

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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Sidelights on Gissing’s Publishing Career

Pierre Coustillas

[The various letters included in the present article are published with the permission of the Dartmouth College Library. The assistance of the staff of its Special Collections is gratefully acknowledged. I am even more greatly indebted to Dick Hoefnagel, who not only did the preliminary research in the Special Collections and supplied copies of the letters, but made shrewd suggestions for some parts of the article. — P. C.]

There are in the Special Collections of the Dartmouth College Library the originals of a

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number of letters which in various ways throw light on the marketing of Gissing’s writings. None of them is of crucial importance and some of them are of minimal interest, but they all make full sense, and their modest significance is enhanced if they are viewed in the more general context of the willingness or reluctance of publishers and review editors to make his work available. Material of the same kind — mainly letters exchanged by publishers, editors, literary agents, copyright owners, collectors and librarians between the early 1890s and the 1940s — has gradually become known to a few scholars. It is widely scattered among libraries, publishers’ archives and private collections, but if placed alongside the miscellaneous letters in the Dartmouth College Library it enables one to reconstruct activities the tangible aspect of which was the publication of a few short stories and novels, either in Gissing’s English or in translation.

The twenty-nine letters concerned can be divided into three groups of unequal importance. The first consists of two letters by Gissing, one to Messrs. A. D. Innes & Co., the London

publishers, the other to William Morris Colles, the novelist's literary agent in the mid-1890s. The second group comprises eleven letters, mostly addressed to Colles in Gissing's lifetime. They concern short stories and books, and it would seem that the author, even though he did not read them all, was aware, as a rule through Colles, of their contents. The third group, which covers the years 1907-1916, consists of sixteen letters from John Buchan, later Baron Tweedsmuir, in his capacity as literary adviser to Nelsons, and to James B. Pinker, Gissing's literary agent in the last six years of his life. They are all concerned with the reprinting of novels in Nelson's Sevenpenny Library.

I

On October 18, 1894, that is at a time when he was devoting most of his energy to short

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story writing, Gissing received an invitation from A. D. Innes & Co. to contribute a short story to the first number of a new magazine "on Church lines," *The Minster*, "to be edited by one of the Chaplains of the Archbp of Canterbury" (*Diary*). After making sure that he would be free to choose his subject and would receive a fee of 12 guineas, he wrote the story, from October 22 to 25. It was to be called "The Flowing Tide," but eventually became "The Salt of the Earth." The manuscript was promptly despatched and published in due course in the January 1895 number of the *Minster*, where it was to be followed in June of the same year by "A Calamity at Tooting." Meanwhile a pleasant suggestion came to him from Innes. On November 1, 1894 he recorded in his *Diary*: "Letter from Innes, saying that they think they could sell the American rights of the story I am doing for them, and asking my price. Replied that I don't know what to ask."

Eversley, | Worple Road, | Epsom.
Nov. 1 '94

Gentlemen,

Many thanks for your kind suggestion. The fact is that I have never myself disposed of serial rights in America, — though it is possible that certain stories of which I have sold all rights have made an appearance there. Consequently, I do not know what sum it would be reasonable to ask from an American periodical. As you think you may have an opportunity of disposing of this right, perhaps you would be so good as to let me have the benefit of your experience — simply asking what seems fit? You would greatly oblige me.

The story is called "The Salt of the Earth," and will make, I find, a little more than 4,000 words.

I am, gentlemen,

Faithfully yours,

George Gissing.

Messrs. A. D. Innes & Co.

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Gissing was truthful about his ignorance of the fate of his short stories in America. William Morris Colles sold all the serial rights to review editors who in turn sometimes tried to sell the American rights to some New York or Boston journal. At least one of his English short stories, as distinguished from those written in Chicago, had been reprinted across the Atlantic, "Letty Coe" (*Temple Bar*, August 1891, and *The Living Age*, October 3, 1891). Whether Innes's plans for placing "The Salt of the Earth" in America materialized is doubtful. Gissing, at all events, received no additional fee for this story which was posthumously collected in *The*

House of Cobwebs (1906).

II

The second Gissing letter, addressed to Colles, is also recorded in the *Diary*. On January 22, 1895 he had heard from his agent that news had reached the latter that *Eve's Ransom*, which was currently being serialized in C. K. Shorter's weekly, the *Illustrated London News*, was to be issued in book form by Ward Lock. The rumour was unfounded and, to Gissing, all the more irksome as Colles was fully aware that Lawrence & Bullen were his client's publishers. This was the time when he was being "discovered" in various quarters. Photographers were anxious to have his portrait, editors to publish short stories from his pen, publishers to have one-volume novels by him in the current year, and his name frequently appeared in paragraphs. Recently in Wakefield the *Free Press*, to which his father had been an occasional contributor, had thought it its duty to salute the serialization of *Eve's Ransom* (January 12). Gissing had all this in mind when he penned the following note to Colles (tipped in at the front fly-leaf of a copy of the 1912 Hodder & Stoughton edition of *The Private Life of Henry Maitland* in the Dartmouth College Library). He also knew that Colles, in reporting the baseless rumour, was reminding him of a promise to let him place a full-length novel on his behalf — a promise which was kept

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with *The Town Traveller* in 1897.

Eversley, | Worple Road, | Epsom.
Jan. 22 '95

Dear Colles,

Could I see you on Thursday? If so, a postcard with the best hour for you would be sufficient.

Yours,
George Gissing.

Author and agent did meet on Thursday, January 24 at Colles's office in Portugal Street. Various projects were discussed, including a contribution to an annual to be edited by Anthony Hope and published by Methuen. By February 5 Gissing was informed by Colles that the project had been abandoned. It is not even mentioned in Anthony Hope's "Authorised life" by Sir Charles Mallet (Hutchinson, 1935).

III

The following two letters concern "A Lodger in Maze Pond," a short story written from August 11 to 14, 1893 which Colles had placed with the *National Review* (February 1895). Georges Art, a French critic who was for some years a regular contributor to the *Revue Bleue*, must have read it promptly, since by February 13, 1895, he had secured both the permission of the editor of the *National Review* to translate it and the agreement of the editor of the *Revue Bleue* to publish his translation. The English editor, Leo Maxse, had succeeded Alfred Austin, the *Review's* conservative founder, and he was fond enough of Gissing's short stories to publish three in quick succession (December 1893-February 1895). The French editor, Henry Ferrari, was to become known personally to Gissing through Gabrielle Fleury in 1898. It was indeed through the translations of Gissing's short stories published by Ferrari in his widely read

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weekly that she discovered Gissing's work.

Art's letter, like all those addressed to Colles, has the number 26 pencilled on it, presumably the identification number for Gissing in Colles's office files.

Paris, 13 février 1895

Monsieur

M. Ferrari, directeur de la Revue bleue de Paris, désire publier la traduction que j'ai faite de votre intéressante nouvelle:

a Lodger in Maze Pond.

Je suis d'accord avec Mr. Maxse, directeur de la National Review, pour les conditions de la publication mais il me renvoie à vous pour obtenir l'autorisation de traduction.

Dans l'espoir d'une réponse favorable de votre part je vous salue sincèrement

G. Art
88, Boulevard Saint-Michel
Paris

Although the addressee of this letter was the author ("your interesting short story"), his response to Art's offer in his diary reads as though the application had been read by Colles, it being probable that Maxse had invited Art to turn to the agent from whom he had purchased the story. Anyway Gissing's reply to Colles, dated February 15, 1895 and rubberstamped "Received 16 February 95," confirms that he did not receive Art's request. After noting that foreign proposals of that kind generally shipwrecked on the point of terms, he urged Colles to accept Art's own terms, as it seemed to him important not to miss such an opportunity. Gissing concluded that he himself would be satisfied with whatever sufficed to recompense Colles's trouble (letter in the Carl H. Pforzheimer Library).

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"Le locataire de Maze Pond" appeared in the *Revue Bleue* on 16 March, and the translator, as the next letter shows, sent Colles a money order for £1 (25 francs) on publication day. The sum is duly recorded in the novelist's Account of Books (Yale). Apparently Colles took no commission on this transaction.

The letter is interesting in another respect. Clearly Georges Art had only just discovered the existence of Gissing's work, and he liked it so well that he was anxious to translate a longer piece.

Monsieur

Vous aurez reçu à ce jour un numéro de la Revue bleue contenant la traduction de la nouvelle de M. Gissing: *The Lodger of Maze Pond* ainsi qu'un mandat de 25 francs. La nouvelle de M. Gissing a beaucoup plu aux lecteurs de la Revue. Voudriez-vous avoir l'obligeance de me dire si cet auteur a écrit une oeuvre plus considérable? Je pourrais peut-être la traduire pour un journal ou une revue de Paris.

Sincères salutations

G. Art
88, Boulevard Saint-Michel
Paris

16 Mars 95

Colles's reply, although not available, must have been encouraging. He doubtless told Art that *Eve's Ransom* was being serialized in the *Illustrated London News* (January 5-March 30 1895) and that two other short stories by Gissing had appeared in the *National Review*, "The Day of Silence" (December 1893) and "A Capitalist" (April 1894). Art translated the former, and the French version appeared in the *Revue Bleue* on October 5, 1895, but the appetite of the French periodical for Gissing's short stories did not end there. Gabrielle Fleury, under the

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pseudonym of E. F. d'Arzinol, published in it "Comrades in Arms" as "Compagnons d'armes" on March 4, 1899 as well as "A Poor Gentleman" ("Un philanthrope malgré lui"), unsigned, on March 17, 1900. As late as March 17, 1928 "The Salt of the Earth" ("Le Sel de la Terre"), translated by A. Chevalier, appeared in the same periodical.

IV

The next letter in Colles's file concerns a Gissing short story, "A Freak of Nature," which was for years shrouded in mystery and about which various articles and queries appeared in the present journal and elsewhere.

