

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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Volume VII, Number 4  
October, 1971  
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Part I of *Born in Exile*: Peak (and Gissing) at College

Robert L. Selig  
Purdue University

Although Gissing tends more towards autobiography than most writers of fiction, he does not attempt to transmute directly, in any of his twenty-two novels, a central experience of his life: his expulsion from Owens College and imprisonment at the age of nineteen for petty thefts for Nell, the young prostitute with whom he had fallen in love. It is, in fact, a weakness of much of his lesser fiction that the hero is so often fitted out with an Oxford or Cambridge background of such rich respectability that it seems little more than a wish-fulfilling dream. In Part I of *Born in Exile*, however, Gissing does deal, in an oddly oblique fashion, with his days of humiliation at college. Yet this one-hundred-and-fifty-nine-page prelude to one of his finest works has

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received little attention because it stands apart from the book’s central theme –

the attempt by the agnostic protagonist, years later, to masquerade as a candidate for the clergy in order to win an upper-class wife. But Gissing's reshaping of his own early troubles in these introductory chapters helps to explain why he once said to Bertz that "'Born in Exile' was a book I had to write." (1).

The college that Gissing actually attended is changed in the novel to Whitelaw College, founded in the Midlands by Sir Job Whitelaw, Bart., whose name is an obvious echo of Sir Joseph Whitworth, Bart. (1803-1887), one of Owens College's most important backers. (2) But because of the needs of his plot, Gissing had to minimize the vast gulf of prestige dividing Oxford and Cambridge from a new school in the provinces. Gissing's fictional college is attended, in fact, by sons of the local gentry, for Peak, as a student, must meet Buckland Warricombe in order to make plausible the hero's later scheme of friendship with the Warricombes. In the real England of the time, such rich country gentlemen would have considered attendance at a young provincial college as a form of social exile and even humiliation (3).

When Gissing entered Owens College in 1872, there were reasons, besides mere snobbery, for being less than overwhelmed by its institutional glory. In his freshman year, Owens was attended by 334 day students, 537 night students, and 112 medical students, but they were all crammed into a single, three-storey house, only five-windows-wide across the front, that had once been the private residence of Richard Cobden. The rooms were so overcrowded that professors were forced to choose between students being stifled by lack of air or being forced, in the generally cold weather, to wear thick overcoats in front of open windows. (4) Still less exalted was the neighborhood around the Cobden house. Both students and faculty agreed that the area was "... one of the worst parts of town," filled with "... scenes of revolting misery and squalor," where "... the coarsest forms of vice festered..." and students "... had to wade through vileness of every sort. . ." (5) Students of late-Victorian under-culture will recognize in these vague condemnations many variants of standard euphemism for the fact of prostitution. Less vague but still carefully indirect is the fol-

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lowing account from a privately printed memoir:

The entrance from Deansgate was guarded by a very Scylla and Charybdis of disreputable licensed houses. On the one hand where Messrs. Crane's great music warehouse now stands was the Dog Inn, a fully licensed house with singing room, at the back of which shocking scenes were enacted. On the other hand was a beerhouse of an equally dangerous character. In this tradition of our day reported that a former Owens College porter had been inveigled, robbed and ejected in *puris naturalibus*. (6)

The existence of back-room prostitution adjacent to the old Cobden house could hardly have escaped the notice of young Gissing. By the time of his involvement with Nell,

though Owens had moved at last to a new and better place, (7) the knowledge undoubtedly remained of where, in Manchester, prostitutes could be found.

Even the improvements of the new Owens campus lacked the splendid ambiance of Gissing's Whitelaw College. But, to make it seem sufficiently splendid in the book, Gissing omits any real description of either buildings or grounds and concentrates instead, in the opening pages, on describing a statue of the founder (I, 7-8). The man of marble, as a symbol of the college, is made to stand for the undescribed whole. Gowned professors, "exemplars of finished courtesy, of delicate culture" (I, 82), wander about in an atmosphere of learning purified of physical detail.

