

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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-- 1 --

CONTENTS

Gissing’s “Indispensable” False Starts: An Annotated Checklist of his Discarded Novels. by Marilyn B. Saveson	2
Gissing’s Benefactor in Chicago: Samuel J. Medill (1841- 1883)	17
Notes on <i>The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft</i> , by P. F. Kropholler	27
On the Outskirts of Gissing’s World – Some comments on a volume of Andrew Lang’s Correspondence Edited by Marysa Demoor	30
Notes and News	34
Recent Publications	40

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-- 2 --

Gissing's "Indispensable" False Starts:
An Annotated Checklist of his Discarded Novels.

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"I have begun a new novel – after several futile attempts –" wrote George Gissing in May 1884; "it is always thus between one book and another. I should not like to have to carry from here to Temple Bar all the paper I have thus wasted during the last five years. *Not waste*, however; it is indispensable."¹ And two years later he wrote his sister Ellen that he had had to scrap all of his pages of *Thyrza*; "a new commencement must be made ... but I can't say that I am much depressed about it, for my work is not lost; the book eventually will be all the better for so much preparation."²

Such was Gissing's usual pattern of writing. His letters and his Diary indicate many, many optimistic beginnings of new novels which eventually had to be discarded. He was, of course, not always so optimistic and philosophic: "Complete breakdown again. Am at end of Vol. I [of the abortive *Hilda Wolff*], but feel it won't do. Have no pleasure in it. Wandered about in despair."³ The Diary is peppered with such phrases as "wasted week," "again a waste of days," "once more to begin a new story," "yesterday in despair." But always he found his way out of these sloughs of despond. One of his recoveries occurred in August 1892: "Sick of chronicling endless beginnings, I left off writing in this [diary] sixteen days ago. But on that same day I began once more a new story, and now I am able to note that I have *finished the first volume*, and with some satisfaction" (p. 283). This turned out to be the commencement of *The Odd Women*.

Other writers might have done well to discard and rewrite as conscientiously as Gissing.

-- 3 --

For example, when he complained to Ellen about Hardy's *Two on a Tower* and *A Pair of Blue Eyes* as "unworthy of the man; I have never been able to understand how he came to write and publish them. They are simply and deplorably weak,"⁴ one infers that Gissing would have discarded similar work in its early stages.

He was his own harshest critic. He was constantly seeing weaknesses in his work, discarding it, and starting over. The novels that did get published all went through rigorous revisions, some much more rigorous than others. A series of new beginnings for a novel that was destined for completion is not surprising. But what is startling is to find that Gissing discarded many more potential novels in various stages of completion than the 22 that were actually published. In his Diary and letters, at least 39 abandoned novels can be more or less identified (not counting *Veranilda*, which, though unfinished, of course was neither abandoned nor lost). Four of the 39 were actually completed (his first novel, *Mrs. Grundy's Enemies*, *Clement Dorricott*, and *Among the Prophets*) but for various reasons never published. At least one other was almost completed (*The Iron Gods* and perhaps *Dust and Dew/The Insurgents*). Even those aborted novels of which only a few chapters or even just a few pages went through a gestation period of being "thought out"; at least 25 were given a title, sometimes two or three successive ones.

Gissing also abandoned and restarted many of his short stories. Sometimes one wonders whether a particular title belongs to a novel or to a short story, for he uses the term "story" often in the larger sense. I have relied upon additional clues, such as references to volumes, whenever I have been in doubt.

As more letters are found and published, there will be more information about some of

these abandoned novels, and I expect to add new items to my list. Meanwhile, however, I have found it to be useful as well as fascinating to make a chronological checklist of those 39 which I have tentatively identified. I have tried to include the most important known details about each

-- 4 --

and also to give briefly some sense of the place each of these unfinished works had in the sequence of novels Gissing was really publishing.

The 39 items in the following checklist are intended to refer to 39 different abandoned novels. I do not include new beginnings of the same novel when these seem to be going in the same direction, using the same ideas. For example, I can spot in the Diary (pp. 335-40) at least six beginnings for *Eve's Ransom*, beginning as early as 16 April 1894 ("Planning out my new story"). The clue showing that these six are all leading up to *Eve's Ransom* is in the entry of 19 April: "I am using as much as possible of my old Birmingham story." True, on 18 May he got so fed up with these bad beginnings that he switched impetuously to another idea, "The Woman-Queller," which, however, he "gave up... within a few hours" (Diary, p. 337). The six are presumed to be part of the development of *Eve's Ransom* and are therefore omitted from my catalog. But *The Woman-Queller*, as an abandoned possibility, goes into my checklist (item no. 32).

A Checklist of Gissing's Unpublished and Unfinished Novels.

1. 1877-78. Gissing's first novel, title unknown. The author was only twenty years old, desperately trying to make something of his life after the Owens College fiasco. From February to May 1878 he reported on his progress with this first book in letters to his family. Its content is possibly indicated by George's asking his brother Algernon to find out the legalities involved in an accidental murder and the subsequent trial. When the novel was rejected by the publishers in July, George wrote, "Just what I anticipated. The next must be better."⁵ (The next was in fact *Workers in the Dawn*, finished in November 1879 and published in 1880.)
2. March-June 1880. *Will-o-the-Wisps* or *Wills-o-the-Wisp*⁶ (or *A Child of the Age*⁷).

-- 5 --

"The subject of the novel is the dissipation of illusions, the destruction of ideals, in short the failure of a number of people to gain ends they have set up for their lives, or, if they *do* gain them, their failure to find the enjoyment they expected" (*Letters to his Family*, p. 65). Eight chapters were written.

3. Dec. 1880-Aug. 1881. *Heirs of Poverty*, or *Heirs of Toil*, or *Children of Toil*, or *The Disinherited*.⁸ He hoped to publish this "just before Xmas 1881; that is the best time of the year" (*Letters to his Family*, 5 Dec. 1880, p. 87).
4. 1882. *Mrs. Grundy's Enemies*. This novel was accepted for publication in 1883 with a 50-guinea advance payment. However, Bentley, the publisher, though he had the book partially set into type, became worried about its contents and didn't follow through with publication. It is generally assumed that the manuscript was lost when Bentley's business passed to Macmillan.⁹ Gissing's next novel was *The Unclassed*, written in 1883 and published in 1884.

5. 1884. *A Graven Image*. This was abandoned, though “quite inoffensive and expected to have a better chance.”¹⁰
6. Jan. 1884. A “new novel” (*Letters to his Family*, p. 135).
7. Mar. 1884. “My new novel” (*Letters to his Family*, p. 137).
8. May 1884. “I have begun a new novel – after several futile attempts” (*Letters to his Family*, p. 137).

Finally there came a series of four successfully completed and published novels: *Isabel Clarendon* (written Sep. 1884-Aug. 1885); *A Life’s Morning* (written Aug.-Nov. 1885); *Demos*

-- 6 --

(written Nov. 1885-Mar. 1886); and *Thyrza* (written Apr. 1886-Jan. 1887). Following *Thyrza*, still in a productive phase, Gissing completed another novel, but this one was not to be published:

9. Feb.-May 1887. *Clement Dorricott: A Life’s Prelude* dealing “almost entirely with theatrical life.”¹¹ “I took it to Bentley and offered it for ‘Temple Bar.’ For that purpose he declined to use it, but was willing to publish it in vols. I declined – thinking it unworthy to succeed “Thyrza” – and threw it aside, wrapped as it came from Bentley. Will it ever come out, I wonder?” (Diary, 7 June 1888, p. 31). Gissing had not always thought it “unworthy.” After completing Volume I, he exclaimed “Good I tell you, good, good!” (*Letters to his Family*, p. 190). According to his son Alfred, Gissing destroyed the manuscript himself.¹² Now came one of Gissing’s most frustrating series of false starts, lasting until March 1888:
10. 1887. *Sandray the Sophist*. A satire on literati.¹³
11. June 1887-Feb. 1888. *Dust and Dew* and/or *The Insurgents*. I believe that *The Insurgents*, which is the title Gissing uses from 27 Dec. 1887 on, is probably the same book which he earlier called *Dust and Dew* (“Excellent name that!”), begun on 28 June 1887 (*Letters to his Family*, 195ff.). In July of that year he went to Surrey and in October to Essex to gather material for the novel (pp. 196-201). To Algernon on 6 Oct. 1887 he wrote: “I am labouring on the first volume of *Dust and Dew*. Now writing it for the third time” (p. 201). The new title is used in the Diary on 27 Dec. 1887: “After a fortnight’s break in writing ... [I] resume ‘The Insurgents.’ Have reached middle of 3d vol., but I see that much must be re-written. Began it last July, and have toiled ever since.” On 6 Jan. 1888, after some

-- 7 --

revision, “My patience is inexhaustible.” But on 7 Feb. 1888 he is “wholly dissatisfied with the plan ... This terrible waste of time” (p. 21).