The title of the story first occurs in the diary entry for October 19, 1894. On that day a page and a half of it was written; but Gissing was dissatisfied with this beginning and he gave up the story the next day. He took up the subject again on March 7, 1895, wrote three pages, completed the narrative and sent it off to Colles on the 8th, saying in the accompanying letter (original in the Pforzheimer Library) that if it could not do for the periodical of Harmsworth's of which Colles had spoken, perhaps someone else would have it. The periodical he was referring to was yet unborn, but it had a name, *The London Magazine*, an editor, Beckles Willson and, as the letter from Willson to Colles testifies, offices in Temple Chambers, Tudor Street, E. C.

Beckles Willson was a young Canadian in his twenty-fifth year, who, after a short spell of journalism in America, had come over to England in 1892. He himself was to relate in his autobiography, *From Quebec to Piccadilly and Other Places: Some Anglo-Canadian Memories* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1929), the unsatisfactory story of his connection with Alfred Charles Harmsworth, afterwards Viscount Northcliffe. "It happened that a series of articles I had been writing for the *Strand Magazine* attracted Harmsworth's attention. He had for some time

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contemplated a high-class shilling monthly — something on the lines of Astor's *Pall Mall Magazine*, and of this projected publication he offered me the editorship. The terms he offered were generous. I accepted at once and was forthwith invited to join the Christmas party at Broadstairs" (p. 34). Things were at about this stage when Willson was purchasing material for the magazine soon to be launched.

The London Magazine | Editorial Offices, |
120, 121 & 122 Temple Chambers, | Tudor Street, E. C.
2/4 '95.

My dear Mr. Colles:

I should be glad if you would let me know what Mr. Gissing demands for his work. I am prepared to receive a series of tales from him — granted they are as good as "A Freak of Nature" for which, if the price is within bounds, I hope to be able to send you a cheque this week.

Yours truly
B. Willson.

P.S. I am sorry Oxenham is intractable: the tale might be made a most excellent one.

(The allusion to John Oxenham, the pen-name of William Arthur Dunkerley, probably concerns one of his two short stories which appeared in the first volume of *The Harmsworth Magazine*, "The Very Short Memory of Mr. Joseph Scorer," August 1898, pp. 131-43, and "The Missing Q. C's," December 1898, pp. 497-514. As this letter implies Colles was John Oxenham's agent, but he was not told of the true identity of his client until 1896. See Erica Oxenham, *Scrap-book of J. O.*, London: Longmans, Green & Co. 1946. Erica Oxenham also wrote a biography of her brother, entitled *J. O.*, London: Longmans & Co, 1942).

In another note to Colles, dated April 5, Willson informed him that "A Freak of Nature"

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had been approved (Pforzheimer Library), and Gissing received a cheque for £15 on April 17. In his Account of Books he merely noted towards the end when listing his earnings for 1895 "London Mag. £13.10" (Beinecke Library and *Colophon*, Part 18, 1934). Gissing was slightly worried to receive a cheque which should normally have been sent to his agent and to read on the form of receipt that "the entire rights" had apparently been sold. Some triangular correspondence between author, agent and editor ensued which had two consequences: first, it appeared that Gissing had been the recipient of the cheque because Harmsworth objected to literary agents; second, the author was asked to offer further contributions. While he thought it necessary to defend the role of his agent in a letter to Willson (20 April, 1895, Pforzheimer Library) he must have thought that it was hardly advisable to submit other short stories so long as "A Freak of Nature" had not been printed in the projected magazine.

After that "A Freak of Nature" disappeared for years, and it is doubtful whether Gissing and Colles ever knew what happened to it. In his autobiography Beckles Willson refers to Harmsworth's project with melancholy: "It is unnecessary to say much about the Magazine, which cost me many months of labour and Harmsworth some thousands of pounds, because it never saw the light of day. It was postponed again and again during three years. Cecil Harmsworth succeeded me in the editorship, and later a bantling appeared bearing the name we had agreed upon, but nothing else of the original conception, which passed away into the limbo of the unborn" (p. 35). "My reputation will be ruined," Willson confided to his diary, "Harmsworth has put me in a false position" (quoted by Reginald Pound and Geoffrey Harmsworth, *Northcliffe*, London: Cassell, 1959, p. 235). There is indeed a small, yet significant gap in the Beckles Willson entry in *Who Was Who* (he died in 1942). No activity is recorded between his arrival in England in 1892 and his joining the staff of the *Daily Mail* in

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1896. That he was after all decently treated by Harmsworth seems likely. The *Daily Mail* was also a Harmsworth publication.

Gissing did not abruptly forget his short story. The last mention of it in his handwriting appears in a (privately owned) letter to Colles dated September 25, 1895 which emerged from oblivion a few years ago. Was the *London Magazine* now in existence? He very much hoped he would receive a proof someday.

But there is no sign that he ever did. When the magazine at long last came into being, it was called *The Harmsworth Magazine*, and Gissing's short story, unidentifiable except by the few people who had seen it in manuscript, had become "Mr. Brogden, City Clerk," a title of

which there is no mention anywhere in Gissing's papers and correspondence. The new title may well have been chosen by Cecil Harmsworth, who published the story in February 1899, pp. 36-43. No connection was established by biographers and critics between the mysterious Mr. Brogden and "A Freak of Nature" until the enquiry required by the publication of the *Index of English Literary Manuscripts* revealed that the long lost manuscript was held by the University of Kansas (see Pierre Coustillas, "'A Freak of Nature': The Last Missing Short Story Identified," *Gissing Newsletter*, October 1978, pp. 21-22).

V

Gissing devoted most of 1895 to short fiction, largely at the urging of his agent William Morris Colles. Colles also encouraged him to write a novel. On January 19 (letter in the Pforzheimer Library) Gissing explained that he was willing to write a novel of some 60,000 to 70,000 words which Colles might try to place with Methuen & Co, a firm which hoped in vain to publish *Eve's Ransom* in book form. He expected to have the manuscript ready in the autumn. The following letter from William Canton to Colles reflects an episode of Gissing's fruitless

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attempt to satisfy his agent.

In his letter of April 17, 1895, dealing in part with "A Freak of Nature" and the cheque he had received for it, Gissing said he was now at work on the promised serial story, probably to be called "The Spendthrift." If all went well, he thought the manuscript would be in Colles's hands by the end of June. His diary shows him beginning "to think out" "The Spendthrift" on April 22, and the next day "thinking away, all day and half the night." Late April and early May saw various abortive attempts and eventually the original project was altered beyond recognition. When on May 22 Colles wrote to him that there was an opening in *Good Words*, an Edinburgh-based monthly founded in 1860, and that a decision could be made if the first few chapters were sent to the editor, Gissing responded immediately. "The Spendthrift," he said, he had had to lay aside because he was not satisfied with it. The new story on which he was at work was provisionally entitled "The Enchantress" — a narrative of middle-class devoid of "squalor." The protagonist was a strong, ambitious man aiming at public life whose chance of ultimate distinction was endangered by his marriage to a rich woman only concerned with enjoying life. The man was to prevail in the end and subdue his wife's weaknesses to his own will — a story which in some respects glanced back to *Middlemarch*, but in others glanced forward to *The Whirlpool* (letter of May 22, 1895 in the Pforzheimer Library). The first three chapters were despatched to Colles the next day.

Good Words was edited from July 1872 to April 1906 by Dr. Donald Macleod, D. D., V. D., Chaplain in Ordinary to the Queen in Scotland, and obviously a man whose tastes could hardly be expected to include realistic fiction from the pen of George Gissing. The author of the reply, William Canton (1845-1926) was probably, as well as sub-editor of the *Contemporary Review* and manager of Ibister & Co, the London representative of *Good Words*. He was an

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acquaintance of Gissing's friend W. H. Hudson, the naturalist (see *Landscapes and Literati*, ed. Dennis Shruballs and Pierre Coustillas, Wilton: Michael Russell Publishing Ltd, 1985).

Good Words | Sunday Magazine | Contemporary Review,
15 & 16, Tavistock Street,
Covent Garden, London W. C.
27th June 1895.

Dear Mr. Colles,

I am herewith returning the 3 chapters of Mr. Gissing's story which you were good enough to send me. Dr. Macleod has given it, together with other proposals his full consideration, and I am sorry to say does not decide to take it. I am very much obliged to you for the trouble you have taken in suggesting different authors to us and only regret that we have not found one of your proposals suitable to *Good Words*.

Yours faithfully,
William Canton

W. M. Colles, Esq.

Wisely Gissing had decided to put aside "The Enchantress" until he heard from Colles. The fate of this abortive novel is to be read in a letter to Colles of August 5, 1895 written while on holiday at Yarmouth. It was doubtful, he said, whether he would complete this serial when he sat at his desk again, adding that he had resolved never to send away chapters of a story before the whole was completed (Pforzheimer Library). But this was largely written with a view to keeping Colles off.

Perhaps the agent tried to interest the *Windsor Magazine* in the same fragment, though the manuscript submitted may have been a Gissing short story that was still on his hands. The result was at all events negative, and the reason given quite characteristic of an editor who was

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bent on amusing his readers. This magazine had been founded in January 1895 and its editor was one David Williamson according to *The New Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature* and to Alvin Sullivan, in his *British Literary Magazines 1837-1923* (Greenwood Press, 1983), p. 453.

Windsor Magazine,
Warwick House,
Salisbury Square,
London, E.C.

10. 8. 1895.

W. M. Collis [sic], Esq.,

Dear Sir,

I am obliged by your favour of the 5th. inst, but after carefully considering the matter, I am afraid that Mr. Gissing is a little too sombre for this magazine.

Faithfully Yrs

The Editor

VI

The next letter, which is undated though another hand than that of the writer added a 7 after the partly printed date year, concerns the six sketches which Gissing contributed to *To-Day* under the title "Nobodies at Home" in 1895: "The Friend in Need" (4 May), "A Drug in the Market" (11 May), "Of Good Address" (18 May), "By the Kerb" (25 May), "Humble Felicity" (1 June) and "A Man of Leisure" (8 June). With the exception of "By the Kerb" they were reprinted in *Stories and Sketches* (1938). The sum is confirmed by the novelist's Account of Books while his diary for September 25, 1895 records the receipt from Colles of an "account up to 24th, with cheque for £23 odd," in fact £21.4.7 after deduction of the agent's commission.

