

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*

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George Gissing and Israel Zangwill:

Some Unpublished Letters Describing their Acquaintanceship

Bernard Winehouse
Bet Berl College, Israel

The first letter below is from Gissing to Clara Collet, one of the novelist’s “closest and most valuable friends”; “of all the women of his acquaintance, she was undoubtedly the most intelligent and generous.” (1) In 1911, Clara Collet sent this letter to Israel Zangwill (1864-1926), Anglo-Jewish Novelist, playwright and poet and a man of a hundred brave causes. She had been familiar with his writing for some seventeen years and admired it very much. (2) The letter is in Gissing’s handwriting.

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Feb. 26, '95.

Eversley,
Worple Road,
Epsom.

Dear Miss Collet,

Do not always feel bound to Saturdays. Another convenient day for us is Thursday. A notice any day this week or next will bring me to the station.

By the bye, I have read "Children of the Ghetto." This is not only a remarkable, but in some respects a grand, book. My opinion of Zangwill has gone up very much. I shall soon read the book again. It is much more than a story: a chapter of world history, and done in a very noble spirit.

Yours ever,

George Gissing

Children of the Ghetto (1892) won Zangwill considerable fame and the doubtful title of "Dickens of the Ghetto." The novel is a realistic evocation of contemporary Anglo-Jewish life and is a distinct landmark in English literature's treatment of the Jew: the long tradition of caricature in the depiction of the Jew from Chaucer to Dickens had come to an end. Gissing, as is known, was not a man easily pleased by the work of contemporary writers, neither was he alone in his appraisal of Zangwill's literary abilities. The contemporary reception of *Children of the Ghetto* is characterized by a critical surprise at Zangwill's ability to write something more than facetious ephemera, for he had won his spurs as a prominent contributor to the school, so called, of "New Humour." (3) This was a group of writers that centered on Jerome K. Jerome's journal, *The Idler*.

Gissing first met Zangwill at a *Cosmopolis* dinner which the magazine gave at the Savoy Hotel on June 25, 1896. In his diary entry for this date, Gissing recorded the following impression:

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"Zangwill decidedly a good fellow as I have always felt from his books." (4) On July 2nd, 1896, Gissing accompanied Zangwill to his home in Kilburn and stayed for half an hour. (5) As the following extract from Zangwill's letter to Dr. David Eder gives witness, Gissing seems to have been very self-revealing in so short a space of time. (6) Eder, Zangwill's cousin and life-long intimate was later to become both friend and physician to D. H. Lawrence. As one of the Gissing letters below speaks of his enjoyment of Louis Zangwill's *The World and a Man* (1896), I include also the section of Zangwill's letter which refers to the novel. Louis was Zangwill's brother:

Our Louis (Z. Z.) will write to you soon & will probably tell you the story of how *The World & a Man* has been boycotted by W. H. Smith & Son as indecent. Whether this will help it is uncertain but it went into a second edition before the row.

The mysterious Gissing has come within my ken at last & sitting in my study poured out his sad soul. He is a handsome youthful chap but seems to have bungled his life in every possible way, and after a terrible uphill fight to be still burdened with some woman who, I suspect, breaks out in drink. He hates women and is not in love with life. From another source I hear that the cloud on his career had its origin in imprisonment for stealing from overcoats when he

was the pride of Owens College, Manchester. This statement being “libellous” please do not “publish” this letter. He is now making a fair income but unfortunately he has no interest in his old books & he will never write anything again as good as *Thyrza* or *New Grub Street* or *Demos* or *The Nether World*. Still I encouraged him to go on in his old groove & not now to knuckle under to the popular demand.

This account of the now notorious Manchester incident in Gissing’s life is the first to be committed to paper if one excludes the published extracts from the archives of the University of

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Manchester. (7) Zangwill, it appears, has confused Nell Harrison, Gissing’s first wife, with Edith Underwood, his second.

We learn from Gissing’s diary that on July 8th, 1896 he was reading Louis Zangwill’s *The World and a Man*. On his return home from Mablethorpe in Lincolnshire where he had been holidaying with his wife and sons during July and August of 1896, he found a letter waiting for him from Israel Zangwill. Gissing’s letter of reply indicates the contents of Zangwill’s letter:

Eversley,
Worple Road,
Epsom.

Aug. 27, '96

Dear Zangwill,

I have been away for some five weeks, and my letters have not been forwarded to me. Thus it is that I am so long in replying to your letter of July the 17th.

No, it is impossible for me to undertake what Mr. Leighton suggests. I am overburdened already, and in any case should dread to engage myself to a regular article. (8)

Since I saw you last, I have read your brother’s two books, & enjoyed them both. “A Drama in Dutch” is surely an admirable rendering of a peculiar atmosphere; the pages of the book drip with fatness, steam with enduring odours. “The World and a Man” interests me by the boldness of its method. Of course the general reader will cry out against that abrupt dropping of characters in the drama, but it is well done. A line here and there (disillusion as to the seaside folk who let lodgings, etc.) bites deep. Euge!

This is uncalled for, but I have found pleasure in the books, and like to say so.

Sincerely yours,

George Gissing.