The last we hear of this novel is in the Diary entry for 29 Feb. 1888, when Gissing is in the midst of struggling with another abortive novel, *Marian Dane* (no. 12 below): “Think a good deal of my novel – the *old* novel once more, upon which I have no doubt I shall resettle when I get back to 7K. Have got tolerably full notes for vol. I, story substantially the same as before, but details a good deal altered.” In October, to his family, Gissing had written that this

novel dealt with “some of the wretchedest problems of this huge London” (p. 201). To Hardy, in July, he had described the novel as “dark, but with evening sunlight to close. For there may occasionally be a triumph of individual strength; a different thing from hope for the masses of men.”

12. 1888. *Marian Dane*. Begun on 8 Feb. and continued until 14 Feb, at least. Then on 29 Feb. Gissing nearly turned back to *The Insurgents*. But by 19 March he had begun *The Nether World*, which he finished in July (Diary, pp. 24-37). *The Emancipated* came next, written between March and August 1889 and published in 1890.
13. Oct. 1889-March 1890. *The Head Mistress*. This book was “thoroughly prepared, even to the names,” Gissing wrote to his family on 3 November 1889 (p. 291). When he gave up on it, he did not scrap it entirely: “Materials for [it] will lie over” (Diary, 13 Mar. 1890, p. 211). David Grylls notes that Gissing’s researches on female education and “woman literature” (see Diary, Oct. 1889) provided material for *The Odd Women* and several other novels (Grylls, 151ff.).
14. Nov. 1889-Aug 1890. *Revolt*. While still working on *The Head Mistress*, Gissing wrote Ellen that he was already looking forward to his next novel: “a tremendously savage book,

-- 8 --

the scene once more in London. Not, however, among work people but among the poor and wretched educated. It will probably be called *Revolt*” (p. 291). In the Diary entry for 8 August 1890, Gissing is “Thinking of that old story ‘Revolt’ which has been wanting to get written for so long.”¹⁵

15. March 1890. A “new story,” to be in sections rather than chapters (Diary, 13-19 March, p. 211), with the setting partly in Guernsey and Sark (*Letters to his Family*, p. 308). To his brother he complained, “Rather a mill-grinding business, this, of book after book” (p. 308). By 7 April he was “dissatisfied with the subject. And had finished 31 pp.! Always the same, each new book” (Diary, p. 213).
16. April 1890. *A Man of Letters*. According to the Diary, this was begun on 8 April. On 7 May, “Made a new beginning, putting my first scene in Brit. Museum reading-room.” Gissing continued work on this through May. Not until he was well into Volume II on 29 June did he come “to a conclusion I had not foreseen by more than an hour. Absolutely determined to abandon my story, and commence a new one, for which an idea suddenly flashed upon me ... The result was an immense relief” (p. 220). Among the characters in this story were a Marian and a Mr. Solway. (Did this Marian descend from Marian Dane?) This novel certainly sounds like a first stab at what became *New Grub Street* at the end of 1890.¹⁶
17. June-Aug. 1890. *Storm-Birds*. This was written between 29 June and 4 July, then revamped, and continued until 7 August, when it was dropped (Diary, pp. 221-23).
18. Aug.-Sept. 1890. *Hilda Wolff*, “a jumble of the various ones I have been engaged on all the summer” (Diary, 23 Aug., p. 224). Gissing ended this attempt in despair on 15

-- 9 --

September (cf. second paragraph of the present article).

A year had now gone by since his last completed novel (*The Emancipated*). By October 1890, however, Gissing had found the subject of *New Grub Street*, and successfully wrote it in about two months. In the spring of 1891 he launched into the writing of *Born in Exile*, completing it in July. He wrote *Denzil Quarrier* between September and November 1891. Then, between November 1891 and 15 August 1892, came a series of at least twelve false starts. Some of these may only have been ideas, such as items 19 and 20 below, but nearly a whole volume of no. 28 was written.

19. Dec. 1891. *Jack in Office* (“though that name won’t do”). “Thinking over the ‘Jack in Office’ book” (Diary, p. 264).
20. Jan. 1892. *The Laughing Doctor* (Diary, p. 265).
21. Feb. 1892. Untitled. Gissing spent six days working on this one, then threw it aside (Diary, pp. 270-71).
22. Feb. 1892. A novel on “the competition among shopkeepers. Thus it is always with me; I fall back on old subjects which have had time to ripen in my mind” (Diary, Feb. 22-26, p. 271).
23. Feb.-March 1892. *For Art’s Sake*. “The third attempt at a new novel. Think I have hit my subject this time” (Diary, p. 272).
24. Mar. 1892. “Once more began a novel. Title uncertain.” (Diary, p. 273).
25. April 1892. “I settled once more to a novel” (Diary, p. 275).
26. May 1892. “Made a beginning” (Diary, p. 278). To Bertz on 20 May 1892, he wrote that

-- 10 --

in this new book “you will see how I regard the pursuit of money and ease as it affects the mass of the London population; you will see, moreover, that I am very far from overrating the moral worth, the value as individuals, of what we call the educated classes” (p. 153).

27. July 1892. “On looking back I see that this novel I have now begun is the *seventh* attempt since my last was finished. Each time a new subject. Something wrong here” (Diary, p.280).
28. July 10-30, 1892. “Positively began for the eighth time.” This was a bit more promising; he wrote nearly a volume before giving it up (Diary, pp. 281-82).
29. July 31-Aug. 1, 1892. *No Character to Lose*. “A new novel, in the first person” (Diary, p. 282). The next day he abandoned this interesting idea and “decided merely to recast the vol. I have nearly finished [no. 28, begun July 10].” But he gave this up again on August 6.
30. Aug. 6-15, 1892. “Managed to think out an entirely new story,” which in turn was abandoned on August 15 – when at long last he hit upon a beginning which would prove

right: he had started the novel which would eventually be called *The Odd Women*, and he finished it October 4, 1892 (Diary, 283ff.)

31. Dec. 1892-April 1893). *The Iron Gods* (or *Gods of Iron*). The setting was to be “the so-called Black Country – the region to the west and north of Birmingham, a veritable Inferno, flaring at night with the chimneys of iron-works, and blasted by coal and iron mining” (letter to Bertz, 2 Dec. 1892, p. 163). The subject was not to be the working classes, however. It was to be “a story of middle class life, [stressing] the degree to which people have become *machines*, in harmony with the machinery amid which they spend

-- 11 --

their lives” (to Bertz, p. 163). More than once Gissing referred to this book as “hopeful” and “cheerful.” “The principal characters find their task in vigorous social work of the higher – the intellectual – kind. I have some good female types, I think” (to Bertz, 15 Jan. 1893, p. 166). But by April (Diary, p. 302), he had become “dissatisfied” with it; on July 15 he “decided to rewrite my Birmingham book”; and by August 1 he had grown “sick of my Birmingham story. Doubt whether I shall go on with it.” It lacked but twenty pages of completion (Diary, p. 302). He did not totally reject this material, but recycled some of it later in *Eve’s Ransom*. Meanwhile, however, he turned his attention to a new subject entirely, *In the Year of Jubilee*, which he completed between September 1893 and April 1894.