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In his reply of that day (in private hands) he welcomed Georges Art's offer to translate *Eve's Ransom* and ventured to suggest that only a very moderate fee be asked for the translation rights. The higher figure (£10) he suggested is that which was actually paid by Art (Account of Books).

When Jerome had failed to pay for the six sketches after Colles' reminder of July 25, Gissing had written to his agent from Yarmouth (August 5; letter in the Pforzheimer Library) that he need not trouble about Jerome, who was probably beset with "house difficulties."

To-Day,
Howard House,
Arundel St., Strand,
London.

1897.

The Authors' Syndicate,
4 Portugal St.,
Lincoln's Inn Fields.

Gentlemen,

We must apologise for the delay in not sending a cheque for "Mr. Gissing's contributions" before this. The only letter we have any record of (addressed to Mr. Jerome) is dated 25th July, which we have just received, Mr. Jerome being absent from London for a short time.

Kindly return the enclosed form of receipt duly filled up and oblige for cheque £23.11.10.

Yours truly,
[signature illegible]

VII

When, earlier in the year, Georges Art had asked for the text of more short stories after

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publishing his translation of "A Lodger in Maze Pond," that of the other two which had appeared in the *National Review* had been forwarded to him. Now in his letter to Colles written at Yarmouth on August 5 Gissing had enquired whether any use had been made of "The Day of Silence" and "A Capitalist." The two stories were returned promptly by Art and receipt of them confirmed to Colles by their author on August 12 (letter in the Pforzheimer Library). The following letter from Henry Ferrari, the editor of the *Revue Bleue*, was new evidence that the connection with Georges Art might become profitable.

Revue Bleue,
19, rue des Saints-Pères,

Monsieur le directeur
de l'Author's [sic] Syndicate

Nous avons l'honneur de vous adresser un mandat de 25f montant des honoraires de reproduction de la nouvelle *The Day of Silence* de M. George Gissing, paru dans la *Revue bleue* du 5 octobre.

Veuillez agréer, Monsieur, l'expression de notre considération très distinguée.

Henry Ferrari
directeur de la *Revue bleue*
9 8^{bre} 1895

Colles had been informed by Georges Art of the forthcoming publication of "The Day of Silence" in the *Revue Bleue* on September 23 (letter in the Pforzheimer Library). It was in this letter that Art inquired about the possibility of translating "Eva's Ransom" [sic], which he had read months before in the *Illustrated London News*. Who was the owner of the rights of this story by such an original writer? Perhaps Colles referred him to C. K. Shorter to whom Gissing had sold the serial rights for £150 on September 28, 1894 (*Diary*). Anyway, the following

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letter, though it does not bear Shorter's name, was definitely sent to him.

Paris, 11 octobre 95.

Monsieur

Vous avez publié au début de cette année un roman de M. George Gissing intitulé: *Eva's Ransom* [sic]

Je désirerais savoir quel serait le droit à payer pour la traduction de ce roman en français. Au cas où le prix ne serait pas trop élevé je compterais me charger de ce travail. Comptant sur une prompte réponse de votre part, je vous salue sincèrement.

G. Art
88. Boulevard Saint-Michel
Paris

Immediately Shorter had the letter forwarded to Gissing, who sent it on to Colles on October 13. His accompanying note (Pforzheimer Library) smacked of impatience with this absurd procedure. Why had not Art written straight to Colles? He feared there was a misunderstanding.

Things, however, soon straightened out. Art translated *Eve's Ransom*, but not immediately. Indeed, in his next letter (undated; Pforzheimer Library) he explained to Colles that he had been busy translating various things (translations from the English, the German and the Spanish by him are to be found in the *Revue Bleue*) and that he had not yet turned to *Eve's Ransom*. Rather belatedly he begged for a copy of the book as he surmised the story had by now been published in book form. Gissing's diary once more supplies a link between letters. Colles's letter on the subject reached him on May 29, 1896. He ordered a copy of the book to

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be sent to the translator, which was done through Colles the next day, as a note at the top of Art's undated letter to Colles testifies. The translation was done within reasonable time. A further letter from Art to Colles dated October 5 (Pforzheimer Library) informed Gissing's agent that the French version of *Eve's Ransom*, which was entitled *La Rançon d'Eve*, but should in fact have been *Le Rachat d'Eve*, had been accepted by the *Revue de Paris* and would appear sometime in the next year. A money order for 250 francs (£10), the sum agreed upon,

was enclosed. Art, who suddenly became capable of writing four-page letters, requested a receipt that he might justify payment to the editor of the *Revue de Paris*, expressed his intention of writing an article on “Mr. George Gissing” whose talent he greatly admired, begged for some biographical details (his age, main events in his career, etc) and for copies of his main works. He was prepared, he said, to translate well-written, amusing short stories, at 25 or 50 francs (£1 or £2) a piece.

His contribution to the diffusion of Gissing’s works was now virtually at an end, for although he reiterated in January 1897 his request for some of Gissing’s works and biographical details — Gissing did send two of his books, *The Odd Women* and *In the Year of Jubilee* (letter to Colles, 29 January 1897, Pforzheimer Library) on January 27 (*Diary*) and a long letter of biographical details, but no acknowledgment was made — Art failed to publish the promised article in the *Revue Bleue* when at long last the *Revue de Paris* serialized *La Raçon d’Eve* from April 1 to May 15, 1898. If the projected article appeared in another journal, it still has to be exhumed. The French serial version in turn appeared in volume form under the imprint of Calmann-Lévy in December 1898. Meanwhile Gissing had published *The Town Traveller* in late August, and Art expressed his intention to translate this novel as well as *New Grub Street*, a copy of which had been sent to him in May 1897 (letter of Gissing to Colles of May 7; Pforzheimer Library).

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The emergence of Gabrielle Fleury in the novelist’s life nearly rang the death knell of more profitable relationships between the novelist and Georges Art. When Gabrielle wrote to Gissing about her desire to turn *New Grub Street* into French, he quite naturally suggested she should apply to Smith, Elder since he had sold all his rights to them. Actually a letter from Smith, Elder of June 14, 1898 to the Authors’ Syndicate (Pforzheimer Library) shows that she had already done so weeks before she got in touch with Gissing — under the pseudonym of E. F. d’Arzinol. On hearing that he had been forestalled by a rival, Art protested to Gissing, accusing him of disloyalty, but Art’s dilatoriness lay at the root of the matter and this he failed to see (*Diary* for 25 July, 1898).

Art apparently did translate *The Town Traveller* — at least Gissing wrote that he had on the inside of the back cover of Volume III of his diary (p. 550) — but as the following note testifies he could not find a publisher. This note was a reply to an enquiry prompted by Gissing, but actually made by Colles, the novelist having come to think, after the recent protest of Art, that direct communication between them was inadvisable. Despite extensive research in the French press at the turn of the century, no translation of *The Town Traveller* by Georges Art has been found.

Revue Bleue
19, rue des Saints-Pères,
Paris, le 7 juin 1899

Monsieur

J’ai le regret de vous annoncer que malgré tous mes efforts je n’ai pu trouver le placement du roman de M. Gissing intitulé *The Town traveller* [sic].
Je vous présente mes sincères salutations.

G. Art

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The last two letters in the batch of correspondence about Gissing received by Colles require but little comment.

John Holland Rose, like Gissing a former student of Owens College, Manchester, was the general editor of the Victorian Era Series launched by Blackie & Son in 1897. Rose had commissioned Gissing to contribute a monograph on Dickens in December 1896. The book had been written at Siena in the autumn of 1897, after Gissing had called on his old schoolfellow at his home, 11 Endlesham Road, Balham on September 14, a week before he left for Italy. The typescript of *Charles Dickens: A Critical Study* was sent to Colles on December 9, and the present note shows it on its way to the printers via the general editor of the series. Rose (1855-1942) was a Congregationalist. He later occupied a post at the university of Cambridge and is mainly known as a historian of the Napoleonic period.

Congregational School,
Caterham, Surrey.
Dec 16. 1897,

Dear Sirs,

My wife has told me of the receipt of the Gissing typo-script. With many thanks to you,.

I remain,

Sincerely yours

J. H. Rose

The letter from A. M. S. Methuen to Colles speaks for itself. The project duly materialized in March 1902 with the publication of a sixpenny reprint of *The Town Traveller* in very small type and on 128 pages. It was no. XXIX in the Novelist series. *The Crown of Life* was to appear in the same series in 1905.

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Jan. 29. 1901

Dear Colles,

We wish to have the power, if necessary, to bring out a Sixpenny edition of THE TOWN TRAVELLER, paying Gissing a halfpenny per copy, 13/12. I asked Gissing whether I should apply to you and he says that I am to acquaint you with our proposal. Gissing himself, is quite pleased at the idea, so I presume we may regard the matter as settled.

Yours sincerely,

A. M. S. Methuen

It is relevant to add that in his letter to Colles of February 1, 1901, (Pforzheimer Library) Gissing thought it necessary to correct Methuen's view of the matter in hand. He disclaimed having accepted his offer. He had only said that he was glad to hear that Methuen thought of printing a cheap issue of the novel. He had referred Methuen to Colles for the question of terms. The royalty was to be a halfpenny per copy.

The series of letters from John Buchan to James B. Pinker about the possibility of including Gissing titles in Nelson's Sevenpenny Library (MS137), those small red-cloth volumes which one still occasionally sees in English second-hand bookshops, began in early 1907. All the letters up to May 22, 1907 are typewritten on notepaper which reads "Thomas Nelson and Sons Publishers, Parkside Works, Edinburgh." The address after that date is 35 and 36 Paternoster Row, London E. C., and the letter of May 23, 1907 is hand-written. The recipient's address was Talbot House, Arundel Street, Strand, London W.C. (It may be worth

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noting that these letters are part of a collection of 313 letters covering the years 1898-1927, but that most of them were written from 1907 to 1916).

Negotiations had probably begun either in 1906 or very early in 1907. They were at the following stage on February 22, 1907 when Buchan wrote:

The books of Mr. Gissing I should like you to inquire about are "New Grub Street," "In the Year of Jubilee" and "The Odd Women." I am not a great authority upon Mr. Gissing's Works, but I should also be glad if you could ascertain from his executors if they regard any books of his as specially typical or specially good that I may have a look at them.

