

THE GISSING NEWSLETTER

“More than most men am I dependent on sympathy to bring out the best that is in me.”
– George Gissing’s *Commonplace Book*.

Volume XII, Number 4
October, 1976

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Gissing and the Gaussens: some Unpublished Documents

Anthony Curtis

When I was researching into the life of George Gissing for a centenary radio portrait broadcast on the Third Programme in November 1957, and a biography of him still not completed (!), I wrote to one of his former pupils Brigadier-General James R. Gaussen, C. M. G., C. I. E., D. S. O., then in his retirement at East Dean Manor in Wiltshire, requesting an interview with him about Gissing. He replied on August 19, 1958:

I fear that for the time being I am not fit to receive visitors – I am in my 88th year – but as soon as I can I will write *all* that I can about my life with him for you.

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Subscriptions

Private Subscribers: £1.00 per annum
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The Brigadier was as good as his word and in November I received another letter from him with some enclosures. I give it in full:

East Dean Manor, Wilts.
Nov. 8th '58

Dear Curtis,

At long last I have written out my remembrances of George Gissing as promised: I only hope you can read it, as it is written propped up in bed!

I only hope you may find something in it that may be of use to you. I enclose (please do not bother to return) a sonnet by G. G. which is possibly the only one he wrote. Must have been written at Broughton Hall for my Mother: she had been telling him a lot about India and of the gardens of Kashmir. Also a letter to show how poorly G. G. was paid by his publishers: £100 for "Demos" in 3 volumes.

Yours sincerely

J. R. Gaussen

The letter reads as follows:

7.K. Cornwall Residences
Regent's Park, N.W.

26th Feb. '86

Dear Mrs. Gaussen,

Smith and Elder have bought my new book for £100, and go to press immediately. They have not even waited to see the 3rd Volume. The name is "Demos," and it will be pubd anonymously. I write to ask for your good word among your friends as soon as the book is announced. It will appear in 3 Vols. before the end of March. By just mentioning the name among your friends, and saying

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that the book deals with Socialism, you will be able to help me appreciably, and I shall be very grateful.

Payn expects a great success.

Believe me

Sincerely yours,

George Gissing.

Gissing was still under 30 when he wrote that, still full of ambition, and half in love with Mrs. Gaussen. It is fascinating to find him indulging in a trifling piece of log-rolling on his own behalf. The sonnet was written two years earlier and was not the only one he wrote. The occasion for it was Gissing's move to Cornwall Residences which, as the Brigadier's own contribution makes plain, was prompted and organised by Mrs. Gaussen. When he was installed there she sent via her son a bunch of flowers from Broughton Hall, Lechlade, in Gloucestershire. Gissing's thank-you letter took the form of the following poem:

A Sonnet

The flowers are such as English gardens bear;
And as my eye rests on their tender hues
The town has vanish'd, and I cannot choose
But wander in green ways, and taste the air
Sweet from broad English pastures. Yet when'er
I veil my sight, imagination views
Strange Orient scenes, and wafted odour woo's
My thought to Indian gardens, fiercely fair.

For these were gather'd in an English home,
Where, as I walked amid the mingled scents,
You spoke of Eastern memories; of tents
Pitch'd in wild valleys where the leopards roam;
Of flowers that bloom by trackless torrent-rents,
And mighty rivers rolling golden foam.

G. G. 18-9-84

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As the sonnet reveals Gissing had romantic memories of Broughton Hall but the impression made by him during his first visit there on the boy who was to become his pupil was an unforgettably pathetic and also a comic one. Here is the Brigadier's account of his tutor:

“George Gissing and my boyhood contact with him”

My parents were anxious that I should gain a Scholarship at Uppingham, which was then entirely “classical” under Teddy Thring. Frederick (*sic*) Harrison told them that no-one was more fit to give an opinion of my capabilities in this line than George Gissing. He was accordingly invited to come down to us, and to stop the night, as our home, Broughton Hall, Lechlade, was in the depths of the country. I still remember his arrival in our high dog-cart, dressed in a black frock coat and top hat and in time for lunch: poor man he must have hired it all! He was terribly shy. My eldest sister took him round the grounds and gave him a juicy pear: he was too nervous to state that he could not eat fruit, so slipped it into his frock-coat pocket and, of *course*, sat on it at tea-time!! The upshot was he agreed to coach me up in London. He was living in rather squalor and I was boarded out in Wigmore Street, but my Mother soon arranged things on a better basis and got a small flat, 7K Cornwall Mansions, close to Mme Tussauds, where we were both to live. I fancy this must have been one of the first Artisans' Flats built; dimly lit stone staircases and each flat had two rooms and a little kitchen and washplace but no bathroom. We shared one room as a bedroom and the other was sitting-room cum work room and eating-room. My Mother also tackled Gissing's publishers, who, in her opinion, had been very far from generous to him with his books and got him much better terms. There is no doubt that Gissing had a passionate love for Latin and Greek poetry and all my life I have been grateful to him for passing on a little bit of this to me. Incidentally I got my scholarship all right, and later on passed into Sandhurst on Latin, Greek and French with high

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marks, and probably bottom marks for Maths, as neither Gissing nor Uppingham had much use for them, even when I was in the 6th Form. At 87 I can still spout quite a bit of Gissing's favourite Latin verses, but alas! not Greek ones now.

