

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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Gissing in China

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Late 1930’s to 1940’s

China was one of the first Asian countries to have introduced Gissing to their readers. Already in the late 1930’s Gissing’s name was heard there. In a series of introductions to 19th-century English literature in *Literature Magazine*, edited by Fu Donghua and Zheng Zhenduo, Gissing’s name was mentioned as that of a minor naturalist novelist. Then in 1940 was published *Selections from Modern British Prose*, edited by Xie Daren, a textbook for sophomores whose major was English language and literature. Included in it were two extracts

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-- 2 --

from *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* – Spring XII, in which Ryecroft relates how he purchased a first edition of Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, carrying the eight volumes in three journeys from the west end of Euston Road to a street in Islington far beyond the Angel, and Winter XVII, with his final resolve to read *Don Quixote* once more before he dies. The year 1941 saw the publication of some graduation papers on Gissing, one of them entitled “On Gissing’s style — my impressions after reading *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*,” by Jiang Bingxian, now emeritus professor of English at Hangzhou University.

The first Gissing title chosen by a Chinese translator was, as one could expect, *The*

*Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, which had been his best-known book for decades in English-speaking countries. The task was undertaken by Li Ji-ye in 1941, in the days of Japanese occupation. While doing the work, the translator (who is now emeritus professor of English at Nankai University) had to move from one place to another in order to avoid Japanese firing and bombing. It was not until February 1944 that the translation was completed and that publication began. He revised his manuscript in Bai Pai, and had it published in serial form in *Literary Monthly*. Two years later, in 1946, the translation was published in book form by the Taiwan Compiling and Translation Press in Taipei. The total number of copies printed ran to 2050. The volume, entitled *Szu Chi Sui Pi* (An essay on the Four Seasons), helped Gissing to find a small audience in China.

#### Late 1950's to early 1960's

As time went by, Gissing's works were given fresh opportunities to reach more and more Chinese readers. By the late 1950's, Gissing had entered the classrooms of college students on a nationwide scale. In 1957, a group of professors of English from several universities were called together with a view to compiling a set of textbooks for fourth-year students of English. The

-- 3 --

work took two years to complete under the superintendence of the Education Department. In 1959 the textbooks came out in eight volumes which were soon in wide use. Included in Vol. 8, which was edited by Xiu Yanmou, a former professor of English at Fudan University, were selections from *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* in English. The text, seven pages long, was printed under the heading "Buying and Reading Books." In his introductory remarks, Xiu assessed Gissing's work as that of a realist, since many of his novels are truthful and vivid representations of what people did and thought, of their way of life in general, and he praised Gissing for his capacity as an artist. His beautiful language and straightforward style were viewed by Xiu as a reason for his popularity among learners of English in China. About the same time Gissing was entered in the *Chinese Encyclopaedia of Foreign Literature*, published by the People's Publishing House in 1963. The entry on Gissing was contributed by Qou Kean, professor of English and Vice-President of Nin Po University. It is four pages long and carries two photographs of Gissing. In his introduction, Qou observed that many of Gissing's novels give us a unique view of Victorian society, a vivid picture of working-class life as well as of middle-class life. Among all the books Gissing wrote, Qou thought, the most important were *Demos*, *New Grub Street*, *The Odd Women*, *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, and *Charles Dickens: A Critical Study*. He placed *New Grub Street* foremost. It was the first time that an assessment of Gissing appeared in an authoritative Chinese publication with a nationwide readership, and it did much to popularize Gissing's name in China.

#### Late 1970's to early 1980's

The "Cultural Revolution" instigated ten years of literary famine during which the Chinese people suffered an unprecedented spiritual hunger. In 1978, following the fall of the "gang of four," the long-forbidden precincts of research and translation of foreign literature were swiftly

-- 4 --

opened, and the people, with even more interest, quickly resumed their pursuit of foreign cultures. Wrong ideas and concepts of foreign literature were set right while new objective assessments were made. Gissing soon became one of the few English writers who was seen to deserve attention.

Early in 1979, a nationwide discussion of studies and research on foreign literatures was

held in Beijing. Soon professors of English from fourteen universities and colleges gathered in Shanghai to propose guiding principles for compiling a textbook of English literature for senior undergraduates. In 1981 the book, entitled *Selected Readings of English Literature*, appeared in three volumes published by the Shanghai Translation Press. Included in Vol. II were the two passages from the *Ryecroft Papers* mentioned above, Spring XII and Winter XVII. In a short foreword to the selections, which totalled twelve pages, the editor, Yang Jishen, emeritus professor of English at Fudan University, referred to Gissing as a good writer who not only had inherited the fine tradition of critical realism initiated by Dickens, but also developed a unique artistic style. In the wake of this appeared another two-volume textbook which served as further reading for students of English. The book, called *Selected English Short Stories* (1981), was also published by the Shanghai Translation Press. It is the collective work of the teachers in the English Department of the Shanghai Foreign Languages Institute. In a brief preface to Gissing's short story "A Charming Family," included in Vol. 1,<sup>1</sup> the editor observed that Gissing was bolder than his predecessors Dickens, Thackeray and George Eliot when denouncing the injustices of his time. In a synopsis of the story, the editor praised the skill with which Gissing analysed his characters' psychology.

