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“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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Das Sabinergut by Eduard Bertz
A Forgotten Novel of America

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One of the literary historiographers’ favorite myths is that time will make a meaningful selection from the piles of books published. Frequently, however, posterity misses out on an aesthetic experience; even more frequently, a historical context is distorted by the loss. Since Eduard Bertz (1853-1931) has not left a literary *oeuvre* worthy of his talents, the judgment already made by history might be taken to be well-founded. The fact that he has fallen into oblivion has nonetheless proved damaging, because Bertz is one of the important mediators between national literatures about whom we should know more. While alleged original geniuses in established literary genres offer their products so successfully that posterity feels obliged to take note of them, mediators are too often ignored by literary historiography.

With his novels, Bertz attempted to make a living and to gain honor (probably in this

order). One reason for his lack of success is suggested in a review of Bertz's *Philosophie des Fahrrads* (Philosophy of the Bicycle, 1900) written by the philosopher of science Wilhelm Bölsche. The author, Bölsche conceded, is worth reading "because one always listens to the voice of a sober but completely independent and bold mind,"¹ and the reader profits from the "acquaintance with a rational human being." However, "There is no aroma emerging from this book. One breathes the dust of the road [...] one never gets the freshness of a moss-grown forest

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path between fern and springs in the green quietly singing" (Bölsche, 1253-54). Though his novel *Das Sabinergut* (The Sabine Farm, 1896)² did deal with the "springs in the green quietly singing," Bertz's evaluation of their status in the modern industrial and corporate society was realistic.

Just like Hawthorne in his novel *The Blithedale Romance* (1852), Bertz worked his own experience in a utopian community into his novel. Rugby, in Tennessee, founded in 1881 by Thomas Hughes (1822-96), the author of *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1857), produced more headlines than goods or happiness, but while we are well informed about the history of the colony, Bertz's life there remains blurred. Only his work as a librarian is repeatedly mentioned by those who write on Rugby and one must be careful in using the novel as any kind of historical source. When, in the conclusion, an oil well starts to gush on the hero's former 'Sabine Farm,' we hardly need recourse to factual information in order to suspect allegory. Coal might have been tolerably realistic but Tennessee's Cumberland Plateau, which always remained economically depressed (Blume 220-30), never experienced an oil boom. The allegorical tendency was characteristic of the author. When his friend George Gissing examined in the Jardin des Plantes, in Paris, an allegorical group of statuary which Bertz had mentioned to him, he only found "a hunter struggling in the grip of a bear," not "the soul combating with the flesh and vainly trying to escape its clutch." Gissing commented that his friend had been blinded by "the Germanic tendency to see more than the subject contains!" (Gissing, *Diary*, 57).³

Possible future discoveries in as yet undocumented reviews of *Das Sabinergut* notwithstanding (see Gissing, *Letters*, 221), the novel may well have found its most competent and most attentive reader in Gissing himself. This he owed to his German friend, who had informed him in such minute detail about the topography of Tübingen for *Workers in the Dawn* (1880) that it had been assumed that Gissing had actually studied there. Also, he had acquainted him with Schopenhauer's philosophy (Korg 20; Bridgwater 14; Coustillas 17). In subsequent periods (1889 and 1901), Bertz did not tire in propagating Gissing's writings and in enhancing his popularity in Germany. Without being aware of it, he thereby insured his own modest posthumous fame, because what would we know about him had not Gissing's letters (only those dated 1887 and later) to him been recovered out of the ruins of Berlin after 1945 and sold to Yale University's Gissing Collection? Bertz's personality, however, can be recognized (in the words of editor Arthur C. Young) "only in vague outline, like a figure in a photographic

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negative" (Gissing, *Letters*, xxvii). We might be tempted to take at face value the entries on Bertz in Adolf Hinrichsen's *Das literarische Deutschland* and other specialized reference works,⁴ but Bertz did not go to Paris to study French, as Hinrichsen has us believe; he was a political (social-democratic) exile. It remains unclear why Bertz furnished the following information for Hinrichsen's entry:

In 1881, a severe nervous disorder forced him to join a utopian community

founded by the English writer of books for young people, Thomas Hughes, in America. He bought a farm in the virgin forests of Tennessee and lived lonely in a log cabin until 1882, when he was named librarian of the newly established public library of Rugby, Tennessee. After putting it in order and cataloguing it, he returned to England in 1883.

Why broadcast his nervous disorder? Why the pedantic mention of the library catalogue? Although the hero of the novel, Dr. Karl Steffen, is a kind of self-portrait, the work must be read with as many grains of salt as the report of the oil well.

The hero of the novel was interested in the “cultivation of patriotic literature” (*Sabinergut*, 357, 404). Bertz must have been concerned about his own career. From Gissing’s soothing and encouraging responses to his letters (Young emphasizes how the relationship between the two authors in Gissing’s beginnings had been exactly the opposite), we can reconstruct Bertz’s ever new plans and ambitions, setbacks and depressions. The correspondence also sheds light on the history of the novel’s origin. Gissing suggests writing a novel about life in England (Gissing, *Letters*, 170). But Bertz had already conceived the idea for *Das Sabinergut*. He worried about Hughes, but Gissing reassured him on 29 September 1893: “You are not writing calumniously. The Rugby affair is historical, and anyone with adequate knowledge is more than justified in making literary use of it” (Gissing, *Letters*, 176). On 31 January 1895 he congratulated Bertz on having completed his work; subsequently, however, he speaks of a “heavy blow” (195). Probably the author had vainly attempted to sell the novel to a magazine. It appeared under the sponsorship of a book club, “Verein der Bücherfreunde.” Gissing received a copy on 3 March 1896; on 7 March he had finished it and wrote an enthusiastic letter on 8 March containing a misguided prophecy: “This Book will be very widely read, in several countries – be sure of it” (Gissing, *Letters*, 214). There is no doubt about the intensity of his interest in the book – even to the detection of typographical errors. Gissing himself had been in the U.S. in 1876/77, and in *Thyrsa* (1887) he had used motifs which we encounter again in *Das Sabinergut* – not

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surprisingly, because the character of Walter Egremont is modelled after Bertz, whose letters from America were probably one source of the novel.⁵ Shortly after the publication of *Das Sabinergut*, its author once more depended on the counsel of his successful friend. Thomas Hughes had died! “A very curious coincidence,” Gissing commented. “The obituary notices, so far as I have seen them, preserve a discreet silence about ‘Rugby’; indeed that episode was very little to the poor man’s credit” (Gissing, *Letters*, 217). Gissing decided that there was no need for Bertz to mention his novel in his letter of condolence to the family.