To me he was always a most kind and gentle man. Just think of the annoyance of having a young cub hanging round when you were trying to write books for your bread and butter! I give you an example. Gissing's only luxury was probably his pipe. Tobacco could be had then for 2½d per ounce and he had three very old pipes and *very* out-worn ones. When he was out I thought I would do him a kindness; I filled a small bowl with very soapy hot water, put in the three pipes and stirred well with a stick; then drained them and put them to dry in a hot place. Of course they all cracked and split! Most men would have walloped me, but Gissing did not even scold me as he was sure "I meant it kindly."

Looking back Gissing must have been suffering at that time from melancholia and very nearly did a horribly cruel thing. I used to go to bed after our supper and he used to sit up writing for ages, and as a rule [I] did not wake when he came to bed – I forget if it was gas or tallow candles in the bed-room. One night I woke with a start and with horror saw him standing in front of the mirror in the act of cutting his throat with a razor. I called out "Mr. Gissing! Mr. Gissing!" and he closed the razor and handed it over to me, saying: – "Boy, boy. Keep it safely." Next morning I slipped the razor quietly onto his table.

I entirely lost touch with Gissing. I was 30 years on and off in India. But it was a joy to me to learn that he ended his days in a house of his own, well looked after, and free from the nagging worry of how he would buy his next meal, and above all I like to think that there he found the happiness he had missed all his life.

I think one of his books was dedicated to my Mother and people said that one of the chief characters [Isabel Clarendon] was modelled on her; she certainly did a lot for the impoverished writer.

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Gissing's Friends: More Light on the Gaussens

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[Martha Vogeler is completing a biography of Frederic Harrison.]

About fourteen years after Alice stepped through the Looking Glass and, eventually finding herself in a crowded railway carriage without a ticket, decided that "there's no use in speaking," (1) her creator, "Lewis Carroll," travelling on the 6.30 evening train from London to Oxford, made a different decision. The Reverend Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, Fellow of Christ Church, Oxford, had by then given up his mathematical lecturing, and even his hobby of photographing little girls, in order to pursue the literary tasks he felt pressing in upon him. And he had been avoiding the distraction of polite society on which as a bachelor he had long depended but which he had come to view as so much "bandying small-talk with dull people." (2) Yet he had not lost interest in pleasant company.

And so on the hour's railway journey on February 10, 1885, Dodgson engaged in conversation

on “many subjects, serious & other,” with a gracious stranger in her forties. Perhaps to establish her status – for he must have explained that he was an Oxford don – she mentioned her acquaintance with Mr. Frederic Harrison, (3) a graduate of Oxford University like himself and an examiner in the Law School there. (4) Students of Gissing know that Harrison was the novelist’s first literary benefactor, introduced him to Positivism, and had employed him as tutor to his two eldest sons until the previous autumn. The lady had herself been employing Gissing as tutor to her own son since

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then and, along with Mrs. Harrison, was the inspiration of Isabel Clarendon in the novel he was then completing. She was none other than that elusive figure, Mrs. Gaussen.

Mrs. Gaussen makes only fleeting appearances in the published *Diaries of Lewis Carroll*, edited by Roger Lancelyn Green, for he had to omit much in his voluminous manuscript sources. (5) But fortunately, Professor Morton Cohen’s index to the complete diaries, with them at the British Library, enables us to locate not only additional unpublished entries about Mrs. Gaussen and her family but also about Frederic Harrison. These entries illuminate, if obliquely, a corner of Gissing’s early life.

When Mrs. Gaussen mentioned Harrison’s name to Dodgson on the train, the men were already acquainted. They had corresponded in the autumn of 1883 about their joint undertaking to rescue one T. J. Dymes, a fellow alumnus of King’s College School, London, and of Oxford, whom they had not seen in decades but to whose financial plight they both responded. Harrison, a man of considerable inherited wealth and wide connections, raised the money, which Dodgson, a generous contributor himself, disbursed to Dymes’ creditors. (6) He then told Dymes he would give himself the pleasure of meeting Harrison, (7) and on October 19, on a visit to London, called on him, probably at his house at 38 Westbourne Terrace, Bayswater – by then a familiar address to George Gissing. The occasion was mutually gratifying: Dodgson found Harrison “very genial” (p. 27): and Harrison later recalled Dodgson’s “quaint oddities and generousities,” (8) judging the latter “more interesting and more worthy of remembrance even than his wonderful and delightful humour.” (9) Only three weeks earlier, Harrison had expressed another of his own characteristic generousities by giving Gissing sympathetic counsel about his vexed divorce proceedings and offering a loan for legal fees. (10)