In August 1981, a four-volume *History of English Literature* achieved publication in China. The book was soon put to use as a textbook for students of English. This was the first

-- 5 --

comprehensive history of English literature written in English by Chinese scholars since the founding of the People's Republic. The chapter on Gissing in Vol. III contains an account of Gissing's life, literary career and major achievements as well as an objective criticism of the writer. The editor-in-chief, Chen Jia, a former distinguished professor of English at Nanking University, classified Gissing as a nineteenth-century naturalist, but pointed out that Gissing differed from other naturalists in the sense that his novels express his own deepest thoughts and are written in an original style. Special stress was laid on *New Grub Street* and *The Ryecroft Papers* in the introductory comment on Gissing's major works. For the first time Gissing was included in a history of British literature written by Chinese scholars. This fostered a number of wider and deeper studies of the writer and his works in China.

#### The mid-1980's

Serious and systematic research on Gissing began in China in the mid-1980s. Between 1983 and 1987, three articles appeared in academic journals and two Chinese translations (one of them a reissue in a revised form) were published by different presses. In April 1983, Li, the translator of the *Ryecroft Papers*, wrote a long preface to his revised Chinese translation of *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, and the book was brought out by the ShanXi People's Press. Besides a discussion of Gissing's life and of his most important novels, *Workers in the Dawn*, *The Unclassed*, *Demos*, *Thyrza*, *The Nether World*, *New Grub Street*, *Born in Exile*, *The Odd Women* and *Eve's Ransom*, the preface gives some account of his non-fictional work – *Charles Dickens: A Critical Study* and *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*. The former volume, in Li's opinion, remains one of the best books ever written on Dickens, a volume of great value to students of the mid-Victorian novelist and his books. Li devoted ten pages to the *Ryecroft Papers*, concentrating on its ideological contents. He also commented on Gissing's attitude

-- 6 --

towards the proletarian poor – a peculiar compound of contempt and compassion – and on his ambiguous appraisal of the upper classes, which wavered between envy and impatient disdain.

However, according to Li, the most striking aspect of the book lies in Ryecroft's

enjoyment of his way of life in his Devon cottage, and of writing, in his late years, as an artistic occupation. The critic concludes that, as a novelist, Gissing was a substantial artist, generous, noble and sincere, actuated by strict purposes, as daring in spirit as one of the Englishmen he most respected, Milton. Li expresses a hope that modern Chinese readers may be inspired by what Gissing says in *The Ryecroft Papers*. His preface amounts to a thesis on Gissing and his major works. It aroused greater interest in him among Chinese readers and paved the way for wider and more scholarly discussions.

In May and October 1986, two articles written by the same man, Zai Xiang, appeared in different journals. The first article, entitled “An Unfairly Forgotten Writer: George Gissing,” appeared in the Supplement to the *Journal of Hangzhou University*; it focussed on Gissing’s achievements and his proper position in English literature. Zai declared that Gissing is a major novelist of the Victorian age, worthy of this status thanks to his twenty-three novels and one hundred and eleven short stories, a travel book, a monograph on Dickens and various essays, which is more than the production of any other “major” Victorian novelist except Trollope; the fact that he wrote no less than a dozen novels of high quality is no common achievement. In order to support his view, Zai quoted from many critics, especially from George Orwell. Zai’s second article, which was included in the Annual Collection of Articles published by the Zhejiang Foreign Languages and Literature Society, was devoted to “George Gissing and His Major Novels.” In this article Zai first divides Gissing’s career into three periods: early (1877-1887), mid (1888-1897) and late (1897-1903). In the first period, he argues, Gissing

-- 7 --

wrote novels of social protest, five in number, while in the second the writer dealt with middle-class life in another five major novels. The demarcation between these two periods was Gissing’s trip to France and Italy, for when he came back in 1889 he turned away from the proletarian novel and entered upon another phase of creative activity – writing a brilliant but uneven series of stories about the moral and economic problems of bourgeois life. The most substantial work of the third period is non-fictional and consists in the critical study of Dickens and the recollections and meditations of Gissing’s *alter ego*, Henry Ryecroft.

Commenting on the salient features of Gissing’s novels, Zai shows that Gissing was both recognizably “Victorian” and highly personal; if his novels offer a general view of Victorian society, his concerns, analysed with idiosyncratic perceptiveness, are none the less the concerns of almost every generation. Zai concludes that Gissing was a fine realistic writer who made an original contribution to English fiction, and to whom full justice must be done.

In July 1986 a Chinese translation of *New Grub Street* was published by the Zhejiang Literature Press. It is the work of Wen Xin, the penname of a young editor on the staff of the People’s Literature Press in Beijing. The book is prefaced by a long piece which focuses on Gissing’s special position and the social significance of *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*. Wen notes that Gissing achieved brilliant things in his short life. Sometimes called “Zola’s English disciple,” he carved out for himself a singular niche in the literature of his country. After giving a brief biographical sketch of the writer, Wen turned to the book’s plot, structure, themes and style. He explains how by way of a strong contrast between Milvain, a successful critic, and Reardon, an unfortunate writer, Gissing succeeded in exposing the fundamental contradiction between the devotion to art of creative man and the commercialization of literature, by depicting, on the one hand, the fierce competition in the literary field and, on the

-- 8 --

other, the degrading effects of poverty and the money-race on the sentient spirit as well as the extent to which human feelings can be degraded by economic pressures. After analysing the

skilful design of the novel and its characters, Wen discusses *New Grub Street* as a significant image of the literary world in late nineteenth-century England, Gissing's permanent contribution to the English novel. With this book a blank in English literature was filled, the blank consisting in the unrecorded role played in it by impecunious writers.