Given the oblivion into which the novel has fallen, a summary of its plot is necessary (roman numbers refer to chapters, arabic numbers to pages). Dr. Karl Steffen, classical philologist, 23 years old, stands at the grave of his wife and child. His teaching profession, forced upon him by his father, means nothing to him; his suffering drives him away from home. Just before reaching Italy, the land of his dreams, he turns round and travels North (I). In London, he settles down as a language teacher (VI), after having failed to find employment at a public school. He instructs young Walter Bunting, son of the famous philanthropist Sir Austin Bunting, in the German language; also Mrs. Romney, Sir Austin’s sister, and her daughter, who prefers Marryat to Goethe and dreams of the jungle – “Monkeys, parrots, coconuts, lamas, buffaloes! Wonderful, it will be wonderful!” (74, also 126). For Sir Austin is thinking of setting up a community in order to care for the Will Wimbles (see *Spectator* No. 108; No. 21), because the plight of the German and English intellectual proletariat grieves him deeply and he plans to send his own son and his sister’s children along with them. “Knowledge has become a commodity which is being devalued through surplus production in the same way as industrial

products” (15). Why should the Wimbles not find their new home “where virgin land awaits their work, an area to where the degenerated commercial speculation has not yet spread, where a young community may give itself its own laws and separate itself from the corruption of the Old World?” (21). Originally, he thought about a place in the British colonies in order to save England’s younger sons for England, but Enoch Tripp, an American, persuades him that a land purchase in Tennessee is a onetime opportunity for the community. Indeed, people should look to America as giving an example to the world (17). But actually Sir Austin is seduced by Tripp’s compatriot, Emerson and his deeper insights (20). Steffen will eventually discover, but too late, that Emerson should be read in a universal rather than a partial manner (375-76). Although

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Brook Farm is never mentioned, Emerson’s quotations about “Arcadian fanaticism” distinctly evoke Ripley’s ideal community as the novel’s background. In the same way, Thoreau’s account of Walden Pond forms the background for Steffen’s experiment in living for nature and for his studies, while working only one or two hours per day (376).

A second strand of the plot is introduced by a remark by Tripp:

“My brother-in-law Joseph Karmesin in Cincinnati, who originally comes from Germany, has certainly not brought with himself an excess baggage of education, yet now he is worth a million. Practical, practical, that is our motto.” (15)

One problem in the Karmesin family is that of the younger son, “smart Dagobert,” member of a student duelling corporation, lieutenant of the reserve, and failed jurist who wants to escape his troubles by marrying for money. However, he soon runs through the small fortune of Antonie, who worships him, and is forced to move to America. Crossing the ocean as steerage passenger (for pedagogical reasons), he is supposed to start from the very bottom with uncle Joseph (Joseph the Provider!). However, America cannot reform Dagobert, who holds on to idleness, class arrogance, and alcohol (VIII-IX, XIII, XX). On his way to Tennessee, Steffen, who has been persuaded by Mrs. Romney, hears that the enterprise which has been referred to as a “transatlantic well of blessings” and as “ver sacrum” (in a treatise by Sir Austin) is merely “a warmed-up maneuver of land sharks” (130). On arriving in Wimbledon, he encounters typhoid fever. He has already paid for the passage of a young girl (X), now he works as a nurse. However, one of the first victims of Sir Austin’s “ver sacrum” is his son Walter. Away from the center of Wimbledon, in a mountainous region which is more romantic than suitable for agriculture, Steffen builds his *Sabinergut* with the aid of the frequently useless and always selfish backwoodsmen whom he overpays for both material and labor (XXIV, XXX-XL).

Dagobert’s alcoholism has developed to a point where Joseph cunningly forces him to Wimbledon’s temperance colony; Antonie and her faithful sister Klothilde accompany him. Dagobert starts to flirt with rich Euphemia Dudgeon (XXIX). Failed as a farmer, Steffen gets a librarian’s job, while Klothilde becomes a teacher. He had already seen her on a Cincinnati street, and was deeply impressed by her resemblance to his late wife (XIV, XLI).

The ideal colony, negatively affected by typhoid fever, hostile press reports, the Will Wimbles’ reluctance to work, and the bad effects of the monopoly of the consumer co-operative

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(241-42, 333), goes bankrupt. Noble Sir Austin, willing to assume all financial obligations, wants to clarify the situation with the colonists. In the course of this process, “Great Cyrus” Manypence (199, 273, 285) is revealed as actual property owner. He takes over this “utopian

prodigy of eccentric heads” which has become a “disgrace for the North American union,” and assumes his humanitarian obligation, “to extinguish it from the face of the earth” (429):

America takes back what is hers, and from that moment on, the American spirit rules over Wimbledon, and it will prove what the practical mind of the New World can make out of a project which European idealism has disgracefully wrecked.

The colonists who, according to Steffen’s judgement, never had any intention other than becoming rich in the first place – “rich, rich, like ninety-nine out of one hundred immigrants since the days of Pizarro” (436) – cheerfully collaborate. “Whatever some idealists’ dream may have been, the Dollar was and has remained the highest ideal of the new world” (436). And this ideal is realized. Properties rise in value, as do the shares of the consumer co-operative which were bought by the Griddle family at next to nothing (XLIX; cf. 60). Liquor stores replace the (officially) alcohol-free inn and oil gushes from the Bandusian fountain (LIII). High finance rules the ideal colony (L). The happy ending (such as it is) consists in the divorce between Capital and the Ideal. But Capital and Dissipation are likewise divorced; Euphemia merely pretends to want to escape with Dagobert; she does not want an alcoholic (LI). Antonie does not get over the loss of her husband and dies (L); Klothilde liberates herself by marrying Karl and they return to their native country where Karl tutors high school students in the Horatian Odes (LIV). Sir Austin, broken as a result of the death of his son, is buried next to Walter (XLVI).