In 1884 Dodgson twice availed himself of Harrison’s invitation to come over to Sutton Place when he was staying with his sisters in nearby Guildford. Harrison’s widowed mother had been

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leasing the Tudor manor house (until recently owned and occupied by J. Paul Getty) and Harrison had brought his wife and sons there for part of every summer for nearly a decade. Since Dodgson’s first visit was in January, they were not present, but he was shown the “faded tapestry, old pictures and the long galleries: like Hatfield reduced” (pp. 43-44). When he walked over on August 3, a Sunday, Harrison and his mother received him, but Harrison’s wife Ethel was ill, and did not appear (p. 71). Indeed, so ill was she that neither she nor her husband had accompanied their four boys, aged seven to twelve, when they left two days earlier for an August holiday on Lake Ullswater. (10) *In loco parentis* the Harrisons had sent Gissing, who had occasionally been coming to Sutton Place to continue the boys’ lessons and had grown to love the tree-shaded lanes, the meandering River Wey, the historic house, and to marvel at the accustomed opulence – on one occasion five servants laid out a picnic tea. (12) All this provided images of privileged country living for his fiction, as would the excursion with the boys in the Lake District. On the afternoon of Dodgson’s visit the

Harrisons must have been impatiently looking forward to the next day's mail, which would bring the first letters from the holiday-makers. Surely something was said by host to visitor about the troubled life and literary promise of the absent tutor, now almost a member of the family. (13)

Gissing left his young charges after a fortnight, (14) his place taken by their uncle. (15) At the end of the month he kept an appointment at Broughton Hall, another historic country house, this one near Lechlade, in Gloucestershire – the residence of the Gaussens. They needed a tutor for their sons and had been told about Gissing by Harrison. (16) Gissing found Mrs. Gausson to be much younger-looking than her age, the mid-forties, and “on the whole, one of the most delightful women imaginable.” She in turn was sufficiently impressed with him to entertain him for three days, far longer than the interview about teaching required. (17) It was agreed that one of the Gausson boys would become his pupil in London, where the Gaussens were to take a house. Since his pupils at

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38 Westbourne Terrace were about to enroll in St. Paul's School and would no longer need his tutoring regularly, the arrangement suited Gissing well. (18) In order to have more respectable accommodations – his new pupil would come to him rather than he going to the boy – he soon established himself in the Cornwall Residences, near Marylebone Road and Regent's Park. There Mrs. Gausson sent flowers from Broughton Hall and at least once visited herself. He in turn attended social gatherings at her London house at Craven Hill, Bayswater. (19)

Dodgson, too, enjoyed an exchange of visits with Mrs. Gausson after their meeting on the train. On May 19, 1885, when Gissing was awaiting a publisher's report on *Isabel Clarendon*, the novel in which she figures, Dodgson recorded in his diary: “Mrs. Gausson and her daughter ‘Ella’ came for 5pm tea and photos.... They are staying for the summer in London” (p. 109). Presumably he showed them some of the photographs he had taken (much as Gissing, on the occasion of Mrs. Gausson's visit, had shown her his family album). On June 15 he “dined with the Gaussens” in London (II, 437): “there I saw Mr. G. for the first time – also two younger girls, ‘Nannie’ and Nina, twins of abt 12 – there was a party of 12 or so” (p. 115). On June 16 he was back “for luncheon and another chat with the twins”(p. 115); and on October 2 he “spent the whole afternoon in writing and copying a long letter to Ella Gausson – and the evening in correcting proofs of ‘Euclid and His Modern Rivals’” (p. 135). (20) On February 27, “Mrs. Gausson and Ella called in the afternoon for a chat, and I undertook to offer myself for a visit shortly” (p. 146).

Only Dodgson's departure for Broughton Hall and return to Oxford five days later are mentioned in the printed diaries (II, 441), but the MS. diary tells something of what transpired between. Tantalizingly brief, these entries remind us that Dodgson was always drawn to little girls but did not find boys “an attractive race of beings” (21); we learn more about the Gaussens'

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daughters than about Gissing's pupil and his brothers. It was one of the latter who greeted Dodgson on his arrival on March 31: “The youngest boy, ‘Toddy’, aged abt 12, met me, with a little pony-trap, at Alvenscot Station, and drove me to the Hall, abt 2½m. The party are Mr. & Mrs. G., Ella, Nannie, and Nina; also a governess, Fräulein.” April 1 : “In the afternoon went a walk with Ella.” April 2: “Two friends came to dinner, Mr. Avent (& eldest d[aughte]r), and Mr. Clementson – Mr. A. is rector of Broughton. He had called on me on Th. In aft. walked with Ella.” April 3: “Ella went riding (with a youth named Stewart, who is coming to Ch. Ch.) so I took a walk of 8m. with Fräulein.” April 5: “A Miss Adams (friend of the Cunnynghams) called, & Miss Beadon, cousin of the Harcourts” (all p. 149). The published entry concludes: “I have had a very pleasant time, &

many tête-à-têtes with Ella.” Some were apparently quite serious. On April 18: “Wrote to Ella on her question abt ‘greater privileges of baptised persons.’ To me, the giving varying degrees of *happiness* of two persons differing in no way is not so opposed to our ideas of perfect justice as the blessing the one & *punishing* the other would be.” (p. 151; II, 441).

