these matters branch wide. No one reading the perhaps too ambitious title of this article can expect that, within the space here available, all the burgomaster’s anxious inquiries will be discussed. I limit myself, and that with severe abridgment, chiefly to current aspects of one, which to the believer must be of enormous importance, and to the unbeliever is full of speculative yeast, and also full of studies, sometimes pathetic, in the working of the human mind and the history of religion. For my topic is immortality—that is to say, the idea of the continuation of the consciousness of personal identity after death.

If estimates of religious success are to be based on the awkward and doubtful mundane tests of the number of believers gathered-in here below, then beyond question Christianity ranks, with the older Brahmanism and Buddhism and with expanding Moslemism, among the most successful of the world’s surviving religions. What is the cause of that Christian success? It is the doctrine of immortality which was the making of earlier Christianity and has hitherto been the preservation of the Church. But if we accept, as I do here, a naturalistic standpoint, we may now see clearly that, while there is much that is interesting and suggestive in the long history of that numerical success, there is nothing whatever that is miraculous about it, not much that is to be reckoned wonderful, and even less that can be called ideal. Indeed, some divines now frankly confess that the true—and, as some complacently say, the final—religion did not commend itself at first by the ethical superiority often attributed to it. Much of the better part of Christian morals, like the better part of the teaching of the rare and unpopular Hebrew prophets, was

Too bright and good  
For human nature’s daily food.

It was its particular, unanimous, and emphatic teaching as to a future life which first won the triumphs of Christianity in a credulous and, as we now know, a specially timorous age; in an age of this and other religious mysteries, with magical rites chiefly of Oriental origin. Add to that early teaching the later suggestive influence of miracle and of tradition, and the power and the prestige of the persecuting Church, with its definite dogmas of heaven and hell and its doctrine of exclusive salvation; add the persistence of fear, which the theologians call a sense of sin; add desires, deep in the general heart of man, for a future life of bliss and of escape from eternal torture; and then, in the total of this sum, we have the secret of the long success of Christianity. Gibbon, as we know from his fifteenth chapter, saw the power of this offer of a safe and joyful immortality; and Friedlander, Lecky, Coulton, and many more writers who are not 'counsel for a creed,' give copious examples of it all and of results often so deplorable. Renan, too, reminds us that the Christian masses worshipped only when promised payment in return, and that Christian self-denial was shrewdly calculated with a view to the kingdom of heaven. This, as anthropology now shows us, is, however disguised, a primitive, fundamental, and abiding trait of religion. Does it not date back to the time of that crude animism from which imaginary spirits and, at length, personal gods were derived? We refine too much if we forget that religion begins with belief, sacrifice, adoration, and obedience, and assured reward in return. Who can blame mankind for this? Who would worship an irresponsible god? How can the average man in any age live, and protect other lives, merely by the contemplation of that beauty of holiness which he would hardly find or even understand?

This Christian belief in immortality still persists, for many, in all its old familiar details. As the *Catholic Dictionary* (1913) plainly shows, the whole Catholic Church, ridding itself of Modernism, is to-day firm in its adherence to this venerable doctrine and all its mediæval elaborations. There will be heaven for some, and for the rest of mankind endless torments in hell inflicted, as Dante held, by a just and loving personal God. Countless Christians, of many squabbling sects outside the Roman obedience, also agree at least to stand up resolutely both for heaven and hell and the scheme of salvation taught by theologians in all Christian ages. So recently as 1899 the Cambridge University Press, which has so long adored Paley, put forth a new edition of the yet more old-fashioned Pearson's

*Exposition of the Creed*, edited by the Librarian, and former Chaplain, of Trinity College. In Pearson the resurrection of the body, final judgment, and the two sorts of life everlasting are asserted, as in the familiar creed itself which is still devoutly uttered in thousands of churches. Obviously this reprint of Pearson is not issued as a religious curiosity, but for the purpose of current edification. I wish the Cambridge Press no serious harm; but I am glad to say that years ago Pearson reached the ‘remainder’ stage, in which I bought him, at a very reduced but sufficient price. Far later than Pearson, but a little before his latest edition, came that powerful and popular preacher, C. H. Spurgeon. None who ‘sat under’ him, or read his numerous printed sermons, could have any fear that he would tamper with the ancient faith or join in that ‘down grade’ which indeed he so vigorously but unsuccessfully denounced. And now the Anglican Bishop Gore, recovering from the laxity of *Lux Mundi*, puts forth for the guidance of the laity his *Religion of the Church* (1917). Therein immortality has its base, or at least its buttress, in inspired Holy Writ, and the reality of heaven and hell is duly reaffirmed. As to ordinary Protestantism, I have before me the book of ‘Salvation Army Songs’ (1911). It is appropriately bound in a lurid red, and it is freely circulated all over the English-speaking world. Like the social work of the ‘Army,’ it yields some better things; but, after all, this popular book reeks of hell: –

Before God’s bar we all must go,  
And hear the sentence given:  
‘Depart, ye cursed, into hell,’  
Or, ‘Come with me to heaven.’

Here, indeed, is the sincere milk of the word. Again, surely, neither Tertullian nor St. Augustine, Dante nor Calvin, could easily beat that other hymn in which kindly Salvationists roar: –

Yes; sinners then on earth will burn;  
To ashes will their bodies turn,  
The saints will shout with joy.

The War revealed the innermost faith of many. In 1916, in that suggestive book, *The Faith and the War*, Dr. E. A. Taylor, Professor at St. Andrews, manifests the harsh Presbyterian religion which was so well exposed by Buckle, for Dr. Taylor asserts that ‘there must be a hell or

something very like it.' But here the Rev. R. J. Campbell was not to be outdone. He in 1916, and with deep emotion, thumps the drum ecclesiastic, in a popular Sunday newspaper. He urges men to 'go as healthfully mad again as the primitive Christian and the thirteenth-century friars.' Presumably taking his own medicine, Dr. Campbell proceeds to assert that Revelation alone can settle these high matters; and, of course, plumping for immortality, he throws in an emphatic: 'There is a hell, and men ought to be warned against it.' These examples could easily be multiplied; but most of us know too well many other tokens of the survival in full blast of the ancient orthodox belief in Christian immortality, and of the present use, especially in Revivals, of those terrors which, from the first, led anxious people to throng to the church or to the stool of repentance.

Yet, for all those who, somehow, believe in a personal God and wish to think highly of Him; still more for all who, like Lucretius and Montaigne, are enemies of groundless fear; and for that growing number who, like the Greeks, would think clearly rather than, like the Hebrews, feel strongly, there is balm in Gilead. In truth, there is much evidence that, despite what has been cited above, the Christian doctrine of immortality is now moribund.

Building wiser than he knew, Bacon told his generation that truth is the daughter of time and not of authority. Time has sapped the old creeds. It has gradually led men to see that any belief in human immortality involves tremendous moral, intellectual, and physical difficulties, and vast, sometimes incredible or even unthinkable, assumptions. If Revelation be needed to demonstrate the reality of the future life, an authentic, clear, positive, and sufficient revelation is becoming very hard to find in these days of advanced Biblical criticism and widespread decay of bibliolatry. Literal inspiration is no longer the vogue. Holy texts are now found to be much in conflict with each other; and man's improving moral sense is in conflict with many texts and much of orthodox eschatology. Those who would dare to dispense with Revelation and yet have faith must, as even theologians would agree, find a certain definite Theism, in what used to be called natural religion, the grounds of their beliefs in a soul and its immortality. They must discover and trust an omnipotent, beneficent, and personal God; and it is plain that the mind and the faith of man are to-day failing him in these difficult matters, upon which there is such a severe divine economy of truth. 'Immanence' is fast leading on to pantheism. In the face of the

frequent defeats of virtue and triumphs of injustice in all ages, and of the cruelty, pain, and waste of the whole known scheme of creation or evolution, say as seen again in the recent ghastly earthquake in Japan, the hand of a kindly God, preserving individual man somewhere and for eternity, is not often traceable. No wonder that so great a philosopher as Lâo-tsze found, like many more, that the existence of evil is an insoluble puzzle. If we shrink away from this problem, we are still reminded of the lowly animistic origins of all religions, and see in them at best pathetic projections of human desires and tokens of anthropomorphic fancies.