The only sordid element that Gissing retains from his days at Owens College is a passage describing Peak's rented rooms "in a very ugly street in the ugliest outskirts of the town; ... a monotone of grimy, lower middle-class dwellings, occasionally relieved by a public-house" (I, 75). Pierre Coustillas, the most thorough researcher of Gissing's life at Owens, looked at his lodgings there a few years ago, close to the second campus, and found them very run down but hoped that they might have been better a century ago. (8) In any case, both Whitelaw and Owens at that time lacked residence halls. (9) Significantly, perhaps, in the passage lamenting Peak's squalid dwelling place, Gissing

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connects the desolate environment with vague, unmentioned temptations:

An impartial observer might have wondered at the negligence which left him to arrange his life as best he could, notwithstanding youth and utter inexperience. It looked indeed as if there were no one in the world who cared what became of him. Yet this was merely the result of his mother's circumstances, and of his own character. Mrs. Peak could do no more than make her small remittances, and therewith send an occasional admonition regarding his health. She did not, in fact, conceive the state of things, imagining that the authority and supervisal of the College extended over her son's daily existence, whereas it was possible for Godwin to frequent lectures or not, to study or waste his time, pretty much as he chose, subject only to official inquiry if his attendance became frequently irregular. His independent temper, and the seeming maturity of his mind, supplied another excuse for the imprudent confidence which left him to his own resources. Yet the perils of the situation were great indeed. A youth of less concentrated purpose, more at the mercy of casual allurements, would probably have gone to wreck amid trials so exceptional. (I, 76)

Peak does, in fact, engage in the "spasmodic debauch" of a one night's spell of drinking (I, 92-94, 96), but this reflects very dimly Gissing's own "allurement" by Nell, his prostitute love, which was neither brief nor "casual." Coustillas has illumined much of this story through letters sent to Gissing by John George Black, his close friend at Owens. A fictional counterpart of Black appears in *Born in Exile* under the name of

John Edward Earwaker (I, 25) which may owe something to John Parsons Earwaker (1847-1895), an antiquarian and distinguished alumnus of Owens, who preceded Gissing there by only a few years. (10) In the latter part of the novel, dealing with Peak's masquerade as a candidate for the church, his friend John Earwaker is the only one with the faintest suspicion of what the hero is doing (II, 175-76). In actual life, John Black had similar suspicions of his friend's predicament with Nell. (11)

Gissing, of course, was caught stealing money for his prostitute from the cloak-

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room at Owens, was arrested, convicted, given hard labor for a month, stripped of academic honors, and expelled with public condemnation of his sexual adventures. (12) "How easy it would be," the narrator declares at the time of Peak's brief bout with alcohol, "for him to lapse by degrees of weakened will into a ruinous dissoluteness" (I, 96). The moralizing tone is curiously similar to that of the Principal of Owens in reporting to the Senate that "... Gissing... had...been leading a life of immorality and dissipation" and had been guilty of "profligate courses." (13)

Yet Gissing allowed the real disgrace of his days at Owens College to enter into his novel only in strange disguises. Both Peak in *Born in Exile* and Gissing in life were brilliant students driven from their colleges just before earning their degrees. But if Gissing was expelled for both theft and sexual misadventures, Peak is self-expelled for reasons that seem innocent and even laughable. He is mortified when Cockney Uncle Andrew plans to start a restaurant across from the campus in order to win the business of his nephew's college friends: "Tickles you, eh, bo-oy? 'Peak's Refreshment an' Dinin' Rooms!' Everything tip-top, mind; respectable business, Godwin; nothing for nobody to be ashamed of – *that* wouldn't do, of course" (I, 40-42). Peak is "ashamed," to desperation, of his lower-class relatives, particularly in the presence of "gentlemen" from the college. Yet the full reasons for his humiliation over "Peak's...Dinin' Rooms" may be partially obscured by the author's own reticence. Uncle Andrew's "respectable business" would have been, in effect, an extension of an unrespectable neighbourhood into the college's zone. Peak flees to escape his connection, in the minds of students and teachers, with the "sordid" and "degenerate" surroundings so dimly described in the text (I, 75). To this basic motive, with all its absurdity, Peak adds the trivial rationalization that he hasn't won enough prizes at the college and must run from further defeats (I, 133).