In order to do justice to *Das Sabinergut* as a novel about America, it is important not to overlook that the author continues one theme from his first book, which has nothing to do with the U.S. *Glück und Glas* (1891), with its rejection of social democracy, is a critique less of society than of the idealist. Felix Lubrecht is a spoiled intellectual, devoted to the more refined pleasures of life. He is very undialectically contrasted with Martin Gugelhupf (the novel takes place in Swabia), an earth-bound realist, dutiful in the sense of the Lutheran adherence to state and church. While Felix’s fortune and his life break like glass, Martin marries the girl they both love. Felix is a more interesting character than Karl, while *Das Sabinergut* is to be read as a

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Bildungsroman. The honest American, who exists even in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, Dickens’ study in selfishness, in Bertz’s novel is introduced in the person of a physician, Dr. Floyd. He attempts to heal Steffen from escapism and extreme idealism. It is given to Klothilde to summarize the result: “Nobody can transcend the limitations of his nature; it is enough to recognize them – and this is what you have learned in America” (483-84).

Bertz does not belong to the liberal enthusiasts about America so prominent in Germany earlier in the nineteenth century, whose disappointment then led them to become “amerikamüde” (tired of America). Karl is indeed referred to as the “Amerikamüde” at the end (385), and his self-assessment as “kultur müde” (tired of culture, 70) reflects Ferdinand Kürnberger’s *Weltschmerz* so prominently displayed in his famous novel *Der Amerikamüde* (Lang, 1981: 55-56, 67). The difference between Bertz and Kürnberger is that Steffen’s (as well as the author’s) expectation of America was, from the very beginning, to come to know the “country of regression,” “the country in which the ethical culture of the East recedes in spite of all democratic phrases, in which Europeans [...] returned to the moral standard of wolves and hyenas” (70). The novel belongs into the context of an older motif which Harold S. Jantz has described as “America as a house of correction and a reformatory” (331). Dagobert cannot be reformed—“As long as a glass of beer is more important than everything else, our heart remains German,” he says in a conversation with Steffen (358) – the reformatory cannot help him, but Steffen’s “morbid escapism” is curable (257). This, however, means that it is not enough to

reject an unidealistic America; idealism itself is questioned. Steffen must review not only his attitude towards life but also towards literature. The overall tendency, namely that one should stay home and pursue an honest trade, is accompanied by a philosophical restlessness. Although Bertz does find his place, also intellectually, in Wilhelm II's Germany following his repatriation in 1890 (Gissing, *Letters*, 107), documented particularly well by *Glück und Glas*, he upholds his critique of capitalism. Bertz's hero is the eternal schoolmaster and longs for the "dear narrowness of the Old World" (444), but the author is hardly so conformist. Steffen is a Don Quixote (267, 384), a fool and an ass (375), who has learned to laugh at himself (381) and to be satisfied. The motif of renunciation (266, 328, 352, 371) plays a central role. But idealism is not thrown out altogether, merely reformed. In a slightly whining tone, Steffen says to Klothilde: "O, my friend [...] the martyrdom of the idealist is the severest on earth" (411). One is reminded of

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American novels with the "international theme," but the roles are reversed: the Buntings, the Will Wimbles, and Steffen, are European "innocents abroad." Joseph the Provider, however, proves that it is also possible to make money in Egypt without compromising one's soul. Bertz lays it on thick when he decorates Joseph's room with pictures of the Kaiser, Frederick the Great, the Crown Prince, Bismarck and Moltke. But in comparison with Kürnberger, the German mission in the U.S. is a moderate one. In the vicinity of his farm, Steffen finds a German book, Arnd's *Paradies-Gärtlein*, which belongs to the Stonecreeks (formerly Steinbach), whose "disappearance among the mixed American people" is a lesson for Karl: he now wants to watch over his Germanness as carefully as over his honor.

Tennessee's backwoods people are presented as lazy, wily and egotistical; Karl has reason to recall "odi profanum vulgus" (141) and to distance himself from the "Arcadian dealings of the tattered gang, from the noisy, dirty children and their starving curs" (364). However, Dr. Floyd also teaches him to judge the conditions in the backwoods and generally to view Americans as a people "in awkward adolescence" (257). The physician assists him in responding to Mrs. Romney's demand to be fair to America. Seven years prior to Ludwig Max Goldberger's *Das Land der unbegrenzten Möglichkeiten* (The Country of Unlimited Opportunities, 1903), he employs this topos, relating it not to economic but to moral life. According to Floyd, "everything is possible" in America (274); in Mrs. Romney's view, Emerson's "classical character" guarantees an "unlimited fund of moral renewal" (73). When Steffen, in the course of his final weeks in the country

reached for works by American poets and thinkers, he had to admit that he did not even know yet the best aspects of this great people [...] Emerson, with his purity and depth, Walt Whitman, with his universal sympathy, proved the unlimited opportunities for a higher development. (383)

Thus, Gissing was able to write to the author: "... you have dealt generously with America, though, very rightly, you throw light upon the hateful side of American life" (214-16). He recognized Bertz's philosophical ambition: "You have so treated an episode of colonial life (in itself very interesting) as to make it symbolical of the history of humanity." He praised the construction and fell himself – for Bertz's sake? – into allegory: "One closes the book with a sense of satisfaction, of repose after unutterable struggle – the true epic struggle between man and fate." Finally, he emphasized the novel's difference from his own production:

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Now if I had written a book on this theme, the flavour at the end would be

bitterness. Not so with you. And you are on the side of all the great masters.
[...] You draw the line admirably between Quixotism and true idealism.