I shall wait to make a proposal about the foregoing works until I hear from you and decide what we specially wish to include.

In the next letter, dated February 26, Buchan regretted that Henry James was unable to offer any of his books and he repeated that he would be glad to hear from Pinker "about what Mr. Gissing's executors say." Then, referring to W. E. Norris, whose desirable titles for the Sevenpenny Library had been reprinted in sixpenny editions recently, he offered a halfpenny royalty on every copy sold and £50 per volume on account of this royalty. He concluded with this remark: "I shall wait to make a proposal about the Gissing books till I hear from you further."

The executors must have replied promptly for on March 12 Buchan made an offer which, in the light of the Norris books, was not a generous one, since neither of the two Gissing titles mentioned had appeared in sixpenny editions: "We are prepared to reprint in our 7d Series George Gissing's two novels 'The Odd Women' and 'In the Year of Jubilee,' and to pay a royalty of ½d per copy sold and an advance of £50 on account of royalties. We shall be glad to hear from you at your early convenience whether Mr. Gissing's Executors accept this proposal."

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Algernon Gissing and Clara Collet were not satisfied with the halfpenny royalty offered by Buchan, and Pinker relayed their views, which prompted a not unexpected reaction on March 28: "We have considered the question of the royalty on the Gissing books, and we are afraid we cannot offer more than ½d per copy. You see Gissing is in a different position from the ordinary popular novelist. His books appealed to a limited class, and we cannot expect the same sale for him as for, say, Anthony Hope and Mrs. Ward." In the eyes of Thomas Nelson & Sons, if all authors were equal, some were more equal than others.

This, as indicated by a letter of March 16, 1907 from A. H. Bullen, the publisher of both *The Odd Women* and *In the Year of Jubilee*, to Pinker, was a setback (original in the Northwestern University Library, Evanston, Ill.; Bullen's offices were then at 47, Great Russell Street, an address to which he moved after the dissolution of the Lawrence & Bullen partnership in Gissing's lifetime). In this letter Bullen had thanked Pinker for his note of the

13th, but he had objected to Nelson's terms. He also insisted that in Pinker's letter to him of February 18 the agent had said that Nelson would pay a *penny* per copy, and it was on the penny a copy basis that he had negotiated for the Executors. Still, as a reduced royalty was better than no royalty at all, Bullen reported the executors' consent in a letter of April 13; he complained again that the drop from a penny to a halfpenny was somewhat severe, but looked forward to the £50 on account of royalties (Northwestern University Library). No further royalties could be expected until 24,000 copies of a book had been disposed of, a figure that no Gissing title, however cheaply priced, had yet reached.

By April 19 the contract for the publication of the two books had been signed; a letter of May 1 between the same correspondents (Berg Collection) confirms this. But some aspects of the contract needed clarification on the publisher's side. The contract only referred to the sale

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of rights for the United Kingdom, hence a query from John Buchan on May 14: could colonial customers also be supplied should occasion arise? The other contracts, he said, gave Nelson "the rights for the British Empire, though in certain cases Canada is excluded." The point had been overlooked for Gissing and W. E. Norris! Buchan's letter of May 16 indicates that no objection was raised. One more request reached Pinker before the decks were clear for the publication of the first title, *The Odd Women*: in a letter of May 23 he was asked for "the chief press notices" of the two novels, as well as of three W. E. Norris titles, one by W. W. Jacobs and one by A. E. W. Mason.

The Odd Women was published in November 1907, and the letter of thanks from Algernon Gissing and Clara Collet dated September 4, 1907 for Pinker's cheque for £53.1.4, though no details are given, must have covered, among other things, the £45 paid by Pinker to the executors once he had deducted his ten per cent commission on the £50 paid to him by Nelson & Sons (Northwestern University Library).

The Sevenpenny Library was proving a successful venture and there was a possible extension of the market to America. Buchan's letter of November 29, 1907 reads in part: "A proposal has been made to us by an American firm to purchase a certain number of copies of those volumes in our Library which have not been copyrighted in America. I should be greatly obliged if you would inform me if any of the volumes which we purchased through you have not been copyrighted." Among the eight titles by various authors listed were *The Odd Women* and *In the Year of Jubilee*, this last being still unpublished.

Indeed it was not to be published under the Nelson imprint for a reason which many readers will find unjustified from the artistic point of view. The complications which occurred at this stage were unexpected. The next four letters give interesting details about the negotiations.

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4th. November, 1908.

Dear Mr. Pinker,

You will remember that we bought from you about a year and a half ago two of Gissing's novels, viz. "The Odd Women" and "In the Year of Jubilee." You said that you thought these were good representative specimens of Gissing's work.

We have published "The Odd Women" and on the whole done very well with it, but we feel a little doubtful about "In the Year of Jubilee," which seems to me a very much inferior book to the other. Do you think it would be possible to exchange it for another of Gissing's? The one I should like is the "New Grub Street" [sic], and I understand from Mr. Reginald Smith that he is quite willing to agree to its publication in our Library.

Yours sincerely,
John Buchan

At the bottom of the letter, a handwritten note, made by neither Buchan nor Pinker, reads: "Copyright of 'New Grub Street' belongs to Smith Elder & Co., who say they are willing to consider a proposal for its publication by Nelson & Sons."

Smith Elder had bought all the rights for *New Grub Street* eighteen years before and the novel had sold well, A new impression had just been issued by its original publishers. However, for unknown reasons, *New Grub Street*, though an excellent substitute for *In the Year of Jubilee*, was not chosen by Buchan. Instead, Gissing's novel of literary life — a fact which testifies to Reginald Smith's willingness not to stand in the way of a cheaper reprint than his own half-crown edition — was reissued at 6d in the Newnes's series in 1910.

John Buchan now belatedly discovered that he was confronted with an *embarras de*

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richesses, and it is quite possible that the executors encouraged him through Pinker to choose a title which would mean royalties to them rather than Smith, Elder, a firm which had grossly taken advantage of Gissing's straitened circumstances in the years 1886-91 and, on at least two occasions, exploited him ruthlessly. Various titles were currently available in sixpenny reprints — *The Unclassed* (Routledge), *The Town Traveller* and *The Crown of Life* (Methuen), *Our Friend the Charlatan* (Chapman & Hall), and *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* and *Will Warburton* (Constable). Only the five Smith, Elder titles had been sold outright and not bought back in the 1890s.

11th. November, 1908.

Dear Mr. Pinker,

Many thanks for your letter of 9th. November. I understand that there are a number of Gissing's novels where the copyright is still in the hands of his Estate. Could you send me a list of these? I presume you would be willing to exchange "In the Year of Jubilee" for anyone of them.

Yours sincerely

John Buchan

Buchan's decision was a difficult one to make unless he was prepared to read the most part of Gissing's *oeuvre*. Two more steps proved necessary before *Born in Exile* was ultimately chosen. Constable, who were selling *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* quite successfully at various prices from 6d to 6 shillings, were not likely to close with such an offer from Nelson's, even if the executors had viewed the transaction favourably.

6th. January, 1909.

Dear Mr. Pinker,

Many thanks for your letter of 31st. December.

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I would take it as a great kindness if you would send me copies of Gissing's "Born in Exile" and "By the Ionian Sea." I find great difficulty in getting copies of his books.

I shall write you about one of Wells' serious books in a day or two.

Yours sincerely,

John Buchan.

21st. January, 1909.

Dear Mr. Pinker,

We have considered Gissing's "By the Ionian Sea," but we do not think on the whole it would be likely to be a successful volume in our Shilling Library.

Would it be possible do you think to include his "Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft" in that Library? I think that would be a most suitable volume.

With regard to Wells' serious books, we are prepared to offer a royalty of 1½ d. and an advance of £100 on account for "A Modern Utopia."

Yours sincerely,

John Buchan.

Ultimately, with the agreement of Clara Collet, who had bought the copyright, as she reminded Pinker in a letter of February 20, 1909 (Berg Collection), and of Algernon Gissing, *Born in Exile* was published in February 1910. A receipt for the £45 paid to the Estate was signed by Algernon Gissing on behalf of both executors on February 28, 1910.

The last three Buchan letters are less specifically concerned with Gissing. On March 18, 1913 Buchan asked Pinker: "Could you at your leisure make some enquiries for me? The chance has lately occurred of selling our Libraries largely in the United States, and I should be

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glad to know what books which we have obtained from you are not copyrighted there." Some member of Pinker's staff wrote "Rights not known" by the two Gissing titles. The answer was that *Born in Exile* had originally been sold to Adam & Charles Black; it had then been bought back by Bullen in 1896 and had eventually drifted into the hands of Clara Collet, who, kind soul that she was, had purchased the rights as a way of helping Bullen and, should a new edition be published, the Gissing children, these being still under age. As for *The Odd Women*, it had been published in America by Macmillan simultaneously with the first English edition in 1893 and had long been out of print. Clearly Nelson & Sons could sell the two books in America, where they must have been known to very few readers at the time.

The difficulties of wartime publishing prompted the letters of June 19 and 22, 1916.

19th. June, 1916.

Dear Mr. Pinker,

My firm has found it practically impossible to go on publishing our cheap libraries at the present prices, owing to the increased cost of production, and we are anxious to raise these prices to a point which will enable us to continue them through the war. Our proposal is to raise the sevenpennies to 9d. net and the shillings to 1/3d. net.

This increase in price will in no way benefit us. Allowing for the extra discount to booksellers, with regard to our sevenpennies we will be in a rather worse position than before the war, and with regard to our shilling books much the same. Roughly speaking, on an average the cost in the production of the sevenpennies has gone up 1.5d, and in the case of the shillings, which are more expensive books, at least 2d. This, allowing for the extra

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discount necessary to the booksellers on the increased prices, absorbs that increase.