The fictional reason that the author has invented for his hero's departure from college is obviously less dramatic than a simple transcription of Gissing's own disgrace. Peak is driven from Whitelaw by the actions of others and not of himself – actions that are hard to take seriously. Gissing was expelled from Owens for his own disastrous

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behavior. Yet, although Peak's imagined misadventures lack the bitter agony of Gissing's actuality, they are filled with compensatory laughter. Part I of *Born in Exile* is, in effect, a private and ironic joke, with a richness of secret comedy that reveals

itself only through the study of the author's life at college.

- 1 - *The Letters of George Gissing to Eduard Bertz, 1887-1903*, ed. Arthur C. Young (New Brunswick, N. J., 1961), p. 153.
- 2 - George Gissing, *Born in Exile*, 3 vols. (London, A. & C. Black, 1892), I, 7-8, hereafter referred to in the text by volume and page number. Edward Fiddes, *Chapters in the History of Owens College and of Manchester University, 1851-1914* (Manchester, 1937), pp. 124-26.
- 3 - See Bruce Truscot, *Redbrick University* (London, 1943), pp. 19-30, for the persistence of these attitudes more than fifty years later.
- 4 - Joseph Thompson, *The Owens College: Its Foundation and Its Connection with the Victoria University, Manchester* (Manchester, 1886), p. 464; see also the sketches facing pp. 125, 246-48.
- 5 - Fiddes, pp. 25-27; Thompson, p. 210.
- 6 - Quoted from Henry Brierly, *Memories of Quay Street and Owens College*, pp. 6-7, by Fiddes, p. 27.
- 7 - Thompson, p. ix.
- 8 - Pierre Coustillas, "George Gissing à Manchester," *Etudes Anglaises*, XVI (July-September 1963), 256, footnote 5.
- 9 - Fiddes, pp. 116-17.
- 10 - *Ibid.*, p. 53.
- 11 - Coustillas.
- 12 - The fullest account of these often-described events appears in Coustillas.
- 13 - Coustillas, pp. 260, 261.

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#### The Revision of *Thyrza*

C. J. Francis  
University of Newfoundland

Gissing's revision of *Thyrza*, composed of a number of alterations and cuts, shows that he intended to improve as well as to shorten the novel.

The alterations are minor. Most are small improvements of phrasing or verbal changes. For instance, on p. 5 of Vol. I, the colloquial "She was sixteen when her

mother died” became “When her mother died Annabel was sixteen,” which is more correct but not otherwise obviously better. “...the loveliest lyric would appeal to a man like Bower no otherwise than a paragraph from the daily newspaper” (I, 148-49) became “... than an unintelligible demonstration of science” — an improvement of the image.

The cuts are much more frequent. The irrelevant affair of the Emersons is removed, almost all of pages 93-114 and 129-46 in Vol. III, as well as other references, disappearing in the process. What this indicates, that the shortening process was also one of tightening up the structure and eliminating digression, is borne out by the nature of the lesser removals. A short analysis of the minor character Mrs. Butterfield (II, 77) is gone, also the much longer one of Bunce (III, 46-48). Relationships between minor characters, notably that between Lydia and Mary, are reduced in importance as well as in the space their interactions occupy. Some conversations that are unnecessary in being repetitions are cut; for instance, that in I, 178-79 between Grail and his mother, which merely reiterates information about Egremont and the proposed library which is quite sufficiently discussed without it. (In my opinion, this principle could have been applied with much more vigour, especially to that chapter entitled “Movements,” in which characters pass each other information with which the reader is well acquainted.) Notable among these cuts are conversations, or “chat,” intended to convey the affection between Lydia and Thyrza: an effect quite well achieved without them; these are numerous.

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Gissing removed things that he felt to be digressions from the telling of his characters’ story: for instance, in I, 147 he removed a few sentences discussing Egremont’s lecturing technique, and in II, 12-13 the account of the second lecture upon Newspapers. A second reason for eliminating the latter was that it was an expression of the author’s personal bias, and moreover a blatant “address to the reader” — “Yet, after all, these gentlemen have thick skins...” — and Gissing was clearly concerned to exclude such evidences of the author’s presence, for other examples of the intrusion of the authorial “I” have also gone. In this connection we may refer to one of the more extensive alterations, when, throughout the description of Dalmaine in I, 222-24, the archly satirical present tense was converted to the less self-conscious imperfect.