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This letter is written in Gissing’s handwriting. *A Drama in Dutch* (1895) is the faltering work of a beginner but Gissing, characteristically, perceives the undeniable achievement of its realistic evocation of Dutch immigrant life in London. The types Louis depicts are clearly Jewish, though this is never made explicit – probably because he wanted his work to be clearly distinguished from

that of his brother. Hence his pseudonym, "Z. Z." *The World and a Man* (1896) is a real advance on its predecessor in both the breadth of its canvas and in the daring quality of its flashback technique (to which Gissing is perhaps referring in this letter). Characters are indeed "dropped" with irritating frequency, as Luke Merritt, the hero, moves along on his picaresque adventures. Luke is a Gissing character *par excellence* so it is not difficult to understand why Gissing warms to him; he is glum at all times, sensitive in the extreme, morally upright and heavily battered by the trials of living, more especially by the trials of living with women.

Two other extracts from unpublished letters of Clara Collet and Morley Roberts link Zangwill with Gissing. Roberts, Gissing's much-castigated fictional biographer, was, as the letter suggests, already contemplating *The Private Life of Henry Maitland* (1912), or at least a biography of Gissing of some kind, as early as 1905. The following is from a letter from Morley Roberts to Zangwill dated June 6, 1905. The letter is handwritten:

"...I am very anxious to read the articles you wrote about George Gissing (9) for somehow I have missed them. Could you tell me how I am to find them? Or you might possibly have copies to spare. Sometime or other (it won't be soon, of course) I mean to do a short life of him. It would be wonderfully interesting but sadder even than you can imagine..."

Roberts and Zangwill were on fairly close terms if one is to judge by the "My Dear Zangwill" of the opening and the intimate details about his health which Roberts recounts in continuation (he was a known hypochondriac). There is in the Zangwill collection one other letter from Roberts; it is

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dated December 11, 1899 and recounts in the warmest of terms his appreciation of Zangwill's collection of short stories, *They That Walk in Darkness* (1899)

The following passage from a letter from Clara Collet to Zangwill confirms again Gissing's special appreciation of Zangwill's work. Miss Collet's letter is dated June 29, 1907 and was perhaps inspired by a re-reading of Zangwill's warm article on Gissing in *To-Day*, written at the time of his death. In this article, Zangwill acknowledges his debt to Gissing "for hours of intellectual pleasure" and then writes: "Whether I was ever able to repay him some quota of the debt I scarcely know." (10) Clara Collet provided the answer to this question by sending him Gissing's letter to her (the first letter quoted in this article). She wrote as follows:

"...About twelve years ago, moved by a similar impulse of profound admiration and gratitude to you for your work after reading *The Master*, I sent you an extract from the letter George Gissing had written to me about *The Children of the Ghetto*. You did not reply but there was no reason why you should do so.... I am sorry you did not know how very highly George Gissing appreciated your work. But from what you wrote about him in *To-Day* you evidently understood how gladly he welcomed a work of genius, so it does not matter."

Clara Collet's mention of *The Master* (1895), Zangwill's autobiographical novel about the growth of an artist, brings me to the last piece of Gissingiana which has made its way to Jerusalem. It is in *The Master* that Zangwill's debt to Gissing is most apparent, a fact that Zangwill explicitly admits in two diary entries made while work on this novel was in progress. "What other novelist is

to be equalled in drawing nineteenth century characters?" Zangwill wrote. Of Gissing's *Thyrza* (1887) he says, "it seems likely...with little change to set me in the direction of my new work." (11)
The Master was Zangwill's first sally into serious fiction that was not set in the Jewish Ghetto

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he knew so well. Its communal warmth, its delight in religious belief and above all its humour had created in Zangwill's fiction a world far removed from the bitterness and misogyny of Gissing. The mean by-ways of this novel bring Zangwill close to the astringent atmosphere of Gissing's *milieu*. Rosina, the hero's wife, narrow, avaricious and hurting is a Gissing woman. She plays a major role in the destruction of the artist-hero, Matt. Like *Thyrza*, but in no way stressing Gissing's social thesis, *The Master* is preoccupied, through Matt's meteoric rise from poverty to wealth, with the relative importance of environment and heredity in determining character. Matt, like *Thyrza*, rises to, and is ultimately accepted by, an upper class milieu. Zangwill feels no need to resort to parental quasi-gentility, as in *Thyrza*'s case, to explain the position Matt enjoys in high society. A person of talent may rise regardless of his background – had not Zangwill himself proved this in his rise from rags to riches? *Thyrza* and other characters are seen to achieve greatness of stature by their readiness to suffer all with patience and fortitude. Matt, however, battles through life with great pugnacity of spirit, though the novel closes on a hero preparing for a life in which he will bear with high morality the cross of misalliance. Were these the Gissing "directions" which Zangwill speaks of in his diary?

- 1 - Jacob Korg, *George Gissing: A Critical Biography* (Seattle, 1963), p. 192 and Pierre Coustillas, ed., *The Letters of George Gissing to Gabrielle Fleury* (New York, 1964), p. 9.
- 2 - See Clara Collet's letter to Zangwill dated December 28, 1910. Here she speaks of Zangwill as a friend of hers "for nearly twenty years." Bernard Winehouse, "Clara E. Collet and Israel Zangwill: An Unpublished Correspondence," *Gissing Newsletter*, July 1973, p. 14.
- 3 - For a full discussion of this novel and its contemporary reception, see Bernard Winehouse, "Israel Zangwill's *Children of the Ghetto*: The First Anglo-Jewish Best-Seller," *English*

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Literature in Transition, XVI (1973) pp. 93-117.