With this translation of and comment on *New Grub Street*, appreciation of Gissing in China took one more step forward. It was promptly followed, in July 1987, by an article in *Foreign Literature*. Turning to account the recent discoveries and comments made by western scholars, the author, a young academic familiar with the author's works, reconsiders some basic questions – Gissing's realistic subject matter, the specific qualities of his style, the vividness of his characters. In the final analysis, the young scholar holds that Gissing deserves a place alongside Dickens, the Brontë sisters, George Eliot and Hardy.

#### Immediate Prospects

The year 1988 will see the publication in China of one article and a book on Gissing. The article, "A Comment on *New Grub Street*," is to appear in the *Journal of Hangzhou University* in May. This is a further analytical study of Gissing's works, focusing on the social significance of *New Grub Street* through an analysis of its themes. The book, which will be published by the Zhejiang Literature Press, is a Chinese translation of John Halperin's *Gissing: A Life in Books*, the work of a distinguished American professor. The book will surely be instrumental in making Gissing better known in China. The author of both article and translation

-- 9 --

is ZaiXiang. Another volume, a collection of Gissing's most characteristic short stories, in Chinese translation, may be published in 1989. After the publication of some more articles and books, Gissing studies should take a new turn in China and China become a better place for Gissing.

1. Pp. 60-70. The explanatory notes are in Chinese.

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#### William and Algernon Gissing on Tour An Unpublished Account

Pierre Coustillas

Little enough has hitherto been published about William Gissing. George's biographers have not shown much interest in him, and the major reason for their unconcern is not far to seek. William died before he had any chance of doing anything that would earn him the recognition of future generations; he died before either George or Algernon had done anything likely to distinguish them from the common run of men. Nor did he influence his elder brother in any obvious manner in the late seventies when the latter's early novels – *Workers in the Dawn* and its lost predecessors – were being written in miserable London lodgings. George's biographers have been content to read the few letters of William to George which the editors of the volume of family correspondence chose to print in 1927. However, some eighty of these have survived and George himself once assessed their significance with emotion: "A week or two ago I brought out and read a great batch of dear old Will's letters. They struck me as remarkable, not

-- 10 --

only by their revelation of a character rarely surpassed, I should think, for delicate unselfishness, but judged as mere writing. One or two of them seem to me as good as letters written by men of the epistolary time, – really models of such composition.”<sup>1</sup> When these letters are available in print, it will be seen that they offer an image of William’s personality which is at once engaging and pathetic. This image of the least known of the three brothers is complemented by his diary which covers the period July 1879-April 1880. It gives a full account of his activities, first on holiday in the north, then as a poor music teacher in Wilmslow. It is hoped that a fully annotated edition of this document will be published in the present journal before long. William mentions a number of persons who appear in George’s early correspondence, notably Alfred C. Fryer and various friends and acquaintances of the family in Wakefield. A third document, of admittedly lesser importance, has been known to be in existence since the novelist’s younger son, Alfred, parted with it in the early 1970’s. Although it is not mentioned in the old volume of family correspondence, it might be thought that George had it in mind when he commented on the trip which William and Algernon took at Easter 1878. His letter of 2 May 1878 to Algernon reads in part: “It was very annoying that you had such very bad weather for your tramp ... I was glad you did not miss Haworth. I suppose you climbed the almost perpendicular street and saw the little parsonage where *Jane Eyre* first saw the light. I admire your pluck in trudging along all day through the rain. I once did the same thing in N. Wales.”<sup>2</sup> Actually Algernon had been prompter than William and had sent George a long letter, now lost, about their common expedition. The outing was first mentioned by William in a letter of 13 April 1878, in which he wrote that as one of his landlady’s children had recently had a light attack of scarlet fever, Mrs.

-- 11 --

Gissing had thought it better for him not to go home. The two brothers would meet at the starting-point of their trip. It was only on 2nd May that William offered to write down an account of his Easter walk, being aware that he had been forestalled by Algy, as he called him. The account was enclosed by William in his letter of 8 May. He wrote apologetically about it, as he felt it was “necessarily wanting in interest owing to the prevailing rain.” He deplored that he and Algernon could not see any scenery to admire and that consequently George would find more comment on hotels and trivialities than “under other circumstances, would be pardonable.”<sup>3</sup>

The original manuscript, which covers eighteen and a quarter pages of 16 x 20.3 cm, was sold at the Parke-Bernet Galleries on 23 November 1971 (item 24, which also included an autograph commonplace book kept by Thomas Waller Gissing). It is now in a private collection whose owner is thanked warmly for his permission to print William’s essay from a photocopy of the manuscript.

To George R. Gissing, this short account of a ramble by his two brothers, during their Easter holidays (1878), is affectionately dedicated by William W. Gissing.

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On Thursday April 18, after business I caught a train to Hebden Bridge,<sup>4</sup> intending to find an Hotel and then wait until Alg arrived from Wakefield; but when I stepped out of the train I was at once seized and heartily shaken by a large man in a light coat of a sporting kind, having

-- 12 --

five or six pockets stationed at various points over the front – this was Alg. Having arrived

earlier than he anticipated, he had made all arrangements for the night and at once led me to the hotel he had selected.