It may be in the same mood of demolishing a rather juvenile flaw of style that Gissing deletes references of a sentimental kind to passionate love: “nay, not so, for love is never waste” (I, 5) and the lines containing the words, among others, “that passionate love which had exalted others to the heaven of heavens” (I, 281). It might also be argued that Gissing’s views of love, by the time of the revision in 1891, were much changed; however, there are no signs of his attempting to alter the central theme of *Thyrza*, which is assuredly sentimental.

Perhaps the most interesting of the changes is that Gissing removed from many places throughout the novel certain statements of what characters were thinking at particular moments. That he should reduce the amount of analysis of minor characters’ mental processes, as when, in II, 171, he removed Lydia’s reflections about Ackroyd, is explicable and consistent with what we have already noted. But, that he should decrease the analysis of the main characters amounts to a change of technique. Especially during those crucial scenes in Vol. II, in which Egremont and Thyrza are

developing an irresistible attachment, Gissing has applied a discipline of reticence. For instance, in II, 162-63, the passage:

“They certainly might be more musical,” Egremont said, with a forced laugh. I should not care to live in one of the houses, just under the church.”

“No, indeed.”

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However it had been before, he knew now beyond possibility of doubt all that was in Thyrsa’s heart. Why had he allowed her to come thus far with him? He must fix sternly his final purpose. It was monstrous cruelty to encourage... (etc, etc.).... His love was great enough to justify anything. One word and it was done. He had but to put out his hand, to say, “Thyrza, come with me,” and she was his for ever.

She was speaking.

“I waited this morning...”

is cut from “No, indeed” to “... for ever,” so that the words spoken, the forced laugh, the implied pause, do duty in place of all the trite reflections. Another example (II, 125); again the scene is Egremont with Thyrsa:

Yet he began to explain, and was soon speaking much more freely, almost as he had spoken that evening in the Grails’ room, when he told of his sea-experiences.

What things he had looked upon! How vast the world was, and what marvels it contained! When he ceased, she could say nothing. If she had fallen at his feet, it would have been but the natural prompting of her spirit.

He ended somewhat abruptly, and went to the shelves with books.

Here the paragraph beginning “What things...” is gone, and in consequence our attention is strongly drawn to the implications of Egremont’s abrupt cessation of speech. There are other cases where Gissing has removed explanation, has left things to be understood in a way at least reminiscent of his technique in *Isabel Clarendon* and *Eve’s Ransom*.

The revision of *Thyrza* appears to have occupied a few days only (1st to 3rd of February, 1891) and clearly Gissing had no time to rewrite scenes even had he thought of doing so. But equally clearly his conception of scene was now much more dramatic, more inclined to substitute suggestion for pedestrian explanation. Where by judicious cutting he could make improvements in that direction, he did it – and it is worth note that not infrequently the framework of an effective dramatic scene was already there.

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Israel Zangwill on Gissing

(The following article is reprinted here because of its intrinsic interest and because probably few, if any, commentators on Gissing must have had a chance of reading it. Gissing and Zangwill met at a public dinner offered by the tri-lingual journal *Cosmopolis* on June 25 1896 at the Savoy, but further opportunities to meet seem to have been strictly limited by Gissing's absence from England during the most part of the seven years and a half he was still to live. He respected Zangwill as a novelist, and once praised him highly in an unpublished letter to Clara Collet, which the latter passed on to Zangwill after Gissing's death. Zangwill's article appeared in the *American Reader Magazine* for May 1904, pp. 624-26. It was entitled "George Gissing." – P.C.)