- 4- Algernon and Ellen Gissing, eds., *George Gissing: Letters to Members of his Family* (London, 1927), p. 349.
- 5 - I am grateful to Pierre Coustillas for this information from the unpublished diaries of George Gissing.
- 6 - This letter is a typescript copy and is dated September 2, 1896.
- 7 - See Pierre Coustillas, "George Gissing à Manchester," *Etudes Anglaises* (July-Sept., 1963), pp. 254-61.
- 8 - The Mr. Leighton referred to is in all probability the literary editor of the London *Daily Mail* which appeared for the first time in April, 1896. There is in the Zangwill Collection a letter dated April 29, 1896 from "Marie and Mr. Leighton" who describe themselves as the co-literary editors of the London *Daily Mail*. The letter asks Zangwill for contributions to their columns.
- 9 - In fact, Zangwill had written only one full-scale article on Gissing and that was for his weekly series "Without Prejudice," *To-Day* (Feb. 3, 1904), pp. 433-34. Some other Zangwill references to Gissing are to be found in the *Pall Mall Magazine*, under the heading "Without

Prejudice": I (July, 1893), p. 442; II (Feb., 1894), p. 700; III (Sept., 1894), p. 171; VIII (Jan., 1896), p. 170. – Louis Zangwill reviewed Gissing's *The Town Traveller* for the *Cosmopolitan*, to which he contributed a regular *causerie* (Dec., 1898), XXVI, p. 238.
10 - "Without Prejudice," *To-Day* (Feb. 3, 1904), p. 433.
11 - Diary entries for January 17, 1893 and January 9, 1893.

I am grateful to the Trustees of the Central Zionist Archive in Jerusalem for permission to publish the material above. To Pierre Coustillas I am indebted for various items of information which are included in this article.

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Demos: The Film

Pierre Coustillas
With the assistance of
Clifford McCarty

In *Men, Books and Birds*, by W. H. Hudson (London: Nash & Grayson, 1925), which consists of Hudson's letters to Roberts, there are two tantalizing passages about the film made from *Demos* in 1921. Not that the film was a masterpiece in the early days of the cinematograph – Hudson leaves us in no doubt about that – but because, poor as the film was, we should like to know more about it. And who, among the Gissingites of the present day has had a chance to see it? Doubtless no one, though it would be pleasant to be contradicted. Therefore Hudson's words are worth repeating to start with: "Gissing's *Demos* is on the films at the Coronet to-morrow" (Sunday, [October 16] 1921). "Just what I thought myself when I saw it yesterday – G. G. would have been mad at the way his story is treated – its jerkiness. The only good thing is the end when he [Richard Mutimer] is killed by the mob" (October 18, 1921). However, Hudson added: "But *Kipps* and *The House of a Thousand Candles* are ruined just as badly on the screen – I have just seen them."

This, when I first read it some fifteen years ago, made me wonder whether Hudson's judgment was not unduly warped by his (understandable) objections to the cinema as an art which we know was still in its infancy. Other judgments are consequently welcome; Clifford McCarty, the Los Angeles bookseller and film-critic, has luckily rescued two reviews from the files of old periodicals, *Moving Picture World* and *Motion Picture News*. Both appeared on the same day, February 4, 1922. They are reprinted in full, except for the cast which is omitted from the *News* review.

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"Why Men Forget"
Nothing to Redeem This English Picture
Released by R - C
Reviewed by Fritz Tidden

If the Robertson-Cole Company felt that it just had to release another bad picture it might be said that it could have found one or two in this country without going abroad for one. However, this enterprise in finding poor pictures seems lately to have become a habit with the firm, so it evidently

wished to point out that it would not play favorites in nationalities. "Why Men Forget" is an English importation that has nothing to redeem it, nor anything that would justify more than the slightest consideration.

It makes a great deal concerning characters about which the most interested spectator could not find anything to claim his interest. They are utterly negative. It is morbid and never for a moment holds the attention, but the fault does not lie with the original material upon which the picture has been founded but in the treatment. "Why Men Forget" is said to be an adaptation of George Gissing's novel "Demos".

A good exploitation stunt might be to have patrons guess the connection between the title and the story.

The Cast

Richard Mutimer	Milton Rosmer
Mrs. Mutimer	Mary Brough
Alice Maud Mutimer	Vivian Gibson
Emma Vine	Evelyn Brent
Kate	Irene Foster
Adela Waltham	Bettina Campbell
Mrs. Waltham	Daisy Campbell
Hubert Eldon	Gerald McCarthy

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Mrs. Eldon	Haidee Wright
Daniel Dabbs	Olaf Hytten
Jim Cullen	James C. Butt
Stephen Longwood	Leonard Robson
Willis Rodman	Warwick Ward
Keene	George Travers
Cowes	Thomas E. Montagu-Thacker

Adapted from George Gissing's Novel
"Demos"

Scenario by Denison Clift.

