

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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Some Unpublished Letters by Gabrielle Gissing

Jacob Korg
University of Maryland

Among the Gissing manuscripts in the Berg Collection of the New York Public Library is a group of twenty letters and postcards from Gabrielle Gissing to Morley Roberts. (The first of these, written in French, is addressed to Mrs. Roberts). They contain some information about Gissing, and reveal the intense suffering Gabrielle experienced for years after the loss of her husband. She reports that she attempted suicide no fewer than four times before 1911. As late as 1910, more than five years after Gissing’s death, a postcard in French tells Roberts that she still feels “accablée” at her bereavement. The letters also contain some comment about posthumous publications by and about Gissing.

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Editorial correspondence should be sent to the editor:
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The eight letters written in 1904 augment the five written to Eduard Bertz between January 17th and November 29th, 1904, which are described by Arthur C. Young in “The Death of Gissing: A Fourth Report” (*Essays in Literary History*, Rutgers University Press, 1960). Gabrielle’s explanations add a few details to what is known about the circumstances of Gissing’s death, and might be said to constitute a fifth report. The first letter, dated January 17th, was written to thank Roberts for being present at Gissing’s funeral on December 31st. She undertakes to explain why she did not reply to a telegram sent by Roberts during Gissing’s illness. She did not communicate with Roberts when Gissing was dying, she says, because Gissing had advised against it, saying it was not right to bother people with bad news. But he had asked that H. G. Wells should be called and on December 24th Gabrielle telegraphed him.

Wells, who was ill, relayed the message to Roberts, who in turn telegraphed Gabrielle. Roberts was himself recovering from an illness, and said that he would come only if it was necessary. Gabrielle never answered this message, she now explains, because the office was closed on Christmas Eve when Roberts' telegram arrived. After a few days of silence from Gabrielle, Roberts did go to St. Jean-Pied-de-Port. But by that time Wells had come and gone, and Gissing was dead.

Another part of Gabrielle's letter concerns the statement about Gissing's deathbed conversion made by the Reverend Theodore Cooper, who came to see the sick author shortly before he died. At this time, as Wells describes the scene in his *Experiment in Autobiography* Gissing was delirious and could be heard to chant in Latin. Mr. Cooper, who had been sent for, according to Gabrielle simply because he was English, and not for religious reasons, reported that he had heard Gissing say "God's will be done," and wrote a report, which was published in the *Church Times* on January 8th, 1904, that he had died in "the Catholic faith."

This report elicited a sharp reaction from Morley Roberts. Incensed by what he knew must

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be a misconstruction of Gissing's last remarks, he sent a letter to the *Church Times* denying that he could have died in communion with the Church. This unpublished letter is in the Berg Collection, though undated, it must have been written between January 8th and January 19th. The *Church Times* responded by correcting its earlier announcement in a note in its issue of January 29th, 1904. Roberts also solicited a statement on the subject from the English nurse who had attended Gissing, Miss E. Robertson Bayman. Miss Bayman, whose statement is in the Berg Collection, reported that Gissing had chanted the *Te Deum* and referred to the Holy Father in his delirium, and maintained that he was not mentally fit "to be bothered with any subject whatever."

Gabrielle's letter to Roberts corroborates Miss Bayman's account, explaining the prayers and visions of hell Gissing spoke of as reflections of the superstitious tales he had been reading in the ecclesiastical sources he was using for *Veranilda*, the historical novel he was writing at the time of his death. She adds that he often discussed the rituals and beliefs of the early Church with her. In December of 1897 he had even spent a night at the abbey of Monte Cassino as part of his preparation for *Veranilda*, and the material he gathered appears in the four chapters narrating Basil's visit to the monastery. Gabrielle says that she was present during most of the time that Mr. Cooper spent with the patient, and heard no conversation about religious subjects. She is, she says, happy to see Roberts' reply to the "silly announcement" of the *Church Times*, and reports a recent meeting with Mr. Cooper at the cemetery. On this occasion, he showed her a letter from Gissing's elder sister, Margaret, inquiring about the state of Gissing's religious beliefs at the time of his death. Gabrielle told him that since Gissing had the virtues of a Christian, he could be considered one, but had not accepted any formal religion. It must have been shortly after this meeting that Mr. Cooper wrote the misleading letter to Margaret which is excerpted in the first appendix to Gissing's *Letters to His Family*.