32. May 18-26, 1894. *The Woman-Queller*. “Yet again began a story” in the midst of attempts to get started on *Eve’s Ransom* (see above). But *Eve’s Ransom*, which had apparently been begun in April, was resumed after this interruption and completed on June 29.
33. Nov. 1894. *Among the Heathen*. According to the Diary entries between November 10 and 14 (p. 353), this book was at least thought over. (*Sleeping Fires*, seemingly an entirely different story, was written between January and March 1895.)
34. May 1895. *The Spendthrift*. Gissing worked on this April 22 to May 16 (Diary, pp. 371-73). The plan was for it to be serialized, possibly in *Good Words*,¹⁷ but after the typical false starts this book was abandoned for a new inspiration (no. 35).
35. May 1895. *The Enchantress*. This was to replace *The Spendthrift* as a serialization, but the first three chapters were rejected as unsuitable for *Good Words*.¹⁸ (Gissing then turned his

-- 12 --

attention to *The Paying Guest*, which he wrote between 2 and 16 July 1895.)

36. Dec. 1895-Jan. 1896. *The Common Lot*. “A day of thinking over a new book at last!”; “getting my names for the new book [which] may possibly be called ‘The Common Lot’” (Diary, pp. 398-399). This book drops from sight during the times following the birth of the second child, Alfred, on January 20. By February 23 (letter to Bertz, p. 214), Gissing is “very, very slowly [shaping] the details of a new book,” which I believe is item 37 below.
37. Feb.-July 1896. *Benedict’s Household*. This title is indicated in the Diary in May (pp. 409, 411) and also in a letter to Bertz, 9 May 1896: “I have got to work again, quite seriously,

and have done *three Chapters* of my new book, which may perhaps be called ‘Benedict’s Household’. The theme is the decay of domestic life among certain classes of people, and much stress is laid upon the question of *children*. I hope to get it all done before the end of the autumn” (p. 219). By August 3, to Bertz, he has “lost heart and hope” and “can’t imagine when it will be finished.” On August 26, however, he “sat down and made a new beginning of my novel” (Diary, p. 420), and by September 27 he was writing to Bertz that he had “written about 1/3 of my long book. It *must* be finished before the end of this year. I don’t think it will be altogether bad, and there is a most grave purpose in it” (p. 224). This particular book is by October called *The Whirlpool*. *Benedict’s Household* must in some ways have led up to *The Whirlpool*, BUT I count it as a separate false start, for *The Whirlpool* has a much more complex story than of one household (and it has no Benedict). At any rate, *The Whirlpool* did get finished in December 1896 and published in 1897.

-- 13 --

38. Jan.-Feb. 1897. *Polly Brill*. The Diary from January 26 through February 9 describes trials and tribulations with this story – “The thing won’t do,” “re-scheming,” “new beginning of Polly,” “story again out of gear.” Evidently it was to be a thriller based upon a real event.¹⁹ But it disappeared from the Diary between February and June (“a very long gap, full of miseries and amenities” [p. 435]. By June 8, Gissing was “thinking out my story ‘The Town Traveller.’” The Diary entry for June 9, “Wrote nearly 3 pp. – a good beginning,” suggests that this was indeed a new book, not the old *Polly Brill*, although one Polly Sparkes is a leading character in *The Town Traveller*. The latter was published in August 1898. Next came *The Crown of Life*, written between October 1898 and January 1899. Then came the last of the lost novels:
39. Nov. 1899-Feb. 1900. *Among the Prophets* (at first entitled *Oracles*). Diary, pp. 521-31. Early in his work on this novel, Gissing wrote Bertz that it was an “attractive subject – the restless seeking for a *new religion*, which leads people into Theosophy, Spiritualism, and things still more foolish” (11 Dec. 1899, p. 268). To Miss Collet he said that it dealt “with new religions and crazes of various kinds” (29 Dec. 1899, p. 366 in *Letters to his Family*). By July 1900 he was writing her that he had “decided to put [it] aside ... It never satisfied me” (p. 371). However, the book had actually been finished in February 1900 and sent to be typed, although he thought it to be “poor stuff, and I wish I could afford to destroy it” (Diary, p. 523). In June he wrote that his agent, Pinker, thought it should be held over a while. But ultimately he asked Pinker to destroy it.²⁰

Following this unsatisfactory episode, Gissing still had three novels to write and publish:

-- 14 --

Our Friend the Charlatan, written between September 1899 and August 1900, published in 1901; *Will Warburton*, written in 1902 and published in 1905, after Gissing’s death; and *Veranilda*, worked on from the spring of 1897 onwards (Diary, p. 435), and published posthumously in its unfinished form in 1904. Thus, we have 22 published novels by Gissing; 4 additional completed ones are lost; and at least 35 beginnings of other potential novels were made and destroyed. Given all the gaps in time between letters and between Diary entries, I think we can safely calculate that he probably made an additional 15 or 20 false starts of novels during his 25-year writing career, for a possible total of 55 to 60.

The loss of this enormous amount of material staggers one’s mind, but it was not ultimately regretted by Gissing (despite the waste of time and the mental anguish), for all of his

beginnings had helped him find his way to the creation of the 22 published novels. This is true both in a general sense and in very specific ways. For example, Gissing's topic of "the dissipation of illusions" for *Will-o-the-Wisps* (item no. 2 in the Checklist) certainly became a major theme in *The Unclassed*, *A Life's Morning*, *The Nether World*, *The Odd Women*, *Born in Exile* – in fact, in every single one of his novels. *Dust and Dew* (item no. 11), which was intended to deal with "some of the wretchedest problems of ... London," was surely an inspiration for parts of the later London books, such as *The Nether World*, *New Grub Street*, *The Odd Women*, and *In the Year of Jubilee*. Even the shopkeeper subject of item 22 eventually got used in *Will Warburton*. Thus, the loss of the false starts is not necessarily a true loss.

But the loss of the four completed novels is quite different. These were not deliberately thrown away in the same spirit as the false starts. Gissing thought well enough of them to try to get them published. What we know about them is tantalizing. Each one would have given us

-- 15 --

new insights into Gissing's philosophy of life and views of society. True, the 1878 first novel might have been melodramatic and immature – but as the first novel of a precocious 20-year-old future novelist, it would be a most interesting document.

Mrs. Grundy's Enemies apparently revealed Gissing's most cherished beliefs about the freedom of the writer, as well as his contempt for the narrow-mindedness of the reading public. These views are shown (but probably in a softened style) in *New Grub Street* ten years later.

It would have been great fun to read Gissing's interpretation of theatrical life in *Clement Dorricott*. Perhaps this lost book also contained some critical insights into Victorian plays, for Gissing himself had some interest in playwriting (see *Letters to his Family*, p. 137, and the *Diary*, p. 496).

Perhaps our greatest loss is that of *Among the Prophets*. Gissing of course revealed his disdain for conventional religion in many places, most notably in *Born in Exile* – but he never fully developed his ideas on religion in any of the published works. *Among the Prophets*, by examining "new religions and crazes," probably among narrow-minded, conventional people, would necessarily have had to deal harshly with many a conventional tenet. It could have been a real shocker.

It is highly unlikely that any version of the 1878 novel, or *Mrs. Grundy's Enemies*, or *Clement Dorricott*, or *Among the Prophets* will ever come to light, but Gissing readers around the world could desire nothing better than the resurrection of even just one of them.

1. *The Letters of George Gissing to Members of his Family*, collected by Algernon and Ellen Gissing (London: Constable & Co., 1927), p. 137.
2. *Ibid.*, 31 July, 1886, p. 183.
3. *London and the Life of Literature in Late Victorian England: The Diary of George Gissing*,

-- 16 --

Novelist, edited by Pierre Coustillas (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1978), 15 September 1890, p. 226.