How the obituary notices have appraised George Gissing I have not even a remote idea, here on the Bridge of Avignon; as little do I know how posterity will place him. Time was when I considered him Shakespearean in his psychologic range, and though the years have robbed me of that generous judgment, I still feel his debtor for hours and hours of the keenest intellectual pleasure. Whether I was ever able to repay him some quota of the debt I scarcely know; he was at pains to write me his admiration of – my brother. The novels originally published under the pseudonym of "Z Z" had no warmer appreciator, probably because they had affinities with his own realistic school. But whether he approved of other schools of fiction or not, no man was ever less jealous of successes won in them. "He does many kinds of work, all efficiently," he said to me of a prosperous contemporary. Yes, even prosperity could not excite his envy, and the vulgarst popularity he regarded philosophically as the due reward of certain robustious qualities capable of nourishing and stimulating the crowd. No writer could have been more foreign to his temperament than Dickens, yet he set himself to a most sympathetic study of Boz for a literary handbook, and even showed traces of the master's influence in "The Town Traveller." It was, perhaps, too late in the day for his view of life to be modified by the Pickwickian spectacles; earlier Dickens' reading of London and the lower classes might have served to correct his own text. One of the few British novelists who are also critics of life, he regarded Jingoism with the contempt of a man

whose study of "the nether world" had exposed the ironic failure of civilization at the very core of the empire. Yet in "The Whirlpool" Gissing went out of his way to pay a tribute to Kipling's imperial muse. His own best work was done for a mere pittance, and when at last his eminence began to penetrate even to editors and he was able to eke out his resources by "serial rights," he never passed the poet's ideal of "six hundred a year." "Last year was my *annus mirabilis* – I made six hundred pounds," he said only a few years ago. He was then, to all appearance, in the flower of his age, a tall, handsome, strapping Anglo-Saxon, scarcely suggesting the literary recluse that he was by nature, and the pessimist and misogynist that bitter experience had made him. His work was largely done under a cloud, and its austerity and loftiness of aim are the more to be admired in that the writer was sustained only by his own ideal of art and truth. It is



pleasant to think that ere the end came he was able to gratify his passion for travel in those classical lands with whose literature he was so familiar, and to record his impressions in a couple of volumes. For if he was a recluse, it was of the sect of Wordsworth's "Solitary" or Matthew Arnold's "Scholar Gypsy." And yet it is not when he tried to render the autobiography of a recluse that he achieved his greatest hit, though for some odd reason "The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft" won not only the praises of the critics, but the suffrages of the reading public. It can only be because our literature is so lacking in these books of reflection that such a commonplace book – in more than one sense – could have been hailed as Gissing's masterpiece. You have only to compare it with, for example, "Amiel's Journal" to gauge its poverty of magic and idea. But then, "Henry Ryecroft" wrote at the weary close of a career: all that Gissing really had to say about life had been said long before, through the mouths of his personages, or – more artistically – through their fortunes. The Swiss professor's two volumes represent the entire honey hived in a lifetime. But perhaps what appears to me so obvious may strike the dwellers in cities as the height of originality, and that Gissing should have proposed to add a prayer on their behalf to the litany may have appeared to them startlingly paradoxical. The suggestion is, indeed, the keynote of the book and its

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most memorable sentence; but is it anything but the cry of a thousand souls in revolt, from Jean Jacques Rousseau to the author of "Civilization: Its Cause and Cure"; from Thoreau to the promoters of "Garden City"?

While Gissing's own temperament yearned for the woods and waters, and the quiet companionship of the classics, with their equally large perspection of heroic outlines, Fate set him for his life-task the study of the swarming miseries of our human ant-heaps and the pettinesses of our mortal nature. "The Nether World," "New Grub Street," "Demos," "The Odd Women," "The Whirlpool" – these are monumental titles, mighty themes. None of his contemporaries in England – only Zola and Tolstoi anywhere else – even attempted to wrestle with such big canvases, and if Gissing did not always rise to the height of his great argument, the conception was at least Herculean. "The Nether World" is even an arraignment of the universe by mouth of the half-witted religious fanatic, who parades the streets of the City of Dreadful Night with his parrot cry of "All His works shall praise Him for ever"; this figure passes as relevantly as Pippa, always at the luridest moment of the history, like an ironic Greek chorus. "New Grub Street" is almost as intolerably painful reading; no shadow of the picture of the Bloomsbury Bohemia is spared us, though for once there are touches of humor in the figures of the scholars whose mutual contempt subsides when they find themselves mentioned in each other's footnotes. "Demos" contains the first study in English fiction of the socialist movement that had begun to spread its roots – it is a serious contribution to our knowledge of the laboring classes and a powerful dramatic study. In "The Odd Women" the problem of the superfluous woman is treated, one of the most vital problems of to-day, though solving itself by a transformation of our conception of woman's sphere and education. "The Whirlpool" is devoted to a subtler aspect of the great sex-problem, the woman being treated as largely responsible for the great rush into towns. It is she who needs the warmth of the human aggregation, the spectacle of shops and theaters. This book is perhaps the best in Gissing's later manner, crowded with subtle characterization and clever talk. It is a far cry back to his first