Except for the entry of June 5, 1886, “To town for day” (II, 442), the published diaries say nothing more of the Gaussens. But from the MS entries we learn that on that day Dodgson and a certain Climène “called on the Gaussens, in Bayswater, and saw Mrs. G., Ella, & the twins” (p. 158). On June 10, after noting that two people he had invited to see *The Mikado* with him had declined, he recorded: “Then I telegraphed to Ella Gausson, inviting her for Savoy, & for [illegible] on Sunday; & she telegraphed ‘engaged’ – so in the evening I walked to the Earles & arranged to take Beatrice.” (p. 159)

On May 14, 1887: “To town for the day, with Maggie Earle as my companion. After a hasty call on the Gaussens, where we saw Mrs. G., Ella, Nina, Nannie & Mdlle, we left by the 6.30” (pp. 189-90). On June 18: “We [he had a visitor from Cambridge, Willie Wilcox] went to London for

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the day ... [and saw] ‘Much Ado.’ I had telegraphed to Miss E. Terry to get us stalls; failing that, she gave us a box.... Then we called on the Gaussens, and had a chat with Mrs. G., Nina and Nannie, and Ella who came in just before we left” (pp. 194-95).

In 1888, on February 1: “Had a short visit from Mrs. Gausson and Ella. They are thinking of going to *live* in Ireland – I urged that Ella mt, even so, visit me at Eastb[ourne]...” (p. 216).

In 1891, on February 24, at Oxford: “In the afternoon I fell in with Mrs. Gausson, who is now staying in the neighbourhood” (p. 321). On February 25: “Walked in the forenoon as well as afternoon – a new plan advised by Dr. Brooks – About 2½, Mrs. Gausson visited me; also ‘Nannie’ & a young Mr. Williams, of Merton Coll., who is a neighbour of theirs” (p. 321).

And in 1892, on January 21: “Dear Ella Gausson paused for 3 hours at Oxford, on her way home from London, to come and see me – She had been with a friend to see ‘Hans the Boatman,’ with the ticket that I and she were to have gone with. She liked it much: & her view of its tone, as to morality, was entirely contradictory to that of Mrs. Smith’s friend, who so strongly condemned it” (p. 350).

This is the last of Dodgson’s diary entries on the Gaussens. Did anyone else see fit to record their doings thereafter? It is to be hoped that Gissing’s relations with them will be further illuminated in the forthcoming monograph by Pierre Coustillas.

- (1) *The Annotated Alice: Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland & Through the Looking Glass*, by Lewis Carroll, Introduction and Notes by Martin Gardner (Cleveland and New York: 1969), p. 217. Gardner dates the adventure tentatively as 1862, but I here date it at the publication of *Through the Looking Glass*, 1871.
- (2) Quoted in Helmut Gernsheim, *Lewis Carroll: Photographer*, revised ed. (New York: 1969), p. 81.

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- (3) Lewis Carroll Diaries, Journal 12, Feb.10, 1885, British Library, Add. MS. 54347, p. 94. Hereafter, entries from these diaries will be cited in the text, not the notes, by page number in parentheses.
- (4) Frederic Harrison (1831-1923), three months older than Dodgson, had taken his B. A. and M. A.

at Wadham College, was a barrister of Lincoln's Inn, President of the London Positivist Society, and a prolific writer on contemporary affairs.

- (5) Roger Lancelyn Green, ed., *The Diaries of Lewis Carroll*, 2 vols. (London, 1953), I, Preface, xiii (References to this work will be given in the text as "II", with page numbers).
- (6) The correspondence is in the Harrison Collection, Library of Political and Economic Science, London School of Economics.
- (7) Dymes to Harrison, Oct. 12, 1883, *ibid.*
- (8) *Autobiographic Memoirs*, 2 vols. (London, 1911), 11, 116.
- (9) Stuart Dodgson Collingwood, *The Life and Letters of Lewis Carroll* (London, 1898), p. 352, quoting a letter Harrison wrote after Dodgson's death to Dodgson's brother.
- (10) Gissing to Algernon Gissing, Sept. 29 and Oct 1 (1883), Yale University Library.
- (11) Gissing to Algernon Gissing, July 24, 1884, in *Letters of George Gissing to Members of his Family*, collected and arranged by Algernon and Ellen Gissing (Boston and New York, 1927), pp. 143-44.
- (12) Gissing to Algernon Gissing, June 22, 1883, *ibid.*, pp. 127-28; MS letter in the Berg Collection of the New York Public Library.
- (13) Aug. 2 seems to be the date of the first letter from the boys to their parents; it is dated only "Saturday."
- (14) Bernard Harrison to his mother, Tuesday (August 19, 1884), Harrison Family Papers; Gissing to Frederic Harrison, Aug. 17, 1884, from London, Carl H. Pforzheimer Library.
- (15) This was Ethel Harrison's brother, George Crawford Harrison (same surname because Ethel

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and Frederic Harrison were first cousins). He became engaged during this holiday to a girl living in the area; he was later, until his death in 1900, a headmaster at Fettes College, Edinburgh, to which Harrison, in a letter to Gosse, March 1904 (Brotherton Collection, University of Leeds), suggested sending Gissing's sons after his death.