4. Quoted by Pierre Coustillas from an unpublished letter to Ellen, in "Some Unpublished Letters from Gissing to Hardy," *English Literature in Transition*, IX (1966), p. 208.
5. *Letters to his Family*, pp. 26-32.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 61, 65, and 72.
7. See John Spiers and Pierre Coustillas, *The Rediscovery of George Gissing: A Reader's Guide* (London: The National Book League, 1971), p. 3.
8. John Halperin, *Gissing: A Life in Books* (London: Oxford University Press, 1982). p. 42.
9. See *Rediscovery*, pp. 39-41, for a fuller account of this lost novel. The memorandum of agreement is in the British Library. Gissing ultimately received 50 guineas, not £50, as he says for instance in his "Account of Books."
10. *Rediscovery*, p. 45. It is possible that this is the same as one of the following three false starts of the same year, for its chronological position in the year 1884 is not clear.
11. *The Letters of George Gissing to Eduard Bertz 1887-1903*, edited by Arthur C. Young (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1980), 17 April 1887, p. 3.
12. See Young's note 2 on p. 3 of *Letters to Bertz*.
13. David Grylls, *The Paradox of Gissing* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1986), p. 79. Cf. also *Rediscovery*, p. 60.
14. Quoted by Coustillas in "Some Unpublished Letters from Gissing to Hardy," *English Literature in Transition*, IX, p. 200.

-- 17 --

15. David Grylls thinks *Revolt* became *Born in Exile* (*The Paradox of Gissing*, p. 116 and note 47 on p. 207); but Gissing's description of the London setting for *Revolt* sounds quite different from the setting of *Born in Exile*.
16. Jacob Korg, in *George Gissing: A Critical Biography* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1963), calls it a precursor of *New Grub Street* (p. 149). Of course, Marian Yule is a chief character in *New Grub Street*, but there are no Solways.
17. Pierre Coustillas, "Side1ights on Gissing's Publishing Career," *Gissing Newsletter*, XXII (July 1986), pp. 11-42.
18. See the Colles-Canton correspondence in *ibid.*, pp. 12-13.
19. *Rediscovery*, p. 117.
20. Jacob Korg cites a letter from Gissing to Pinker, 13 March 1901, asking Pinker to burn both typed copies of *Among the Prophets* (pp. 235 and 295).

Gissing's Benefactor in Chicago:
Samuel J. Medill (1841-1883)

[Gissing's Chicago period, in the Spring and early Summer of 1877, is reputedly one of the most obscure in his life. Very little is known about the people with whom he became acquainted, or about his non-literary activities. No letter of the time has apparently been

-- 18 --

preserved. His American notebook, although of great interest as an index to his reading while in America, is in no way a Diary and it is difficult, if not impossible, to say whether this or that entry was made in Chicago or elsewhere. What is now best known is the corpus of his short stories written from March to July. Still even that leaves something to be desired since an entry in his *Commonplace Book*, the third under "Lower Classes" in Jacob Korg's edition, gives one to understand that there is an important gap in the fullest record to date of his American publications. The man "who combined the keeping of a dry-goods store with the editing of a weekly paper" and for whom he wrote "some stories," including possibly "a long story for serial publication" has been identified, but no complete file of his paper seems to have survived, and Gissing's contributions are to all appearances irrecoverable.

However, despite many difficulties, substantial progress has been made in two directions. Further stories by him, signed or unsigned, have been identified, largely thanks to Robert L. Selig, and so has, again thanks to him, Gissing's benefactor, Samuel J. Medill, the editor of the *Chicago Tribune*. Selig's article on the subject in the October-December 1985 number of *Études Anglaises*, is an essential contribution. Selig knew more than he could conveniently say; in particular he found the obituary of Medill in the *Chicago Tribune* from which he quoted at some length. It is this two-part obituary which we now reprint in full. Warm thanks are due to Marilyn Traum, archivist of the Tribune Company, and to Kenneth W. Faig, Jr., who has been actively interested for about a decade in all the mysteries that attach to Gissing's life in Chicago, and has made some discoveries which he may some day publish. We are indebted to him for a copy of the obituary.— Ed.]

-- 19 --

Obituary of Samuel John Medill,
Chicago Tribune, Wednesday,
21 February, 1883, p. 4, cols. 6-7

Samuel J. Medill, who for the last eight and a quarter years has been the managing editor of THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE, died at twenty-five minutes past 9 o'clock last night at the house of his wife's parents in Quincy, Ill. For many days he had known that death was impending and had prepared himself to meet it. He died resigned to so early a departure from life and looking forward with hope and faith to the future.

Samuel John Medill, the youngest son of William and Margaret Medill, was born Nov. 19, 1841, on his father's farm in Pike Township, Stark County, Ohio. He lived on the farm and went to the country school until April of 1850, when he went to Coshocton, O., where his brother Joseph Medill was publishing the *Coshocton County Republican*. Of this paper, Mr. Medill was editor, and his brother William foreman, while Sam was general-utility boy about the office, and also acted as "fly" boy – taking the sheets from the press. He worked there until May 1, 1852, when he went to Cleveland, where he had the same place on the *Daily Forest City*, a campaign

paper printed by Mr. Joseph Medill. Part of the time he was also carrier for the *Cleveland Leader*. While at Cleveland he worked a little at the printer's case, and began to pick up the rudiments of the trade. In 1855 his brother came to Chicago. Sam remained in Cleveland until the 1st of May, 1856, when he went to Canton, O., where his mother had removed from the farm, and remained there for nearly three years, attending the high-school and working at odd jobs. He would have returned from Canton to his place on the *Cleveland Leader*, but it had been filled by some other boy; and accordingly, in March or April of 1859, he came to Chicago and

--20 --

went into the office of the *Northwestern Prairie Farmer*, which was then published by his brother James, the composition being done in THE TRIBUNE office on Clark Street, and just across the alley from the other paper. In 1860 he went into THE TRIBUNE job-office and worked there under Chancy Day and John Dean, remaining there up to about the time when Randy & McNally bought into the office. He became an excellent job-printer, and the knowledge which he acquired in that branch of the business became of great service to him afterwards, for few had better judgment or finer taste as regarded the mechanical appearance of a paper, the selection of type, and especially the choice of letters used in headlines. He was also some of the time with Conrad Kahler, who was the foreman of the press-room, and learned, even at that early period, a great deal about that important branch of the service.

During the fall of 1860 he got tired of setting type, and was offered the position of Stationer to the Illinois Central Railroad, and accepted it. Soon after the War broke out he made an effort to enlist in the Board of Trade Battery, but was finally rejected by the examining surgeon on account of his youth and his apparent unfitness to undergo the severities and hardships of military life. The place which he had on the railroad having been filled, he returned to THE TRIBUNE job-room, but remained there only a short time. On the 1st of September 1862, he enlisted in Company G of the Eighth Illinois Cavalry Regiment, of which John F. Fornsworth was Colonel, and his brother, William Medill, was Major. Of this company George A. Forsythe, afterwards Colonel of the Seventeenth Illinois, was First-Lieutenant; and Mack Wing Second-Lieutenant. He joined the regiment at once, saw service at Antietam and South Mountain, and in a number of cavalry skirmishes in Northern Virginia. He was attacked, however, by inflammatory rheumatism, brought on by exposure during the fall campaigns, and was finally discharged, on account of sickness, on the last of November, 1862.

-- 21 --

He returned to Chicago and entered Prof. Hathaway's school on Clark Street for the purpose of supplying deficiencies in his education and of fitting himself for college. Oct. 1, 1863, he went to college at Beloit, where he remained a year. On his return from there he went back into THE TRIBUNE job-office and newsroom, and also did some work as proofreader. Late in the fall of 1864 the city editor needed an additional man to meet an emergency. He asked Mr. Joseph Medill, then superintendent of the paper, if there was any person whom he could recommend, and he said that he might try Sam and see what he could do. He was accordingly put to work, first as a substitute, and afterwards as a full-fledged reporter.

From this, which was then considered the poorest work on a paper, he gradually worked his way up until he became sporting reporter. He was considered one of the best in the West. He had a great liking for all games and pastimes, which he preserved to the end of his life. Subsequently he did general work of all kinds, and, if it had not been for his transfer to executive duties, would have become an able writer. His private letters showed the possession on his part of fine descriptive powers and a quick sense of humor which would have made him a name had he had an opportunity to employ them in the reportorial field.