Director, not mentioned.

Length, 5 Reels.

The Story

The story concerns Richard Mutimer, who is discharged for taking up the time of the men in a factory while listening to his socialistic utterances. He becomes suddenly wealthy through the death of an uncle. Then he proceeds to forget his old sweetheart, Emma Vine, and marries a society girl. The uncle's will is found and the estate, it is disclosed, belongs to other heirs. Richard returns to his poor home, where his former friends mob him, and at last he finds comfort in the arms of Emma, although he has been seriously injured. – From *Moving Picture World*.

In Factory Localities This May Get Over

The labor note in this picture may interest those patrons who belong to factory communities, but owing to a lack of punch and action of any romantic or dramatic nature, even these spectators may not find it a means of entertainment. It is a British-made feature with players unknown to audiences on this side of the water. Hence it has its drawbacks as far as carrying some personality appeal. The story originally known as "Demos," written by George Gissing, may have contained

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some sound virtues, but translated for the screen it reveals stock situations and an orthodox line of development which never intrigues the imagination. However, it has a certain lesson which will undoubtedly have its effect with impressionable laboring classes.

It purposes to show that one of their members should not forget his balance when he suddenly becomes wealthy. He forgets because of his newfound fortune – forgets his ideals – forgets his promises – even forgets his sweetheart in his worship of the dollar and the manner in which it introduces him to society. The plot lacks a single outstanding scene of vitality, the interludes being filled with platform speech-making by the central figure and the little intimate details of his new home. There is nothing new or novel in the treatment. The capital-versus-labour formula is usually rich enough in situation and climax to interest the average patron. "Why Men Forget" never takes the spectator into any dramatic sequence. You do not identify yourself as a part of the story – you do not assume the identity of the hero because he does not make you feel his tragic circumstances when he climbs to the heights and fails in the end.

The characterization is poorly worked out, the feminine figures being almost negligible. It seems strange to see the discarded sweetheart take him up again after his brutal treatment. The climax reveals a storming of the mob to get at their erstwhile leader who has been entrusted with their savings. They pursue him through various byways and highways before they punish him in the home of his former fiancée. The story contains but a single character of any dramatic value, the others providing the background. Since there is no novelty of situation, it is easy to guess the outcome. The photography is rather uneven and the acting is uninspired. However, there is a lesson in the story which will be grasped by many. It shows that money is a curse when it destroys ideals. The title and the working-man's problem suggest an angle for exploitation. It should score in certain

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communities where the program feature is the thing. – Length 5 reels. – Laurence Reid.

[The Cast]

Press Notice – Story

Based upon the celebrated British novel, "Demos," by George Gissing, "Why Men Forget," a Robertson-Cole feature, will be shown at the — theatre next —. It is presented by a distinguished cast of British players, embracing some of the foremost screen artists of the Empire. The theme of the story stands forth as an attractive feature since it concerns the sudden rise of one of the workers, Richard Mutimer. He had been a leader among the men. Overnight he became a man of wealth. He

quickly forgot his promises to help the working-man and neglected his sweetheart. In fact he changed completely. Moving in the higher circles of society he married a young woman of wealth and social standing.

Fate entered and upset all calculations. The will by which Mutimer inherited his riches was proved invalid by a later one which swept away his wealth at a single stroke. The young man returned to the mills and encouraged the workers to believe in him. They entrusted their savings with him and the climax reveals him completely crushed as it is shown that their money is stolen. The hero receives a punishment at their hands. The story carries the onlooker through tense scenes which are dramatic with suspense.

Program Reader

“Why Men Forget” opens at the — theatre next —. Based upon the memorable novel, “Demos,” by George Gissing, it presents a powerfully dramatic story in which an all-star British cast gives a brilliant performance. The story is a tragic romance in an industrial setting. The feature unfolds a story of a young working man who rises in the world due to a rich inheritance. He forgets his promises to help his fellow-workers – even forgets his sweetheart in a new love. Then Fate enters and upsets all calculations. How he realized in the end that money cannot bring faith or love is told

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through five reels of interesting drama. The industrial background of mills and mill workers is picturesquely shown.

Catch Lines

Why do men forget? Is it because of money? If a man becomes suddenly wealthy isn't he apt to forget his old friends? See “Why Men Forget”.

A stirring story of mills and mill workers is “Why Men Forget,” which comes to the — theatre next —. – From *Motion Picture News*.

Gissing in the Sale-room

P. Coustillas

An important sale of Gissing material took place at the Auction Rooms of Jollys of Bath, Old King Street, on September 16th. The relevant portion of the Catalogue is reprinted hereafter, with the purchasers' names and the prices fetched by the items:

277 AL.s to his brother Algernon. Five letters in 1895-6 Epsom. Trouble over drum and fife bands. Talks of employing lawyer. Of Hardy's *Tess* he says “This is a sad book. For one thing Thomas has absolutely lost his saving Humour – not a trace of it.” Domestic tribulation over servants and children's ailments etc. 8vo. Pickering & Chatto, £300.

278 AL.s to his son. Thirteen letters in 1897-1902. Containing advice to his son, two letters written during the tour which resulted in "By the Ionian Sea" containing descriptions of the kind published in the book. 8vo. Quaritch, £720.