Turning to another subject, Gabrielle reports that she is grasping the fact of Gissing's

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death only gradually, and is prey to a growing loneliness. She says that while she is no longer "somnambule," she does suffer from insomnia. And in a highly emotional conclusion she says she is deeply disturbed by the thought that Gissing died without enjoying calm in his life and the degree of recognition he deserved.

Six months after Gissing's death, in a postcard and letter written in the summer of 1904, Gabrielle again told Morley Roberts of her profound sense of loss. She had been back to the Paris flat where she and Gissing had lived, and had suffered at the memories it evoked. She had

had to dispose of his books and clothing; “burying my face in his coats, and closing my eyes, I positively had the illusion of his presence near me.” The same pathetic theme is continued in a letter of September, 1904; she says she can do nothing but weep, and wishes for death. This letter also mentions two of the significant articles about Gissing that appeared soon after his death, Roberts’ “The Exile of George Gissing,” which was to be published anonymously in *The Albany Magazine*, and the essay by H. G. Wells which had by then appeared under the title “George Gissing: An Impression.” She says she is glad to hear that Roberts is also writing a memoir of Gissing, and approves of his plan to delay publication until the principals involved in it are dead. Instead, of course, Roberts adopted the recourse of changing the names in his account, *The Private Life of Henry Maitland*, to easily-recognized pseudonyms. In this letter, Gabrielle remarks that she has heard of the difficulties created by the introduction H. G. Wells had been asked to write for *Veranilda*. The full story of this imbroglio has recently been told in “The Stormy Publication of Gissing’s *Veranilda*” by Pierre Coustillas (*Bulletin of the New York Public Library*, November, 1968, Vol. 72, no. 9, pp. 588-610). Gabrielle had no doubt heard that the introduction had been rejected by Gissing’s family on the ground that it did not do justice to his character, and that Gissing’s old friend, Frederic Harrison, had offered to write one. The episode served to renew the antagonism between Wells and Gabrielle. It is ironic that

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Wells’s home should have been the scene of the first meeting between Gissing and Gabrielle, for after the summer of 1901, when Gissing was advised by his doctor to enter a sanatorium in Suffolk while Gabrielle returned to France alone, and the decision was announced to Gabrielle by Wells and his wife, their relations were unfriendly. Gabrielle seems to have placed the responsibility for the separation on the Wellses, and felt, with some justification, that they were taking the management of his affairs out of her hands. Wells quickly lost patience with her after receiving some letters from her in which she complained of her difficulties. (These letters appear in *George Gissing and H. G. Wells*, ed. Royal A. Gettmann, University of Illinois Press, 1961, pp. 162-189). Their hostility continued during Gissing’s last illness, when they disagreed about the management of the sick-room, and now Gabrielle observes to Roberts, in her letter of September, 1904, that Gissing had distrusted Wells as a critic, and had said more than once that he was quite incapable of understanding his work.

When Wells’s introduction was published as an independent article in the *Monthly Review* of August, 1904, Roberts offered to send Gabrielle a copy, but in a letter of September 21-22 she declined to see it, pleading that she was too nervous. Nevertheless, Roberts seems to have passed on to her Wells’s observation that Gissing’s devotion to fiction was ill advised and that it was not “his own true expression.” In her reply Gabrielle describes Gissing’s reaction to a similar comment in the *Athenaeum* review of the Ryecroft Papers. The reviewer had taken Ryecroft’s preference for scholarship as an expression of Gissing’s own estimate of himself. Gissing considered the remark an attack upon him, and a judgment that he should not have written his novels. In this letter, Gabrielle urges Roberts to meet Wells’s critical comment about Gissing, for she is particularly upset by the notion that after his death Gissing’s friends, led by Wells, may turn against his literary reputation.