Early in the summer of 1866 he was offered the place of assistant city editor of the *Republican*, the predecessor of the *Inter-Ocean*. The paper was at that time in the charge of Messrs. Smith, Ballantyne, Denslow, and Williston, who had gone over from THE TRIBUNE, and were well acquainted with the qualifications of the person to whom they offered this place on the *Republican*. He had not held it many weeks before he succeeded Mr. Alfred Smith as city editor. During the fall of 1867 there were disagreements among the proprietors of the *Republican*, which led to Mr. Medill's tendering his resignation in November of that year. He

-- 22 --

went to Canton to visit his family, and remained there until January of 1868, when Mr. Horace White offered him the place of city editor of THE TRIBUNE. That position he filled until the close of November, 1873. To the discharge of its duties he brought not merely a thorough acquaintance with all the details of local work, but also a keen appreciation of what was news, and an intuitive sense of the comparative value and interest of the subjects with which he had to deal. He had the rare faculty of rapid and comprehensive thought, and was able in a moment to see what was best to be done, and to give the necessary orders to carry out his ideas.

On leaving the local department, Mr. Horace White promoted and transferred him to Washington as correspondent for the paper at that point, in the place of James W. Knowlton, who had recently died. He remained there until June of 1874, when he came back to this city, and was sent as a traveling special correspondent throughout the West. In the fall of that year Mr. Joseph Medill, assuming control of THE TRIBUNE, made him its managing editor, a place which he held until the day of his death, and whose duties he performed until failing health compelled him to abandon them. In January, 1882, he was elected President of the Chicago Press Club. Illness prevented his presence at the yearly banquet last month, but he sent a telegram so cheerful and hopeful and so like himself that those who heard it were fain to believe he could not be on the verge of the grave.

Jan. 14, 1880, he was married to Miss Nellie M. Carson, the daughter of John B. Carson, of Quincy, Ill. By her he had one child, born in January, 1882, which died a few days after birth.

While he was never strong, and occasionally suffered from attacks of illness, partly due perhaps to the rheumatism contracted in the army, there were no apparent symptoms of the pulmonary illness from which he died until over a year ago, and then they seemed to yield to

-- 23 --

brief holidays trips to the South and West. During January of 1882, however, he became seriously ill. He went to Quincy for a brief visit and returned with apparently restored health. It became evident, however, that he had returned too soon to the uncongenial climate of Chicago, and in June alarming symptoms showed themselves, and, on the advice of his doctors, he went to Fayette Springs, in the mountains of Southwestern Pennsylvania, spending three months at a quiet, secluded farm-house. He came back here in the fall apparently improved, but yet with unmistakable signs of failing health. He stayed here until the cold weather began to set in, when the doctors decided that it was necessary for him to go to a milder and more equable climate. Accordingly, accompanied by his wife, he went to Las Vegas, New Mexico, with the intention of staying there for some time, and then going on to Southern California. A few weeks ago, however, at the time of a sudden change in the temperature at Las Vegas, the thermometer dropping from 65 degrees nearly to zero he got chilled through, the hotel was not warm, and he contracted a catarrhal affection of the stomach, which brought on an acute dysentery. The doctors said that he could live but a few days if he remained at Las Vegas, so giving up the trip to Southern California, especially the crossing of the Raton Mountains, he was brought back to Mr. John B. Carson's home at Quincy. The trouble with his lungs appeared to remain stationary,

but the stomach complaint refused to yield to treatment. There were slight alterations from good to ill until last Sunday, when the doctors decided that it was probable that he could not live another week. His death came sooner and more unexpectedly than they had predicted.

Two of his brothers and one sister preceded him to the grave. His oldest brother, a sister, and his aged mother are still living. His remains will be brought to Chicago for burial.

He performed honestly and well the important duties which were entrusted to him during his brief life, and earned not only the trust and respect of his employers, but also the affection

-- 24 --

and prompt obedience of those who worked under and with him. While there will be sorrow among the many friends whom he had in every walk of life, it cannot measure the grief felt by those who for long years had worked by his side, and had learned to love the gentle heart, the kindly mind, and trained and active intellect. Theirs is a loss that years cannot obliterate.

In Memoriam, *Chicago Tribune*,
Thursday, 22 February, 1883, p. 4, cols. 6

The narrative of events in the active life of the late Samuel J. Medill, which belonged to the world, has already been printed in the columns of THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE, with which he was so long and conspicuously identified; but the tribute of respect to his memory would not be complete without some reference to that part of his life which belonged to his profession, and to those characteristics known only to his intimate friends and to his associates in the office, who will long miss his familiar presence and cordial greetings.

As a journalist Mr. Medill was active, alert, keen, clear in his perceptions, and quick in his execution, and all these qualities were intensified by enthusiasm. The position of managing editor, which he filled so ably, is an exacting one. It requires a high degree of executive ability, a clear vision of what is transpiring today, a clear outlook of what may occur in the future, a knowledge of the importance of news, instant decisions upon its value, promptness in securing it, and sharpness to detect it in advance of others. Mr. Medill was not wanting in any of these directions. He had the rare faculty of knowing what news was at sight, what the public wanted, how much they wanted, and how to furnish it in an attractive form. No emergency found him

-- 25 --

unprepared. However suddenly an event happened, however immense it was, he instantly organized all his preparations and massed his resources and presented it to the public well nigh in its entirety. A striking instance of his energy and dash was manifest at the time of the great fire. Its magnitude did not discourage him. He utilized the entire resources of the office and brought them to bear upon it, and labored on through that terrible night, hour after hour, arranging and preparing the details as they were brought in to him until at last it became apparent that the work was useless. Worn out and exhausted he threw himself down in the office and went to sleep, to be shortly after awakened by one of his associates as the fire approached the office. He had good judgment in organizing his little army of news-writers and telegraph correspondents, and infused them with his own zeal and enterprise. He was almost a pioneer in this particular department of journalism, for when he assumed charge of it the telegraph and the telephone were just beginning to be more extensively developed in their relations to newspapers. He utilized them to the fullest possible extent, and was always busy devising means for increasing their usefulness by economizing in time and concentrating and expediting their service. In all this he was largely aided, of course, by his intimate knowledge of the practical and technical details of the newspaper, but his great success as managing editor,

which we may speak of without ostentation, as it was fully recognized throughout the country, was principally due to his quickness of perception, his promptness of action, and the enthusiasm which he threw into his labor. He was a man admirably equipped and trained for his duties, and when to such a preparation enthusiasm and devotion are added no other result than success can be anticipated.

Some men show their best traits to strangers, reserving what is unpleasant for their intimates. Mr. Medill had but one face for all men, though some of his strongest merits, owing

-- 26 --

to a natural reserve of manner, were only recognized by those associated with him through many years. He had a strong, positive, emphatic nature. He was as earnest in his likes as in his dislikes, and among his dislikes none were so intense as those with which he regarded anything like cant or sham. He was quick, nervous, and brusque in his contact with men, splendid qualities when tempered and warmed, as they were in his case, with large-heartedness and strong attachments. Though he occupied a prominent position and won it by his deserts and had a natural pride in it, he was singularly free from any ostentation or desire for publicity. He was content to let his work speak for him. He had a very wide acquaintance, though few close intimacies, as is apt to be the case with persons naturally reserved, but all who knew him, whether slightly or intimately, knew him actually. There was no affectation or any desire to appear other than he was in his contact with people.