279 Two letters to Mr. Payn, August 1891, November 1887. "It seems to me...that a book from my

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hand at the present day should be worth only fifty pounds more than *Demos...*" "if Smith Elder will purchase *Godwin Peak (Born in Exile)* for £150, well, I shall accept it..." "Thank you for your good opinion of my style." 8vo. Pickering & Chatto, £130.

280 *Workers in the Dawn*, First edition, 3 vols., 1880, inscribed on title page "Charles Bradlaugh, Esq., M. P., with publishers' compliments." With AL.s from the author inserted. 8vo, Sims, £540.

281 *The Emancipated*. First edition, 3 vols., 1890, 8vo. Pickering & Chatto, £130.

282 *New Grub Street*. First edition, 3 vols., 1891, 8vo. Pickering & Chatto, £200.

283 *Veranilda*. First edition, 1904, 8vo. Sanders, £16.

284 *Will Warburton*. First edition, 1905 and one other 8vo. Sims, £14.

285 *By the Ionian Sea*. First edition, 1901, 4to. Pickering & Chatto, £22.

Lots 281 to 285 do not call for special remarks except the obvious one that the first editions concerned will cost the libraries or private buyers that will acquire them more than the books are really worth. There is not the least doubt that any of these five titles can be had for much less than the prices recorded above.

The five letters to Algernon are to all appearances unpublished. The "trouble over drum and fife band" makes sense thanks to the entry for October 25, 1894 in Gissing's diary. On that day he noted that a maddening drum and fife band planted itself before his house and that he came out in a rage and sent the people packing. The din inconvenienced him seriously, and it prevented Walter from going to sleep at the appointed hour. But the drum and fife people did not acknowledge themselves beaten; they came again and took up their position in the garden of the house opposite Gissing's home. This time he had to put up with the infernal noise, as they were on private ground.

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The two letters to Payn are dated November 25, 1887 and August 7, 1891. The first contains an allusion to the revision of *A Life's Morning* which was soon to be serialized in *The Cornhill Magazine*, the second is about the manuscript of "Godwin Peak," later retitled *Born in Exile*. I have seen copies, in different handwritings, of these letters, such as they were transcribed for Thomas Seccombe at the time he was writing his biographical article for the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

The thirteen letters to Walter are a significant supplement to the batch of sixty held by Yale.

They will probably be accessible before long as they are said to have been bought for a public institution.

The copy of *Workers*, already disposed of by Sims for £750, is a well-known item. It came up for sale several times between the two world wars. It is described in Sotheby's Catalogue, dated February 20, 1933, as having the Pickford Waller bookplate in each volume. On that day, it was knocked down to Moore, the bookseller, for £130, a sad fall from the £325 the same book had fetched on July 2, 1929 when it had been purchased by Halliday. In between, it had passed into Hill's hands for £135. The letter inserted in the book is a two-page ALS to C. W. Tinckam, Gissing's landlord in his Brixton days, dated "Oct. 28.95" (not 1891 as Sotheby's Catalogues had it on two occasions) from Eversley, Worple Road, Epsom. In it Gissing gave his correspondent philosophical and practical advice: "Get as much variety into your life as health and circumstances permit."

Remington & Co. doubtless hoped that Bradlaugh would review *Workers* in his *National Reformer*. For some unknown reason he did not do so, but he asked his friend Annie Besant to write an appreciation on his behalf. Mrs. Besant's opinion can be found in the *National Reformer* for August 22, 1880, pp. 163-64. It could hardly have been more unfavourable. The following are extracts which speak for themselves:

"This book, from beginning to end, is a book as inartistic as I have ever read. It

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has the gravity befitting a novel with a purpose, but the purpose is undiscoverable. It is dull enough for a sermon, but the application is wanting. It contains some well-drawn incidents and some clever writing, but the incidents form a fortuitous concourse of atoms, and the writing is directed to no foreseen object. It begins in a garret in Whitecross Street and ends in the Falls of Niagara, but the garret and the falls might change places and the story be no loser. It is named "The Workers in the Dawn," but who the workers are, what they work for, and how they are concerned with the dawn, is a riddle whose answer remains within the breast of Mr. George R. Gissing...

I cannot recommend this book to anyone either for amusement or for instruction. It is very dull, very prosy, very useless. *Requiescat in pace* on Mudie's top shelf."

THE BAPTISM RECORDS OF GEORGE GISSING
AND HIS BROTHERS AND SISTERS

Clifford Brook

It is pleasing to scotch an often repeated mis-statement that the Gissings were Unitarians – something which arose because George attended private schools run by Miss Milner and Mr. Harrison in the Westgate (Unitarian) Chapel Sunday School. It is known that T. W. Gissing and his wife were married in Ambleside in a Church of England church; and there are newspaper reports showing that George's father's funeral service was performed by the Rev. C. J. Camidge, Vicar of All Saints' Church, and he was buried in a part of the town cemetery reserved for members of the

Church of England. I accept that T. W. Gissing is known to have been an agnostic (according to an unpublished memoir of him written by George) and that it was Mrs. Gissing who was the church-

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Date when Baptised	Child's Christian Names	Parents' Names Christian Surname	Abode	Quality Trade or Profession	By whom the ceremony performed
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All Saints' Church, now Wakefield Cathedral