Her fears were justified in a sense, for when *Veranilda* was published, Roberts himself was disappointed with it. In a letter dated September 29, 1904, he wrote to Gissing’s friend, Clara Collet:

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I’ve just read *Veranilda*, and it distresses me above measure that I cannot think it a success. For Gabrielle’s sake I wished tremendously

to like it, and I think it great, but it isn't Gissing at all. I'm writing to her and am saying as little as I can about it, but I'm grieved to my heart that I don't like it. – Quoted in Coustillas, *op. cit.*, p. 603

He must have expressed himself quite openly, however, for on October 1, 1904, Gabrielle replied, saying that she is not hurt by adverse opinions from one who loved and understood Gissing, but only by tactless public depreciation. She says that she does not care for historical novels herself, and is sure she will continue to prefer his other books. Her list of the books on which she thought Gissing's fame would rest is of interest; she mentions *New Grub Street*, *Born in Exile*, *Demos*, *The Nether World*, *The Rycroft Papers*, and *By the Ionian Sea*.

In the following month she wrote to Roberts from St. Jean-de-Luz that she has paid a painful visit to Gissing's grave. And she says she is distressed to hear, from Gissing's brother Algernon, that Roberts' letters to Gissing cannot be found among his papers.

It is possible that Roberts sent Gabrielle an advance copy of his article "The Exile of George Gissing," for on December 9th she wrote to thank him for it, characterizing it as "interesting" and "clever." She corroborated a Gissing trait Roberts described, an inability to adapt to circumstances. She added, however, that he had changed in his last two years, and had overcome his melancholy, particularly at the mention of Italy. She is herself of Italian descent, and thinks that was part of her attraction to Gissing, who thought that she looked Italian.

A letter of January 9, 1905, praises Roberts' novel, *Rachel Marr*, and recalls that Gissing spoke well of it, Gissing had, in fact, written very encouragingly about this novel in two

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unpublished letters of October and November, 1903. Gabrielle laments the fact that Roberts and his wife will be unable to pay a visit to her. But she does recall that Miss Collet has spent a month with her since Gissing's death, and in the following letter, dated February 5, 1905, says that Miss Collet told her about Herr Plitt, the German with whom Gissing had travelled on the Continent in 1888. She has already read Gissing's detailed accounts of Plitt's behaviour in his diary (see my biography, *George Gissing*, pp. 119-126). In this letter she also expresses profound despair, and announces plainly that she wants to die. In a letter dated February 27th (no year is given, but it may be 1905), she urges Roberts to come to St. Jean-de-Luz, for Miss Collet will be there. She reports that Miss Collet has informed her that Roberts has decided not to write a life of Gissing; but she says she hopes he will continue with the project, even if he does not publish it, for he is "the only person qualified."

The next letter of consequence is conjecturally dated 1910. Roberts had apparently been approached by Madam Aurora von Sacher-Masoch, the first wife of the Austrian novelist, who, it seems, proposed to write something about Gissing. Although she was an old acquaintance of Gabrielle's, who had introduced her to Gissing, Gabrielle now makes her opposition to her perfectly clear, declaring that she has repeated as statements of Gissing things he could not have said, and that Gissing found her "vulgar." She had misbehaved to Gabrielle's mother, in spite of their kindness to her, so that they had been compelled to break off their acquaintance with her. She advises Roberts not to reply to Mme von Sacher-Masoch's note, and asks him particularly not to give her her address. The letter closes with the information that she has actually attempted suicide.

There are four final letters, which contain little of substance, but enable us to know something of Gabrielle's movements. In October 1910 she wrote from the Château de Tazières near Nevers, the house of relations named Saglio with whom she occasionally stayed, to say that

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she is planning to go to Rome. But a letter written in November is dated from Paris; in it she says that she was in Nevers attending Mme Saglio in her last illness, and now intends to spend

the winter in St. Jean-de-Luz. The series closes with two letters, both dated in June with no year given, but possibly written in 1911. The first announces that she may go to England, and the second is dated from London. This last letter is the only one in the group that contains some light-heartedness. It is addressed to the Comte de Tappington (Roberts' address was Tappington Grange), and is signed by "La Marquise de Box Hill."