Gissing did not mention one structural characteristic which likens *Das Sabinergut* technically to the American "romance." Bertz dramatizes his theme through four landscapes: the Mark Brandenburg as the hero's native land, the Sabine Hills as his ideal landscape, England and America as lands of exile. All these countries were also known to Gissing, who, unlike Bertz, managed to get to Italy as well. When he visited his friend in Potsdam in 1898 (the only time this happened), he not only complained about the raw ham Bertz served for breakfast, but wrote about the heart of Prussia: "The sheer *commonness* of it all, after Italy" (*Diary*, 490). Steffen, on the other hand, thinks about the "inexhaustibly deep lakes of the Mark [Brandenburg], the quiet, perpetual Havel, the river of his native land" even in the very moment when he is touched by the "gracefulness of this rural idyll" of the Tennessee mountains (263-64). Unfortunately the novel loses some of its power by the fact that Steffen is a voluntary exile. Chapter VII, however, which is central for Karl's development, can be read like a palimpsest; the author's past as a political refugee, otherwise suppressed in the novel, shines through.

The hero is a dreamer, but also a brooder, just like Faust; "philosophy [...] had merely led him to despair of the faculty of human perception" (64). As rebel against the "schoolmaster rigidity of the father" (281), shaped by his mother's love for nature, he is easily seduced by Sir Austin's treatise *Ver Sacrum*, assisted by Emerson's idea of a new beginning possible at any time (82). The main culprit, however, is Horace, whose picture he has in his London room, together with Homer's bust. "For the German dreamer, they both embody the attraction of nature [...]: classical philology protested against its own restraints through its noblest representatives" (83). He feels closer to Horace, who is modern and suffers because the great God Pan is dead. Steffen admires Horace's wise stoicism, although he has to admit: "But the healing power of the Roman did not reach to the deepest level of passion [...] From what tortures the innermost soul, suffering human beings can only deliver themselves" (84). Sir Austin's enthusiasm strikes a familiar chord in Karl's mind; he recalls the blue flower of German Romanticism, dreams of an Island of the Blessed, and hopes to find his "ardently longed-for *Sabinergut* in the Cumberland Mountains" (88). There is one remark hardly related

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to the rest of the novel which opens up a political dimension otherwise carefully avoided: "The truth which he had searched for had receded to ever greater distance from his groping hands; freedom had turned out to be yet another version of bondage" (88). If this is a blow against social democracy, America and the fate of the colony have also spoiled capitalism for Steffen. At the beginning of the novel, he still has one-half of his small fortune, "secured by mortgage" in his native country. He converts it into cash because where in Europe would he have been able to "buy a *Sabinergut*" for 600 Marks (91)? However, he has to learn that land registers in the U.S. are not administered in Prussian ways. In contrast to Kürnberger's Dr. Moorfeld, Bertz's hero is allowed a tolerable balance between gain and loss. Steffen loses his Don Quixotic character, but his idealism is confirmed, if only in a minor form, that of resignation. The utopia which is destroyed is not only that of the ideal colony. In his first short marriage, Steffen already had a favorite spot at the far end of his garden: "There to sit with Horace, to be permitted to say to yourself that the promise of poetry is fulfilled in life, – he desired nothing better" (10). But poetry is not fulfilled through life and life not through poetry.

Steffen has written an essay about Horace (9) and raves to Mrs. Romney about the Sabine Mountains as if he had been there himself (68); also, he prefers Horace over Stephens' *Book of the Farm* (113, 134-35). In Tennessee, he starts to have doubts as the idyll turns out to be decidedly Spartan. Does the youth have to "gladly suffer narrowness and poverty?" (187) Would

the poet himself have placed his Estate here? “And if Juvenal had joined him, certainly, he would have said for a second time: It is difficult not to write a satire” (187). Solitude and stoicism do not suffice (271), even though he chooses Vergil’s “Fortunatus est ille, deos qui novit agrestes” as an inscription (298). It is the “arrogance of these autocrats and barons of the desert,” of the inhabitants of the backwoods, which brings out the European aristocrat in him. As they do not want to work, he has to do it, and he discovers that “division of labor is the condition of all advanced life. In order to enjoy his *Sabinergut* he would need eight slaves, just like Horace” (349). Instead of seats in the shady and beautiful corners of his estate and inscriptions from Horace about the joys of country life, “only ‘benches of Sighs’ would have been adequate, and as inscriptions lamentations from the *Tristia* by the banished Ovid” (349).

The German poet Friedrich Rückert might have been able to spare him the trip to Tennessee, had Steffen known in time the passage reporting on a trip to the Sabine country:

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In Horace a passage
I read, where everything was more beautiful
Than I found it here.

Steffen is educated enough to know how “nature in Italy had degenerated since the days of classical antiquity through senseless deforestation and mismanagement” (351), but in principle, Rückert is correct and his criticism of Horace cannot be withdrawn. Steffen now discovers that there was little modesty in the poet; rather, Horace lived like a “poetry-writing rentier of our day, who is popular at court, pampered by influential friends, lives in his beautiful house in Berlin surrounded by a host of servants” (352-53). Horace was an “egotistical old bachelor” and a “pleasure-loving epicurean, whose pathetic moralistic phrases do not have much depth, and who was hardly willing to do without anything he could not easily dispense with” (353). Steffen needs something in addition to Horace, so the author puts at his side Klothilde, who has no Latin but who knows “*quod satis est*” (100).

The motif of modesty intensifies into renunciation (“*Entsagung*”). Steffen becomes absorbed in Goethe’s works and feels that this is the right way (364); Bertz, however, does not attempt to use Goethe’s American motifs or to recall the renunciation of *Wilhelm Meister’s Travels*. This is certainly better because the critique of Horace would have had to be addressed to Goethe as well. Poetry and life also fall apart in that Steffen enjoys “the most delicious irony: the Bandusian fountain yields oil” (474), whereas Bertz looks at things more grimly. When he introduced Gissing to the German public in 1889, he reported the Englishman’s *Weltanschauung* to be “deeply pessimistic and his final word to be: renunciation. The deepest pessimism is definitely a child of the purest idealism” (Bertz, “George Gissing,” 367). Steffen attempts a compromise: “Life teaches us to be modest in all things, and old Horace is confirmed in the end, albeit in a different way from what I used to believe” (380).