- (16) Coustillas, Introduction, *Isabel Clarendon*, 2 vols. (1886; rpt. Harvester Press, Brighton, Sussex, 1969), I, xix. The only reference to the Gaussens I have found in the Harrison Family Papers is in an undated letter to Harrison from his mother saying Mrs. Gausson and Ella were to spend three days at Sutton Place on their way to a spa.
- (17) Gissing to Algernon Gissing, Sept. 1, 1884, Yale University Library (the quoted passage is not in the version in *Letters of George Gissing*, pp. 147-48). If there was any talk of history on this occasion, it could well have been of Anne Boleyn; the son of the founder of Sutton Place was a member of Queen Anne Boleyn's circle and as such executed by Henry VIII; and the original Broughton Hall was one of her dower houses. Frederic Harrison, *Annals of an Old Manor House, Sutton Place, Guildford* (London, 1899) p. 7; *Letters of George Gissing*, p. 147.
- (18) Gissing to Algernon Gissing, Sept. 7, 1884, Berg Coll.
- (19) Coustillas, Introduction, *Isabel Clarendon*, I, xxi; *Letters of George Gissing*, p. 154, Gissing's letter of Feb. 14, 1885, about having "young Gausson to live with me for a month"; and p. 157, a letter written in May 1885, about a party at Craven Hill. The Gausson house was five streets away from Harrison's in Westbourne Terrace, and around the corner from the house in Lancaster Gate owned by Harrison's parents until they leased Sutton Place in 1875.
- (20) The book is called "amusing, ridiculously opinionated and scientifically unimportant" by

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Warren Weaver, "Lewis Carroll: Mathematician," *Scientific American*, CXCIV (1956), 118.
(21) Gernsheim, *Lewis Carroll: Photographer*, p. 18.

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Notes on *A Life's Morning*

P. F. Kropholler

[The edition referred to is the Smith, Elder edition published in 1914.]

- p. 3, l. 40.
the "Christian Year." A popular collection of religious poetry by John Keble (1792-1866).
- p. 14, l. 38.
"My despair is the universality of my interests." There are several references in Gissing to the dangers of having too many interests. Rycroft (Winter XVI) speaks of "open vistas of intellectual despair." A long list of "intellectual ambitions" appears in the *Commonplace Book*. The risk is also mentioned by Christian Moxey in *Born in Exile* (Part I, ch. IV), when he remarks: "There's nothing like having a special line of work and sticking to it vigorously."
- p. 35, l. 42.
"... her only reproof was a steady gaze, eloquent of gentleness, but it proved quite sufficient." Emily's way of maintaining discipline among her pupils is somewhat like Gissing's own, as described in Jacob Korg: *George Gissing* (p. 4): "When the boys misbehaved, he simply stared at them with his sad and tortured eyes until their own shame had corrected them."
- p. 49, l. 34.
"... I read of you till dawn in the Knightes Tale." Wilfrid had of course been reading *The Canterbury Tales*.
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- p. 64, l. 28.
"... an existence possibly preferable to that of the fourth circle of Inferno." In the Fourth Circle (*Inferno*, Canto VII) Dante places the "Avaricious" and the "Prodigal."
- p. 66, l. 27.
Emily's action in defending a dog that is being tortured reminds one of Marcella Moxey in *Born in Exile* (Part VII, ch. 1), who defended a horse that was being beaten by its owner.
- p. 70, l. 4.
"She was hard at work building for her soul its 'lordly pleasure-house,' its Palace of Art." In Tennyson's poem *The Palace of Art* we read: "I built my soul a lordly pleasure-house."
- p. 73, l. 41.
"... the land of milk and honey..." *Exodus*, III, 8 "A land flowing with milk and honey."