Isabel Clarendon: A Retrospect

[In connection with the new edition of *Isabel Clarendon* published by The Harvester Press (10, The Garden House, Clifton Place, Brighton, Sussex, BN1 3FN), it has been thought appropriate to reproduce a handful of reviews that appeared in the English press at the time of the first edition, issued in two volumes by Chapman and Hall. They constitute an interesting, though occasionally somewhat irritating record, of the average critic's attitude to technical innovations and to the painting of "abnormal" characters. Ed.]

St. James's Gazette

June 5, 1886, p. 7.

Here is clever portraiture, whether slight sketch or finished picture; though the sitters may seem to have been scarcely worthy of all the skill and pains bestowed upon them. Too much space, moreover, is occupied by the literary gentleman and the artist—a combination which the modern novelist is only too prone to introduce. One of them at a time is almost too much; so offensive is what the author of this story (and not he alone, alas!) would call their

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"subjectiveness." Excellent "bits" the story has; as a whole, however, it is deficient in movement and incident, and it lacks directness of narration. It is as if the author were propounding a conundrum rather than telling a tale; were defying detection rather than expounding a case; were leaving inferences to be drawn rather than making a straightforward statement. This is quite a different thing from contriving a plot which mystifies the reader until on a sudden the mystery is cleared up, a flood of light pours in, and that which but lately appeared to be incomprehensible and impossible turns out to have been the most reasonable and most natural thing in the world. There is no plot at all in the present instance—no plot, that is, from which the reader is excluded; and the mystification that is caused arises not from ingeniously devised complications, but from deliberate want of lucidity on the author's part. This is hardly fair story-telling; at any rate it is very irritating, and calls to mind the summary process adopted by the holy St. Jerome, when he forgot for a moment that he was a saint, and pitched his exasperating "Persius" into the fire, with a passionate "Burn, if you won't be understood!" As for the titular heroine, she is by no means an uncommon type of woman; but it is doubtful whether the type has ever before been so carefully, sensibly, truthfully, and yet indulgently described. Not so much can be said for the relations between her and the morbid literary gentleman; their love affair is not to be explained on any imaginable grounds of cause and effect, and (on the side of the literary gentleman only) is absurdly rhapsodical. The author himself is a little too much inclined towards affectations of language and high-flown expressions having more sound than meaning. "There are women," he tells us, "who enter a room like the first notes of a sonata, and leave it like the sweet close of a nocturne." Surely this is nonsense.

The Athenaeum

June 19, 1886, p. 808

In *Isabel Clarendon* Mr. Gissing has been stronger in conception than in execution. After laying down his plan, devising his circumstances, introducing his characters with labels attached, and giving out that he will show how these characters developed under the stated conditions, he proceeds to a few trivialities which neither advance the plot nor illustrate the motives of his heroes and heroines, and then suddenly winds up his drama and drops the curtain. Most readers will be inclined to resent this abrupt ending of a story which began with considerable promise. It would have been well worth Mr. Gissing's while to elaborate his plot and to adhere more closely to natural types and models. He has submitted sundry improbable incidents, which take away from the illusion he desires to create, and thus he fails to make his story as attractive as it evidently might have been.

St. Stephen's Review

July 3, 1886, p. 23

Isabel Clarendon by George Gissing, is as much like *The Basilisk* as *The Mysteries of Udolpho* is like *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*. Mr. Gissing is evidently a great admirer of the greatest of our living novelists, but George Meredith is not a writer who permits of imitation, his wit is too incisive, his imagination too subtle. Yet Mr. Gissing has succeeded in writing a most excellent story and in sketching a man of the type of Kingcote, given as a careful study of an abnormal psychologic development. The man whose extreme sensitiveness has rendered him utterly indolent can never be a pleasing person but he is scientifically accurate. Debarred from joining in what the world calls its pleasures, they yet receive full heritage of its misfortunes. That Kingcote should have fallen in love with a woman like Isabel Clarendon who is a perfect