Feb.7 1858 Entry 1238	George Robert Born 22.11.57	Thomas Waller & Margaret	Gissing	Westgate	Chemist & Druggist	C. J. Camidge
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Holy Trinity Church, George Street, Wakefield (1839-1954)

Nov. 22 1859 423	William Whittington	Thomas Waller & Margaret	Gissing	Wakefield	Chemist	Wyndham M. Madden
May 1 1861 469	Algernon Fred	” ”	” ”	” ”	” ”	” ”
Nov. 23 1863 538	Margaret Emily	” ”	” ”	” ”	” ”	” ”
May 26 1867 670	Ellen Sophia	”	”	Westgate	”	”

(All these records are in registers stored at the West Yorkshire Registry of Deeds, Margaret Street, Wakefield.)

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goer. In diaries of Lucy Bruce, and in discussion with John Horsfall, I have learnt that Mrs. Gissing or her daughters attended St. Michael's, St. Catherine's and All Saints' Churches after 1880, but I

have not found any other references linking Holy Trinity Church with the Gissings.

As I see it, the Gissings became members of All Saints' Church when they came to Wakefield, as a result of living in that parish but between the baptisms of George and William they changed their allegiance. There was little difference in the distances from 60, Westgate to the two churches, and not only was Holy Trinity a "low church" but possibly significantly the vicar, the Rev. Wyndham Madden, was one of the two C. of E. ministers in Wakefield who voted Liberal in the Parliamentary Election of 1859, the year in which William was baptised.

Authors Pay Homage to Gissing

Alfred M. Slotnick

Neglected as Gissing has been over the years, it comes as a great thrill of pleasure to read some obscure, or not so obscure, novel or book, and to find in it a reference, sometimes only a fleeting one, to Gissing or to one of his books. It will come as a surprise, even to most Gissing enthusiasts, that literally dozens of such references exist in books by say, George Orwell, Norman Douglas, Doris Langley Moore, Elizabeth Taylor, Thomas Burke, Hugh Walpole, Ludwig Lewisohn, Christopher Morley, not to mention Frank Swinnerton.

Doubtless one of the very first of these hat doffings took place in 1902 with *The Lightning Conductor*, by C. N. and A. M. Williamson. I first heard of this English husband-American wife team of writers while reading the *Letters of George Gissing to Gabrielle Fleury*. They were pioneer

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automobile travellers who wove their adventure travels into very ordinary husband-seeking novels. The popularity of their books in the early 1900's was enormous – thirty or more printings for a book was not unusual. A book or two a year using the same formula appeared for many years.

The Lightning Conductor was published by Methuen in 1902 and my copy is one of the Fourteenth edition issued in 1906. The following passage is part of a letter written by the heroine of the book to her father:

When I came home a little before eleven Brown was waiting. He wanted to know if I wouldn't care to have a peep at Spain, and said that we could easily go there and back by dinner-time. Aunt Mary and I were ready in a "jiffy," so was the car, and we were buzzing along a beautiful road (though a little "accidentée," as the French say) near the ocean. There were the most lovely lights I ever saw on land or sea, over the mountains and the great unquiet Atlantic; and St. Jean de Luz, which we came to in no time, as it seemed, was another charming little watering-place for us to come and live if you get poor. A good many English people do live there all the year round, and who do you think is one of them? George Gissing. You know how I made you read his books, and you said they seemed so real that you felt you had got into people's houses by mistake, and ought to say "Excuse me"? Well, he has come to live in St. Jean de Luz, the all-knowing Brown tells me. His master admires Mr. Gissing very much, so the Honourable John must be a nice and clever man.

Book Review

Wakefield District Heritage, compiled by Kate Taylor, Wakefield E.A.H.Y. Committee, 1976, £1.00.

1975 was European Architectural Heritage Year and in support of it a weekly series of articles was printed in the *Wakefield Express*, describing buildings of interest in and around Wakefield. Their author was Kate Taylor who unashamedly drew on the wide knowledge of Wakefield's newly

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appointed District Archivist, John Goodchild; and she was well served as photographer by a local schoolboy, William Perraudin. The articles and photographs have now been published in a book by the local committee. I shall treasure my copy for most of the seventy or so topics but Gissing lovers will find quite a number of references to buildings and people associated with him or his father.

John Binks, p. 39, was a close friend of T. W. Gissing; Pierre Coustillas has said that Algernon Gissing was articled to William Stewart, p.73; Samuel Bruce, another friend of T. W. and George, was educated at Wakefield Proprietary School, p. 63, and worshipped at Zion Congregational Church, p. 94, where his grandfather was the first minister; George attended Harrison's School, p. 76; his sisters held their first school in Wentworth Terrace, p. 92; T. W. Gissing and his friends Dr. Milner, John Binks, Samuel Bruce and R. B. Mackie, p. 68, were closely involved in Wakefield's reply to the Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1851 – the Industrial and Fine Arts Exhibition of 1865, p. 109; Baxendale's House, North Parade and Heath, all mentioned in *A Life's Morning*, appear as St. John's House, p. 68, South Parade, p.70, and Heath, pp. 50-53 (Heath is also the subject of a new booklet of that name, published by M. and M. Oddie of Heath Hall, at £1, and it contains Dagworthy's house – The Manor House); and the Pit Row of "The Quarry on the Heath" and "The Firebrand" is Sharlston Long Row, described on p. 121, which looks very like Nostell Long Row illustrated on p. 119. Glaring omissions are T. W. Gissing's shop and the Mechanics' Institution, but we can't expect everything. – Clifford Brook.