- p. 84, l. 8.
 "... the fiery soul of youth...." The phrase "a fiery soul" occurs in Dryden: *Absalom and Achitophel* (line 156) but there may be no connection.
- p. 84, l. 14.
 "Put money in thy purse." Shakespeare: *Othello* I, III, 345.
- p. 86, l. 38.
 "You remember the fairy tales in which the old woman bids some one go to a certain place and do such and such a thing and something is sure to happen." Such an episode occurs in Anderson's fairy tale *The Tinderbox*. Of course, it may be a reference to fairy tales in general. Such episodes are quite common.
- p. 111, l. 31.
 "She cried mentally for an ounce of civet." See *King Lear* IV, VI, 133 ("Give me an ounce of civet, good apothecary, to sweeten my imagination.")
- p. 112, l. 26.
 "... the still voice within spoke clearly amid the hush." *1 Kings*, XIX, 12: "... and after the fire a still small voice."
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- p. 112, l. 38.
 "... her first duty was to tend the garden of her mind." Probably echoing Voltaire in Ch. 30 of *Candide*: "Cela est bien dit, répondit Candide, mais il faut cultiver notre jardin."
- p. 129, l. 14.
 "... the working of the very means of grace..." A phrase from *The Book of Common Prayer*, A General Thanksgiving: "For the means of grace, and for the hope of glory."
- p. 132, l. 35.
 "[The clerk] seized a ruler, and began a species of sword-play about Hood's head...." In *The Nether World* (ch. VII) Samuel Byass (also a clerk) plays the same curious "game."
- p. 141, l. 17.
 "If only he could bring himself to the lie direct and shameless." Echoing a passage in Shakespeare's *As You Like It* (V, IV, 96): "The retort courteous ... the quip modest ... the lie circumstantial ... the lie direct."
- p. 164, l. 2.
 "... all is vanity...." From *Ecclesiastes*, I, 2.
- p. 164, l. 12.
 "... effort was weary and unprofitable...." Echoing Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, I, II, 133: "How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable | Seem to me all the uses of this world."

- p. 172, 1. 22.
 "... the tenor of her life..." Echoing Gray's *Elegy* "They kept the noiseless tenor of their way." Allusions to this line are frequent in Gissing.
- p. 172, 1. 36.
 "... it was the means offered to Isabel of rescuing her brother Claudio." Reference to Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*.
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- p. 174, 1. 11.
 "... the image of that bliss which was the crown of life." Foreshadowing Gissing's later novel *The Crown of Life*.
- p. 174, last line.
 "... her life must have seemed to her a weary pilgrimage." The phrase occurs in a hymn, *O God of Bethel*, by Philip Doddridge (1702-1751): "O God of Bethel... Who through this weary pilgrimage | Hast all our fathers led."
- p. 175, 1. 41.
 "Before long the bell of the chapel-of-ease opposite began its summoning." References to church bells (often unfavourable) are common in Gissing.
- p. 191, 1. 12.
 "Is there no nether Circle, where dread anticipation eternally prolongs itself?" In his *Inferno* Dante reserved the Nether Circle for traitors.
- p. 196, 1. 13.
 "With the sublime love of woman, conquering all dread, she dropped to her knees..." Faintly echoing 2 *Samuel* I, 26: "Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women."
- p. 200, 1. 19.
 "Did you imagine yourself to have the air of a hero of romance, of the intense school?" *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* quotes Mackintosh: "'The intense school' may be defined as always using the strongest possible word on every possible occasion."
- p. 212, 1. 6.
 "Men and women go to their graves in wretchedness who might have done noble things with an extra pound a week to live upon." Suggestive of Ryecroft's remarks on the power of money (Winter XXIV).
- p. 215, 1. 22.
 "Sleep was binding his brows with oblivion..." As this phrase seems rather unusual it may be the result of Gissing's reading of Shakespeare (*Henry IV*, Part 2, I, I, 150): "Now bind my brow with iron." It may also be a classical reference.

- p. 223, 1. 14.
“... it only remains to me to remember the old proverb.” A reference to Beatrice’s precipitate departure, but which proverb? Perhaps “More haste less speed.”
- p. 239, 1. 12.
“What of the ideal which saw the crown of life in passion triumphant....” Again foreshadowing *The Crown of Life*.
- p. 244, 1. 34.
“The pale cast of thought was far from him.” Quotation from Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* (III, I, 84): “And thus the native hue of resolution | is sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought.”
- p. 248, 1. 21.
“He will not come forth a better man, though perchance a wiser; wisdom and goodness are from of old at issue.” Perhaps faintly echoing the end of Coleridge: *The Ancient Mariner*: “A sadder and a wiser man, He rose the morrow morn.” The phrase “wisdom and goodness” occurs in Shakespeare’s *King Lear*: “Wisdom and goodness to the vile seem vile” (IV, II, 38).
- p. 249, 1. 10.
“The first thing in the morning a poet is capable of mathematics.” Ryecroft (Summer XI) also said he could apply himself with gusto to mathematics at five o’clock in the morning, although at any other time the subject was loathsome to him.
- p. 285, 1. 25.
“Deep on his front engraven | Deliberation sat, and public care.” Quoted from Milton: *Paradise Lost*, Book II, 1. 302.
- p. 329, 1. 27.
“... the golden fruit of the tree of life.” The “tree of life” comes of course from *Genesis*, 11.9. Perhaps faintly suggestive of Goethe’s *Faust*: “Grau, teurer Freund, ist alle Theorie | Und grün des lebensgoldner Baum.” (Studierzimmer).