woman, but a woman of society all the same, is only natural, and that he should have afterwards found that she was quite incapable of appreciating his passion of feeling for his agonies is equally true to that phase of mental growth which Mr. Gissing has laid himself out to follow. Isabel Clarendon I have called a perfect woman. She is lovable, queen-like, and beautiful, but she is weak, the creature of her environment, and when she meets Kingcote, though she loves him better than she has ever loved any one before, his super-subtle flame of love doesn't satisfy her, and she learns to forget him. Women must have passion, and can forgive jealousy, but they must understand the one and feel the other. Kingcote's burning words, coming from the spiritual side of the man, excited by love, fell upon the animal side of a woman in love. So the novel ends sadly, as it should do. It is a most delicate piece of work, and the minor characters are all as carefully drawn as those of hero and heroine. All may not feel the scientific truth which the story of *Isabel Clarendon* illustrates, but all will acknowledge that the novel is thoroughly readable, and far beyond the average.

The Scotsman

July 8, 1886, p. 7

No one who read *Isabel Clarendon* will hesitate to pronounce it the work of a man who is something more than a clever writer. Mr. Gissing brings a fresh and original mind into the field of fiction. He does not follow the beaten track. His plot, if it may be called a plot, is not of any

of the fashionable patterns. We are not sure that, as a mere story, *Isabel Clarendon* gains by this. Those who read novels for the story only may, in fact, be warned off the ground. Events do not take the course that the habitual novel reader would predict or desire, and the narrative simply stops like that of an epic, and is not nicely rounded off and finished according to the recognised and on the whole excellent practice of novel-writers. The reader wishes that, characters and

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events had turned out differently, and when he gets to the end there are several points on which his interest and curiosity are not satisfied. For all that the story is possessed of an interest which to those who can enjoy an original study of character will be absorbing. From a dramatic point of view this is one of the freshest and most powerful fictions by a new writer that have appeared for a long time. Kingcote, who is the Hamlet of the tragedy, is a remarkable study of a mind of peculiarly fine fibre affected with a fatal morbid taint, which, in spite of the amicability, nobleness and even active goodness which distinguish him, makes his life a misery to himself and others. Isabel is a less peculiar, but singularly perfect representation. Her passion for Kingcote seems at first sight inexplicable both in its genesis and its endurance, till her history and position are well considered, when it will appear a masterpiece of art. Every character is distinctive. Ada Warren ranks with the two just mentioned in importance and felicity, but the more ordinary persons are admirably fitted to their parts and are each as true as life. We cannot particularise further; but we have no hesitation in saying that this is a drama in the form of a novel which will repay not only perusal but study.

The Academy

July 10, 1886, p. 24

Many mournful memories conspire to prevent one from opening with very high expectations of pleasure a book with an unfamiliar name on the title-page; but *Isabel Clarendon* has none of the ordinary characteristics of a first novel. Mr. George Gissing, who is apparently a new writer, must in his time have filled a good many waste-paper baskets with his tentative efforts, for there is nothing amateurish in the story by which he introduces himself to the novel-reading world. *Isabel Clarendon* is above all things a mature book; and such faults as it has are the faults of a man who has deliberately formulated certain principles of art, not of one who

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fumbles on without any principles at all and describes the process as "writing under inspiration." Mr. Gissing is probably, like Gauthier, rather contemptuous of inspiration, and his book has not a single character or a single situation which is not clearly the outcome of laborious and intelligent study. In following the practice of Mr. Henry James by leaving nearly all the threads of his story hanging loose at the end of the second and last volume, I cannot help thinking, with due humility, that he is mistaken. I cannot escape from the old-fashioned opinion that if a man sets himself to write a story it should be a story with a fore-ordained and inevitable close, which leaves behind it a sense of imaginative satisfaction. But writers like Mr. James and Mr. Gissing think otherwise; so their readers must needs be content with the goods the gods provide. In *Isabel Clarendon* there is certainly ample material for contentment. It is impossible to be quite sure one understands the nature of the hero, Bernard Kingcote, whose capacity for self-torment seems to have in it a touch of insanity. But, without understanding, one can recognize the sympathetic subtlety of the portraiture; and the character of Ada Warren, which presents fewer difficulties, is an imaginative triumph. Indeed, the book has so much interesting matter that one would like to linger over the enjoyable things which it contains: but this is impossible, so I must regretfully content myself with recommending it heartily to that cultivated

class of readers who seek in fiction what Mr. Matthew Arnold says is to be found in good poetry—a “criticism of life.”