Das Sabinergut is a philosophical novel about America, whose negative impressions, even where they seem to be clichés (Yankee Doodle as national anthem, 336; land of humbug, 348), are cancelled out by the reflection on why, whence, and whither. Dr. Floyd’s “sound competence,” which “forms the positive human center of America’s character in spite of the excesses of the barbarism of an unfinished people and which promises a nobler period of maturity to the New World in the future” (481), meets with respect. But Bertz, who admitted to some flaws in his artistry (Gissing, *Letters*, 195), was too much of a philosopher not to want to

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get at the bottom of things and to think them through to the end. Finally, he, like George

Santayana in the same period, dismissed the New World in a “double-bind”: it was damned if it was not ideal and damned also if it attempted to be ideal. In *Die Weltharmonie: Monistische Betrachtungen* (Global Harmony: Reflections of a Monist, 1908), Bertz once more dealt with American philosophy from Emerson up to William James.

There was a decade of frustration for Bertz between *Das Sabinergut* and *Die Weltharmonie*. It started with the fact that his mother was unable to differentiate between fact and fiction. She probably took literally the passage of the novel where it says: “at this girl’s side, he could have hoped to fulfill his purest humanity” (405). Gissing wrote on 28 May 1896: “Alas! I don’t like this behaviour of your mother’s. She ought not to use that tone with you. It is monstrous to press upon anyone such a dubious experiment as that of marriage” (Gissing, *Letters*, 221). On 2 June 1893, Gissing had written: “More than half the misery of life is due to the ignorance and childishness of women” (Gissing, *Letters*, 171). Bertz did not only remain a bachelor, he also cultivated a rather male philosophy: “A female hand is good for those wanting to relax from their work; but for the rough seriousness of life, we need a male philosophy” (*Weltharmonie*, 51). In the same book, he described male hysteria as the psychological epidemic of his time (87). As he himself had provided a few examples of hysteria in the course of his controversy with Johannes Schlaf over Whitman’s homosexuality, a fact so far not sufficiently appreciated must be recalled here. In the Germany of 1907, following the accusations of Maximilian Harden against the Kaiser’s friend, Fürst Philipp zu Eulenburg-Hertefeld, it was as explosive to write about this topic as it was in England after the Oscar Wilde trials.⁶ A few years earlier, his plan to edit Gissing’s letters had failed. Gabrielle Fleury had misgivings; Bertz acted ethically and not practically and gave up on his plan (Young, 235-36).

The rejection of American philosophy in *Die Weltharmonie* cannot be explained by anti-Americanism alone. According to Bertz, subjectivism and anthropomorphism (again recalling Santayana) must be overcome. However, it seems “indeed consistent, that in America, especially, where the human individual proudly learned to become the creator of a New World, instinctual optimism was significantly expressed. Emerson’s position on this question [...] can be regarded as typical” (38). Bertz’s synthesis between older conceptions of harmony and Darwinism is even less satisfactory than Santayana’s philosophy; it is neither consistent nor

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comforting: “Harmony is merely what remains after billions of disharmonious individuals have been eliminated by starvation, cold, and ravenous enemies. [...] The conformists are the harmonious and they may triumph” (143). The conflict between conformism and ethics presented in *Das Sabinergut* remains (147). Optimism is either illusion or insensibility, “the mysticism of the chubby-faced journeyman butcher” (162). William James is now added to rejected seducers such as Emerson and Whitman. James’ “fascinating way of presentation addresses instinct more than reason” and is said to be responsible for the “superficiality of a following which is satisfied with tempting half- or apparent truths” (163).

For Bertz, the best remedy against American optimism is the work of Schopenhauer who teaches us that

true sacredness is expressed solely through sacrificing one’s own life in the service of humanity. The highest, most beneficial heroism is included in this service; it is way above the spirit of America. And as we do not want to be Americanized, we pick up the rock which was thrown across the ocean at our great moralist and throw it back across the water. (165)

In claiming that the “supreme harmony of our soul is the drive to harmony itself”(172), Bertz is closer to William James’ “will to believe” than he suspects. The book concludes with an

old-fashioned, passionate rhetoric: the noble ideal must be defended against the common and the mean.

Although Bertz is successful neither as philosopher nor as writer of romances, his philosophical American novel does have merits. His motivations were better than those of Kürnberger or Dickens. Whereas Kürnberger carried out a publisher's commission and fretted about not being able to devote himself to his idealistic poem *Firdusi* (Lang, 1981: 60), Dickens was so mad about the American press and the pirated editions of his works that he forgot how much Americans had celebrated him and what good words he himself had earlier found for America. He sent Martin Chuzzlewit to America, where he had little to do according to the logic of the plot (Moss, *passim*). Bertz attempted to be just. But the conflict of his life burst through the shell of the well-constructed novel with its happy ending. There are three preconditions for obtaining a Sabine farm: an oeuvre, a patron, and the wisdom to choose the victorious side in a civil war. Bertz did not get very far in any of these. Although he attempted to conform, he never achieved harmony. It remained a theoretical concept – as did Klothilde.

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¹All quotations from German sources, including Bertz's works, are translated.

²The *Gesamtverzeichnis des deutschen Schrifttums, 1700-1910*, the German bibliography, shows that *Das Sabinergut* was published in several editions. The second edition appeared serially in the *Deutsche Romane* series in 1902, and in volume form in 1903; the third edition appeared under the title *Amerika, du hast es besser* in 1909. The first edition was reprinted once (10,000-12,000 copies). His book *Glück und Glas* (Fortune and Glass) had two editions; *Der blinde Eros* (The Blind Eros, 1900) one.