book, "The Unclassed" which somehow missed being boycotted at Mudie's, though its

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heroine was a woman of the streets. Curiously enough, despite the challenge of its heroine and its title, this is the least realistic of Gissing's novels, the theme being treated as sentimentally as in "Frou Frou." It is quite a light and charming work. "Thyrza," too, is another agreeable piece of fiction, with no particular elemental problem that I can remember, nor does any of his other novels stand out in my memory like the five great books I have bracketed together. Of these, realism and pessimism are the dominant note, and perhaps if there had been more realism there would have been less pessimism. Gissing surveyed the world more or less as a superior person; he had no sympathy with high jinks, and he described a bank-holiday at the Crystal Palace with ethical horror, which might be better reserved for a gladiatorial combat in the Roman Coliseum. This narrowness of vision, this pain of the over-refined observer, detached from what he described, led him to exclude from his pictures of life the humors which lighten the reality, and the genial acceptance which makes the lot of the poor and even the criminal classes less horrible to live than to behold. But Art, after all, is never Life, and Gissing has a right to his point of view. Let us remember, however, it is the peephole that makes the picture. Another artist, with Gissing's own characters, could have produced you a much more bearable panorama, and Mrs. Gaskell also dealt with "The Odd Women," and the result was "Cranford." It is a pity Gissing did not try his hand at heroic types; in his scorn of the grandiose and the pseudo-romantic he perhaps overlooked that, after all, there are heroes and heroines.

But he was broadening all the time, and his premature death probably robbed us of his masterpiece.

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The Town Traveller

Memorandum of Agreement for the American edition

(Hereafter is reproduced, with the kind permission of the owner, Mr. Charles E. Yenter, the agreement concerning the publication of *The Town Traveller* by Frederick A. Stokes in 1898. The typewritten original is on two pages, the first ending with the ninth provision of the memorandum. Provision number eight is cancelled in ink with the initials "G. G." and "H. G. W." in the margin. Gissing's domicile, "London," is added in his own handwriting. The novel was published in New York in late September 1898. - P. C. )

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT made this Twenty Second day of February 1898 BETWEEN GEORGE GISSING Esq of London of the one part, and MESSRS. FREDERICK A. STOKES Co., Publishers, of 27 West 23rd Street, New York in the United States of America, of the other part. WHEREBY it is mutually agreed as follows:

(1) THAT the said George Gissing hereby assigns to the said Frederick A. Stokes

Co. the exclusive right of printing and publishing in the United States of America and in the Dominion of Canada a new novel, entitled "The Town Traveller," of which the said George Gissing is the author, and in consideration thereof the said Frederick A. Stokes Co. shall pay to the said George Gissing a Royalty of Fifteen per cent (15%) on the nominal selling price of all copies they may sell of the said new novel.

(2) THAT the said Frederick A. Stokes Co. shall on the day of publication – which shall hereafter be fixed to the mutual satisfaction of the said George Gissing and the said Frederick A. Stokes Co., – pay to the said George Gissing the sum of One hundred Pounds (£100) in advance and on account of the above mentioned Royalty.

(3) THAT all details as to the manner of production, publication, and advertisement, and the number and destination of free copies shall be left to the sole discretion of the said Frederick A. Stokes Co. who shall bear all the expense of the production, publication, and advertising of the said new novel.

(4) THAT the said George Gissing guarantees to the said Frederick A. Stokes Co.