These and many more difficulties seem to overturn the theistic base of immortality. Some, like Dean Rashdall (*The Faith and the War*), would revert to Leibnitz's doctrine. They try to save God's reputation for beneficence by giving up faith in his omnipotence. He only does the best He can; but how then, even if all other difficulties were removed, could we be sure of personal immortality? In these perplexities the Dean of St. Paul's would help us by suggesting that God may be a humorist. With Voltairean levity, Dean Inge adds that 'the ironies of history are on a colossal scale, and must, one is tempted to think, cause great amusement to a superhuman spectator.' Have we then still a Christian God of Pity? Soon men may approve again of the epitaph upon Gay's tomb in Westminster Abbey: –

Life is a jest, and all things show it;  
I thought it once, but now I know it.

And what of the soul? Who, like savages or mediæval teachers and artists, can now conceive it as a separate or separable material form? Some would feed themselves with words about a 'spiritual substance.' But Santayana, who here is much like Aristotle, rightly says that the idea of spiritual substance is 'a self-contradictory notion at bottom.' It seems, also, hard to believe that, as one has said, two drink-sodden wretches lying in the straw can beget an immortal soul. Again, the modern biologist asks how, with our knowledge of life and death, a separable soul can be imagined, when and how it enters the body, how soul can survive, and if soul is anything more than a name for psycho-physical energy or for consciousness. It is surely unthinkable that after physical death man's consciousness of identity can endure. To believe in that now means a faith much exalted indeed, but sadly confused. Many serious men are losing faith. Christian

apologists are, as they sometimes confess, fighting a 'rearguard action' (*Foundations*, 1913).

With but obscure notions, if any, as to God and the soul, we expect, and we find, everywhere, especially in Protestant and Anglican communities, a decay of belief in immortality. When, in his very *Outspoken Essays*, he condescends to be serious on religion, Dean Inge roundly tells the clergy that before the War 'reference to the future life had become rare even in the pulpit,' and that the Christian hope of immortality 'burns very dim among us.' He confesses that attacks upon the heaven of popular religion cannot be answered. He will have none of the 'starveling hopes' of necromancy or of that Spiritualism in which some, like Professor Broad, find their doubtful proofs of immortality (*Hibbert Journal*, July, 1923). As to himself, he, Dean Inge, admits a blank ignorance of the fate of the large majority of mankind, who are equally unworthy of heaven and of hell. For those who can follow him, the chief consolation seems to be in some mystical doctrine of 'eternal values.' If we would seek a clearer light, say in Hastings' recent *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, we shall hardly discover it in the articles on Annihilation, Immortality, the Soul, the State of the Dead, and Universalism. There we find vagueness, dispute, and confusion among theologians in every age. As to hell, there is a marked and creditable moral embarrassment. As to a future state, 'we have not any conception, still less any mental picture, of the conditions of that existence.' This is surely not the teaching of the Gospels, or the doctrine of the mystery religion firmly preached by St. Paul. Is it the faith for which the martyrs died?

Small wonder is it that the ecclesiastically-minded layman, Dr. Percy Gardner, in *Evolution and Christian Doctrine* (1918), corroborates the Dean as to pulpit silence, and admits that hell is 'a subject of general incredulity' and the doctrine of heaven 'far more vague,' and that all such beliefs have now 'little practical power.' Indeed, there are even Christians for whom any ideas of eternal rewards and punishments seem immoral; and, albeit not alarmed for themselves, others find heaven unattractive (Hearnlè [Hoernlé], *Matter, Life, Mind, and God*, 1923). May not our children hear multitudes calling themselves Christians and yet lacking any belief in immortality? There are some philosophers, such as Prof. Pringle Pattison (*The Idea of Immortality*, 1923), who are not afraid of the social results of the decay of the belief, and they repudiate most of the old familiar arguments which were supposed to support it. They conceive the soul itself

very vaguely, reckon pure spirit an abstraction, and are not at all clear whether most people will ever live again, or are, indeed, fit to do so.

Immortality thus seems to be going. Do we, then, despair? That is largely a matter of temperament. If we take life at tragic pitch, the prospect may be agonizing. But for many who have only moderate expectations, or, like *Candide*, just cultivate their garden, this life may still abound in interests and attractions of infinite variety, and in opportunities for good. Altruistic instincts and the intelligence which have together built up some civilization will abide in our race, and so will the memory of many noble men and women who have lived and died without hope or fear of another life.



### ●●● **Announcement** ●●●

The editor and his wife, who has been involved in the production of the *Gissing Newsletter*, then of the *Gissing Journal* from 1991, wish to inform our readers that from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013 the present publication will be edited by Professor M. D. Allen of the University of Wisconsin-Fox Valley. His name will be familiar to our subscribers on account of his regular contributions to the *Journal*.

Pierre Coustillas is no longer able for health reasons to carry on his editorial labours, and he is pleased to recommend Professor Allen as his successor, who incidentally was born in Wakefield and has been an admirer of *Gissing* since his student days. Pierre Coustillas also wishes to thank the many friends and colleagues with whom he has worked over the last 44 years of his editorship, not least the members of the editorial board whose faithfulness has been constant.

Good-bye to you all. May *Gissing* and the *Journal* devoted to him continue to prosper!



## Short Stories by Algernon Gissing published in Australia

### More Additions

BOUWE POSTMUS

1. "Bridget's Christmas Dream," *The Christmas Chronicle* (Adelaide), 17 December 1898
2. "Bridget's Christmas Dream," *The Capricornian, Illustrated Christmas Supplement* (Rockhampton, Qld), 17 December 1898, pp. 14-16
3. "The House o' the Dead," *Warwick Examiner and Times* (St. Lucia, Queensland), 5 May 1900, p. 3
4. "The Parson's Text," *The Capricornian* (Rockhampton, Qld), 8 September 1900, p. 7
5. "A Stranger in Deepdale," *Australian Town and Country Journal* (NSW), 10 November 1900, pp. 32-3
6. "Aa'd Nick," *Daily News* (Perth, WA), 14 March 1902, p. 4
7. "A Ruby Key," *Daily News* (Perth, WA), 3 July 1911, p. 8. **NB:** Story is identical to "The Rusty Key," published in the same paper three weeks later. [No. 8 below]
8. "The Rusty Key," *Daily News* (Perth, WA), 22 July 1911, p. 10
9. "Foggin's Heir," *The Capricornian* (Rockhampton, Qld), 22 March 1913, p. 33
10. "Barbara's Dower," *Colac Herald* (Victoria), 31 August 1914, p. 3
11. "The Additional Typist," *Central Queensland Herald* (Rockhampton, Qld), 23 April 1931, pp. 49-50

12. "Merrill's Savings," *Central Queensland Herald* (Rockhampton, Qld), 28 December 1939, pp. 44-5
13. "The Miller's Surprise," *Central Queensland Herald* (Rockhampton, Qld), 31 July 1941, p. 31

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### **Book Reviews**

George Gissing, *Thyrza*, edited with an introduction and notes by Pierre Coustillas, Brighton: Victorian Secrets, 2013

*Thyrza* was the fifth of Gissing's novels and the fourth, following *Workers in the Dawn* (1880), *The Unclassed* (1884), and *Demos* (1886) set in the world of the London working-class. Gissing received a paltry £50 upon the publication of *Thyrza* in 1887 and an even more shocking £10 pounds when the novel was reissued in 1891. Following its initial publication, the novel has been in and out of print. Prior to the present edition, the Harvester Press and Farleigh Dickinson University Press had reissued *Thyrza* in 1974 with an introduction by Jacob Korg. A new edition was overdue.