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As often in Gissing’s novels *A Life’s Morning* contains numerous questions with the affirmative word order. Thus within a few pages we find: “You are going out?” (p. 223) “You haven’t quarrelled with her about the prayer meeting?” (p. 223) “He came home?” (p. 226) “There was an inquest?” (p. 228) “I fear I could not see Mrs. Hood?” (p. 228) “He is well?” (p. 231).

Further Notes from Wakefield

Clifford Brook

Census Returns for 55, now 60, Westgate, Wakefield

1861 3423 District 8 All Saints’ Parish, Wakefield

	<u>Age</u>		<u>Born</u>
Thomas Waller Gissing	31	Pharmaceutical Chemist employ- ing 2 assistants and 1 porter	Halesworth Suffolk
Margaret Gissing	28	Wife	Droitwich Worcs.
George Robert Gissing	3	Scholar	Wakefield
William Whittington Gissing	1		Wakefield
Algernon Fred Gissing	5 months		Wakefield
Benjamin Shaw	18	Apprentice Registered with the Pharmaceu- tical Society	Leeds
George Althorpe	17	Apprentice	Stamford Lincs.
Jane Peak	15	Nursemaid	W. Bretton Nr. Wakefield

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	<u>Age</u>		<u>Born</u>
Mary Wakefield	24	Housemaid	Crigglestone Nr. Wakefield

* * *

1871 4024

Margaret Gissing	39	Head of family	
Margaret E. Gissing	7	daughter	
Ellen S. Gissing	4	daughter	
Thomas Wood Roman	30	Chemist's Assistant	

William Edward Sexty	19	Chemist's Assistant
Elizabeth Quin	14	General domestic servant (Born in Ireland)

The census returns for 1871 were made in March or April. They clearly indicate that by that time the three Gissing boys had already been sent to Lindow Grove School at Alderley Edge, Cheshire, as arranged after their father's death on December 28, 1870.

Census returns for 1881 and later are not available to the general public.

Pupils at Wakefield Girls' High School

There are two registers at the school covering most of the years of interest to students of Gissing. The school opened in 1878 and the Gissing sisters were amongst its first pupils. The one

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register that begins at that date gives only the name, age at entry, dates of entry and leaving, and comments; the other book, which starts in 1882, and then runs in parallel with the first one, also has the father's name, address and occupation. Unfortunately there are discrepancies where the books cover the same years, and in particular May Baseley's name (she was a relative of Algernon Gissing's wife) is not entered in the 1882 + book.

	Age	Date of entry	Date of leaving	Comments
Margaret E. Gissing	14	Sept. 1878	April 1880	Leaves school. Ill-health.
Ellen S. Gissing	11	Sept. 1878	Xmas 1884	Aged 18
Enid Gissing	13	Sept. 1902	July 1903	
May Baseley	15	Sept. 1888	July 1890	Education finished
Constance Eliza Ash	13	Jan. 1879	Xmas 1882	Attained age of 16
Emily Ash	10	Sept. 1878	Summer '84	Education finished
Gertrude Ash	11	Jan. 1880	Xmas 1883	To be taught at home
Florence M. Ash	9	Sept. 1884	Xmas 1892	Belle Vue

Enid Gissing is identified as follows: "Father: Algernon Gissing, Author. Previous School: Grove School, Highgate, London. Address: Willersey, Broadway, Worcs. Date of birth: 10 Nov.

1888.” The entry for Florence M. Ash is followed by: “Wm. Ash, Cornmaltster, St. John’s.” The Ashes were acquaintances of the Gissings. Constance Ash (Connie) appears in Gissing’s diary and correspondence in the summer of 1890. He was then in love with her.

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The Name Earwaker in *Born in Exile*

It is a point of interest, if only a minor one, to consider the names chosen by an author for his characters. As well as symbolic names such as Mutimer – the changed man – Gissing makes use of uncommon ones, possibly to avoid charges of libel. For example I have not come across a family called Nancarrow. So when I learnt that a new colleague had the name Earwaker, and with more reason when I heard that he pronounced it “e-rica,” I sought him out and asked him for comments.

“I think that Earwaker *is* as a rule pronounced ERICA, though I *have* heard of it being pronounced EAR-WAKER, but only because one particular family had given up the unequal struggle to explain it to people! (i.e. they knew that it was wrong).

The name is Anglo-Saxon and means “swine-herd.” Every so often one comes across a few more, but our immediate family is not large and so far we haven’t been able to trace connections. We have met some people of the same name from Australia, and someone else from New Zealand told us that the name was quite common there, so it looks as if some of them emigrated at some time – perhaps farming families?

On the question of pronunciation, it is perhaps more relevant that there is an alternative spelling (at least, I assume that’s what it is – not a completely different name) – “ERWICKER” – this would bring it into line with Berwick, Warwick, and names like that. At all events, the mute “W” is a feature of Anglo-Saxon words (as in “ANSWER”).”