³Mack and Armytage's biography of Thomas Hughes devotes Chapter 14 to the Rugby colony. A comparison with this shows the degree of Bertz's allegorization and dramatization, although he did keep the basic outline. According to Dr. Susan Schneibel (letter from Oliver Springs, Tennessee, 29 July 1986), the library assembled by Bertz, including many German books, can still be inspected. Personal papers are also accessible. In studies on Tennessee's utopian colonies, Bertz is only mentioned as a librarian. A letter from Eduard Bertz to Walt Whitman of 20 July 1889 (see Walter Grünzweig, ed., "Adulation and Paranoia: Eduard Bertz's Whitman Correspondence," *Gissing Journal*, July 1991, pp. 5-10) briefly summarizes his time in Rugby. Bertz admits to the breakdown of his health due to overwork and reports that he had come to know Hughes personally. Karl's work as a nurse is documented; what is important is that the land in the romantic wilderness was still Bertz's property in 1889. Bertz's remark that he is in opposition to the spirit of the German Reich is his most relevant comment for a reading of *Das Sabinergut*. The patriotic tone in *Glück und Glas* and in his second novel would thus be primarily camouflage.

⁴One of the most popular references used in German literary studies, Kosch's *Deutsches Literaturlexikon*, has a short note (without death date) in its 3rd edition of 1968. Franz Brümmer's *Lexikon der deutschen Dichter und Prosaisten* (4th ed.) is based on Hinrichsen. *Die Novelle. Ein kritisches Lexikon über die bekanntesten Dichter der Gegenwart mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Novellisten* (1896) merely adds: "Now lives in Berlin as writer of books for young people and author of romances" (169). German-nationalist and anti-semitic literary historian Adolf Bartels calls Bertz's novels "full of substance" (65), but devotes only a little over two lines to him in *Die deutsche Dichtung von Hebbel bis zur Gegenwart: Ein Grundriß* (1922). Unfortunately no run of Ottmann's *Litterarisches Echo* (not to be confused with Ettlinger's well-known later publication of the same title to which Bertz also contributed) seems available. Ottmann's *Litterarisches Echo* contains an autobiographical notice by Bertz (*Gissing, Letters*, 142). Bertz research requires much expense both in time and travel; the present study required trips to four countries all taken at the author's own writing-desk.

⁵Gissing research shows how much the knowledge of a second-rate author is necessary for the determination of detailed questions raised by the works of a first-rate author. It is very difficult to decide what, in a fictional character such as Walter Egremont, must be attributed to the author and what to his friend. Arthur C. Young never had access to *Das Sabinergut* (Gissing, *Letters*, 216, note 553).

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⁶See my article "Eduard Bertz vs. Johannes Schlaf: The Debate on Whitman's Homosexuality in Germany"; Walter Grünzweig, *Walt Whitman: Die deutschsprachige Rezeption als interkulturelles Phänomen*. München: Fink, 1991; Walter Grünzweig, ed., "Adulation and Paranoia: Eduard Bertz's Whitman Correspondence," *Gissing Journal*, July 1991, pp. 1-20; October 1991, pp. 16-35.

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A Writer's Novitiate
An Unpublished Essay by Morley Roberts

Pierre Coustillas

It has been known for over three decades that Morley Roberts's papers – what is left of them at all events – are held by the University of Pennsylvania. Some idea of their bulk and significance to Gissing scholars was given by T. E. M. Boll in *The Library Chronicle* for Spring and Summer 1961, but they have not yet been turned to any significant account, even by the two or three scholars whose interest in Morley Roberts is common knowledge. Only the letters that Roberts wrote to Gissing in 1884-86 have been published. Gissing's letters to Roberts are, with a few exceptions, in the Berg Collection and they are gradually being included in his collected correspondence. The relations between the two writers were described by Roberts in a few articles published both before and after Roberts's major contribution to Gissing studies, *The Private Life of Henry Maitland* (1912), and of course Gissing's name appears in a number of letters to members of his own family and in articles whose titles give no definite promise of any mention of Gissing. The following piece, apparently unpublished, is one of these. T. E. M. Boll does not mention it, but he does list Roberts's source, "an account book for four months of 1888," although, as will be seen in the article itself, this date is slightly misleading.

"A Writer's Novitiate" has been preserved in the form of a typescript of eleven pages preceded by a title page which, besides the title, reads "from Morley Roberts/ Authors Club/ 3

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Whitehall Court/ SW," the address being crossed out and replaced by "Tappington Grange, Wadhurst, Sussex." Some corrections in Roberts's hand occur on most pages. They are essentially stylistic. Only one four-line passage (p. 10) has been cancelled and rendered practically illegible, and the typescript is signed quite legibly "Morley Roberts." Internal evidence – the reference to his first book, *The Western Avernus* (1887), having been followed at the time of writing by "more than thirty companions" – together with the Tappington Grange address, suggests that "A Writer's Novitiate" was written in 1905 at the latest, but not earlier than 1903, when *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, mentioned in the first paragraph, was published.

The bohemian period about which Roberts reminisces must, if his account can be fully trusted, have covered the last quarter of 1887 and January 1888. Shortly afterwards a letter from Gissing to his brother dated 20 March 1888 shows Roberts going through experiences much like those described in the article: "Roberts is struggling on, in extreme poverty, unable to get things accepted as yet. I have my fears for his future." By July articles from his pen had been accepted

by the editor of *Murray's Magazine* and he was taking his first steps in the world of literary journalism. He was then living at 4 Danvers Street, Chelsea, a street off Cheyne Walk, only a short walking distance from Gissing's former home at 17 Oakley Crescent and from another Roberts' address in Manresa Road.