There was one quality of his character that was but little known, and that was his generosity, and his generosity was little known because it was bestowed in a quiet, private manner, and upon those whom he knew could never make any requital to him. He had a very warm heart, and could not resist the appeals of distress, but it was only those who knew him best that really knew the nature and the extent of his bounty, it was of a kind not blown by trumpets nor paraded in public acknowledgment, but among his sincere mourners there will be many in the humble and squalid ranks of life. There never was a time when he did not have some ragged little protégé whom he was clothing, some hungry mouth which he was filling, or some hopeless one he was encouraging. It was more often that he had a retinue of them depending upon him for support, and though he was occasionally deceived and imposed upon it never dampened his charitable nature or relaxed his interest in the unfortunates. The first impulse of his heart was to relieve someone of his burdens as its last impulse was to inflict any of his own burdens upon others. There will be many obscure ones down among the

-- 27 --

unfortunates, among the ragged news-boys, bootblacks, and gamins of the streets, who will unaffectedly mourn the absence of the one who was so kind to them.

It is hard to realize that he is gone who was but a short time ago so full of life, of hope, and of courage. It is hard to realize that we shall not see his face any more or hear his greeting in the rooms where he labored so long. It is hard to realize that the voice is forever silent, and the busy hand at rest, and that he will not come in today, or tomorrow, or on any of the tomorrows and seat himself again at the old desk. It is hardest of all to say: Good bye, old friend, old comrade, with no response, and to feel that there is no return from the long journey he has taken to the far-off country.

Notes on *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*

P. F. Kropholler
Clermont (Oise)

[These notes must of course be regarded as a supplement to the notes on the book that have been compiled since the 1920s by all the editors of the book in various languages, English, Japanese, Dutch and French.]

Preface

“’twill serve”

-- 28 --

From Shakespeare: *Romeo and Juliet*, III.I.102: “’tis enough, ’twill serve.”

SPRING

- II: “the spirit prompts”
Perhaps inspired by Judges, 13:25 (“the Spirit of the Lord began to move him”).
- X: “whose need was greater than mine”
Cf. the words attributed to Sir Philip Sidney on the battlefield of Zutphen: “Thy necessity is yet greater than mine.” The *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* adds that *necessity* is usually quoted as *need*.
- XI: “the pity of it”
From Shakespeare: *Othello*, IV.I.206: “The pity of it, Iago.”
- XVI: “the children of men”
“As for the children of men, they are but vanity.” (Psalms, 62:9, Prayer Book version.)
- XXII: “the literature of knowledge”
From Thomas de Quincey, who opposes the “literature of knowledge” to the “literature of power” (*Essays on the Poets: Pope*).

SUMMER

- II: “gazed and gazed”
“I gazed and gazed” (Wordsworth: *I wandered lonely as a cloud*).
- III: according to the notes to the World’s Classics edition Hooker was born in *Essex*. Probably *Exeter* is meant here.
- IV: “heavy-laden mortals”
Echoing St. Matthew, 11:28 (“all ye that labour and are heavy laden”).

-- 29 --

- XI: “Rosy-fingered goddess”

The epithet is a favourite one in Homer (*rhododaktulos*).

- XX: “germane to the matter”
Cf. *Hamlet* V.II.165: “The phrase would be more germane to the matter.”
- XXII: “him ... we shall have always with us”
Cf. St. Matthew, 26:11: “Ye have the poor always with you”).

AUTUMN

- XXI: “the root of the matter”
Cf. Job, 19:28 (“the root of the matter is found in me”).

WINTER

- III: “blesseth him that gives as much as him that takes”
From Shakespeare: *The Merchant of Venice*, IV.1.87 (“it blesseth him that gives and him that takes”).
- VII: “the people with only one sauce”
“Il y a en Angleterre soixante sectes religieuses différentes et une seule sauce.” The *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* attributes this saying to Francesco Caraccioli (1752-1799).
- VIII: “a dish for a king”
From Shakespeare: *The Winter’s Tale*, IV.II.8 [“A quart of ale is a dish for a king”).
- XX: “the assumption of virtue”
Perhaps echoing Shakespeare: *Hamlet*, III.IV.160 (“Assume a virtue if you have it not”).
- XXI: “‘honest, sober and godly’ lives”

-- 30 --

“a godly, righteous, and sober life” (from the General Confession in the *Book of Common Prayer*).

- XXVI: “a year drew its slow length”
Cf. “A needless Alexandrine ends the song | That, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along” (Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*, lines 356-57).

On the Outskirts of Gissing’s World: Some Comments on a Volume of Andrew Lang’s Correspondence Edited by Marysa Demoor

In the literary world of the 1880s and 1890s, Andrew Lang and George Gissing did not belong to the same side. How could they have agreed if they had had an opportunity to discuss literary matters? From the pens of novelists Lang was prepared to accept only romances; Gissing, even though he was in some respects a disappointed Romantic, was above all a militant

realist. They met twice – within a few days, but the contacts were not profitable. On 25 June 1896 they both attended a *Cosmopolis* dinner at the Savoy, and Gissing noted in his diary that it was on that occasion that he met Lang for the first time, but he had “no speech with him.” On 3 July, as chance would have it, both men were Edmund Gosse’s guests at the National Club, and this time Gissing was a little more specific: “Lang justified his reputation of being crusty to new

-- 31 --

acquaintances. Not an agreeable type: lolling and languid.” All this we know, thanks to an article by Marysa Demoor to which I contributed some of the material on Gissing’s side,¹ and we also know that Lang passed some comment on *The Nether World, New Grub Street, Charles Dickens: A Critical Study* and *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*.² Except possibly in the long review article on *Charles Dickens*, of which the subject was naturally alien to Gissing’s fiction, Lang responded tepidly if not coldly to the work of a man who held an earnest view of literature and did not have a high opinion of the kind of criticism Lang himself was producing. To sum up the record is largely one of uncongeniality, but this does not detract from the interest of Marysa Demoor’s book, and indeed not apparent in it, since the only mention of Gissing’s work it contains is rather positive “Did you look at Gissing’s book on Dickens?” he asked his American friend James Brander Matthews on 4 August 1898. “It interested me, though I don’t always agree.” Matthew’s reply is not available, but his opinion of the book can be read in his review of *Charles Dickens* in the *Forum*, which preceded Lang’s review by a month: “Mr. Gissing’s essay reveals genuine insight into the principles of the novelist’s art; it is modest and moderate; it is convincing. At least one reader, who would have confessed to little liking for Dickens either as a man or as a novelist, laid it down with the feeling that the critic had made out his case, and that the adverse decision against Dickens must needs be revised now in the light of Mr. Gissing’s argument, so cogent in this plea of confession and avoidance.”³

To Gissing’s readers the interest of Marysa Demoor’s book, *Friends over the Ocean: Andrew Lang’s American Correspondents 1882-1912* [distributed by Universa, Hoenderstraat 24, 9200 Wetteren, Belgium] is likely to lie mainly elsewhere. For one thing, the 176 letters to J. B. Matthews, H. H. Furness, F. J. Child, William James, and J. R. Lowell enable one to form

-- 32 --

an opinion of the man Gissing met. By and large they are short, casual, professional letters in which candour is perhaps more commonly met with than confession. Lang at least passes comment on many people and books, and this helps us to define him and to do him justice. He also reveals the extent of his professional activities, which certainly confirm the common notion that he is more notable for having boosted second-rate literature of the escapist type than for having praised those solid novels, English and American, of the so-called transition period which were quickly recognized as classics or semi-classics. But the major pleasure that awaits the reader in this collection of efficiently edited letters is the frequent occurrence of names which are familiar to the Gissing biographer, editor and critic. To Edwin Austin Abbey, the American artist who was to settle at Broadway, Worcestershire, Lang says after first meeting him that he has “lost his heart,” and we soon find the connection that was, for geographical reasons, in Gissing’s mind when he mentioned Abbey and his fellow artist Millet – “the fair Mary” Anderson, the famous actress steps in and is described shortly after a literary dinner: “pretty, but not beguiling, I think.” Gissing was to see her on the stage and to meet her husband as well as her brother Joseph, a journalist whose interview of him he was graciously asked to read at proof-stage.⁴ Francis James Child, the authority on ballads, whom Gissing had known in his Boston days, appears to have been one of Lang’s correspondents from about 1881 to Child’s death in 1896. F. W. H. Myers, the inspector of schools and prolific writer who corresponded

with Gissing about *Charles Dickens: A Critical Study*, is mentioned in a letter to Furness of September 1901, and it is clear that Lang looked upon him patronizingly. George Moore, for whom Gissing had scant esteem, was not better liked by Lang: "George Moore's an ass," he wrote to Matthews on 7 January 1897, "and all that Celtic crew, who don't know Celtic. I don't

-- 33 --

either, but I know the facts, and there is a very learned Celtic pal to keep me straight." Agnes Repplier, an American essayist praised by Gissing, appears in different contexts which hardly show Lang to have been a feminist. Clearly Lang expected more – *a priori* – of a historical novel, which could not turn out to be a problem novel, than of a story of contemporary life. It is striking that even before the publication of *Esther Vanhomrigh* (1891) by Margaret L. Woods, whom he calls "Daisy" Woods, he confides to Matthews that he should not be surprised if the novel "turned out good" while he has nothing to say of *A Village Tragedy* (1887), which Gissing praised in letters to his relatives, to Bentley and to Mrs. Woods herself.