A small independent British publisher, Victorian Secrets, has been issuing critical editions of Nineteenth Century novels, including novels of Gissing. Victorian Secrets published Gissing's rare first novel, *Workers in the Dawn* in 2010 followed by the publication of *Demos* in 2011. Early this year, Victorian Secrets brought out this scholarly edition of *Thyrza*, edited and with an introduction and explanatory notes by the renowned Gissing scholar, Pierre Coustillas. This paperback volume is attractively produced, easy to hold and to read, and moderately priced. Coustillas' introduction describes the history and themes of the novel while the unobtrusive end-notes explain references that might otherwise be obscure. The edition includes a brief biographical summary of Gissing together with a short bibliography of studies of *Thyrza*. An Appendix, *Thyrza's Geography*, by Richard Dennis, of University College, London, describes the two primary worlds of the novel in London and Eastbourne. The book would benefit from a Table of Contents setting forth the chapter headings of the novel together with the book divisions in the original three-decker.

The present edition has much to offer to both new readers and to those readers already familiar with *Thyrza*. For new readers, the book will be accessible in an excellent scholarly edition. Those familiar with the work will have the opportunity to read *Thyrza* in the original edition, as the publisher has opted to use the novel's 1887 text rather than the revisions Gissing made for the 1891 version.

It was an interesting decision to use the earlier version as virtually every other edition of the book uses the revised 1891 text. It is valuable in itself to have ready access to Gissing's own understanding of his tale at the time when he was immersed in his proletarian novels. The three-decker 1887 text is somewhat longer and more diffuse than the 1891 successor. Gissing cut many passages in which the narrator's voice editorializes effusively on the characters and the action of the story. Gissing also eliminated passages of dialogue which illuminated character but did little to advance the plot. Finally Gissing eliminated an extensive sub-plot from the final third of the novel. For those familiar with the book, the sub-plot involves Thyrza's stay with a couple, Harold and Clara Emerson. As part of her project to educate Thyrza and to raise her status, Mrs. Ormonde had arranged lodgings for the young woman in London. Harold Emerson with misdirected and foolish ambitions to become a poet, becomes infatuated with Thyrza. With her growing independence and self-confidence, Thyrza puts Emerson in his place.

This new edition reprints a 2006 article from the *Gissing Journal* by David Grylls, Kellog College, Oxford, "Gissing's Revision of '*Thyrza*,'" which examines and assesses the differences between the two versions. Grylls finds that Gissing's revisions made *Thyrza* "subtler and sharper." The decision to eliminate the Emerson story was, I think, wise. Grylls also concludes that the 1887 text, "messier and warmer," "remains valuable for [Gissing's] original conception."

I found it illuminating to read Gissing's original version of *Thyrza* for the first time after a lengthy familiarity with the 1891 text. Newcomers to Gissing might have found the latter version less daunting. Gissing's revision of *Thyrza* worked better than his subsequent revision of another early book. In 1895, Gissing edited and shortened drastically his second novel, *The Unclassed*, written in 1884. In so doing, he substantially, in my view, weakened the book. The revisions of *Thyrza* were nowhere near as unfor-

tunate. On balance, they probably improved the novel. There still is a great deal of value in restoring Gissing's original text, as Coustillas has done.

An example of the virtues of the 1887 text of *Thyrza* is close to hand. Gissing began with an epigraph, which he deleted in 1891, from an *Idyll* of Theocritus. Gissing translated the passage, as Coustillas notes: "But we here are mortals, and, being mortals, of mortals let us sing." With the death of its young heroine, its gray, sad tone, its portrayals of the lives of the working poor and of failed dreams, *Thyrza* offers an all-too-human picture of mortals. In *Thyrza*'s emphasis on love and passion and, to a lesser extent, on art, song, and learning, Gissing endeavors to sing realistically about what he finds of value in the lives of mortals.

A tale of idealism, political and personal, and its limitations, *Thyrza* is set over a four-year period in the early 1880's in Lambeth, a poor working-class area of London, in the prosperous seaside community of Eastbourne, and, in important scenes late in the book, in the United States. Walter Egremont, 27, a wealthy educated, well-travelled young man from a working-class background does not know what to do with his life. He forms the project of going to Lambeth to present a series of lectures on literature and the humanities for the uplift of working men. Before travelling to Lambeth, Egremont proposes to a thoughtful educated young woman, Annabel, of his own economic class. He is fond of but lacks passion for Annabel, who rejects him.

Egremont's two sets of lectures in Lambeth on Elizabethan literature and on "Thoughts for the Present" are failures. Only one person, Gilbert Grail, 35, is interested. Grail works in a candle factory and devotes his free time to reading and study. Egremont decides to fund a free library for Lambeth and he asks Grail to be the librarian, with the promise of relief from a life of drudgery.

Approaching 17 at the outset of the novel, *Thyrza* Trent lives with her older sister Lydia in a cheerless apartment. Both young women are factory workers. With her flowing blond hair and beautiful voice, *Thyrza* is possessed of ambition and a lively imagination to see the world beyond Lambeth while Lydia is of a more practical turn of mind. Before learning of Egremont's offer, Grail proposes to *Thyrza* and is accepted. As a result of unanticipated meetings *Thyrza* and Egremont fall in love. A lengthy tale follows in which *Thyrza* breaks her engagement, runs away with shame, and nearly dies before she is rescued by a philanthropist, Mrs. Ormonde,

from Eastbourne, who proposes to educate her. Mrs. Ormonde also aims to keep her friend Egremont from marrying Thyrza because of the broad and in her view insurmountable differences of class. Thus Egremont spends two years in America, ostensibly to learn his own mind. When he returns, hardened, his passion for Thyrza has cooled. Thyrza returns to Grail, but she dies before their marriage can be consummated. Egremont and Annabel agree to what will be a comfortable but lifeless, passionless marriage.

On a social level, Gissing shows affection and understanding for the working people of Lambeth. He also displays a deep skepticism about the possibility of an idealistic program of liberal education as a means for uplifting the working poor. Although Egremont's intentions were good, his program accomplished nothing worthwhile, led to harm, and failed to bridge the divide between social classes.

On a personal level, Egremont also fails. For all the social discussion in the novel, *Thyrza* is primarily a story of the importance of love and romance for a fulfilled human life. In the last analysis, Egremont lacked the self-knowledge and moral courage to act on his love for Thyrza even though she remained in love and eager to come to him. In the absence of full love, Gissing suggests, Egremont's life will be forever atrophied.

Gissing's novel is fleshed out with numerous secondary characters, both men and women, particularly among the working people of Lambeth. While the sea and hills surrounding Eastbourne receive detailed portrayals, Gissing's heart remains with the streets, public houses, shops and apartments of Lambeth. For example, Thyrza makes her first appearance in the story with a friend, an independent young woman, Totty Nancarrow, at an event called a "friendly lead" to raise money for the family of a deceased worker at a Lambeth public house. At this event, Thyrza sings in public for the first time. The book is replete with many descriptions of the events of local life. In a scene in which a group of poor children dance to a barrel-organ playing on Lambeth Walk, Gissing describes:

"the life of men who toil without hope, yet with the hunger of an unshaped desire; of women in whom the sweetness of their sex is perishing under labour and misery; the laugh, the song of the girl who strives to enjoy her year or two of youthful vigour, knowing the darkness of the years to come; the careless defiance of the youth who feels his blood and revolts against the lot which would tame it; all that is purely human in these darkened multitudes speaks to you as you listen. It is the self-conscious striving of a

nature, which knows not what it would attain, which deforms a true thought by gross expression, which clutches at the beautiful and soils it with foul hands.”