[There was a student named Earwaker at Owens College in Gissing’s time. His name appears a number of times in the Calendar of Owens College. Robert L. Selig drew attention to this in the *Newsletter* for October 1971. – Ed.]

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Notes and News

Mr. Alan Bridgman, of Teignmouth, Devon, sends extracts from two books which are not likely to be known to many Gissingites. The first is by Eveleigh Nash, the literary agent and publisher. Nash was acquainted with Morley Roberts, published a number of his books, including *The Private Life of Henry Maitland*, and asked him to write introductions to the five Gissing novels which had originally appeared under the imprint of Smith, Elder. The book in which Gissing appears, *I Liked the Life I Lived*, was published by John Murray in 1941. It carries a photograph of Nash as a frontispiece. “While at Constable’s, I saw in the *Fortnightly Review* a series of papers ‘An Author at Grass,’ by George Gissing, who, after being for years the spokesman of those on whom good fortune never seems to smile, strayed into a happy field to write some beautiful things about his love of the countryside and of English ways. I was so delighted with this journal of a recluse who enjoys release from poverty and worry that I called on Mr. J. B. Pinker, who was Gissing’s agent, and asked him whether we could have the book rights of the work. Fortunately, no arrangement had been made for its publication in volume form, and with the approval of

Mr. Kyllmann I agreed to the terms proposed. The title was changed to 'The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft' and it was the most successful of all Gissing's works." In connection with this passage it is only fair to add that, at Thomas Seccombe's death, Constable & Co. acknowledged that Seccombe had been instrumental in their securing the book rights of *Henry Ryecroft*. There is no contradiction between the two. Seccombe acted as literary adviser to Constable and he it was, very likely, who read the MS for the firm's director, Otto Kyllmann.

The other book mentioned by Mr. Bridgman is W. Pett Ridge's *A Story Teller* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1923) which contains this significant passage: "George Gissing and H. G. Wells are

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coupled in my mind, although I met the first but rarely, and with the second took week-ends – at Woking, at Worcester Park, at Sandgate – very often. They were friends; each had the trick of putting himself into a novel. Gissing's books could not, I imagine, have had a wide circulation, but the circulation was fit, and no man who wrote so gloomily about gloomy people could expect to have a very large number of readers. It is in *The Whirlpool* that a young couple having, after a sufficient number of tribulations, contrived to get married, go to live for two agreeable years in Wales; these years Gissing deals with in hurried pages, and then brings the pair back to London, and to all the discomforts of home. He told me that he wrote his one amusing novel, *The Town Traveller*, during a time of great mental worry. 'It was the only thing I could do,' he urged excusingly. There was fine work and enormous patience in *Demos* and *The Unclassed* and the rest; published now they would receive an attention they did not encounter in their day. George Gissing was a tall, good-looking man, moustached, with a bushy head of hair; he had a deep voice that seemed ill-suited for ordinary remarks. 'Do you know,' he would say at table (and you might think from his tones he was about to submit a profound and well-thought-out argument), 'do you know I am half inclined to ask for a second helping of that admirable roast mutton!'"

By the time the present issue of the *Newsletter* is in the hands of subscribers, the three new Harvester critical editions of *The Unclassed*, *In the Year of Jubilee*, and *Our Friend the Charlatan*, edited by Jacob Korg, Gillian Tindall and Pierre Coustillas, will be about ready. So also will be a new edition of George Moore's well-known but extremely scarce pamphlet, *Literature at Nurse or Circulating Morals* (1885), with a substantial introduction by Pierre Coustillas on the part Moore played in the downfall of the three-volume novel. The pamphlet itself is preceded by the article Moore published on circulating libraries in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and the ensuing correspondence

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(including Gissing's letter) in the same journal.

The Harvester Press announce that *The Whirlpool*, one of their next Gissing titles, will be edited by Dr. Patrick Parrinder of the University of Reading. Publication is scheduled for the Autumn of 1977. *The Emancipated*, edited by Pierre Coustillas, should also be ready by then.

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Recent Publications

- Jonathan Raban, *Soft City*, Fontana, 1975. Contains several references to Gissing, in particular to

“The Salt of the Earth” and *New Grub Street*.

- Anon., *Choice*, March 1976, p. 88. Review of Adrian Poole’s *Gissing in Context* (Rowman and Littlefield).
- A. S. Crehan, “Victorian Literature: Materials for Teaching and Study (Great Britain),” *Victorian Studies*, March 1976. Page 389 is devoted to Gissing.
- Anthony Cronin, “Treasury Matters,” *Irish Times*, May 28, 1976. Contains comments on *The Nether World*.
- Pierre Coustillas, “Reviews,” *Journal of the Eighteen Nineties*, 1975-1976, pp. 39-40. Review of *George Gissing: A Bibliography*.
- Jenni Calder, *Women and Marriage in Victorian Fiction*, London, Thames & Hudson, 1975. Contains many references to Gissing’s works.