We entered under the sign of the White Horse. I was shown to my bedroom<sup>5</sup> and was much struck by the costly and tasteful manner in which it was fitted up. Misgivings as to the bill flitted through my mind. I washed and went down to tea into an elegant chamber more like a drawing-room than an hotel coffee-room. More misgivings. An excellent tea was served, Alg continually praising everything.

But at last:

“Alg,” I said with perhaps a touch of sadness, “you always liked to do it large,” “Oh nay,” he replied, “only decent, only decent, not large.”!

We took a short walk in the dusk, just to observe the weather. It was misty and cloudy.

Next morning – Good Friday – we got up and had breakfast, wishing to set off betimes as we had a heavy day’s walking before us. Alg was keeper of the purse so I remember no amounts of the bills, but this one turned out to be very moderate and altogether satisfactory.

Having gathered up our luggage – a hat, an umbrella and small bag each – we sallied forth to find a steady drizzle descending and everything enveloped in fog. Hebden Bridge lies in a deep valley and we now began to ascend a steep, winding road by which to reach the level ground above. And now we should have had a glorious sight under other atmospheric conditions, but the beautiful valley and noble hills surrounding it were all hid from view. Moreover the rain was not pleasant, consequently our spirits were affected in an exactly opposite manner to a column of mercury (if I may compare the two) for the higher we rose the greater was their depression. We walked on occasionally breaking the silence by some dismal remark, until we

-- 13 --

came to the little village of Heptonstall,<sup>6</sup> consisting of one narrow, winding street, of sufficient width to admit one cart and no more; of course no distinction of place made in favour of foot-passengers. On each side rose old, solid-looking stone houses. Turning aside under an ancient archway, we saw before us two churches, a few yards distant from each other; one mouldering in ruins, the other a fine modern edifice. It was a striking picture to see the old and the new side by side, the one a victim to the resistless hand of Time, the other showing us what it once was, and the two together teaching all but the blind the course of human life.

Regaining the road, we continued our walk and soon came in sight of a group of children grotesquely attired, and singing in unison a song of which we could not catch the burden. We were soon espied and one of the children came running up. I thought this an excellent opportunity for learning the meaning of the custom, and accordingly asked the youth, but we only received the very significant reply: “We do’t for brass”!

We moralized. Can the thirst for gold have penetrated into this secluded hamlet? It was even so, for a hat was promptly put forward. We gave him a trifle and passed on. These were the “pace-egggers”<sup>7</sup> and that was all we could learn.

A man now overtook us, who was going to Widdop<sup>8</sup> about four miles ahead. He attached himself to us and told us all that we should have seen had the weather been fine. We occasionally stopped to look at any plant that attracted us. Our friend said: “Are you looking for ‘yeärbs’ (herbs)? There are some fine ones over here” and directing our attention to the other side of a wall we beheld a fine bed of nettles!

We passed along a fine valley, with a stream winding through it and bare rocky hills towering on each side. This was the only piece of fine scenery that we beheld the whole day as the road was very uninteresting as far as Skipton.<sup>9</sup>

-- 14 --

About one o'clock we reached Colne, in rather sorry plight, being very wet and dejected – and I may say a "leetle" hungry. Seeing two Inns we chose the quieter of the two, in which to get dinner. Now, it was a curious little establishment apparently only possessing a kitchen and a taproom, so we chose the kitchen where we found the hostess.

"Can we have some dinner?"

"Well, I dunno, I've gotten a pound o' ham if you'd like that."

"Very well, that will do."

Ham was cooked and placed on a dish in the middle of a table, with a filthy old cloth of some colour on, two knives and forks were next added and then –

"Will you want *plates*?"

Well, we thought if she had any plates they might be useful, so two very small ones were at last found.

"Can you make us a cup of coffee please?"

"No. The water isn't fit to drink."

Other beverage had to be fetched, which left us alone for a moment.

"What a hole we've got into," growled Alg.

"Why didn't she put the frying-pan between us and lend us a knife to divide the stuff with?"

We ended our meal and asked what it would be. She reckoned the cost of the ham and bread etc and said "so much," then seeing we had not finished everything we could lay hands on, said

"Will you take the rest with you?"

This was the climax, a suitable reply was made, and escape effected with becoming haste.

We had a reward for our undue haste for dinner, by finding further on quite a respectable village with several good Inns. However, it afforded us much amusement and kept us in good spirits for the next fifteen miles, which would otherwise have been very dreary as we saw nothing noteworthy along the whole route and the rain was getting much steadier. About four o'clock, we observed a small break in the sky, which gave us a little more light and soon

-- 15 --

the rain ceased. We were delighted and expected the sun every moment, indeed once Alg thought he saw his shadow, but I fancy he was mistaken, for before long the above-mentioned skylight was closed up again and we entered Skipton at a little after seven with rain falling "as per usual." We were wet, bemuddled and footsore.

We went and looked at the Castle with the Cliffords motto "Désormais"<sup>10</sup> cut out on the battlement over the archway, and glancing at the old church we passed under the portals of the Black Bull Hotel. Here we were very comfortable. After tea I enjoyed playing upon a splendid piano by Collard and Collard. Haydn's "Creation" was all the music I could find, but this was more than enough, as I needed no written music, the soft rich tones of disconnected chords fully satisfying the craving which on a poorer instrument only melody could have appeased.