We hope that the authors to whom you are agent will realise the situation, and will be willing to consent to accept the same royalties as at present paid on the 7d. and 1/- books. If any authors refuse, we fear it will be impossible to continue the publication of their books in these libraries during the war. That, I think, would be a pity, as the demand for them is very great, and I do not believe that the increased price will make any difference to the public. The alternative, of very considerably lowering the authors' royalties on the existing prices, would not meet the difficulty, and would be much harder on the authors themselves.

Before we do anything it is necessary to get the authors' consent, and I should be very glad if you could sound your people. We should like replies as soon as possible, as we are anxious to bring the arrangements into effect without delay.

Yours sincerely,

John Buchan

A list of sixteen authors, Gissing being the sixth, was added in some clerk's hand after Buchan's signature.

Given the time that passed between this letter and the next, Pinker's reply could only be concerned with the principle of the projected rise of the published price of both Libraries. As years went by, the books became more expensive, but the authors did not benefit by the change.

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22nd. June, 1916.

Dear Mr. Pinker,

Many thanks for your letter. Where the publisher has a say in the cheap edition I think he must be consulted. I do not fancy the original publishers will make any trouble, however, as they are all pretty much agreed about the 7d. increase, and would, I think, welcome the increase of the 1/- books, even though in some cases they may be afraid to make the move themselves.

If this is going to give you a great deal of trouble, if you will get the authors' consent and let us have a list of the books in which the publisher has a joint interest, we will do the correspondence in connection with them.

Yours sincerely,

J. Buchan.

Although this is the last letter of Gissing interest in the Buchan-Pinker series held by the Dartmouth College Library, the story of his books under the Nelson imprint does not stop in 1916. Algernon Gissing suggested that *The Emancipated* be included, but it was *The Town Traveller* which was selected instead. Contracted for in 1914, the book did not appear until after the war, in 1919. The days of the little volume in bright red cloth were over; *The Town Traveller* appeared in blue cloth with a very attractive dust jacket which, partly because it is extremely uncommon, has become a curiosity. Although the 10,000 copies sold in a few years only, the book was not reprinted; nor were the two other titles after 1919, at which time they were still in print.

It is difficult to ascertain how many copies of *The Odd Women* and *Born in Exile* were printed by Nelson & Sons, but various documents in private hands as well as in institutional libraries indicate that the sales were considerable. A glimpse of the truth is offered by two receipts addressed by Algernon Gissing to Pinker for Nelson royalties: one for £15.9.10 dated November 4, 1911, the other for £10.15.1, dated November 5, 1912, these figures representing the sums paid by Nelson less Pinker's ten per cent deduction. Another much more comprehensive approach is offered by Clara Collet's papers (Coustillas collection). At the end of 1915 Miss Collet reckoned that she had received £127.8.9 from Nelson, this sum consisting of half the sums paid by the publishers after deduction of Pinker's commission. (She had bought the copyright of the eight Lawrence & Bullen titles together with *Born in Exile* in 1905 for £250 and shared the income with the Gissing family). Considering that Nelson paid a halfpenny royalty per copy sold, it appears that over 120,000 copies of *The Odd Women* and *Born in Exile* had been disposed of from 1907 to 1915. Nor was this quite the end. For instance statements of royalties addressed by Pinker to the executors prior to the deduction of Pinker's commission mention sums of £8.7.10 on December 2, 1916 and £4.0.9 on June 30, 1917 (Coustillas collection).

These are admittedly only some odd pieces of a sizeable puzzle, but the number of physical variants of the two books indicates that the printers and binders were at work on them on a number of different occasions. Any collector or bookseller who has examined carefully the various bindings, frontispieces, advertisements or lack of them at the beginning and end of copies, not to speak of page 306 in the first printing of *Born in Exile* with its memorable printers' blunder "Galley 75," will not be tempted to question the above estimations.

There is no doubt that Nelson gave *The Odd Women* and *Born in Exile* many more

readers than any other publisher to any other work by Gissing until the second decade of the present century. Even *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* fails to qualify as an exception. This is a fact that should not go unacknowledged.

Crossing the Adriatic: A Cautionary Tale

Andrew Hassam
Llandysul, Dyfed.

In the winter of 1889, Gissing sailed from Athens to Italy. On the morning of 19 December he came on deck expecting to find himself in Brindisi, but was astonished to discover the ship approaching a wild and mountainous coastline. Apparently, around midnight, when the ship was nearly half-way across the Adriatic, the Captain had decided the wind was too strong for safety and had run for the shelter of the Albanian coast. The other passengers were greatly indignant at having to spend an entire day anchored off Avlona, especially as the sky was cloudless. But Gissing, with characteristic detachment, patiently spent the day reading Sophocles and noting the beauty of the scenery and the sunset. When the ship eventually reached Brindisi the following morning, the boatman ferrying the passengers ashore asserted that the Captain had been over-cautious in turning back. Yet Gissing had discovered that the shipping company was to blame, the ship had been carrying insufficient ballast. "Doubtless," he concludes in his diary, "it was wiser to wait at Avlona."¹

The lesson to be drawn from this travellers' tale is to trust those in a position to balance conflicting points of view, and not to adopt a single, limited perspective. At least, this is the lesson of the tale itself. But there is also a parallel lesson to be learnt from its recounting, for

though Gissing recorded the crossing in his diary, he elsewhere recorded two other versions of events that day, and through a comparison of all three versions we are cautioned as to how far we can trust Gissing's, and indeed any, diary as a factual recording of events.

Apart from the diary account, then, the crossing of the Adriatic is recounted in *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*.² Here we are given what at first sight appears to be a description of the same events. There are, however, two informative discrepancies. Whereas the diary states, "Violent wind rose as soon as we had left Corfu ... Much rolling in the night" (p. 192), *Ryecroft* states, "there was a little wind ... though not enough to make any passengers uncomfortable" (p. 161). The tone of the *Ryecroft* account reverses that of the diary, and one might feel sympathetic to the now more justifiable anger of the passengers. However, in the *Ryecroft* version there is no mention of the indignation of the passengers at having to pass a full day anchored off Avlona, and indeed it goes on to tell how in the shelter of the harbour "the wind whistled above our heads" (p. 162), an apparent contradiction of Henry *Ryecroft*'s earlier statement that there was only a little wind.

The second discrepancy occurs in the mentioning of a map. The diary records, "As I have no map of this district I cannot tell exactly where this is" (p. 192); yet Henry *Ryecroft* has a map — "My map showed me where we were" (p. 161). If we didn't know the status of the two texts, the one factual, the other fictional, we might question the authority of the first account. However, the diary has an appended parenthesis giving the correct location, ending with "If I had but known it!" We can therefore account for the discrepancy by arguing that, written later, *Ryecroft* is a fictionalized retelling of the crossing, and according to this reading the quietening of the wind during the night and the omission of the passengers' anger are intended to reflect the quiet tone of *Ryecroft* as a whole, a tone suiting the retired narrator coming peacefully to

the end of his life. The whistling of the wind harmlessly above the sheltering ship has the same effect. In sum, the diary gives us the raw material from which the *Ryecroft* version is artfully constructed.

Yet there is still a third version to account for and this casts doubts upon the status of the diary as raw material. In a letter dated 8 January 1890, Gissing recounts the same crossing to his friend Eduard Bertz.³ But as with the *Ryecroft* account, there are some telling differences from the diary. In the diary, the ship left Corfu at 5 pm., yet in the letter to Bertz we read "About midnight we again started" (p. 94), the time the diary gives for when the ship was half-way across the Adriatic. And whilst the Gissing of the diary learns about the lack of ballast from a stewardess, the Gissing of the letter is told that by a steward. Can we then argue as we did in the case of the *Ryecroft* account that this version is also an artistic, fictionalized transformation of raw material? Certainly the Gissing of the letter is less detached from the indignation of the other passengers than the Gissing of the diary. In the diary, the narrator accepts there is good reason for the ship to remain anchored all day off Avlona — "To-day not a cloud anywhere in the sky, but wind still violent" (p. 193). In the letter, however, the narrator states: "All day long we waited. It seemed absurd, for the sky was cloudless" (p. 95), a more jaunty and involved tone suited to the telling of an anecdote. Yet unlike *Ryecroft*, the letter to Bertz is clearly a factual text. If we can argue that the letter is to some extent fictionalized then factuality does not preclude fictionalization. In that case, the other factual text, the diary, could also be fictionalized. Moreover, the letter includes material, such as the low cost of meat in Albania, not included in the diary and can therefore hardly be a straightforward transformation of it.

To account, then, for the differences between the letter and the diary in the same way as it

was possible to account for the discrepancies in *Ryecroft* is to undermine the status of the diary as the raw material from which the letter is constructed. Of course, it might be possible to account for the letter in different terms, for being written later than the diary, the events may be misremembered. Gissing may simply have confused the time when the ship left Corfu with the time it turned back. But even this affects how we read the diary, for the entry for 19 December also includes events of the following day and concludes with "But of course all this happened on —" (p. 193), before an entry actually dated 20 December. It is possible, then, that the events of 19 December were recorded the following day, and this being so, how can we be sure that the events of the crossing recorded in the diary are not also misremembered? And even if we could somehow prove that those events were recorded on the same day, there would still be some time delay between what happens and the recording, as there is in any diary. However frequently a diary is kept, there will always be a gap between events and the written version of those events.

In terms of the diary as a factual recording of events, we are left with two possible conclusions, what I will call the weak conclusion and the strong conclusion. The weak conclusion still accords greater veracity to the diary than to the other accounts, but is forced by a comparison of the accounts to conclude that the diary is to some extent both fictionalized and misremembered. This conclusion is weak to the degree that, though it would argue that the fictionalization and misremembering are minimized in the diary, it cannot tell us that any specific point is neither fictionalized nor erroneous. We have no way of knowing.

The strong conclusion, on the other hand, is to argue that none of the versions of any given event is more veracious than the others. Or rather, it does not award an *a priori* authority to the diary simply because it is a diary, but judges the different versions according to the type

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of text in which they appear. This is normally the view taken of letters, and the jaunty, conversational tone of the account of the crossing given to Bertz is consistent with our expectations of the genre. It is also the view taken of more literary works, such as *Ryecroft*, and again we accept the aptness of that version. But the fact that the diary has a less consistent tone and is not such a well-made tale does not of itself mean that the diary is the raw material from which the others are worked. The diary is a form like any other genre, and to the extent that the version the diary gives is consistent with its form, that version is simply a version like any other. This conclusion is strong because it compares genres rather than facts, and can account for contradictions without recourse to notions of fictionalization and error.