Victorian Secrets and Pierre Coustillas deserve thanks from lovers of Gissing for this new edition of *Thyrza*, which will allow readers to explore the song of mortals and of human mortality that is *Thyrza*.—Robin Friedman

George Gissing, *New Grub Street*, London: Penguin Books, 2012.

*New Grub Street* has long been regarded by literary critics as George Gissing’s masterpiece. It is certainly the best known, most enduring, and most popular of his works. According to Pierre Coustillas’s indispensable Gissing bibliography, since its original publication by Smith, Elder & Co in three volumes in 1891, *New Grub Street* has maintained its topicality for each succeeding generation of readers and remained in print for the greater part of the past 120 years. This novel of late-Victorian London literary life enjoyed its first success from 1891 up to the 1893 second printing of the later Smith, Elder one-volume edition. Smith, Elder produced further printings in 1904 and lastly in 1908, while in 1910 George Newnes issued a sixpenny edition. These were out of print by 1921. Six years later James Eveleigh Nash bought the copyright from Smith, Elder for £50 and published the novel under the Nash and Grayson imprint with an introduction by Morley Roberts. The novel was last printed by the firm in January 1938. After this edition sold out *New Grub Street* fell out of favour, at least on this side of the Atlantic, until its reputation was revived in 1958 on becoming an Oxford World’s Classic. Nine years later Bodley Head produced an edition with an introduction by John Gross. Then, in 1968, Penguin added the novel to their Penguin English Library – from 1985 it became a Penguin Classic. From 1977 up to the millennium the Ryburn Press, Oxford University Press, Wordsworth Editions Ltd, and J. M. Dent successively published the novel. Currently, *New Grub Street* is obtainable as an Oxford World’s Classic, as a Wordsworth Classic, in a Broadview Press edition, and in a first English version of Gabrielle Fleury’s 1901 French translation for which Gissing had revised the novel.

As many booklovers will have observed over the years *New Grub Street* has been a mainstay of the eminent Penguin Classics series. The 1968 printing included a scholarly introduction by Bernard Bergonzi. At the time this was a worthy introduction to the novel and the notes and suggestions for further reading were entirely adequate. However, as the years passed one wondered why Penguin continued to retain, in the manifold reprints, the original introduction and critical apparatus. Having compared the twenty-seventh impression with the first, I can confirm that the introduction and notes are exactly as they appeared in 1968. Indeed, the suggestions for further reading are identical and from the perspective of any year since 1980 look positively antiquated – the most recent written recommendation being Jacob Korg’s groundbreaking 1963 Gissing biography. Surprisingly not even Peter Keating’s 1968 monograph on *New Grub Street* gets a mention in any edition by Penguin. Besides acquiring a new cover photograph as a Penguin Classic in 1985, and some minor changes to the copyright page and the text over the years, the two editions remain indistinguishable. It is equally baffling that, whenever Penguin in recent years brought out their classics in various new formats such as a pocket edition, a Popular Classic, a hardcover edition, a Penguin Classics Deluxe edition, a Penguin Red Classic, a Penguin Graded Reader, and as a book/CD combination, not once did they include either of their two Gissing titles.

In view of this 2012 was a special year in Gissing Studies. Firstly, the last two volumes of Pierre Coustillas’s monumental three-volume biography appeared. Secondly, the *Collected Short Stories* were published in three volumes. Thirdly, *New Grub Street* was included in a new series of Penguin Classics re-entitled the Penguin English Library. Particularly pleasing is the fact that the novel, uniform with the other classics in the series, has at last attained a new state. Each title comes in a differently coloured paperback cover with an original cover design by the in-house book designer Coralie Bickford-Smith. In an interview about the popularity of these particular cover designs, Bickford-Smith states that “The cover is there to serve the content, so the content has to be taken into consideration. How and to what extent the content is represented on the cover varies of course – sometimes it will be quite literal, other times more oblique, or even just a suggestion of mood and tone.” The cover of *New Grub Street* is an attractive pale yellow, while the design of blue ink streaks, spots, and

smudges quite literally relates to the literary content of the story between the covers. In comparison, whereas the cover of Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* has an architectural design representing the structure of a university, the cover of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is decorated with various totem heads and skulls.

The inside cover of this edition shows a pencil sketch of Gissing by Mrs Clarence Rook from 1901 "signed in jest" by the subject and H. G. Wells. Opposite this is a brief biographical description of Gissing, then the title page and the copyright page which correctly marks the first printing with a "001". The contents page follows listing the chapters in sequence without marking the division into three volumes (although this division is retained in the actual text). Next is a facsimile of the title page of the first volume of the 1891 Smith, Elder edition. Thereafter the book launches straight into the text of the novel. In keeping with the series format, there is no introduction, no textual note, no suggestions for further reading, and no footnotes nor endnotes – in fact, there is no critical apparatus at all apart from a short essay which appends the novel. The main compensation is that the text has been reset and the font has been slightly enlarged to enable a more pleasant reading experience. As a result, while the text of the Penguin Classic covers 516 pages, the text of the novel in this edition extends to 576 pages. Even so, it looks more compact and feels less bulky.

Having made good by including Gissing in this series, it is unfortunate that Penguin have followed the novel with an essay which predates Bergonzi's 1968 introduction by ten years. It is a missed opportunity, for a new work by a modern scholar would have been preferable. V. S. Pritchett's essay, here entitled "Grub Street," was actually written as a review of G. W. Stonier's 1958 Oxford World's Classics edition of *New Grub Street* for the *New Statesman* under the title "A Chip the Size of a Block." It reappeared under the present title in Pierre Coustillas's 1968 *Collected Articles on George Gissing*. It is worth noting that Gissing was still alive when Pritchett, the renowned short story writer, was born. Hence he belongs to a generation of critics brought up preferring Wells, Bennett, and Galsworthy, one which invariably regarded Gissing as a tragic failure as a man and a novelist. In a 1946 BBC talk about Gissing, to cite Martha Vogeler (from a valuable estimation of V. S. Pritchett's works on Gissing which appeared in the *Gissing Journal* in October 1993), Pritchett said "that Wells and Arnold Bennett had been 'far more successful' in writing



about his favourite subject, lower middle-class life.” Though he admired Gissing, and wrote six pieces about him, these appear at midpoint in the tradition of Gissing criticism. Like his post-war contemporaries Pritchett was deeply influenced by Morley Roberts’s disguised biography of Gissing, *The Private Life of Henry Maitland*, – indeed in his 1958 essay he remarks with joy its reappearance in print – and by Roberts’s view that Gissing ought never to have written novels. Yet, for Pritchett, Gissing has definite merits as a writer, but he believes that ultimately his faults outweigh them. In sum he sees him as a martyr to pessimism in a garret, feels he is deficient in the construction of his novels, lacks human warmth towards his characters, and avoids major incidents for the sake of describing drab scenes. These are judgments that reveal his inability to appreciate Gissing’s achievements as a novelist. Clearly, he is a critic who has read more *about* Gissing and been more deeply influenced by the contemporary view of him—in an era when it was a convention to regard him with disdain—than what Gissing actually wrote himself.