(The book, 148 pages long and profusely illustrated, can be obtained from one of the secretaries of the Committee for £1.50 including postage: A. J. Blaza Esq., 141 Carleton Road, Pontefract, W. Yorks).

Three Queries

1 - Gissing and Wakefield: Clifford Brook, who has contributed so much to Gissing studies in recent years, would be glad to hear of any reference to Wakefield and its inhabitants in the novelist's unpublished correspondence and papers held by public institutions or in private hands.

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His very thorough knowledge of Gissing's native city and its history is a guarantee that, with a little

time, he will be able to elucidate any question submitted to him. Mr. Brook's address is 137 Manygates Lane, Sandal, Wakefield WF2 7DS.

2 - Missing Short Stories : Can anyone help me to trace three short stories by Gissing which have sunk into oblivion since World War II? I summed up the difficulties in my bibliography of his short stories in *English Literature in Transition* (1964), but all my efforts to find the stories have so far been in vain. The basic data are supplied by Gissing's diary and by his Account of Books. He wrote the first of these stories "A Freak of Nature" on March 7 and 8 1895, and according to his Account of Books it appeared in the *London Magazine* in April 1895. (This cannot have been the well-known Harmsworth publication which only started in 1898). The second elusive short story is entitled "Joseph." Gissing wrote it on March 9, 1896. It appears in the Account of Books as having achieved publication in *Lloyd's* in 1896. Of the third contribution only two things are known: payment of £4.2.0 from *Lloyd's* and the date, 1895. The file of *Lloyd's Magazine* held by the British Library was destroyed during World War II, and no other English or American Library seems to hold the years 1895-96.

These stories have never been reprinted in volume form, but the MS of "A Freak of Nature," six pages long, was sold at Sotheby's on February 22, 1927, and the original typescript of "Joseph," ten pages long, was sold by the American Art Association on February 26, 1929. Where are they now? And where can the *London Magazine* and *Lloyd's* (*London Magazine* ?) or *Lloyd's Illustrated London Newspaper* or *Lloyd's Weekly News*, be consulted? – P. Coustillas.

3 - An unidentified text by Gissing: Can anyone supply the origin of the following text,

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which was set as an examination paper for entrance to the Ecole Centrale des Arts et Manufactures in Paris in 1960 (*Langues Modernes*, Sept.-Oct. 1960, p. 89) ?

Who will interpret the soul of London? Observers have attempted the task and all acknowledged failure. G.W. Stevens, after sizing up America and India, is bidden to perform similar service for London. He notes its markets, its food consumption, its drainage system; he finds himself bewildered, baffled. Figures by the hundred thousand, woven into curves, or condensed into tables, statistics of overcrowding, of drunkenness, of pauperism, of crime, all pass like a tale of little meaning.

Yet this London should not be a complicated study. The city is, for the most part, an endless series of replicas – similar streets, similar people; crowded existence, drifting through the choked and narrow ways. You journey on the tardy tram by stages linking together conspicuous gin-palaces, the only landmarks of successive regions. Now you are in "Walworth," now in "Peckham." The varying titles are useful but deluding. The stuff is homogenous, woven of drab buildings and a life set in grey. Lay down an interminable labyrinth of mean two-storied cottages. Pepper the concoction plentifully with churches, school-buildings, and block-dwellings of an assorted variety of ugliness. Cram into this as much labouring humanity as it will hold and then cram in some more. Label with any name, as Stepney or Clapham. These are districts so far removed from the place of work as to have become mere gigantic dormitories. The scuffle into the city, the tedious journey, the hastily wolfed-up

meal, curtailed sleep, represent the home life of the people.

The examiner who set this paper died some years ago and nobody at the Ecole Centrale knows where the piece came from. It reads like a review of G. W. Steevens' studies of London, some of

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which were serialized in the *Daily Mail* (I found an instalment in the number of October 27, 1899, p. 4; it is entitled "Travels in London"). These essays on London, which were written shortly before Steevens' death at Ladysmith, were collected in *Glimpses of Three Nations* (Blackwood, 1901; BM copy received on July 3). Where can Gissing's review have appeared? His diary gives no clue whatsoever, and I am inclined to believe the French colleague who chose this paper did not find Gissing's piece in the English press, but in some book on London, very likely an anthology. Any suggestions would be most welcome. – P. Coustillas.

Notes and News

Dr. Patrick Parrinder, who is editing *The Whirlpool*, for the Harvester Press, reports that he has reviewed Adrian Poole's *Gissing in Context* for the *Modern Language Quarterly*. A valuable review article by him, entitled "Circles of Torment" (*Cambridge Review*, February 7, 1969, pp. 255-57) was unfortunately overlooked by the *Newsletter*.