The lesson of Gissing's cautionary tale thus has a literary counterpart. As Gissing trusted the Captain of the steamer as the person who could balance the conflicting viewpoints, so we must rely not solely on the viewpoint of the diary, but give equal weight to all the versions. We will never have a reliable account of the crossing of the Adriatic, but at least we will be able to see that the contradictions between the versions are unavoidable. There can never be an account free from the form in which it is written, there can never be an unmediated transcription of the real.

1. *London and the Life of Literature in Late Victorian England: The Diary of George Gissing, Novelist*, edited by Pierre Coustillas (Hassocks, Sussex: Harvester, 1978), p. 194.
2. *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* (London: Constable, 1903), Autumn, III, pp. 160-62.
3. *The Letters of George Gissing to Eduard Bertz, 1887-1903*, edited by Arthur C. Young (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1961), pp. 93-97.

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Book Reviews

Dennis Shruballs and Pierre Coustillas (eds.), *Landscapes and Literati: Unpublished Letters of W. H. Hudson and George Gissing*, Wilton, near Salisbury: Michael Russell, 1985.

Despite its subtitle, this book is more concerned with W. H. Hudson than with Gissing. Of the 109 letters it contains, one hundred are by Hudson (to various correspondents) and nine by Gissing (all to Hudson). Hudson's letters include seventeen to Gissing and twenty-eight to Gissing's brother Algernon. The rest are to various friends and acquaintances, including the writers William Canton and Wilfred Scawen Blunt.

William Henry Hudson was one of Gissing's warmest friends; though only part of their correspondence has survived, they kept in touch for over fourteen years. They met through a mutual friend, Morley Roberts (who later wrote biographies of both), at the Chelsea studio of the artist Alfred Hartley in March 1889. Gissing noted of Hudson in his diary: "the man I have wished to see for two or three years. Very striking face; gentle, sympathetic manner." In the following six months the four men socialised frequently (Roberts called them "the Quadrilateral"), and though Gissing and Hudson met less often thereafter, they always remained on good terms.

The present volume provides some clues as to the sources of this solid friendship. That Gissing found Hudson sympathetic no doubt had a lot to do with their exclusion from the literary mainstream, their comparable experience of poverty, and their shared appreciation of nature. Hudson lived literally in self-imposed exile. Born in Argentina, he migrated in his twenties to London, poverty and loneliness; for years his various literary productions (chiefly works of natural history) won only a limited audience. Not until the publication of *Green*

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Mansions, in 1904, did Hudson achieve fame and reputation. It is to Gissing's credit that, nevertheless, he spotted Hudson's literary ability. Probably, though, Hudson's lack of wealth and success was partly what endeared him to Gissing, who might indeed have gone too far in projecting his obsessions onto him. "The poor fellow is married to an old and very ugly wife, who formerly kept a boarding-house," Gissing recorded tendentiously after his first visit to the Hudsons' house in Westbourne Park. (Compare his response to Thomas Hardy, whose wife he also rated as a social liability). Eventually, in 1902, Hudson was awarded a Civil List pension of £150 a year. Gissing "greatly rejoiced" in his diary and exclaimed to H. G. Wells: "I feel my breathing easier ... it was a physical relief. Glorious old Hudson!" Appropriately after Gissing's death, it was Hudson who sponsored Algernon's applications (in 1904 and 1908) to the Royal Literary Fund.

Hudson's enthusiasm for the natural world was shared by both the Gissing brothers, whose father — author of works on the ferns and flora of Wakefield — had instilled in them a love of botany. Reverence for the purity of the countryside has a talismanic significance in Gissing. It is no accident that his story "The Fate of Humphrey Snell," in which botany plays a symbolic role, is the work of which Hudson, in a letter printed here, expresses his most fervent admiration. Of course Gissing was not as technically knowledgeable as Hudson. He was a novelist who dabbled in nature-study — just as Hudson, it might be argued, was a naturalist who dabbled in fiction. Such an argument would be unfair to Hudson, but it remains true that the best things in his fiction depend on the intensity and creative precision of his responsiveness to nature. Both Gissing and Hudson acknowledge, and even exaggerate, the difference in their interests and talents. "I doubt if my judgment is worth much in matters literary," writes

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Hudson, and, elsewhere, "I am a naturalist and therefore have nothing to do with literature". With comparable simplification Gissing declares: "My ignorance of natural history is abysmal,

but I flatter myself I know something of literary style.” Gissing had no difficulty in correctly identifying the true nature of Hudson’s talent. To Hudson himself he wrote reassuringly: “I recollect nothing but pleasure in anything of yours I have read, from the *Purple Land* onwards.” But of Hudson’s volume of short stories *El Ombú*, Gissing noted privately: “Of course less interesting than his natural history work.”

Hudson, for his part, seems in these letters to respond to the rural romances of Algernon more readily than to the urban realism of George. A generous friend to Algernon — he supplied the family with Christmas hampers and became godfather to one of their children — Hudson praised his fiction hyperbolically, avowing that Algernon’s country novels were second only to those of Hardy, or that fiction could boast no “more powerfully drawn character” than Old Crozier in *The Scholar of Bygate*. Eventually, however, even Hudson’s magnanimity was severely tried by Algernon’s fecklessness. When in 1906 Algernon confided his plans for starting up a rural magazine, Hudson, though dubious of its practicality, was quite willing to contribute an article. By 1910, however, when Algernon’s pet project (which in fact he had toyed with for thirty years) was still in the hypothetical stage, Hudson responded more sharply: “as you ask me to express a candid opinion I can’t say that I can see any chance of success.”

Apart from the light they shed on his friendship with the Gissing brothers, Hudson’s letters in this collection contain little of consuming interest. They provide some independent literary judgments (Uriah Heep, it strikes him, is “one of the small minority of sane persons” in *David Copperfield*), and some entertaining literary gossip (“Fancy Hardy getting married at seventy-four! Miss Dugdale too — I know her little books”), but also much appointment-diary

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banality (“I shall be very glad to see you one day this week ...”). The final letter printed in this volume is to an unknown addressee at an unknown date and concerned with an unknown subject: “Dear Sir, ...I can’t be of any assistance to you in what you propose to do.” However, despite the recalcitrance of some of their material, the editors — Pierre Coustillas and Dennis Shruballs, Hudson’s biographer — bring to their task a precision of reference, and a wealth of supplementary detail, that do much to enhance the book’s value.

David Grylls.

Michael Collie, *George Gissing: A Bibliographical Study*, Winchester: St. Paul’s Bibliographies, 1985.

Michael Collie is essentially known to Gissing scholars and readers as the author of three books on the novelist, a bibliography, a biography and a critical study, as well as a few articles and book reviews. All these writings have been severely assessed by competent judges, as factually unreliable, poorly documented and cluttered with irresponsible theories. Two examples of theories aired by Mr. Collie have become sadly notorious: he once tried to convince his readers that the girl who was involved in the Manchester episode was not the same as that who became the novelist’s first wife, and, because he could not find Edith Underwood in the official records at St. Catherine’s House, he came forward with the extraordinary notion that it was a fourteen-year-old girl (shade of Malkin!) that Gissing had married in 1891. As regards the novels they have been discussed by Mr. Collie in a book, *The Alien Art*, which, though the least mistake-ridden of the three, again offers theories which could only be put forward by a commentator who is unaware of the existence of a large quantity of unpublished material.

George Gissing: A Bibliography (1975) was the first of the three volumes to appear and it

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was scathingly received in some quarters. One of the most remarkable reviews of the book was that by Christina Duff Stewart, a scholar and Gissing collector, in the *University of Toronto*

Quarterly (Summer 1977, pp. 430-33). "It is a matter for grave concern," Ms Stewart concluded, "that the University Press of the largest University in Canada would publish a work riddled with such inconsistencies, omissions and errors ... The Press has done Collie, his readers, and themselves a great disservice." Now the book is out of print and a new, extensively revised, edition has been published under a new title, *George Gissing: A Bibliographical Study*, and under a new imprint, St. Paul's Bibliographies, a firm which has published *George Borrow: A Bibliographical Study*, by Michael Collie and a Borrow specialist, Angus Fraser. So many booksellers, librarians and scholars have protested against the innumerable blunders and inaccuracies contained in *George Gissing: A Bibliography* that an antiquarian bookseller, Brian Lake, reviewing the Borrow bibliography, a book written in collaboration, expressed the hope that in the revised book on Gissing Michael Collie might again seek "the collaboration of a partner immersed in his subject as clearly as Angus Fraser has been" (*Book Collector*, Summer 1985, pp. 244-46).

The volume in hand is very nicely produced, with a jacket which reproduces the pictorial cover of the American edition of *The Town Traveller*. The proofs have been carefully read — misprints are extremely rare. As a physical product, the book is fully worthy of the St. Paul's Bibliographies and its director, Robert Cross. But what about the contents? Can we agree that "this bibliography provides a detailed up-to-date and systematic description of Gissing's publishing career"? What are we to think of the claim that this description is "based upon an examination of countless copies of the books themselves as well as the archive of largely unpublished autograph material" in North American and British libraries? To comment on all

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the points which, in some way or other, deserve comment would mean writing a book of the same length as that under review. Since this is out of the question, I shall concentrate on such aspects as those mentioned by Christina Stewart nine years ago — inconsistencies, omissions, errors — and give examples of the quality of Michael Collie's work.