The Illustrated London News

July 10, 1886, p. 50

Clever study of character, accompanied by considerable powers of delineation, distinguishes *Isabel Clarendon* by George Gissing (Chapman and Hall); a romance which is really little more (though that may be quite enough for the reader’s entertainment and the

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author’s credit) than simple portraiture (relieved, of course, by a flow of dialogue and descriptive passages). There are two finished portraits; the rest are sketches in various phases of incompleteness: all testify of keen observation and skilful workmanship. Than the heroine, who gives her name as the title of the book, there is no commoner type of woman in real life; it is doubtful, however, if she has ever before been thought worthy of the elaboration here bestowed upon her, or been so truthfully depicted, or been invested with so much interest (which need not be a great deal) without travelling beyond the bounds of strict verisimilitude. She is one of those women who have nearly every admirable quality of the moral sort save the courage to face poverty, if there be any virtuous way (as the world counts virtue) of evading the necessity; who have physical charms and graces to any extent; who are not intellectual, but have brains enough for practical purposes, and a sufficient varnish of cultivation to pass muster in what is generally known as society. As a contrast, we have also in the novel a careful, though not very full, representation of the growth to noble womanhood from ignoble girlhood, from early physical ugliness to something better than mere physical beauty and yet scarcely to be discriminated from it, of a bad man’s daughter, who certainly did not inherit from him that germ of high moral principle which blossomed and bore such admirable fruit. Even she, however, would evidently have let moral principles and everything else go by the board for the sake of a handsome scoundrel, but for the providential interposition of an anonymous letter (containing, by-the-way, an incredibly absurd statement about a dead man’s will). There is very little action or incident in the story, which is a little too enigmatical in style; but nobody can complain that there is little talk.

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The Morning Post

July 28, 1886, p. 2

The author has keen perception of character and much power of analysis. His plot is involved, and indeed is scarcely deserving of the name, but with the exception of the mysterious and introspective Ada Warren, his personages, although often gloomy, are lifelike. There is a marked contrast between Mr. Gissing’s manner of appreciating animate and inanimate nature. For the most part he paints men and women with the pitiless pessimism which is frequently the outcome of intelligent experience, while his descriptions of the beauties of landscape are fresh and enthusiastic. Kingcote’s arrival at Winstoke, his first view of the cottage, which is to be the scene of so much of misery and happiness, and the meeting with the genial rector have the quaint simplicity of a page out of the *Vicar of Wakefield*, whereas other portions of the novel are entirely of the modern school. The most forcible portrait of the book is that of the self-tormentor Kingcote. His love for the bright but superficial Isabel, her temporary subjugation by his

stronger nature, and the gradual estrangement of these ill-assorted lovers, are portrayed with artistic and subtle realism. The author eloquently illustrates Kingcote's words. "The tragedy is not where two who love each other die for the sake of their love; but where love itself dies, blown upon by the cold breath of the world, and those who loved die on with hearts made sepulchres."

A Possible T. S. Eliot Reference to Gissing

Jacob Korg

I do not recall any evidence that T. S. Eliot knew Gissing's work. The following unsigned review of the 1927 *Letters*, which appeared in Eliot's journal *The Monthly Criterion* in May

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1927 (p. 276), cannot be said to settle the question, but it is suggestive. It is not listed in Donald Gallup's *T. S. Eliot: A Bibliography*, which makes a point of identifying Eliot's anonymous and pseudonymous publications. On the other hand, some of the opinions expressed are characteristic of Eliot. The reviewer's objection to Gissing as "a self made man" resembles the Eliot theme expressed in his essay on Blake where he says that Blake made a serious mistake in turning away from tradition and relying on his own resources in forming his philosophy. The complaint that Gissing was not more extreme is not unlike Eliot; he sometimes said that great works ought to be terrifying. And, of course, the judgment that Gissing would have profited by relying on some outside authority corresponds perfectly with Eliot's aristocratic and religious temper.

The Letters of George Gissing to Members of his Family.