During the night we were serenaded. There were evidently two engaged in producing the music, from what sources I know not, unless two accordions. Next morning – Saturday – the rain was remarkably steady, but after breakfast we determined to start, as the clouds seemed to be dispersing and we did not wish to lose time. We ascended boldly the steep road leading from Skipton and got as far as the Craven Baths (perhaps half a mile) when owing to a considerable increase in the quantity of the wet element descending, we deemed it advisable to retreat. We sat in the hotel the whole morning, studying a directory, watching the rain and admiring the cool way in which the natives strolled the streets with umbrellas under their arms which they



considered it superfluous to put up.

Dinner I will not detail. Suffice it to say it was thoroughly English, for there were six of us and not a word was spoken the whole time. What subject under the sun would not six Frenchmen have touched upon, in the time, though they had never seen each other before?

-- 16 --

About three o'clock the rain ceased. We hastily departed and gained the point we had reached in the morning. Here it began to rain again, we would not again turn back, so hoping it would stop soon, we climbed the steep, muddy road, which had now become, literally, a watercourse through which we waded. We imagined that the scenery around us was glorious, but we could neither see it properly nor enjoy it. Here a mountain stream swollen with the heavy rain, came tumbling down, in a succession of miniature cataracts, until reaching the valley far below, it peacefully meandered through meadows rendered more vividly green, by contrast with the dull, dead, heather above and around us.

We plodded on, the process of saturation gradually gaining completion.

"Alg, your coat is getting rather wet behind."

"I don't care. It's been running off yours for the last hour."

I felt behind and I certainly think that my coat tails cannot have held less than a quart.

Under these circumstances we reached Addingham.<sup>11</sup> At the best Inn a disappointed pleasure party were carousing, so we walked on, with the knowledge that if we had to go to Bradford we could not get worse. Ilkley was accordingly reached. We entered the first Inn we came to<sup>12</sup> and secured a bedroom. Our host most hospitably lent us two suits of clothes and had ours well dried. This cheered us greatly, for upon the road, our most sanguine expectations did not lead us beyond the idea of spending the evening in bed. After tea we laughed over our misfortunes, I played a little upon an excellent Piano, but unfortunately could not find a single sheet of music in the place.

On Sunday morning at 8.15 precisely we sighted the sun for the first time since we had started.

Nature had wept at the remembrance of the deeds of eighteen hundred years ago, but now on the morning of His resurrection, her face wore, most fitly, a smile of the purest joy, her

-- 17 --

beauty only heightened by her recent tears. And we were happy too.

After breakfast we at once set out for Keighley,<sup>13</sup> hoping to reach that place in time for church, but the distance was greater than Black's Guide had led us to expect, consequently we entered the town just as the worthy inhabitants were thinking of dinner. Our thoughts tended in a like direction. This meal over, we at once continued our way to Haworth as we found nothing attractive in Keighley. The road to the former place was particularly uninteresting. We reached Haworth at about three o'clock, and determined to find, as quickly as possible, a suitable place in which to stay the night and then to inspect the village.

We entered the largest Inn and found an old woman, cutting up onions "which shed their fragrance all around us."

"Can you let us have a bed here to-night please?"

"No, I can't."

We retired, almost tempted to imitate the Frenchman and make a note that "*All* the inhabitants of Haworth are very surly and live on onions.!"

We met with more success at No. 2, which was close to the gate of the church. After depositing our baggage, we looked round the village, certainly interesting on one account only. We were amused at the Craven Bank, a little place covered with ivy. I wonder what the yearly

profits amount to. We examined the church and also the exterior of the vicarage. Placing the clock in the church tower has made a considerable addition to its height, so much so as to cause want of proportion to the length of the church to be very noticeable. We were struck with the extensive graveyard.

After tea we attended the service which began at six o'clock.

I anticipated a very simple, sincere form of worship, but they were not, we found, at all

-- 18 --

behind the times! *The anthem* was the "Hallelujah Chorus" from the "*Messiah*" which a choir of some half dozen powerful Yorkshire voices rendered in vigorous style, bass being decidedly predominant. After service we walked for a short time over ground honoured by the love of the Brontës, but as it began to rain, we went in, and as there was an excellent Piano, I enjoyed playing "The Messiah" and "Judas Maccabaeus" which I found amongst some rubbish.

The bells of Haworth church reminded us strongly of those at the Wakefield Parish Church.

Alg was not at all satisfied with our quarters, but railed much.

"This is our third night from Hebden Bridge and they say the third time does it, we have been on the downward course all along, and now we have landed in such an auction as I never was in before."

I suggested that it was not bad considering the locality.

"We ought never to have come to a hole like this, we might have expected that there was no place fit for a gentleman to stay at."

We then went to bed. Now, the bed was one to be remembered. By no means would we make a hollow in the middle; it still remained a ridge, a summit of a hill whose sides sloped down on each side with a steepness that necessitated us both clinging on in a manner that rendered rest totally out of the question. We both got up with aching heads and not feeling at all well.

Alg proceeded to wash. "Hallo, didn't I tell you this was a hole," he roared, "there's no water." And indeed, there was none. We consoled ourselves with the thought that we should pass many troughs by the roadside, but upon opening the door we found a supply placed for our use outside. The morning was dull and inclined to rain. We began our last day's walk, the destination being Hebden Bridge. The sky gradually became clear, and the day was the finest we had.