The new edition of *Workers in the Dawn* (3 vols. bound in one) announced last year by Garland Publishing Inc. as part of their series "Novels of Faith and Doubt" is available at the daunting price of \$35.00 if bought separately. The whole series, which includes 121 novels in 92 volumes, selected by Professor Robert Lee Woolf, of Harvard University, costs \$2,900. To accompany the novels, Professor Woolf has written a book entitled *Faith and Doubt in Victorian England*, which is provided free with all full set orders. If bought separately, this volume sells for \$17. Garland Publishing Inc. also announce "The Decadent Consciousness : A Hidden Archive of Late Victorian Literature," 41 titles published in 36 volumes, edited by Ian Fletcher and John Stokes. No. 10 is *Human Odds and Ends*. The set is priced at \$850; individual volumes sell for \$26.

The *Bookseller* for October 30, 1976, p. 2312, contained the following paragraph: "Routledge & Kegan Paul report that Radio London's six-week Sunday series, starting on 14th. November,

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entitled 'Mean Streets,' will feature dramatised readings of the stories to be found in *Working Class Stories of the 1890s* by Peter Keating (£1.25 paperback). The author will be introducing each story over the radio and Radio London are giving the series considerable publicity including posters and a *Radio Times* feature by Peter Keating". The book, it will be remembered, contains Gissing's story "Lou and Liz."

The *New York Times* of November 30, 1976 carried a three-column article on Frank Swinnerton who "at ninety-two, still writes a book a year between chores at his Pickwickian cottage." Gissing's name clings to Swinnerton's as much as Swinnerton's clings to Gissing's.

Herbert Mitgang, the writer of the article notes that “although the *New Grub Street* of George Gissing’s 1890’s literary world is different to-day, the struggle for survival still goes on for the serious novelist in England. Swinnerton’s readers on both sides of the Atlantic are limited but devoted. There have been some paperback editions of his work, but he does not attain film or television sales, living only off his books. It’s still a struggle.”

“New 21-Bedroom Hotel to Open Soon” – this was the title of an article in the *Wakefield Express* of October 1, 1976. The hotel is situated in what used to be called Stoneleigh Terrace, Doncaster Road, Wakefield. One of the converted houses was the home of the Gissings in the 1880’s and George stayed there several times. There it was in particular that he wrote *The Emancipated*. The owners are Mr. and Mrs. Frank Wilson, who run a staff consultants’ business in Westmorland Street, Wakefield. They will transfer, indeed by now certainly have transferred, the business to the hotel. In conjunction with the business Mrs. Wilson intends to provide at the hotel a secretarial, typing and photo-copying service for residents. The proprietors’ aim, the *Express* said, “is to provide a service with a smile and make everyone feel welcome.”

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Recent Publications

Volumes

The Unclassed, edited with an introduction by Jacob Korg. The Harvester Press, 1976, £5.95; pp. xxiii + 322. Green cloth. The editorial material includes a bibliographical note on the publishing history of the book, the introduction, notes to the text, and a bibliography on *The Unclassed*. The American edition is published by Associated University Presses, Cranbury, New Jersey 08512. The text, revised by Gissing at Bullen’s request, is that of the 1895 edition.

New Grub Street, edited with an introduction by Bernard Bergonzi, Penguin Books, 1976, 90p. This is a second impression of the book originally published under the same imprint in 1968. It is available in America.

The Nether World, with an introduction by Walter Allen, London: Dent, New York: Dutton, 1975. This is the second edition in both hardback (£2.40) and paperback (£1.20). The introduction has been reset.

Articles, reviews, etc.

Paul Theroux, *The Great Railway Bazaar*, Ballantine Books, 1975. Contains a number of references to Gissing and *New Grub Street*.

R . C. Churchill, *A Bibliography of Dickensian Criticism 1836-1975*, London: Macmillan Press, 1975. Contains over 30 references to Gissing.

John Halperin, “The Gissing Revival 1961-1974,” *Studies in the Novel*, Spring 1976. An enthusiastic and perceptive evaluation of the novelist’s work followed by a survey of Gissing scholarship since the publication of the letters to Wells and to Bertz.

- Walter Allen, "Feminist Findings," *Times Literary Supplement*, August 27, 1976, p. 1055. Carries a paragraph on *New Grub Street* and *The Odd Women*.
- Fredric Jameson, "Authentic *Ressentiment*. The 'Experimental' Novels of Gissing," *Nineteenth Century Fiction*, September 1976, pp. 127-49.
- Anon., "Fame Came too Late," *Wakefield Express*, Second Section, p. 13. On Alfred Slotnick's visit to Wakefield.
- Frank T. Dunn, *A Cumulative Analytical Index to the Dickensian 1905-74*, Harvester Press, 1976. A splendid index giving all references to Gissing in the first 70 volumes of the *Dickensian*.
- Maria Teresa Chialant, "Recensioni," *Annali: Sezione Germanica* (Istituto Universitario Orientale, Napoli), 1976, XIX, no.1, pp. 126-27. A review of *Gissing in Context*.
- Joseph Dobrinsky, *La Jeunesse de Somerset Maugham 1874 - 1903*, Paris, Didier (Etudes Anglaises series, no. 62), 1976. Gissing appears on pp. 111, 118, 121, 170, 173, 331.