Collected and arranged by Algernon and Ellen Gissing. (Constable). 18s. net.

The letters are rather dull, monotonous reading and it is doubtful whether they are worth preserving in this commemorial manner. They can by no means be regarded as a substitute for any book by Gissing. Their chief effect is to tone down ideas of Gissing as an excessively sensitive, violent or rebellious personality: we think that his work would have been far more monumental had his character been in some way or ways more excessive. There is no doubt that he rigidly did all of what he believed to be his duty. There is no doubt that he was sincere within the limits of his own conception of sincerity; these virtues are definitely confirmed in these letters. The trouble is that he was a self made man; what withheld him from the foremost rank of all was his inability to trust to any powers outside of his own.

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Here and There

At the University of Sussex, students who take the BA final examination have to acquaint themselves with The Late Victorian Revolt in Literature, Politics and Culture. In 1968, one of the questions was: "Consider the distinctive attitude towards the role of the artist in society of any three of the following: Morris; Gissing; Wilde, Pater, Shaw; Moore." This year, students could choose to deal with the following question: "To the relatively poor (who are so much

worse off than the poor absolutely) education is in most cases a mocking cruelty". Does Gissing's statement agree with other late Victorian ideas on education?" The sentence is quoted from *New Grub Street*, which is a set book in this course. Students are also encouraged to read *Demos* and *The Nether World*.

At the University of Madagascar *New Grub Street* is one of the set books for the "Certificat de Lettres Anglaises," while at the University of Lille the same novel can be found in a list of thirty books from which students must select six for reading.

In a book recently published in Italy—*La Promessa. Antologia italiana per la scuola media. Vol. I.* Edited by Vincenzo Palumbo and published by G. D'Anna, Messina-Firenze, 1968—there occurs this passage translated from *By the Ionian Sea*:

Magia Calabrese

Al di là, come il sole discendeva sull'orizzonte evanescente, il mare, magico, violaceo e rosso fuoco. A Oriente, sopra i declivi della Silla, la luna quasi piena, immobile, del colore d'una foglia autunnale in un cielo soffuso di rosa tenero.

By the Ionian Sea, available in English from John Baker in paperback and hard cover edition, went through several editions in Italy under the title *Sulla riva dello Jonio* (Cappelli, Bologna). As for *New Grub Street*, three editions of it are in print: Houghton Mifflin, with an introduction by Irving Howe (paperback 1962, hard cover 1965), Bodley Head (with an introduction by John Gross, 1967), Penguin (with an introduction by Bernard Bergonzi, 1968).

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Charles E. Yenter (2512 South 13th Street, Tacoma, Washington, 98405) has founded a monthly newsletter entitled *Presenting Moonshine*, "a newsletter for collectors of John Collier, H. H. Munro and other masters of the short story, essay and novel." In the second number, dated August 1, 1969, is announced an article on Gissing's lost novels.

Recent Publications

Gerber, Helmut E.: "Review: A Gissing Series." Review of *Notes on Social Democracy*, with an introduction by Jacob Korg, London, Enitharmon Press, 1968. *English Literature in Transition*, 1969, vol. XII, no. 1, p. 10.

Haydock, James: "George Gissing." *English Literature in Transition*, 1969, vol. XII, no. 1, pp. 35-43. A very interesting list of recent articles on Gissing, with judicious comments.

"Information, Please," *The Times Literary Supplement*, September 18, 1969, p. 1033. A request from John Spiers and Pierre Coustillas, worded as follows: "George Gissing: whereabouts of any colonial editions, early American editions, sixpenny reprints, yellowbacks, 'hybrids' with different imprints on title-page and cover, for a bibliography."

Koike, Shigeru: "Forward from Ryecroftism—a Revaluation of George Gissing," *The Phoenix* (Tokyo), June 1969, p. 9. A review, in Japanese, of Coustillas' *Collected Articles on George Gissing*.

Lelchuk, Alan: "*Demos*: The Ordeal of the two Gissings," *Victorian Studies*, March 1969, pp. 357-74. The June number of *Victorian Studies* is scheduled to contain comments by John Goode and Alan Lelchuk on their papers on *Demos*. Not seen yet.

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