Pritchett’s essay only briefly engages with *New Grub Street*. In the introduction he is reviewing (which devotes a mere page to the novel), he is at once struck by G. W. Stonier’s phrase, “Gissing: the English Gorky with a butterfly collar.” To the expert on Russian literature this phrase is pleasing and he feels compelled to call attention to “the Russian quality of our very suburban novelist for, like Meredith and Disraeli, Gissing brings an alien’s or exile’s unconventional insight into English society.” As proof Pritchett details his exceptional linguistic abilities, seeing him both as a failure and as an Englishman in exile who was profoundly marked by his reading of Russian literature. Coming from a writer who was a noted Russophile, this view carries “special weight” as Martha Vogeler writes in her 1993 article. However, it is his conviction that, fundamentally, “Gissing’s failure and his exile are the cause of his fame.” By this he means that “as always with imperfect artists” his life experience is wrapped up in everything he wrote. In other words, as Walter Allen more “pointedly” put it in *The English Novel*, Pritchett reminds us, Gissing’s novels are “too personal, the powerful expression of a grudge.” Returning to Stonier, Pritchett agrees that Gissing is always “seeing plain,” capturing Kodak-like “the monotony of anguish” in the “life behind windows” without attempting “to transform what is into what is not.” One learns from this that Stonier, the long-time literary editor of the *New Statesman* and translator of

Flaubert, understands Gissing acutely. Elsewhere in his introduction he writes, “We like him grudgingly, or we would be glad to know a little more about him, or we have been on the tail of this or that novel for years, or quite simply never tried. Disgraceful so many of his books should be out of print – but there.” Orwell made similar remarks. But why didn’t they go to the British Museum Reading Room which had all his books? Still this is an apt and sincere view of how things stood with Gissing in the post-war years up to 1958 and shows how far Gissing scholarship has distanced itself from those days in the wilderness. Stonier is again on the mark when he says, “And all he needs is a whole-hearted admirer.” Little did he know that Pierre Coustillas and Jacob Korg were about to take up the torch. For Pritchett, after all, “Walter Allen’s suggestion of the grudge is more interesting,” than anything else Stonier has to say. “The grudge is concerned with education and opportunity,” he remarks. He believes that throughout his body of work Gissing constantly questions the 1870 Education Act, scorning the winning of a scholarship because it results in clever boys from Board Schools living without proper means in intellectual exile “in stultifying and unseemly surroundings.” His grudge is that of the outsider who rejects “modern society altogether because it did not provide a place for the recalcitrant scholar and the pure artist who was poor.”

Pritchett now turns his thoughts to *New Grub Street*, whose theme he identifies as “the tragedy of the intellectual worker.” The comic element, he notes, has no place in Gissing’s “view of writers.” He is instead an unrelenting observer, who describes with “grey exactitude and clarity” literary life in all its aspects. His portrayal of “the gifted and only moderately saleable” Reardon he considers “masterly.” Furthermore, Gissing’s description of “the writer’s day as he sits at his desk is exact, touching, and terrifying” and “would serve for any novelist,” except that Reardon has “a morbid lack of will.” Interestingly Pritchett feels that the literary world of his own day is little different from that of Gissing. The main difference being that journalism now “offers therapy to the writer who can stand the ulcers and suicidal depression of creative writing no more.” He forgets that Gissing actually spurned opportunities to supplement his income by writing for the press out of a profound contempt for journalism as a profession.

Referring to *The Private Life of Henry Maitland*, Pritchett observes that Roberts thought Gissing, like most English writers, was unable to exploit scenes to their full out of a national feeling of shame “and dread of feeling.”

Yet he personally feels that “Gissing excelled, as many have, in irony.” His characters, though in the main “passive,” are living creatures, even if “their temperature is, indeed, low.” Jasper Milvain and Amy Reardon he sees as “two new and disturbing developments of the passive character.” As a journalist Milvain is bold and quick to seize the main chance. As he “climbs” the ladder of success he deceives himself, for “it is his conscience that is passive,” into believing that by admitting to his true motives this “clear[s] him of all moral obligation.” Amy has a woman’s passivity, Pritchett explains, “but she drifts with skill.” Gissing’s depiction of her mental journey is, unusually for an English novelist, “realistic” and “discerning.” She had every right “to wish to marry a great man,” and she is justified in losing all feeling for him in the smothering and impoverished atmosphere of his failure. It is poetic justice, then, that she becomes Milvain’s wife at the end. She has attained her “dream of gentility.” Pritchett contends that it is this “individual dream” that gives strength to Gissing’s characterisation of the lower middle-class. He depicts them with all seriousness “as they are and as they would wish to become” without, like “most novelists,” describing class differences or aspirations as comical. “That is where Gissing is so un-English, a foreigner or an exile,” Pritchett concludes.

Priced at £5.99 this new edition of *New Grub Street* is excellent value and will surely help to bring Gissing’s name before an even wider readership than was possible at the more prohibitive £11.99 in the Penguin Classics edition.—Markus Neacey

### ***Bella Italia - then***

*Bella Italia. Fotografien und Gemälde 1815-1900.* Aus den Sammlungen Dietmar Siegert, Münchner Stadtmuseum und Von der Heydt-Museum. Herausgegeben von Gerhard Finckh, Ulrich Pohlmann, Dietmar Siegert. Heidelberg/ Berlin: Kehrer Verlag 2012. 247 pp. / €35.00 / ISBN 978-3-86828-316-7

Italy, the land where the proverbial lemon-trees blossom, has for centuries attracted travellers, art lovers and artists particularly from Europe. The latest proof thereof is a superbly produced exhibition catalogue: *Bella Italia*.

*Fotografien und Gemälde* [Photographs and Paintings] 1815-1900, a compilation stemming from Italian, French, English and German photographers and artists. It is a large-scale photographic reflection on the “Longing for Italy,” as sketched by Gerhard Finckh and Ulrich Pohlmann in their brief introductory essay. It is preceded by a frontispiece which may be contemplated with an ironic mind – Bernhard Fries’s painting *Italienische Landschaft* [Italian landscape] (1842), its colours ranging from warm blue and rich yellow to earthen brown, is an irresistible visual invitation; it perfectly underlines and symbolizes the very high hopes many travellers may have been entertaining before setting off for Italy. (NB: George Gissing’s excitement on the eve of his first journey there, in 1888, is a telling example of such unrestrained longing, or adoration, notwithstanding his knowledge and critical understanding of Italian history and politics.)

Which Italy captured in c. 200 b/w photographs do we find in this volume? Are our expectations of sights, smells and sensualities triggered by the sheer sound of “Italy” met or even fulfilled? What are our reactions when we look at the other, the less blooming side of life on the Apennine peninsula? More often than not, we have before us carefully arranged scenes due to the then necessary length of exposure, and not snapshots catching the spirit of a given moment. There is sunshine, no doubt; there are people; there is some kind of street life – and yet the overall impression is one of visiting a museum. But what an intriguing and fascinating museum it is, full of unwonted sights and contrasts which correct the notion of the land of our dreams and visions. Take, for instance, the photographs on pp. 22 and 23: the first, simply entitled *Grand Hôtel* (by Giorgio Sommer, c. 1880), shows an empty dining-room in one of the leading houses of Naples, its tables carefully laid, its walls decorated by enormous mirrors, its ceiling covered with a large painting; on the second we see a Neapolitan woman pushing a heavy hay-cart (by Atelier Giacomo Brogi, c. 1880). Can there be a stronger example of palace and hut existing side by side, of two different, or parallel, worlds in one country? The tension that hangs between these two photographs is characteristic of the entire volume – we look at a world gone by from a seemingly enlightened point of view, from a seemingly safe distance, and at the same time we are entangled in stories told in pictures of a rather gloomy non-colour. (NB: This tension can best be re-read and, in manifold ways, understood in most of Gissing’s

writings on Italy.) We may feel a little bit more at ease, though, when we contemplate what according to the order in the catalogue is a triptych of a kind: on p. 178 we see the then well-known German tavern on Capri, ‘*Zum Kater Hiddigeigi*’ (by G. Sommer, c.1880) with a crowd of people in front of this pub enjoying the atmosphere out in the open; on p. 179, there is the colour painting *Pergola* (by Hans von Marées, 1873) showing an early evening scene with five men relaxing at a table and a woman breastfeeding her child; on p. 181, we have another photograph of Giorgio Sommer’s, *Hotel Pagano* on Capri (1886), showing a table less luxuriously laid than that at Naples, with plenty of uncorked bottles of wine and water carafes, the room breathing a Dionysian spirit, expecting its guests to arrive any minute; we can almost smell the food that is going to be served, and imagine a company looking forward to having a jolly good time.