Since books are published by publishers one major source for the bibliographer is publishers' records, wherever they may happen to be when they have been preserved. The only archive that has been consulted — because, in my *Newsletter* review of the first edition, I rejected Mr. Collie's gratuitous statement that the firm's "accounts are lost" — is that of Smith, Elder & Co. Now, as this firm published only five of Gissing's novels, the number of opportunities missed by Michael Collie to find information on the other titles makes one wonder whether the epithet "systematic," quoted above, has come to mean the opposite of what most people think. The study of and commentary on Gissing's books in the Smith, Elder ledgers is the only new source "discovered" by Mr. Collie, and I am sorry to say once more that he cannot be trusted. In 1975 he had invented 3/6 editions for the five novels (*Demos*, *Thyrza*, *A Life's Morning*, *The Nether World* and *New Grub Street*) as well as a six-shilling edition for *A Life's Morning*, and he had misdated three early issues and translations. Now we have two promising tables on p. 4, with some interesting figures in between. How do they compare with the information to be found in the many bulky Smith, Elder ledgers? *New Grub Street* is first given as published in 1890, then in 1891. The total printing of one-volume editions is wrong for four of the five titles, because the figures for some reissues were overlooked. The correct figures are 8,250 for *The Nether World* and *New Grub Street*, 8,000 for *Demos* and either 4,000 or 11,500 for *A Life's Morning* according to whether one includes or not the 1914 impression.

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As for *Thyrza*, if the figure 5,750 is correct, it was essential to say that no figure seems to be available for the 1907 impression (very likely 1,000). Nor are all "Smith, Elder's incidental earnings" correctly given. For *Demos*, Michael Collie overlooks the £20 paid by Tauchnitz; for *New Grub Street* he leaves out the ten guineas paid by E. F. d'Arzinol, that is Gabrielle Fleury. The number of copies sold to libraries is by and large correct, although five copies of *A Life's*

Morning sold in 1889 have been overlooked and two of *Thyrza* in 1888. The sales to individuals are reported with deplorable inaccuracy — deplorable because they imply that a substantial proportion of three-volume editions was bought by private buyers. For *Demos* the correct figure is 63, not “just over 100 copies”; for *A Life’s Morning* 62, not 100; for *The Nether World* 63, not 60; and for *New Grub Street* 57, not “approximately 350” (Mr. Collie’s use of adverbs is worth watching closely). When we are told that in these Smith, Elder ledgers, “the figures do not always tally as to total,” we should refrain from blaming Smith, Elder’s clerks. How can the full system be understood unless one mentions the copies sold to the trade (very few), the author’s copies (six for each first edition), the copies sent, in Smith, Elder’s words, to “editors and friends” and to “public libraries,” that is the five copyright libraries?

One can understand some aspects of Michael Collie’s policy which consists in concentrating on Gissing’s publishing career in his lifetime with a natural extension to the posthumous works published in the three years after his death. It is clear that in a sense, after the publication of *The House of Cobwebs* (1906), another bibliographical phase began. Still in the volume under review there is no clearly defined frontier. Some new impressions after 1903 are mentioned, others are ignored, probably because no copy has been found or examined. What about sixpenny reprints in general and that of *The Unclassed* in particular? Who published it? How many copies were printed?

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Despite the boast that “innumerable copies” have been examined, the ignorance revealed by the author is hardly believable. He has seen some copies of all first editions of course but he cannot have put two copies side by side very often. Had he done so more often anyway he would have realised that there are two markedly different bindings for the three-volume *Demos* in brown cloth which should not be confused. Ampersands, among other typographical signs, do not invariably have the same shape. He would also have found that there are two distinct bindings of *The Unclassed* in three-decker form, that there are copies of the same title, in its remaindered, three-volumes-in-one format, in dark blue cloth. No variant bindings are given for the first English editions of *A Life’s Morning* and *The Odd Women*, yet Henry Danielson, Temple Scott and Jacob Schwartz, all of them pioneers in Gissing bibliography, were, in the interwar period, aware that *A Life’s Morning* also existed in “light blue,” and *The Odd Women* in “blue” cloth. And Schwartz, in his astonishing foreword to his own book, makes no mystery of the library where he found the copies he described — it was quite simply the British Museum Reading-Room. The order in which the books are listed is on two occasions characteristic of a new form of inaccuracy. Whatever the date-stamp on the copy of *Isabel Clarendon* in the Cambridge University Library and the date when Gissing brought home an advance copy of the book, this novel was published after *Demos*, not before. A similar mistaken inversion is noticeable concerning *Sleeping Fires* and *The Paying Guest*, which appeared in early December 1895 and early January 1896 respectively. Nor could Michael Collie rebut this argument by saying that he was following the order of composition of the novels, because he was not, and nobody will blame him for that.

Considering the nature and calibre of some omissions and errors, we are not surprised to see that presentation copies are never referred to, let alone Gissing’s own copies. It would

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perhaps have been too much to expect each presentation copy on record to be mentioned with its present whereabouts when known, but a list of the recipients of the author’s copies as they appear in the novelist’s correspondence and diary would have been of interest.

If some gross absurdities like that to be found on p. 31 of the first edition have been removed — there the first American edition of *The Unclassed* published by R. F. Fenno in 1896 was confused with a reissue of the same title describing Gissing as the author of *The Whirlpool*, which was not published until 1898 in America — worse errors have been

introduced. Perhaps the worst of all concerns *Thyrza*. The second edition (Smith, Elder & Co., 1891), published at six shillings and described by Michael Collie on pp. 33-34, is said on p. 32 and again on p. 34 to have been reissued as a yellowback in 1889 and in red cloth at 2/6 in 1890. How can an edition be reprinted twice before it was published? In the present instance the bibliographer has forgotten which book he is discussing. When Mr. Collie assures us (p. X) that “nothing has been described that has not been seen,” he is rashly baiting his readers. Had he seen, for instance, the Petherick edition of *Thyrza*, he would have noticed that it is dated 1891, as expected, on the title page. His failure to give the dates of the three other Petherick editions (*The Nether World*, *New Grub Street* and *Born in Exile*) confirms that he has no first-hand knowledge of them.

Another instance of the bibliographer unsuccessfully struggling with his material is offered by a copy of *By the Ionian Sea* in the Beinecke Library. In the 1975 edition of his book, Michael Collie wrote that in the Yale-held copy of the well-known second issue of the first edition in green cloth (Chapman & Hall, 1901) there is a portrait of Gissing between p. ii and p. iii with the inscription: “THE LATE MR. GEORGE GISSING whose death was the worst blow suffered by English letters in 1904”[sic].

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Now in the present edition we read that in *some* copies, a portrait of Gissing by Ellis and Watery has been “pasted.” The truth is that the Yale copy is of no special interest. No portrait is pasted, but two portraits are tipped in: (1) a portrait torn from a book (22.3 x 13.9 cm). It is a wood engraving which may have been made from one of the Hall portraits of 1888 or one of the portraits taken by Alfred Ellis in 1893 (2) a portrait (19 x 13.3 cm) which, although the information is to be found on neither side of the cutting, comes from *The King and His Navy and Army* for 21 January 1905, in which number the portrait, taken on 2 September 1893 by Ellis, serves as an illustration for Justin McCarthy’s article on Gissing. By transforming the Yale copy of *By the Ionian Sea* into “some copies,” by ignoring one of the two portraits, and by “pasting” one into the book, Mr. Collie reveals that with the passing of time he can no longer understand the nature and purpose of the notes he took years before in the Beinecke. When a Gissing scholar mentions a fact drawn from a letter the contents of which he himself has forgotten, Michael Collie declares that the said scholar “speculates” (p. 32), but he allows his own speculations to develop into imaginary facts!

Indeed the book teems with confusions of many kinds: William Heinemann, who published *The Odd Women* in his Colonial Library, is confused with Heinemann & Balestier, who published the Continental edition of *Denzil Quarrier*, reissued in 1911 by Brockhaus, but did not bring out *The Odd Women* as expected. Because four of the five Smith, Elder titles were published in six-shilling editions, the existence of such an edition for *A Life’s Morning* is imagined or implied on p. 5. The 1889 yellowback edition of *A Life’s Morning* is wrongly said to be reprinted in the same year. The Smith, Elder ledgers give the lie to such an assertion, and Mr. Collie of course fails to describe the reissue. As in 1975 Frederic Harrison is said to be the

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recipient of a letter of 29 December 1891, while the actual recipient was Edgar Erat Harrison, the printer and previous occupant of Gissing’s flat at 7K Cornwall Residences. Gissing certainly never addressed Frederic Harrison in the way he wrote to his namesake (“Dear Harrison”, etc.). A fantastic figure is quoted on p. 56: £110.10.0 for the British rights of *Born in Exile* bought back by Lawrence & Bullen from A. & C. Black. The correct figure is ten guineas. Another fantastic figure concerns the French translation of the same book. We are invited to believe that only 50 copies appeared under the imprint of the Editions du Siècle. This time the bibliographer shows that he does not understand the meaning of the French publisher’s note on the copyright page. Copies of the third, fourth, fifth and sixth thousands of the book are on record. Chronology is sometimes ignored: on p. 3, the author forgot that *The Emancipated*

appeared before *New Grub Street*; on p. 20, when dealing with the arrangements for the American and Colonial editions of *The Unclassed*, he refers to Chapman & Hall as though he were still dealing with the first edition of the book, but he means Lawrence & Bullen. Or again when he struggles to understand how many copies of the Colonial edition of *The Emancipated* were printed, he implicitly admits that he has not consulted some relevant records and has never come across copies dated 1894. On p. 76 he overlooks the third English “edition” of *The Whirlpool*, but invents an additional (second) “edition” of the same book under the imprint of the Frederick A. Stokes Company. No reference is made to the many minor differences between the texts of the English and American editions of *The Paying Guest*. Occasionally, short of correcting himself, Mr. Collie tries to correct other scholars, with distressing results. His correction concerning the month of publication of *Human Odds and Ends* must be

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corrected: let him consult the *Daily Chronicle* for 30 October 1897, p. 6, col. 7. When, after borrowing heavily from a booklet entitled *Gissing's Writings on Dickens* he obliquely accuses its author of being unaware of the publishing history of *Charles Dickens: A Critical Study*, using one of those “in fact” which are balm to the wounded soul, it is clear that he has misread the booklet, misdating in passing the second impression of the critical study in the Imperial edition (1903, not 1904). Another form of confusion badly affects the description of the early editions of *By the Ionian Sea*. For one thing, as previously noted, no. A.23d, the so-called second state of the second printing with a portrait of Gissing, is an invention pure and simple. But there is something worse: the 1905 Chapman & Hall edition (A.23c) is described in such a way that it seems to have been printed from the same plates, with the same pagination, as the first edition. The description of the title page is omitted and the statement about the illustrations misleading and erroneous. If Leo de Littrow's illustrations in colour have gone, the black and white illustrations have been preserved. No date is given, so that the connection between A.23c and A.23e can only be understood by collectors who have copies of the two impressions. Furthermore the colonial issue in Unwin's Colonial Library (1905) is described inadequately in two lines. Which of the two states is being considered? Is Mr. Collie aware that there are two states? He has seen books, taken notes, and he fails to establish a correct link between the volumes he has examined. (The same colour, according to fancy, is described as maroon, deep maroon and purple brown.) In the present case the inconsistency of the method is shocking: why are we given a description of the title page of the second impression of an edition when nothing of the kind is offered for the first, which is not even dated by the compiler?