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that the said new novel is in no way whatever a violation of any copyright belonging to any other party and that it contains nothing of a libellous character, and that he and his legal representatives shall and will hold harmless the said Frederick A. Stokes Co. from all suits and all manner of claims and proceedings, which may be taken on the ground that the said new novel is such violation, or contains anything libellous.

(5) THAT the said George Gissing shall be entitled to receive on publication six presentation copies of the first edition, and shall be entitled to purchase further copies for personal use at half the published price nett.

(6) THAT no Royalty shall be paid to the said George Gissing by the said Frederick A. Stokes Co. on copies of the said new novel given away for review; for the purpose of advertising the book, on Author's Copies, on Travellers' Samples, or on copies of the said new novel sold at or below cost, in case of the cessation of profitable sales.

(7) THAT the said new novel is to consist of not less than 80,000 words, and is to be published simultaneously with the English edition in order that the rights of the said George Gissing and the said Frederick A. Stokes Co. may be secured as provided for under the United States Copyright Act.

(8) THAT the said George Gissing agrees to give to the said Frederick A. Stokes Co. the first offer of his next new novel after the one above mentioned.

(9) THAT an exact account of the sales of the said new novel shall be made up every six months to the first Monday in July and the second Monday in January, delivered on or before the following October 1st and April 1st and settled in cash on November 1st and May 1st.

The said George Gissing hereby authorises and empowers his agents, The Authors' Syndicate, of No. 4 Portugal Street, London, W.C., to collect and receive all sums of money payable to the said George Gissing under the terms of this Agreement, and declares that The Authors' Syndicate's receipt shall be a good and valid discharge to all persons paying such monies to them. The said George Gissing also hereby authorises and empowers the said Frederick A. Stokes Co. to treat with The Authors'

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Syndicate on his behalf in all matters concerning this Agreement in any way whatsoever.

Frederick A. Stokes Company  
By Frederick A. Stokes  
President

WITNESS to the Signature of  
Frederick A. Stokes Co.  
Frederick Cane

WITNESS to the Signature of George Gissing  
George Gissing. H. G. Wells

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A Note on Gissing and Victorian Advertising

P. Coustillas

Some readers will doubtless remember that the short story entitled "A Calamity at Tooting" (which Gissing wrote in April 1895 and published in the *Minster* in the following June), hinges on the discovery in later life by the heroine, Alma Dawson, that her parents used her as an object of publicity for Hoggan's Food when she was a baby. Her father had written a letter which was published in the *Graphic* alongside a photo of two-year-old Alma, who had until then been fed exclusively upon the miraculous food. This kind of advertisement was very common in Gissing's time and still is not infrequent to-day. The letter in the short story, which conveys splendidly Gissing's mordant satire of certain advertising methods, reads:

"Dear Sir,

"I think it would certainly gratify you to see the accompanying photo. It is that of my daughter, Miss Alma Dawson, aged two years all but three days. Mrs. D. and I are rather proud of our girly-pearly (as we call her), and we think it only right to let you know that for the whole of her life she has been fed exclusively upon HOGGAN'S FOOD! It is one of the triumphs of our progressive age, and I, for one, lose no opportunity of singing its praises through the length and breadth of this great metropolis. Just adding that you are quite at liberty to use both photo and testimonial in

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any way you like,

"Believe me,  
"Yours appreciatively.  
"Benjamin Dawson."

That Gissing carefully imitated the type of letters he had actually found in the press was – perhaps superfluously – evidenced last July when Mr. Ueli Annen, of

Zürich, who is writing a book on Gissing's short stories, came across the following advertisement in precisely the same magazine, the *Graphic*, in the number for December 11, 1897, p. 777. The advertisement concerned Mellin's Food for Infants and Invalids. Close to the photograph of the bouncing baby sitting barefoot in a capacious armchair, was printed this letter:

"Spring Grove,  
Batley,  
July 19, 1897.

Messrs. Mellin's Food, Ltd.

"Dear Sirs,

I enclose photo of my little girl, Nellie, who is 1 year and 8 months old – she has been brought up entirely on Mellin's Food since she was 2 months of age. I may say that she was a tiny delicate child, and now she is the finest child we have.