A special treat – veritable bright spots on the horizon – are eleven colour paintings. They are juxtaposed to a photograph with the same motif, making us wonder at the different ways of artistic expression and the effects thereby created: we have there the telling contrast between the old-fashioned art of colour painting with its views of warm and pleasant illusion, its seductive power and spiritual richness vs. the modern art of black-and-white photography with its views of cold realism, its sobriety and stunning, relentless, literally enlightening details. A few examples may illustrate the attraction of the double views thus arranged.

- On p. 34 a *Kostümszene in Bellagio am Comer See* [costume scene at Bellagio on Lake Como], by Fotografia Bosetti (c. 1870), is reproduced; we see a young woman holding a distaff and spindle, with a grave, tired, concentrated, almost sad expression on her face, yet somehow relaxed, standing in front of a dark studio background, without any professional or, the caption notwithstanding, local context. Opposite, on p. 35, is Friedrich Overbeck’s painting *Bildnis der Vittoria Caldoni* [portrait of Vittoria Caldoni] (c. 1821): a female peasant supporting her head, in a pensive mood, obviously pausing after harvesting heavy honey melons with a sickle, sitting on what looks like a heap of empty sacks; the background, half hidden by her body, is her work environment: a tree, a cornfield, a bay; we do not see a single drop of sweat, and yet we get a sense of that hard work under the merciless sun. Both portraits, in their clarity, remind us of Gissing’s observations of people made throughout Italy and so vividly and lovingly described, e.g., in chapter 8 of *By the Ionian Sea*, “Faces by the way.”

- On p. 96, Adolph von Heydeck's painting *Blick auf Rom* [view of Rome] (1815) intrigues us with a light and bright, early summer-like clear-blue sky above a part of the town (with St. Peter's dominating the background), leaving us with the desire of spending some time in the Eternal City; Carlo Baldassarre Simelli's photograph *Wolkenstudie über Rom* [study of clouds over Rome] (c. 1862), on p. 97, however, with the city's barely recognizable skyline, makes us wish instead to leave it or at least to soon seek shelter from what seems to be developing into a thunderstorm, the early evening mood being one of imminent threat.

- Heinrich Reinhold's painting *Küste bei Pozzuoli* [shore near Pozzuoli] (c. 1823), on p. 156, breathes the spirit of the above-mentioned "Italian landscape": we see part of a building, maybe a temple, with at least three columns; there are bushes, olive trees, cacti, a small section of the Gulf of Naples with a small fishing boat and, in the far background, probably the Isle of Capri – and two living souls: a mother and her child, just entering the picture and perhaps in search of an access to the empty beach, the sandpath behind them strangely lit. On p. 157, Giorgio Sommer's photograph taken around the corner from Pozzuoli shows the ruins of the monumental *Venustempel in Baiae* [temple of Venus at Baiae.] (c. 1862); a three-master with hoisted sails lying at anchor c. 200 yards away hints at some kind of activity, yet the mood in this photograph, with its barely visible two or three people, is one of bleakness and utter forlornness – only a few miles away from busy Naples and the world of *The Emancipated*.

- Giorgio Sommer's photograph *Blick von Capo di Massa auf Capri* [view of Capri from Capo di Massa] (c. 1865), on p. 174, may have served as a perfect specimen of a picture postcard: from the perspective of a huge peephole framed by two trees, we look over an orchard in the foreground and across the bay to the legendary island, a sleeping giant not to be disturbed, in the centre background. Oswald Achenbach's painting *Blick auf Capri* (1884), on p. 175, however, is more inviting not only because distant Capri is bathed in soft sunlight, but also because we may wish to chat with the four people harvesting or cleaning a small agricultural area.

Ulrich Pohlmann, in his knowledgeable essay "Between Educational Experiences and Sweet Idleness [*dolce far niente*]: The Grand Tour in Fine Arts, Photography and Literature of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century," allows us many an insight into the psychology of travelling, into how this particular business began to take shape, and into our contradictory reception and behaviour as

present-day visitors. Pohlmann's views describe, and set up, the mental background for the photographic trip which forms the main pictorial section of the volume. Its six chapters lead us from the northern regions of Piedmont, Lombardy, Liguria, and Emilia Romagna (pp. 26-45) via the northeastern Veneto (pp. 46-79) to the heartlands of Tuscany and Umbria (pp. 76-87) as well as Rome and Latium (pp. 88-139) on to the South, i.e. Naples, Vesuvius and Capri (pp. 140-191) and Sicily (pp. 192-205). Single buildings can be studied on roughly a third, people on little over a quarter of all photographs; with roughly twenty landscapes and double that number of townscape the distribution may seem slightly out of balance, but all in all we have before us an exquisite selection of impressions of yesteryear's Italy.

The noteworthy annex consists of a list of works, a glossary, a bibliography, short biographies of all [53] photographers and [11] painters, and a chronology of Italy. The volume ends with Ulrich Pohlmann's remarks on "The Risorgimento" in which he pays homage to Garibaldi, his men, his deeds; the accompanying photographs were taken between 1849 and 1866.

The present volume is a most welcome addition to, and augmentation of, the catalogue *Neapel und der Süden* [Naples and the South] reviewed in the April 2012 *Gissing Journal*, pp. 37-39. Partly drawing on the same source, the prestigious and renowned Munich-based Siegert Collection of historic photographs, there are a few overlaps; the present volume, though, differs substantially from the other one. Undoubtedly a publication in its own right, it is worth acquiring by Italophiles and Gissingites alike.—Wulfhard Stahl

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### Notes and News

Another change has taken place recently in the Gissing world. At the latest committee meeting of the Gissing Trust in Wakefield, on 13 March, Anthony Petyt, its Hon. Secretary/Treasurer for the last 26 years, offered his resignation. His work in that capacity was exemplary and showed him a worthy successor of Clifford Brook, the first Hon. Secretary/Treasurer of the Trust, from 1978 to 1987, who died in 1992. As many visitors could testify, Anthony Petyt was always available and ready to entertain them, to take them to sites of Gissing interest in the city, to show them round the

Gissing Centre, where he often put up exhibitions dealing with the writer, his family and his circle. An expert on life in Wakefield in the Gissings' time, he also contributed a number of valuable articles to this *Journal*. For all this activity we owe him our most grateful thanks. He will be succeeded by Pat Colling, who joined the committee some months ago. Pat Colling holds a Masters degree from Leeds University and dealt in her thesis with Gissing's slum novels. As for Ros Stinton, of the Idle Booksellers, who, from Yorkshire, has efficiently taken care of subscriptions and distribution since 1991, and whose work for us will cease with the present number, she also deserves to be warmly thanked for her help through all these years.

Rugby, Tennessee, is celebrating this year the 130<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Thomas Hugues Public Library, where the 7,000 volumes of the collection—all 19<sup>th</sup> century books, none dating after 1899 and still in their original shelf locations—are shown to visitors taking Historic Rugby's guided tours. On 12 May Wulfhard Stahl, the acknowledged authority on Eduard Bertz, will be giving in Rugby a special free lecture about the first librarian of the institution.