Open moorland lay on each side of the road, nearly the whole way, but as we began to

-- 19 --

descend towards Hebden the scenery was exceedingly beautiful. We made a circuit in order to lengthen our walk, as otherwise we should have ended it before noon.

Passing off the main road we descended a ravine, which was evidently a favourite spot, judging from the characteristic remains of recent excursionists. When we reached Hebden Bridge, we obtained dinner at Algy's favourite hotel and in the afternoon took our respective trains to Manchester and Wakefield.

1. Letter to Algernon Gissing, Christmas Day, 1892, *Letters of George Gissing to Members of His Family*, ed. Algernon and Ellen Gissing, London: Constable, 1927, pp. 329-30.
2. *Ibid.*, p 29.
3. Unpublished letter in the Berg Collection of the New York Public Library.

4. Hebden Bridge, in West Yorkshire, at the confluence of Hebden Water and the river Calder which runs through Wakefield. Algernon had travelled west from Wakefield, taking the train to Burnley.
5. "For the first two nights we had separate beds on account of Mother's fear of the fever which recently was at Kersal" (William's note). William's current address was 2 Grove Terrace, Kersal Moor, Higher Broughton, Manchester.
6. By that time the two brothers had hardly covered a mile; they followed the road to Colne which runs between Heptonstall Moor on the left, and Wadsworth Moor on the right.

-- 20 --

7. The *Oxford English Dictionary* throws some light on this word: "Scottish and Northern dialect: pace or paste, that is Easter, Easter-tide." Pace-eggs or paste-eggs were Easter eggs. Washington Irving wrote in 1809: "There was a great cracking of eggs at Paas or Easter." The form *pace* is derived from the old French form *Pasques*, nowadays *Pâques*.
8. Widdop is about six miles north-west of Hebden Bridge, half way to Colne.
9. Skipton, in North Yorkshire, is a market and industrial town on the River Aire and on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, sixteen miles north-west of Bradford.
10. The Cliffords were an old aristocratic family whose association with Skipton dates back to Robert de Clifford, fifth baron Clifford by tenure, first baron by writ (1273-1314), only son of Roger de Clifford who was killed in North Wales in 1282. Skipton Castle was given to him in exchange for his claims in the vale of Monmouth on 7 September 1310. *Désormais* is the French equivalent of "henceforth."
11. Addingham is three miles from Ilkley, a place which was known to George. One of his early manuscripts is entitled "Walks about Ilkley."
12. "It was that one on the outskirts, opposite to an old woman's house from whom Mr. Benington used to get eggs!" (William's note). Henry Benington, a draper in Wakefield, was the brother-in-law of James Wood, the headmaster of Lindow Grove School, Alderley Edge. He had been a friend of Thomas Waller Gissing and George recorded a

-- 21 --

visit to him in Wakefield (Diary entry for 5 April 1895.)

13. Keighley is a small industrial town on the River Worth, near its confluence with the River Aire, thirteen miles north-west of Bradford. From Addingham William and Algernon went south. They were on their way to Haworth.

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The New Japanese Translations  
of Gissing's Works

The present year is the *annus mirabilis* for admirers of George Gissing in Japan. Five volumes containing six titles by him have just been published – on April 15, 1988 – by Shûbun International Ltd., 4-12-7, Komagome, Toshima-ku, Tokyo 170. And that day was a great day for the general editor of “The Selected Works of George Gissing,” Professor Shigeru Koike, of the Metropolitan University of Tokyo, without whose enthusiasm and unflinching determination the project would not have materialized. If many editions of particular Gissing titles – particularly *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, *By the Ionian Sea*, *New Grub Street* and the short stories – have appeared in Japan since the first decade of the present century, no publication of more than one book at a time, whether in the original language, in Japanese translation or in a bilingual edition, is on record. The manager of Shûbun International, Mr. Nakamura, is to be congratulated for rendering Gissing such a signal service. No publishing

-- 22 --

firm outside England and America has ever done as much to give him his due.

Two editions have been published simultaneously, a cloth-bound library edition and a regular paper-bound edition. The volumes of the library edition, which is limited to 300 copies, cannot be purchased separately. Sets are priced at 25,200 yen. A four-page illustrated leaflet describing the library edition is available gratis from the publisher; it contains the introduction of the general editor, Shigeru Koike, a description of the books, and an abstract of Gissing's life.

Details are as follows:

Vol. I: *New Grub Street*, translated by Osamu Doi. This is a revised edition of Professor Doi's translation, first published by the Kitazawa Publishing Company, Tokyo, in 1969. Contents: General Editor's Introduction, pp. i-iv; Text, pp. 1-530; Translator's Notes, pp. 532-37; Translator's Postscript, pp. 538-63. Cloth: 6,800 yen. Paper: 3,800 yen.

Vol. II: *Born in Exile*, translated by Kazuo Mizokawa. Contents: General Editor's Introduction, pp. i-iv; Text, pp. 1-377; Translator's Notes, pp. 378-80; Translator's Postscript, pp. 381-82. Cloth: 5,800 yen. Paper: 3,500 yen.