The lifestyle Roberts describes here can easily be imagined as part of Gissing's own background in late 1887 and early 1888 when he was giving lessons to Bernard Harrison, reading proofs of *A Life's Morning* for the *Cornhill Magazine*, trying in vain to write a new novel and reading Thucydides, commenting enthusiastically on Margaret L. Woods' *A Village Tragedy* and looking forward with apprehension to the beginning of his brother Algernon's literary career. Gissing's presence can occasionally be sensed between the lines of Roberts's essay. That "friend of mine," who was not an artist and with whom he begins to read the Greek dramatists once more, was obviously Gissing, but surely the two men did not meet "almost every night for some months." They usually met once a week, on Sundays. An evening they spent together at Roberts's new address is recorded in Gissing's diary for New Year's Day 1888: "Was led to remonstrate with him on his choice of morbid subjects for stories," stories which found no publisher, except for *In Low Relief*, "the extraordinarily morbid piece of work which was to bring me fame." Less than two years later Chapman brought out the story in two volumes and Gissing's diary entry on the day he heard from Roberts about the arrangements for

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the publication of the book may serve as a footnote (and correction) to Roberts's statement that "years afterwards it brought me £25 on account of royalties and never earned it." "Went to Roberts', and we dined at S. Kensington Museum. He has just sold his 2 vol. novel 'In Low Relief' – a story literally out of his own recent life, – to Chapman, for £25 and ½ profits. Not a little elated. Must quote the remarkable utterance of his. 'How easy it is to raise oneself above the common run of literary men! And after all, what are we? Very commonplace fellows, in reality.' *The naïveté* of this is not to be surpassed" (Diary, 12 April 1890).

Perhaps some of this *naïveté* is still to be found in the following recollections, but some of the wisdom of hindsight as well. "I know now," Roberts admits, "that I had a horrible time and I recognise that much of my suffering was due to a foolish and intolerable pride." Not much of what Morley Roberts wrote after his "novitiate" is still alive or likely to be restored to life – only his fictionalized biography of Gissing, *The Private Life of Henry Maitland*, the last edition of which was published one third of a century ago, is now frequently referred to by scholars. However, Roberts's life and career ran parallel to Gissing's for forty-six years and he is not likely to fall into utter oblivion. He could never forget his former college friend. Among the last letters he wrote in the early 1940s the name of Gissing still crops up. Roberts was to die a lonely man and he eventually made the touching confession that his own solitude now enabled him to understand Gissing's desperate behaviour when he thought, in the summer and autumn of 1890, that a continuation of his present miseries was no longer tolerable. By the side of Gissing Roberts will at least remain a sort of Milvain-cum-Whelpdale whom Gissing chose to split into two when he wrote *New Grub Street*. Compiling a bibliography of his contributions to the press would require Herculean labours – which are perhaps in a fair way to bearing fruit in Queensland, provided the projected volume on Roberts in the Victorian Fiction Research Guides materializes. If the quest for material has been conducted widely enough, we shall doubtless be told where his advertisements in verse for the Sunlight Soap Company appeared in and after September 1889. Gissing's satirical allusion to them still awaits documentation!

["A Writer's Novitiate" is part of the Morley Roberts Papers, Special Collections, Van Pelt Library, University of Pennsylvania. For kind permission to publish it thanks are due to the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania and to Nancy M. Shawcross, Curator of Manuscripts.]

A Writer's Novitiate

I have a little paper book in my possession which contains the accounts I kept of all my expenses during the first months I lived in Chelsea at the beginning of my life as a writer. I cannot help thinking that some few excerpts from it will be of interest both to my fellows and to others, for it is the only document of its kind that I have ever come across, and it recalls to me a thousand things that in the ordinary course of time would have passed from my memory. It reminds me of the days of a poverty almost equal to that at which George Gissing hinted in the sombre pages of *Henry Ryecroft*,¹ for I was poor indeed.

A year before I went to live in Chelsea I had written a book which was an immediate success. I had even sold it for fifty pounds, a sum that I had never had in my possession before.² This led me to think that making money by writing was not so difficult as I had imagined and instead of going back to my life on the borders of the Empire I determined to stay in England and become a writer. I spent the first year after the publication of this book in my father's house³ and during that time the writing habit became incurable. It is true that my first success was not followed up. I found that there was an immense difference between writing a book on a subject of which I was full to the very lips and going on to write of things partly or wholly imagined. About the time that I made this discovery I found it advisable to go and live by myself. At home I had no solitude and I soon saw that solitude was more and more necessary as my nerves began to suffer from a life in London. My father who had, I think, little hope of my ultimate success in the line I had taken, was good enough to allow me ten shillings a week and with that behind me I began. I took a single room, in a back street near the river and not far from Cheyne Walk, which cost me four shillings a week unfurnished. I am aware that this was an extravagant price to pay but I found nothing that I could endure at less, and I was prepared to starve a little rather than live in some of the cheaper dens I inspected. To this room I transported some furniture that my people gave me and, as I still had about two pounds remaining from the money which I got from my first book, with that I bought the odds and ends which were necessary for a man who was in unfurnished lodgings without attendance. On the fly of my little book there is a list of the things I bought. They were a fender and fire irons: a coal scuttle and dust-pan and blacking brushes. I found that I had no looking-glass and I made a note to buy one. I did so after I had shaved for some months by the aid of my dim reflection in the glass of an etching that I had

brought from home. I see in my list the words 'blinds' and 'curtains.' These I did without for some weeks, and I then got two old curtains from home. The blinds came a long time afterwards, when I sold something and made a pound or two.

I went into my solitary room on the 23 September 1887, and as my folks sent over my traps at their own expense, I only spent that day some three shillings and threepence. Of this eleven pence went for an oil-tin and a funnel. I bought a penny bottle of ink, some few envelopes for two-pence halfpenny and an ounce of tobacco which cost four-pence halfpenny. I gave the man who brought over my things a shilling and paid eightpence for a bus fare and the carriage of a parcel. I was installed and made my own bed and slept well, not conscious of the hard times that were before me. If I had been conscious of them I do not think it would have made much difference as I had learnt what it was to suffer and endure in other countries than England.⁴ I did not even sleep in sheets. I 'dossed' in the very same blankets that I had carried over a great part of Western America. It is impossible for the average comfortable citizen to understand how disagreeable sheets become after some thousands of nights spent in wool. On

this point I seek no sympathy. It took me years to learn to resign myself to cold linen.