Professor Ian Deary, of the University of Edinburgh, has drawn our attention to an MPhil thesis submitted in 2011 at the University of Birmingham, by Marie O'Connor, entitled *Gissing and unhealth: an analysis of medicine, death and eugenics in the work of George Gissing*. The abstract reads: The study explores unhealth in the work of the fin-de-siècle realist writer George Gissing, whose novels are suffused with examples of illness and death. The aim is to discover whether he used unhealth as a way of prescribing a healthy, middle-class status quo. Character response to and author treatment of medicine, death and eugenics will be explored, reflecting how health and unhealth are controlled, feared and embraced. Chapter one focuses on medicine and power relationships between unhealth and health through the work of Michel Foucault. Chapter two uses Sigmund Freud's death drive in documenting the protagonists' journey to death. Chapter three looks at the texts alongside the eugenic doctrines of Francis Galton, to see if Gissing's protagonists are part of a moral cull because of their unhealth. In concluding his novels Gissing maintains a middle-class status quo as his unhealthy protagonists are removed. His protagonists resist doctoring as it is a form of power and can prolong lives that Gissing



believes should be ended. The protagonists are on a marked journey to death because of their unhealth and their inherited traits mean they have to die. Gissing makes this a welcomed and blissful release for both the protagonists and remaining characters.

Professor Deary also brought to our notice a mention of Gissing made by Karl Pearson, the well-known mathematician and statistician, in his *Life and Letters of Francis Galton*, vol. 3 (1930), p. 312. Pearson is quoting from a letter of his to Galton, dated 8 April 1907, in which he referred to his recent reading of *Ryecroft*: “I read, much to my own pleasure, George Gissing’s *Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*. It is quite different from anything I have previously read of Gissing; over and over again false and annoying, but it is really literature, and there are some fine passages—pessimistic though they be. If you do not know it, it is worth considering.”

Ashgate has announced the publication next September in its Nineteenth Century Series of *George Gissing and the Woman Question*, a collection of essays edited by Christine Huguet and Simon J. James. “The collection places Gissing alongside nineteenth- and twentieth-century authors as diverse as Paul Bourget, Ella Hepworth Dixon, May Sinclair and Theodore Dreiser, theorizing the ways in which late-Victorian sexual difference is challenged, explored and performed in Gissing’s work.” Among the contributors are to be found David Grylls, Roger Milbrandt, Maria Teresa Chialant, Diana Maltz and M. D. Allen.

We can look forward next year to yet another Gissing title to be published by Victorian Secrets. After *Workers in the Dawn*, *Demos* and *Thyrza*, the Brighton firm will bring out *The Whirlpool*, edited by Simon J. James.

Simon Kinder, Head of the History Department at Gresham’s School, Holt, Norfolk, has been in touch with us and telling us that the school, which was attended by both Gissing’s sons, Walter and Alfred, was preparing to mark in various ways the important anniversaries of the first World War, in which 107 pupils and 3 members of the staff perished. Walter, as we know, fell at the Battle of the Somme on 1 July 1916, and his memory will be evoked, with that of the young men from Gresham’s who lost their lives in those four years of the War, in a book under preparation,

to be published next year. We were glad to hear that the school brings pupils over to France every year on a pilgrimage, notably to Thiepval where stands the huge Memorial to the Missing of the Somme on whose arches are engraved the names of the 73 367 British soldiers whose bodies remained unidentified. The names which were becoming almost illegible on the weather-beaten sides of the arches are in the course of restoration, Mr. Kinder tells us. We are reproducing on the next page a 1904 photograph of Woodlands, which was Walter's house for most of his presence at Gresham's from the autumn of 1902 to the summer of 1908.

We have received from an English friend an article, "By the Ionian Sea," by an Oxford man in quest of celebrity but not of accuracy, published in *The Oldie* for March 2013, pp. 60-61, and partly concerned with Gissing in Cotrone. His knowledge of Gissing is not impressive. The distance between Oxford and the Ionian Sea is a good deal longer than Mr. Pettifer imagines, but it is nonetheless clear that the author has tried to find memories of Gissing in the Italian town. He pretends to be knowledgeable but his sources are not far to seek. He is as one could expect most anxious to rake up mud, unaware that he fouls his own nest. Except in his title, he is bent on offering an ugly image of the shores of the Ionian Sea. He probably thinks he understands Gissing and his work, but he is wide of the mark. So that the most valuable part of his article is in the illustrations. At least we are told that the locals are friendly, as Italians usually are in the south. Yet how many readers of the article will reach that stage? Pettifer reveals the level of his thoughts in his very first line: "Few ladies dream of sleeping in George Gissing's bed." Serious readers will feel obliged to ignore him. He does not invite further acquaintance. His article would be pathetic if it was not bathetic.

Hazel Bell, the well-known indexer, has an article in the Spring 2013 issue of the Society of Indexers' newsletter, *Sidelights*, entitled "Judging a Book by its Index," in which she quotes Robert Irwin's satirical article,

“Your novel needs indexing” (in *New Writing* 9, 2000). Irwin declared that the quality of a novel is reflected in its index, should there be one. In his

opinion, the index in Gissing's tedious *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* shows "at a glance" that the book is "bookmanly, tweedy, insular, complacent stuff." Hazel Bell goes on to say that she herself found the contents of Irwin's 1986 novel, *The Limits of Vision*, so variegated, that she compiled an index to its 120 pages, and came up with a huge quantity of topics as varied as the Almighty, Galton, Newton, Jean-Paul Sartre, genius, prostitution, typhoid, washing up, and World War II. She concluded: "Can readers imagine what quality and themes of a novel this index suggests? What plot could possibly bring in all these topics—some so very esoteric—in only 120 pages? And is this index so intriguing as to make people decide to read the book?"

Anthony Quinn, the book and film critic, published at the end of last year his third novel, *The Streets* (Jonathan Cape, 2012), set in London in the early 1880s, or more precisely in Somers Town, an appalling slum in the St. Pancras area. This is a Victorian historical novel, whose setting is reminiscent of Gissing's own in *The Unclassed* or *The Nether World*, only more grim and with greater violence displayed in it than in Gissing's own work. The naïve young hero, seeking work and anonymity in London after serving a time in prison for the theft committed to assist a damsel who seriously misled him, is horrified by the squalor and destitution he discovers in Somers Town, and valiantly goes to battle against the landlords and others who by their greediness and corruption make the lives of the poor so unbearable. Anthony Quinn acknowledges his debt to Charles Booth and Mayhew, but his documentation is so rich that he might have known the Victorian Somers Town in another life, and he uses it so well that his story is remarkably vivid while being enriched by his deep sympathy for the inhabitants of the slums. The author, a staunch admirer of Gissing, has quietly scattered through the book recognizable allusions to his life and works—biographical episodes, character names like Snowdon, Trent and Casti, details from novels, and even a quotation in Italian made by Gissing in his diary! Strongly recommended.

Our American friend Susan Grzyb reports her recent acquisition of an intriguing photograph taken, according to the inscription in ink on the back, at "Lindow Grove School, Alderley Edge, Cheshire" in a large childish hand, an inscription followed, in smaller, grown-up handwriting, by the

words: “In 1875. George Gissing, the later English novelist, and his brother Algernon, are in the group, besides my brother Herbert & myself.” The younger boys are sitting in the front rows, the older ones standing at the back, with four men, obviously masters, and two women who probably helped the Headmaster’ wife, also standing at the back. On the right hand side of the group are standing James Wood and his wife, Wood’s hand resting on the shoulder of the young man assumed by Susan to be George, who seems to be about 18. He and a younger youth are dressed in exactly the same grayish suits, while all the other boys are wearing dark clothes. Since we know of no photos of the two brothers facing the camera in that year, it is difficult to be quite sure of their being the Gissing brothers but the owner of the photo must have known them, and Wood’s attitude implies his pride in his most brilliant pupil. But who was the original owner of the photo? Impossible to say as in the 1870s there were several boys called Herbert who had brothers at the school in the same years. The photo Susan acquired was discovered by the seller between the pages of Charmian Kitteredge’s own copy of her book about her husband *The Book of Jack London*. How did it get there? Can any of our readers throw light on the whole affair?