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The relationship between Gissing and some of his publishers, especially Lawrence & Bullen, is commented upon in a manner which betrays ignorance of vital material. The result is less than fair to Gissing. “Foolish and inexperienced” are two epithets which cannot be applied without serious reservations to Gissing's attitude to Smith, Elder and their reader James Payn. True, one can deplore that he had to sell outright the copyright of four of the five novels that firm published for him, but when a man lives at something like starvation level he may have to make bargains all-too-easily criticizable by commentators who do not live at starvation level. The discussion of Gissing's relations with Bullen is marred by the fact that Gissing's “account of books” is taken into consideration for the period 1880-1898 only. What about the years 1898-1903? Is there no additional conspectus available? In one place Mr. Collie wonders whether Gissing was aware that Smith, Elder published six-shilling editions of his novels (and indeed editions at 2/6 and 2 shillings), but his doubts may be appeased. Not only was he fully aware of the existence of these editions, but he occasionally bought copies. The presentation copy of *Thyrza* inscribed to his cousin Mary Bedford at the time of her marriage to Austin Williams, and his own copy of the six-shilling *New Grub Street* are sufficient evidence. Similarly it is wrong to say that “unknown to Gissing,” Pinker succeeded in arranging for the

serial publication of *Will Warburton*. The novelist's letters to his agent show that Gissing knew of the negotiations with the Northern Newspaper Syndicate, which arranged for serialization in both a provincial newspaper and a foreign newspaper besides the *New Age*.

The short descriptions of the manuscripts are not more reliable than those of the books. The great interest of the MSS of *Will Warburton* and *The Crown of Life* for instance is

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overlooked; some significant discarded passages in those of *Charles Dickens* and *By the Ionian Sea* are not even alluded to. The differences between the serial version of *Henry Ryecroft* ("An Author at Grass") and the first edition are ignored. Some MSS of short stories are mentioned, but in at least fifteen cases the location has been omitted even for MSS as easy to find as those in the Beinecke and the Pforzheimer Libraries. Such inconsistencies are unaccountable. Furthermore "The Four Silverpennys" is not a short story by Gissing and "At the Grave of Alaric" is not a short story at all. The MS of "Cain and Abel" would be hard to locate in the Pforzheimer Library, and Virginia Woolf is not known to be the author of *Selections Autobiographical and Imaginative*.

It certainly was an excellent idea to include plates in this new edition, but a decidedly unfortunate one to describe Plate 4 as "the front cover of Henry Holt & Company's yellowback issue of *Our Friend the Charlatan*." For one thing this particular "yellowback" is green; then it is not a yellowback in the only acceptable sense of the term; and lastly the publisher is not Henry Holt but Chapman & Hall.

The bibliography of the short stories, which has been added to this new edition has been borrowed almost bodily from my old bibliography in *English Literature in Transition* without acknowledgement, but with a very few additions which turn out to be misleading. The entry on "Mr. Brogden, City Clerk" betrays pathetic confusion.

French words have suffered in places. "Transplante" as a title for a short story is meaningless without an accent, and *Cahiers Victoriennes* is a linguistic curiosity likely to amuse some readers.

What are we to conclude from this long, highly selective, list of blunders of all possible kinds which leaves out the purely technical descriptions (after checking the description of the title page of the second English edition of *The Unclassed* and finding three mistakes in six

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lines, I gave up the task as hopeless)? While it must be acknowledged that a large number of errors in the first edition have disappeared, quite a few have been left uncorrected and many new mistakes, bewildering statements and theories have been introduced. Neither scholars, nor booksellers nor librarians will be able to use this book with confidence. In a review of the first edition (*Times Literary Supplement*, 9 December 1977, p. 1455) I wrote that "Michael Collie had a magnificent opportunity of producing a much needed full-length bibliography, but he has wasted it in a regrettable manner." He has been given a new opportunity by a good publisher who nonetheless made the grievous mistake of not consulting one or two specialists about the new version before going to print. The new opportunity was even more magnificent than the first, and it has also been wasted. One can only hope that no third version will ever be made available!

Pierre Coustillas.

Notes and News

David Grylls's book *The Paradox of Gissing*, which was completed last year, is due to be published by George Allen & Unwin towards the end of September. Based on an examination

of the whole of Gissing's output, this book attempts to build up a picture of Gissing's imagination. In particular it stresses his dividedness and the paradoxical nature of many of his values. The book includes extensive sections on *New Grub Street*, *Born in Exile* and *The Odd Women*. *The Paradox of Gissing* will retail in Great Britain at £22.50.

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A Japanese translation of *Le Roman anglais au XIXe siècle*, by Pierre Coustillas, Jean-Pierre Petit and Jean Raimond (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1978) has been published in Tokyo by Nan-Undo, a firm which has published various books of Gissing interest in the last few decades. The translators are Shigeru Koike and Akira Usuda. This is a very attractive, cloth-bound volume, published at 3,500 yen.

The Swedish translation of *The Odd Women*, published by Trevi in 1980 and only recently mentioned in the *Index Translationum* for that year — the latest volume to appear —, gives one an opportunity to deplore the slow diffusion of bibliographical information. Readers of the *Newsletter* will remember the belated mention of the Romanian translation of *New Grub Street* some years ago. Unless a contact has been established between the foreign translator or publisher of a Gissing title and the editor or publisher of the *Newsletter* at the time of publication, or preferably before publication, some significant news is likely to be released with a few years' delay, perhaps too late for anyone to obtain a copy. A Korean translation of *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* was published in 1979. The editor would welcome advice as to the best way to secure a copy.

Brief Interlude: The Letters of George Gissing to Edith Sichel, by Pierre Coustillas, will be published by the Tragara Press early next year. This booklet will contain all the letters from Gissing to Edith Sichel known to have survived and portraits of the novelist and his correspondent about the time they were in touch.

Somewhat unexpectedly, Gissing appeared in an article on the use of computers in the *New York Times* for Sunday, 6 April 1986. Erik Sandberg-Diment observed in "The Next Step in Data Management" that "by now, those who have worked at personal computing for a year

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or so have discovered that the technology's biggest limitations involve entering information to be processed and retrieving the results of that processing." To the uninitiated who have been watching with interest developments in that field, this reads like a faith-shattering confession and poses *the* problem. It is no consolation to read in the middle of the article: "All of Hardy's works could be stored on a single ROM disk, leaving more than enough room for the complete works of Dickens, Collins, Gissing and a few moderns such as Camus and Graham Greene, as well as a compendium on natural dyes."

While one rejoices to see that Century Hutchinson, Ltd. have reprinted *By the Ionian Sea*, one very much regrets that the publishers have reprinted it with Frank Swinnerton's 1956 foreword. It was inadequate when it was first published, as was indeed his *Critical Study* in 1912, and in the light of recent research, it is more inadequate than ever. Swinnerton's factual errors begin on the first page when a quotation from *Henry Ryecroft* about this character's poor talent for mathematics is applied to Gissing's capacities in general. Here we have a typical example of Swinnerton's determination to run down the fine work of a novelist he was temperamentally unfit to understand. What are we to think of Swinnerton's assertion, doubtless borrowed from Seccombe, that it was the proceeds of the second edition of *Demos* (£50) which enabled Gissing to go to Italy? What is one to make of Swinnerton's statement that Gissing died in St. Jean de Luz or that he lived for some time in St. Jean Pied de la Port [sic]? To

anyone who wishes to read Gissing's excellent travel narrative it is a positive duty to skip Swinnerton's incompetent abstract of the author's life. The cover of the book, though pleasant enough, was selected carelessly. "A Sunset on the Laguna of Venice" by Edward William Cooke is about as felicitous a choice as a view of Norfolk for a book on the Lake District.

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Recent Publications

Volumes

George Gissing, *Udda Kvinnor (The Odd Women)*, translated into Swedish by Gemma Sneilman with an afterword by Ulf Brandell, Stockholm: Bokförlaget Trevi, 1980. Pp. 414. Pictorial cover.

George Gissing, *New Grub Street*, New York: Modern Library, 1985. Pp. 426. Brown cloth in pictorial dust-jacket. \$8.95.

Articles, reviews, etc.

K. C. Phillips, *Language and Class in Victorian England*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984. Contains various references to Gissing.

Helmut Winter, "Schinderei fürs Zeilengeld: George Gissings Schriftstellerroman," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 15 March 1986, p. 5. Review of the German translation of *New Grub Street*. Other reviews have appeared: one by Frank Dietschreit in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, probably on 9 April, and another by Anke Möller in the *Lübecker Nachrichten* on 8-9 May.

Francesco Badolato, "Un romanziere-viaggiatore inglese: George Gissing amante dell'Italia," *Il Corriere di Roma*, 15 May 1986, p. 5.

Sylvère Monod, "Comptes Rendus," *Etudes Anglaises*, April-June 1986, pp. 227-29. Review of the Harvester editions of *Workers in the Dawn* and *A Life's Morning*.

André Guillaume, "La Mode et l'Auteur dans *La Nouvelle Bohème* de George Gissing," *Mode(s): Actes du Congrès de Reims*, 1983, Paris: Didier-Érudition, 1986, pp. 132-44.