Many other suggestive examples could be given, which would concern such figures as R. L. Stevenson, for whom Gissing had no use, Grant Allen, whom he came to like after he met him at Edward Clodd's seaside home at Whitsun 1895, and Walter Besant, surely not a favourite novelist of Gissing, although we find him praising *All in a Garden Fair* in an early letter. But enough has been said to suggest the scope of these letters which in some way remind us of *Transatlantic Dialogue: Selected American Correspondence of Edmund Gosse*, edited by Paul F. Mattheisen and Michael Millgate (1965). Like the correspondence of other writers and literati of the period, Lang's letters enable one to reconstruct a fragment of past cultural life and to understand better the likes and dislikes, intellectual and otherwise, which are so powerful elements of the human keyboard. – P. Coustillas

1. Marysa Demoor and Pierre Coustillas, "Andrew Lang on Gissing: A Late Victorian Point of View," *Gissing Newsletter*, XX, 2 (April, 1984), pp. 20-30.
2. Lang reviewed *The Nether World* in *Longman's Magazine* (September 1889), took part in

-- 34 --

the controversy about *New Grub Street* in the *Author* (1 July 1891), commented at length on *Charles Dickens: A Critical Study* in *Longman's Magazine* (September 1898) and belatedly wrote an unsympathetic critique of *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* in the *Morning Post* (9 October 1908).

3. "New Trials for Old Favorites," *Forum*, August 1898, pp. 758-59.
4. "George Gissing as He Is," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 13 June 1896, p. 24.

Notes and News

Significant news in the last few months have not come from Gissing's native country, but mainly from North America and Italy. Once more *English Literature in Transition* has done him a great service. So much comment has been published on his work in the last three decades, so many new editions of his novels and other books have appeared that it may well be desirable

from time to time to take stock of recent developments. This is what has been done in two of the four articles to be found in the Gissing number (Vol. 32, no. 4). While the first, by the editor of the *Newsletter*, is essentially bibliographical on an international basis and attempts to offer a supplement to various important surveys contributed by Jacob Korg, notably to the two editions of *Victorian Fiction: A Guide to Research* (1964 and 1978) and to the *British Studies Monitor* (September 1973), David Grylls's piece discusses with much liveliness, solid knowledge and

-- 35 --

common sense a problem which has always, though not always profitably, coloured the critical approach of commentators, especially those who still have to discover the extent of Gissing's culture and the less apparent characteristics of his art, namely the weight of biographical considerations in critical assessments. The other two articles perform altogether different services. It is hoped that the publication of Gissing's reminiscences of his father, a text which, it would seem, Mabel Collins Donnelly was the first scholar to quote from, will be of help to students of the father-son relationships in the novels. Thomas Waller Gissing was a significant political and social figure in Wakefield for some fourteen years and a book about him and his many-sided work will have to be written some day. Perhaps together with Clifford Brook's indispensable monograph on Gissing in Wakefield, which badly needs reprinting, the present article will prove a useful starting-point. John Sloan's brilliant enquiry into the literary affinity of Gissing and Dostoevsky is likely to remain the standard study of the subject, a subject, one might say, which had been awaiting investigation since 1898, when Gissing, comparing Dickens and Dostoevsky, inevitably, perhaps deliberately, revealed himself as a continuator of a major literary tradition. In this field Sloan had only one predecessor whose aim, however, had been more European, Jacob Korg again, who did pioneering work in his article "The Spiritual theme of *Born in Exile*." John Sloan's piece will rank among the most thorough comparative studies of the type offered by David Grylls in his article on Gissing and Samuel Johnson. Carlyle and Gibbon are two other figures that would be worth considering in the same light. Gissing's copy of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, his Owens prize, contains pencillings which prompt one to meditation. One is hardly surprised to see, on p. 97, that his attention was arrested by the following passage in "Memoirs of my Life and Writings" – a preface of sorts to the eight

-- 36 --

volumes: "I may believe, and even assert, that, in circumstances more indigent or more wealthy, I should never have accomplished the task, or acquired the fame, of an historian; that my spirit would have been broken by poverty and contempt; and that my industry might have been relaxed in the labour and luxury of a superfluous fortune."

Other good news has come from America, where the Estelle Doheny collection was dispersed at Christie's from 22 October 1987 to 19 May 1989. The Gissing material offered for sale was included in Part IV of the Catalogue (17 and 18 October 1988). First editions of *Born in Exile*, *New Grub Street*, *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, *The Unclassed* and *Workers in the Dawn* were sold on that occasion, and *The Unclassed* which, in the experience of well-informed dealers and collectors, is the scarcest of all these titles including *Workers*, fetched \$3,850. In 1884 Gissing received £30 from Chapman who, characteristically, had first promised £50. More importantly, three autograph letters were sold. The letter to Ellen of 26 September 1884, which was printed in part in the collection of family letters in 1927, and refers at some length to the work of Charlotte Brontë and George Eliot, was disposed of for \$715; that of 3 September 1889 to the same correspondent, mainly about Hardy's novels, was more eagerly bid for and ultimately fetched \$2,750. The long passage about Hardy has been printed at least three times

but the date (3, not 5, September 1889) had been misread by the American autograph dealer who offered it in one of his catalogues between the wars. The third letter – probably a note to William Morris Colles, dated 6 March 1894 – was sold with at least one from Andrew Lang in a group of items, and consequently no definite price is attached to it. At least the first two of these three letters will be published in *The Collected Letters of George Gissing* (Ohio University Press). The present owners of the two letters to Ellen have generously given permission to print them in full.

-- 37 --

A copy of *Da Venezia allo stretto di Messina* has been received from Italy (see Recent Publications). Francesco Badolato has translated those portions of Gissing's Diary which deal with his three journeys to Italy, in the autumn and winter of 1888-89, in the winter of 1889-90 after his stay in Greece, and from September 1897 to April 1898. The diary entries for the three journeys are preceded by a 30-page introduction and bio-bibliographical note in which Italian readers will find all the basic information concerning studies on Gissing. But this book should indeed be purchased by librarians and Gissing readers outside Italy for it contains a number of plates, most of which will be new to all scholars except those who have seen the original diary in the Berg Collection. When a sketch occupies only a part of the original page in the diary, the whole page has been reproduced, so that many entries are given in English in facsimile. Gissing's drawings in black and white for the first edition of *By the Ionian Sea*, the originals of which still have to reach a sale room, have also been reproduced, all in an enlarged form except the Table of the Paladins.

Jacob Korg and Francesco Badolato severally report that a new Italian translation of *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* is to be published in January 1990, under the imprint of Lucarini, a Roman publisher, in the Labirinto series. The title of the old translation has not been preserved – *I taccuini segreti di Henry Ryecroft* has been preferred to *Il giornale intimo di Henry Ryecroft* (1957). The translator is Francesco Marroni, Associate Professor of English at the University of Pescara. He has written monographs on Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot, Henry James, Elizabeth Gaskell, Samuel Butler and other literary figures and he is Vice President of

-- 38 --

the Gaskell Society of England. In the same series, "Il Labirinto," he has translated and introduced a collection of stories by Mrs. Gaskell, *Il fantasma nella stanza del giardino e altri racconti*. After Francesco Badolato's *George Gissing: Antologia critica* (1984) and his edition of the Italian portions of the Diary (1989), *I taccuini segreti* will be the third Gissing title published in Rome in half a dozen years.