Vol. III: *The Odd Women*, translated by Ryôko Ota. Contents: General Editor's Introduction, pp. i-iv; Text, pp. 1-350; Translator's Notes, pp. 351-53; Translator's Postscript, pp. 354-61. Cloth: 5,600 yen. Paper: 3,400 yen.

Vol. IV: *Sleeping Fires*, translated by Osamu Doi, and *By the Ionian Sea*, translated by Shigeru Koike. Contents: General Editor's Introduction, pp. i-iv; Text of *Sleeping Fires*, pp. 1-93; Translator's Notes, pp. 95-96; Translator's Postscript, pp. 97-101; Text of *By the*

-- 23 --

*Ionian Sea*, pp. 105-94; Translator's Notes, pp. 195-99; Translator's Postscript, pp. 201-03. Cloth: 3,400 yen. Paper: 2,100 yen.

Vol. V: *Charles Dickens: A Critical Study*, translated by Shigeru Koike and Ryôta Kanayama. Contents: General Editor's Introduction, pp. i-iv; Text, pp. 1-178; Translators' Notes,

pp. 179-92; List of Dickens's Major Works, p. 193; Translators' Postscript, pp. 195-96. Cloth: 3,600 yen. Paper: 2,200 yen.

Professor Koike, who has supplied all the factual information given above, is confident that the simultaneous publication of these six titles will contribute to enlarge Gissing's audience in Japan. He hopes these new translations will prompt other publishers to reprint *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* and *The House of Cobwebs*, which were kept in print for years. Perhaps other new translations will be commissioned. Meanwhile Mrs. Ota's translation of *The Whirlpool* is being prepared for publication early next year. The book will be part of a series of novels on the condition of women co-edited by Mrs. Hôjo, who is the author of an article on *The Odd Women*. – P. C.

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#### Notes and News

The paperback editions of *Denzil Quarrier* and *The Crown of Life* published by the Harvester Press last year are welcome in that they make available again titles which had run out

-- 24 --

of print in the hardback editions of 1979 and 1978 respectively. Still, the pictorial covers are a little odd. Attractive though the illustrations may be, they hardly convey the atmosphere created by Gissing in the two stories. The couple on the cover of *The Crown of Life* would seem to have come from some society journal such as the *Queen*, which one cannot associate with the personality of Piers Otway. The bibliographer who opens the books is also a little disappointed. When these new impressions were being prepared, no one cared to change the date of publication on the verso of the title pages. The consequence is that some day purchasers of second-hand copies of these two books will imagine that the paperback and hardback editions were published simultaneously. The editors, Michel Ballard and John Halperin, are by no means responsible for this situation. Although lists of desirable alterations in the introductions were sent to the publishers they were eventually ignored. Fortunately the back covers are more satisfactory. The descriptions of the editors' activities do show that the volumes in hand were not published some nine or ten years ago. It is to be hoped that the Harvester Press will soon reprint another Gissing title which is out of print in hardback, *Our Friend the Charlatan*, and that a couple of misprints deplored by the editor will be corrected. Although most of the paperback editions of Gissing's novels reprinted by the Harvester Press are also available from Methuen USA, neither *Denzil Quarrier* nor *The Crown of Life* bears the American imprint on the back cover.

Dan Chatterton (1820-1895), that curious anarchist whom Gissing probably had in mind when he drew the character of John Pether in *Workers in the Dawn*, is studied at some length by Andrew Whitehead in his *History Workshop* article (see under Recent Publications). No reference to Chatterton has yet been traced in Gissing's early correspondence, but as not all unpublished letters have yet reached institutional libraries some incontrovertible evidence that

-- 25 --

he had had opportunities in the late 1870's of listening to "Old Chat" – as Chatterton called himself – may turn up some day. Andrew Whitehead writes: "Dan Chatterton was part of the underbelly of popular politics. In his writings, in his street-corner oratory, in his furious

contributions from the floor at political meetings, he expressed a burning and unornamented anger at the injustices which forced him and thousands of others to live in poverty in the slums of late Victorian London”.

“Oh, yes! workers of to-day,” Chatterton wrote in an 1879 pamphlet, “there is nothing left for you to-day but to steel your nerves, dry your powder, sharpen your weapons, tighten your grasp, and drive the bright, flashing steel clean through the quivering heart of your Blood Stained Foe.”

The series of Victorian Fiction Research Guides published by the University of Queensland under the editorship of P. D. Edwards has now reached no. 12 with an index to *Cassell's Magazine* (1874-1910). It offers no unsuspected item of Gissing interest – it has been known for years that Gissing declined to write a short story for this magazine. However, the index reveals that a short story by Algernon Gissing, “The Seat by the Door,” appeared in Volume 46 (1908), pp. 162-69. This story was to be reprinted in one of Algernon’s last books, *Love in the Byways* (London: F. V. White & Co, 1910), pp. 194-221. In the volume, a cryptic note is appended to the story: “It may amuse the reader to compare this sketch, with a fuller and somewhat different treatment of the same subject already introduced into a novel of the author’s. For the interest of any curious on the subject, it may be mentioned that this little story represents the original note, and precedes by many years the fuller use of the incident.” This obscure footnote strikes one as both an unexpected self-advertisement and a significant apology and

-- 26 --

confession. If “The Seat by the Door” was written many years before the novel – which novel remains to determine – it must have been rejected by more than one editor.