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## Recent Publications

### Volume

George Gissing, *Thyrza*, edited with an introduction and notes by Pierre Coustillas, Brighton: Victorian Secrets, 2013. This is a reset edition of the 3-volume first edition in the series edited by Debbie Harrison. The volume also contains a Chronology of Gissing’s life, a Select Bibliography and a Note on the Text by Pierre Coustillas, and two Appendices, David Grylls’s article “Gissing’s Revision of *Thyrza*,” originally printed in the January 2006 *Gissing Journal*, and Richard Dennis’s “*Thyrza*’s Geography,” to which are attached maps of Egremont’s World and *Thyrza*’s World prepared by Richard Dennis and drawn by Miles Irving of the Drawing Office at University College London. Black and white paperback. Pp. 567. £12. ISBN 978-1-906469-32-0.

## Articles, reviews, etc

Kate Taylor, *Not so Merry Wakefield*, Barnsley, Yorkshire: Wharncliffe Books, 2005. This is a personal account of the author's life in Wakefield, with numerous illustrations. Contains various passages on Gissing and the creation of the Gissing Centre.

M. D. Allen, review of *The Heroic Life of George Gissing, Part I: 1857-1888*, *Victorians: A Journal of Culture and Literature*, 122 (Fall 2012), pp. 136-39.

John Sutherland, *Lives of the Novelists: A History of Fiction in 294 lives*, Yale U. P., 2012. Sutherland did not seem to think Gissing worthy of an entry, but referred to him on four occasions, in the entries on Meredith (as literary adviser to Chapman & Hall “he was to assist the careers of, among others, George Gissing, Olive Schreiner, Ouida, and Thomas Hardy,” pp. 152-53); on Arnold Bennett, p. 265, who was writing “reviews for the London prints: Gissing’s ‘New Grub Street’ held no terrors for Arnold”; on W. Somerset Maugham, p. 291, apropos of whose first novel, *Liza of Lambeth*, Sutherland wrote “Published in 1897 (the ‘year of jubilee’ as Gissing calls it in *his* Lambeth novel”—surely an inadequate remark; and finally in the entry on Patrick Hamilton’s first novel, *Monday Morning*, written “in the depressive-realistic style of Gissing or the jaunty comic style of W. W. Jacobs.”

Martha Vogeler, review of *The Heroic Life of George Gissing, Part III: 1897-1903*, *Choice*, CIP, February 2013.

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## Tailpiece

As the major English novelist to begin publishing in the eighties, George Gissing understood both the purposes of the new socialism and the conditions that made necessary its work. Introducing him to miseries almost subhuman, his own bitter experience had left him little sympathy with the existing economic system. In despair he had turned at one time to Comte’s Religion of Humanity and, when befriended by Frederic Harrison, had even become for a while an active member of

the Positivist Society. Yet his aesthetic impulses had been from the beginning at war with his social conscience. And as the acquisition of a coveted book had seemed in his most indigent days more needful to his survival than the purchase of a dinner, he came before long to feel the demands of his craft more urgent than the dissemination of any social doctrine.

It was natural then that an unresolved conflict between the artist and the reformer, or the artist and a milieu that defied reformation, should furnish the principal theme of his many volumes. In *Workers in the Dawn* (1880), for instance, Helen Norman the heroine learns from Tennyson's "Palace of Art" the emptiness of "intellectual delights" and finds in Comtism the means by which her short unhappy life may reach some measure of fulfillment; but Arthur Golding the hero, a painter unable to record the ugliness that has obscured his vision of beauty, suffers complete frustrations in a grim world from which a melodramatic suicide affords the sole escape. Contributing directly to his downfall, Arthur's union with a besotted slattern, one of the many marriages in Gissing surely made in hell, serves as symbol of the tragic disparity between the artist's ideal and the sordid reality to which he is fettered.

*Workers in the Dawn* is, of course, in large part autobiographical, and, broadly speaking, its hero's struggle is his creator's. Similarly, in *The Unclassed* (1884), the progress of Waymark the novelist towards the scientific detachment of "art for art's sake" reflects Gissing's own effort to convince himself that "only as artistic material has human life any significance," while his final unwilling recognition of man's social responsibilities indicates the force that defeated Gissing's every attempt at a pure "aesthetic" objectivity. And in *New Grub Street* (1891), Reardon's fierce battle to maintain a literary standard has likewise its immediate personal parallel. None of the novels approaches in disinterest the clinical naturalism of *A Mummer's Wife* by George Moore, published in 1885 as a conscious tribute to the theory and practice of Zola. For Gissing, always less independent than Moore of the backgrounds he was describing, could neither restrain his compassion nor withhold moral judgment. Far from doing so, he identified himself with his doomed protagonists, sensitive souls warped by circumstance, rejected by a commercial society, but finding no imaginative stimulus in a doctrinaire radicalism, prone to endless self-pity, yet forever faithful in their fashion to an incomplete aesthetic ideal.

Gissing's dread of poverty and his revulsion from the evils that were its logical consequence made impossible a sympathetic or even wholly dispassionate portrayal of urban life on its lowest levels. Yet his desire for the economic security he felt essential to the artist in no way mollified his indictment of the prosperous Philistines with their shoddy substitutes for culture. His aversion of the complacent middle class prompted such satire as his caricature of Samuel Barmby, the suc-

cessful bourgeois of *In the Year of Jubilee* (1894), who, having read about *In Memoriam*, called it “one of the books that have made me what I am.” Mr. Barmby’s mind, we are told, “was packed with the oddest jumble of incongruities; Herbert Spencer jostled with Charles Bradlaugh, Matthew Arnold with Samuel Smiles; in one breath he lauded George Eliot, in the next he was enthusiastic over a novel by Mrs. Henry Wood.” For Mr. Barmby was a typical product of the new education, not quite illiterate, but zealously ignorant of any intellectual, moral, or aesthetic criterion apart from hearsay or popular prejudice.

Such readers (the bulk, it seemed, of the new reading public), while professing a love of literature, were prepared to destroy the writer who placed any strain whatsoever upon the indolent intellect or the sluggish imagination. Though ardent devotees of fiction, they had little use for the novel of ideas or the novel, commended by the philosopher Green, that strove to assert in an age of specialists the claims of “mankind at large ... as against the influence of class and position.” They were, in short, Gissing felt, inimical to all serious art and openly hostile to the Reardons, the Waymarks, the Goldings, the Gissings—to all concerned with the artist’s integrity and his truth to nature. And they were encouraged in their hostility by a new journalism designed for their special consumption, shaped to satisfy the ill-formed tastes of their own social “class and position.” Jasper Milvain of *New Grub Street* was franker perhaps, but no more ruthless, than his living prototypes, in announcing his will to follow a journalistic career dedicated to the proposition that “to please the vulgar, you must, one way or another, incarnate the genius of vulgarity.” The popular *Chit-Chat*, encouraged by Jasper, a digest which reduced thought to anecdote and news to gossip, scarcely matched in vogue the actual *Tid-Bits* of George Newnes. And Jasper’s ultimate success as publicist but dimly foreshadowed the far more spectacular triumph of Alfred Harmsworth. Yet it illustrated with sufficient clarity the unaesthetic power of the new Philistines.

Jerome Hamilton Buckley, *The Victorian Temper: A Study in Literary Culture*, London: Frank Cass & Co., 1966, pp. 210-12