Additional information of a bibliographical nature about *The Whirlpool* in the Kokusho-kanko-kai edition has been sent by Mrs. Ryôko Ota, the translator, who has kindly supplied an English version of the copious factual data which appear on p. 467 of her book. European publishers may well be startled to read that a book printed on 30 June 1989 was published on 1 July of the same year. Mrs. Ota obtained her degree from the department of English and American literature of Tokyo Woman's Christian University, then became Assistant Professor in the English department of Tokyo Eiwa College for Women. She has translated, in collaboration, *Uncollected Stories of Conan Doyle* (3 vols., 1983) and *The Odd Women* (1988), and written, also in collaboration, *Family Matters in American Literature*

(1985).

Shigeru Koike reports that he has published, together with Miss Hiroko Ishizuka, a translation of *Charles Dickens* by L. K. Webb, one of the "Evergreen Lives" issued in 1983 under the general editorship of Michael and Molly Hardwick. The Japanese edition, available from Nishimura Shoten at 880 yen includes an updated Select Bibliography by the translators as well as a Translators' Postscript. The volume contains many illustrations. On 15 October 1989 Arina Shobô Ltd (1-5-17, Hongo Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 113) published a translation by Hiroshi Takayama, an Associate Professor in the English Department of Tokyo Metropolitan

-- 39 --

University, of Rachel Bowlby's *Just Looking*, which contains chapters on *Eve's Ransom* and *New Grub Street*. The book, a beautifully produced hardback selling at 2500 yen, includes a Translator's Postscript entitled "Money and Literature" (pp. 199-214).

On p. 67 of *A Life's Morning* (Harvester Press edition) occurs this passage concerning Emily Hood: "One day she asked for a book on 'Gymnoblasic Hydroids'; the amazing title in the catalogue had filled her with curiosity." Now anyone familiar with Gissing's methods of composition may be disinclined to suppose that he invented such a title. Clifford Brook, for one, did not favour such an assumption although he could not trace the title to its source. This, he writes, has now been done accidentally by the members of the Wakefield Film Club who, in seeking shots for a second Gissing Video Film, came across the following entry on p. 131 of the 1895 catalogue of the Wakefield Mechanics Institution Library:

MACKIE REFERENCE LIBRARY

(Presented by the late M. E. Naylor, Esq., Ray Society's Publications, 1856 -1875)

No. 1883 Gymnoblasic or Tubularian Hydroids (Part I.)

2 copies (1871) G. J. Allman, M.D.

M. E. Naylor was a veterinary surgeon who lived in Warren House, Wakefield, and Clifford Brook interestingly argues that, as this particular book on hydrozoa cannot have been received by the Wakefield Mechanics Institution Library until after 1875, Gissing's mention of it establishes the fact that he used the library after his father's death.

Richard Knowles, of Wakefield, has sent details about the availability of a well known

-- 40 --

letter from Gissing to Walter Besant dated 18 January 1895. Gissing transcribed it in his diary, but the whereabouts of the original letter remained unknown until it was offered by Michael Silverman in his Catalogue no. 1. This short letter, which is now in private hands again, will be printed in the *Collected Letters of George Gissing*.

Nonie Houlton, co-author with Max Foran, of *Roland Gissing: The People's Painter*, announces that she is selling a limited edition print of his painting "Early Oil in Alberta," reproduced from the collection of Bennett Jones, Barristers and Solicitors. The brochure available from Mrs. Houlton (Box 30364, C.P.O., 6455 Macleod Trail S. W. Calgary, Alberta T2H 2W1, Canada) gives the following details:

"Printed on high quality 100% acid free paper. Image size: 19" x 22." Limited Edition of 500. Numbered and authenticated. Price \$150.00. Shipping and handling \$15.00."

Recent Publications

Volume

George Gissing, *Da Venezia allo stretto di Messina*. Introduction and translation by Francesco Badolato. Rome: Herder Editore, 1989. White wrappers with red and black titling, 228 pages. This book is no. 20 in the Quaderni dei nuovi annali, published by the Facolta di Magistero dell'Universita di Messina. It contains a number of plates which reproduce the

-- 41 --

sketches Gissing made in his diary, as well as those in black and white which originally appeared in the first and second editions of *By the Ionian Sea*, respectively in 1901 and 1905.

Articles, reviews, etc.

Barbara Arnett Melchiori, *Terrorism in the Late Victorian Novel*, London: Croom Helm, 1985. Mrs. Melchiori mentions Gissing in various contexts and discusses *Demos* on pp. 190-96.

G. H. V. Bunt (ed.), *One Hundred Years of English Studies in Dutch Universities*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1987. Contains a chapter entitled "George Gissing," by J. M. Blom, which like the preceding item will repay careful reading.

Akira Sano, "Mi o Yorou Onna Rhoda Nunn," *Eigo Seinen*, Vol. CXXX, no. 10, January 1987, pp. 482-83. This article, which is subtitled in English "*George Gissing: The Odd Women*," is about Rhoda Nunn, "the woman who arms herself." It is part of a series devoted to "The New Women at the end of the [nineteenth] century." Mr. Akira Sano is Professor of English at Musashi University, Tokyo, and a specialist of nineteenth-century British fiction.

Gilbert Phelps, *From Myth to Modernism: A Guide to the World Novel*, London and New York: Routledge, 1988. Gissing is discussed briefly on p. 186.

Victoria Glendinning, "Books: Only if the Vicar Approved," *The Times*, 2 September 1989,

-- 42 --

p. 30. Review of Peter Keating's recent book, *The Haunted Study*, with a passage on Gissing. Other reviews appeared in the *Listener* (John Sutherland, "The Uses of Literacy," 7 September), the *Independent* (D. J. Taylor, "Raising the Unread," 9 September), the *Sunday Times: Books* (Julian Symons, "Victorian Values and Social Change," 17 September) and the *Times Literary Supplement* (David Trotter, "Open and Closed

Options," 29 September - 5 October).

Edward Halsey Foster, "Criticism," *Small Press* (The Magazine and Book Review of Independent Publishing), Vol. VII, no. 5, October 1989, p. 72. Review of *George Gissing at Work*.

Laurel Brake *et al* (ed.), *The Year's Work in English Studies*, Vol. 6 (1986), London: John Murray for the English Association, 1989. A selection of Gissing publications is reviewed.

Pierre Coustillas, "Recent Work and Close Prospects in Gissing Studies," *English Literature in Transition*, Vol. XXXII (1989), no. 4, pp. 407-17. The same number also contains, by the same author, "Gissing's Reminiscences of His Father: An Unpublished Manuscript," pp. 419-39; by John Sloan, "The Literary Affinity of Gissing and Dostoevsky: Revising Dickens," pp. 441-53; and by David Grylls, "The Teller Not the Tale: George Gissing and Biographical Criticism," pp. 454-70.

Raimund Piontek, *Positionen des Realismus*, Frankfurt am Main, 1989. Occasional references to Gissing in this study of *Bleak House*, *Vanity Fair* and *Middlemarch*.

Robert Calder, *Willie: The Life of Somerset Maugham*, London: Heinemann, 1989. Gissing appears a number of times in this full-length biography, and Calder informs us that Maugham's review of *By the Ionian Sea* in the *Sunday Sun*, 11 August 1901, p. 1, was

-- 43 --

reprinted in Somerset Maugham, *A Traveller in Romance: Uncollected Writings 1901-64*, ed. John Whitehead (New York: Potter, 1984).

Evelyn Toynton, "The Subversive George Gissing," *The American Scholar*, Winter 1990, pp. 126-138. A perceptive survey of Gissing's life and works.