This Index to *Cassell's Magazine* offers other elements of marginal Gissing interest. For instance on Max Pemberton who was its editor from 1896 to 1905 and one of whose portraits is reproduced on p. iv. Pemberton was the editor of Cassell’s Pocket Library to which Gissing contributed *The Paying Guest*. Naturally Gissing and Pemberton corresponded about the project, but their correspondence still has to emerge from oblivion. Five stories by Morley Roberts are also listed, from “The Crowd,” in Volume 25 (1897-1898) to “The Skipper of the S. S. Ringdove” in Volume 45 (1907-1908). More obscurely, the Index lists a batch of stories translated by one Dora Moore, all of them with one exception (François Coppée) of works by Charles Foleÿ, who was a friend of Alice Ward, herself a friend of Gabrielle Fleury. Alice Ward wrote under many pseudonyms and is known to have translated many of Foleÿ’s works. According to the Foleÿ-Ward correspondence, Foleÿ read *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* and wrote a volume in imitation of it.

Wulfard Heinrichs has sent the typescript of a review of *Zeilengeld* by Rolf Haufs which was broadcast by a West Berlin radio station on 5 May 1986. No translation of any Gissing novel has been as widely reviewed as the German translation of *New Grub Street*.

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-- 27 --

### Recent Publications

#### Volumes

George Gissing, *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, The ShanXi People’s Press, 1985,

pp. 246. Chinese translation by Professor Li Ji-ye, of Nankai University, Tianjin. Pages 1-31 consist in an assessment of Gissing's work and of *Henry Ryecroft* in particular. The preliminary pages include a portrait of Gissing, one of those taken by Elliott and Fry in 1895, and a facsimile of the first page of the novelist's letter to his younger brother dated 22 September 1885. Paperback, with yellow, white and purple covers. The book was reprinted in 1987.

George Gissing, *New Grub Street*, The Zhejiang Literature Press, 1986. Pp. 10 + 2 + 597. Chinese translation by Wen Xin; with an introduction by the translator. The preliminary pages include a portrait of Gissing by Alfred Ellis (1893) and four illustrations of scenes in the novel. Paperback with grey, brown and white pictorial covers.

Articles, reviews, etc.

J. H. Hodson *et al*, *Three Sundays in Wilmslow 1851-1871*, Wilmslow: Wilmslow Historical Society, 1981. This booklet of some seventy pages is a sociological study of Wilmslow, where William Gissing lived for some time after leaving Manchester. George also knew Wilmslow well in the early 1870's. The three Sundays were 30 March 1851, 7 April 1861 and 2 April 1871, that is the three census dates. Some people known to William Gissing are

-- 28 --

mentioned in this booklet, which has a paragraph on the three Gissing brothers and James Wood's school in nearby Alderley Edge. This valuable study is still in print and available at £2.95 from the President of the Wilmslow Historical Society, Mr. Sydney Wheeler, 2 Burford Close, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 6BW.

John Gross (ed.), *The Oxford Book of Aphorisms*, Oxford University Press, 1985. John Gross, a former editor of *The Times Literary Supplement*, is known to students of Gissing's work as editor of *New Grub Street* (Bodley Head, 1967) and author of *The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1969). In *The Oxford Book of Aphorisms*, which contains a wealth of quotations not to be found in standard reference works, he quotes twice from *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*: "When I think of all the sorrow and the barrenness that has been wrought in my life by want of a few more pounds per annum than I was able to earn, I stand aghast at money's significance" (p. 101). "Experience offers proof on every hand that vigorous mental life may be but one side of a personality, of which the other is moral barbarism" (p. 250).

Jonathan Raban, *For Love and Money: Writing, Reading, Travelling 1969-1987*, London: Collins Harvill, 1987. Contains a few allusions to Gissing.

Andrew Hassam, "Reviews," *The Powys Review*, no. 21 (1987-88), pp. 66-67. Review of John Halperin's *Gissing: A Life in Books*.

Francesco Badolato, "Arte e natura: sentimento commune nelle opere di Gissing, Leopardi e

-- 29 --

Pater," *Il Corriere di Roma*, Anno XXXIX, no. 533, 21 February 1988, p. 3.

Roberto Marchi, "George Gissing: Antologia critica," *Seregno*, 13 March 1988, p. 52.

Andrew Whitehead, "Dan Chatterton and his 'Atheistic Communistic Scorcher,'" *History Workshop* (A Journal of Socialist and Feminist Historians), Issue 25, Spring 1988, pp. 83-99. Dan Chatterton, as Andrew Whitehead showed in his recent article in the *Gissing Newsletter*, was very likely the "model" for John Pether in *Workers in the Dawn*.

Regenia Gagnier, "Book Reviews," *English Literature in Transition*, Volume XXXI (1988), no. 1, pp. 84-87. Review of *Twilight of Dawn: Studies in English Literature in Transition*, ed. O. M. Brack, Jr., Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1987. Comments on Morley Roberts's *The Private Life of Henry Maitland* and the essay on the critical reception of the book in the English and American press in 1912. The same number contains a notice of *Brief Interlude: The Letters of George Gissing to Edith Sichel* (Tragara Press, 1987), on p. 125, an announcement of *Gissing at Work* (ELT Press) and a review of Amy D. Ronner's *W. H. Hudson: The Man, the Novelist, the Naturalist* by Dennis Shrubbsall, who reminds readers of Hudson of the esteem in which Gissing held Hudson's works.

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