I also have a baby boy, whose photo you shall have as soon as taken. From a fortnight to three weeks old he had scores of fits, which the doctor said was entirely due to stomach trouble – we tried every kind of milk, and at last I tried Mellin's Food at the end of the week, and I am pleased to say he has never had any fits since, and is getting on splendidly; he is 6 months old to-day.

Yours faithfully,  
T. J. Thompson."

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Some more literary echoes in *Isabel Clarendon* identified

Mr. P. F. Kropholler, of Paris, submits the following list of echoes from, or allusions to, literary work not recorded in the critical edition published last year by the Harvester Press.

Volume I

- p. 18, 1. 2: "Could any good thing come out of Salcot East?" An appropriate remark from a clergyman. See "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (John, Ch. I, 46).
- p. 128, 1. 3 from bottom: Maybe a vague allusion to "the noiseless tenor of their way"? (Thomas Gray, "Elegy")
- p. 178. 1. 8 from bottom: An echo from "We look before and after | And pine for what is not." (Shelley, "To a Skylark")
- p. 196, 1. 10: Another typical remark from the clergyman. He first quotes Shakespeare (*The Merry Wives of Windsor*, I, ii, 12): "There's pippins and cheese to come," then goes on to make a learned allusion to Consul Claudius

Pulcher who had the sacred chickens that refused to eat thrown into the sea.

## Volume II

- p. 38, l. 8: a quotation from Milton (“Areopagitica”): “Methinks I see her as an eagle mewing her mighty youth.”
  - p. 63, l. 7: “... the female form divine” sounds like an echo from Blake’s “A Divine Image,” in *Songs of Experience*, which has a line reading partly “... the Human Form Divine.”
  - p. 88, l. 4: Perhaps a reminiscence of Genesis, Ch. III, 15: “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman.”
  - p. 173, l. 6 from bottom: Undine and Sintram must be characters in German fairy tales. Undine definitely is.
  - p. 173, l. 9 from bottom: the quotation marks in “shaping spirit of imagination” seems to point to a quotation. Perhaps Gissing had in mind these words from *Hamlet*, III, i, 128, “imagination to give them shape.”
  - p. 200, l. 4 from bottom: “The labourer is worthy of his hire.” See Luke, Ch. X, 7.
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- p. 219, l. 9 from bottom: “Plain living and high thinking” comes from Wordsworth’s *Poems Dedicated to National Independence and Liberty*, part I, no. XIII, written in London, September 1802. The first line reads: “O Friend! I know not which way I must look.”
  - p. 317, l. 2: “... years that bring the philosophic mind” is also borrowed from Wordsworth’s *Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood* (end of stanza X).

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## New Publications

### Volumes

- *The Odd Women*, by George Gissing. The Norton Library, New York, W. W. Norton & Company, 1971, N 610, \$1.95. Published simultaneously in Canada by George J. McLeod Limited, Toronto. This is a fine paperback, tastefully produced. The front cover shows “Rosa Corder” by J. M. Whistler, the original of which is in the Frick Collection, New York. This inexpensive edition is most welcome and it is to be hoped that others will appear in forthcoming months.
- *Remarks when opening the George Gissing Exhibition*, by William Plomer. Privately printed for the Enitharmon Press, London, 1971. Price to be announced. This edition

handset in 16 point Pegasus type is printed by the John Roberts Press on Portals all-rag laid paper and is limited to 195 copies. All copies are numbered and signed by William Plomer. Copies in wrappers £1.15; Copies in cloth £2.25.

- *Gissing's Writings on Dickens*, by Pierre Coustillas, together with two uncollected reviews by George Gissing from *The Times Literary Supplement*, London, Enitharmon Press, 1971, £1.50. Second edition of 200 copies.

- *George Gissing at Alderley Edge*, by Pierre Coustillas, London, Enitharmon Press, 1971, £1.70. Second edition of 200 copies,

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#### Reviews

- Worth, George J., *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, April 1971, pp. 326-27. A review of *George Gissing: Essays and Fiction*.

- Anon., "Novelists of the Nether Regions," *Times Literary Supplement*, September 10, 1971, p. 1088. A review of P. J. Keating's *The Working-Classes in Victorian Fiction and Working-Class Stories of the 1890s*.