In the new neighbourhood to which I had come I found my friends among the artists,⁵ many of whom were as poor as myself. Several of them are still my friends and many of them are much better known than myself, though by this time the single book which then stood to my credit has more than thirty companions. I hear it said by the successful that there is no Bohemia. I see no reason why there should not be. Where two artists of whatever kind exist on credit and high ideals there the ancient kingdom still exists and will exist. A few years cannot alter the root facts of young humanity at war with convention and the commercial system. Even now I dare swear there are writers learning their business on a little oatmeal and destroying their digestion as I did on canned corned beef. Even yet perhaps some writers and artists are making their one big meal of the day on fried fish brought in a newspaper from the nearest fried fish-shop. Bohemia still exists and its Shakespearian shores are crowded with strange wrecks.

As I have said I had to live on ten shillings a week and what I could make over and above that sum. The book from which I take my figures was only kept for some months, in order that I might keep within limits. As soon as I found that I had brought myself to a clear understanding of the situation I gave up keeping it. And after a few months I began to make a few pounds here

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and there. I have often been asked since why I did not take to journalism. I can only say that I did not and could not. Whatever gifts I might have I was certainly lacking in the swiftness of mind which sees a subject in the daily press and goes home to dash something off which gets a market at once. I often saw the subject and often wrote something about it, but by the time it was ready the swift world had passed me and my article was useless. I had to write for the Magazines⁶ and for the greater part they rejected me with wonderful unanimity. I had to learn what they wanted and I could not teach them to want me. So I learnt and suffered and starved and put as good a face on it as I could. It was a hard time, a bitter hard time, and looking back on it I wonder how I ever pulled through.

My expenses for the first month in Chelsea amounted to exactly £3.06. On one memorable day I spent nothing at all. This day is marked in my book with a note of exclamation as well it might be. On another day I find that a penny is put down as 'charity.' A note declares that this penny was given to a little girl to pay her fare home. Threepence a week went for the *Athenæum* which was the only literary paper I ever saw. I smoked at least three ounces of tobacco a week and it often stood me in stead of food as it had done in other days in Australia and America. On some weeks the money actually spent on food was only three and sixpence. On one it was actually no more than one and elevenpence, but on that week I have no doubt I went out to eat with someone else, unless indeed it was then that I lay in bed with a sulky determination to starve to death and have [done] with it. Living as I did it will surprise no one, I think, that I was subject to fits of depression which were sometimes dangerously severe. The food I ate was indigestible and for the most part cold. This gave me indigestion and a congested liver. Doubtless this was the case when I determined to die. The rest I gave my wretched stomach cured me of the depression and on the third day I rose and 'rustled' for something to eat. I was not beaten after all in spite of cold corned beef. Of course at this time I cooked all my own food on a grid or in a frying pan over the fire in my own room. This fire cost me on an average a shilling a week or perhaps a penny or two more if the coals I bought in the street went up in price. This means that I ran a fire on a hundred weight of coals a week, or sixteen pounds a day. I found when I was exceptionally hard up that I could keep in a little fire for several hours a day on only eight pounds. If I had to let it out I used to go round to a studio and get a warm at some artist's stove. It was however no unfrequent thing to find that the merchant in coke had refused

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my especial friend any further credit. We were certainly poor: there is no mistake about that.

Living as I did it is no wonder that I got into bad habits of working. I used to find getting up at a reasonable hour an impossibility. I put this down to my digestion and to the beginnings of gout which I inherit from both sides of my family. I got later and later and when I was working on a long novel, which was published many years afterwards, I ended in beginning work at ten and eleven o'clock at night. I used to get up at four in the afternoon and sometimes even later and make my breakfast. After that I would go out and see some of my friends in their studios, and when most people, even in the slums, were thinking of going to bed, I sat down to the extraordinarily morbid piece of work which was to bring me fame. Years afterwards it brought me £25 on account of royalties and never earned it. As I worked I smoked furiously and hardly rose from my chair till I heard the sparrows twittering in the gutter above my window. By that time I was tired but too much excited by the ardour of composition to go to bed at once and I usually sat for some time reading in front of my poor little fire. When the dawn began to show itself on the river I tumbled into my travelled blankets and slept through the uproar of the waking day. I can imagine no course of life more thoroughly unhealthy than this. I have doubtless paid for it since, although I must have been endowed with endurance of evil conditions far beyond the common.

When this book was finished I returned slowly to more usual ways of living. I got up at noon and saw a little more of the sun and had some pleasure in the hope that this great book of mine would bring me into notice again and renew my faith in destiny. I began to take an interest in other things and in company with a friend of mine, who was not an artist, I commenced to read the Greek dramatists once more. In the years of my wanderings I had forgotten almost all the Greek I ever knew and my friend was in the same case. Yet we went to work with enthusiasm and almost every night for some months we read Aeschylus and Sophocles. The way we worked would have made an old-fashioned schoolmaster tear his hair for we wanted to get at the poetry of the plays and did not disdain any kind of crib. But when we had read a play once we read it again and again and it was not long before we knew a dozen of these ancient masterpieces almost by heart. And all this time I should have been trying to make money. Instead of doing so I ate and drank Greek and thought of little else so long as I got a crust of bread. It is literally true that I often had no more and it is as true that sometimes I had not even

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that. When the first winter came on I had an exceptionally bad time for one week. I remember going home one night in bitter frost and finding a wretched starving cat on my windy doorstep. I have always had a passion for cats and this poor animal excited my pity so that I picked her up and took her in with me. She had been starved till she was no more than the shadow of a cat and was madly hungry. I carried her to my room and searched for something which she could eat. I say 'searched' advisedly for I knew well enough that I had neither meat nor milk in my cupboard. There was in fact nothing for her but a lump of old stale bread and when I gave her that she fell on it with tooth and claw as if it had been a bird. And now I who could not keep myself, was saddled with a pet. She had even eaten my last lump of bread and I had none for myself although I too was hungry. She slept that night in my room and in the morning I begged a little milk for her from my landlady who, knowing my circumstances, promptly told me that I was no better than a fool. The cat was an incubus on me for some days and then the landlady found a home for her elsewhere. At least she said she did. I had my suspicions that the home was the river and I did not dare to ask.

Probably few who read this will realise without some assistance what renting a room without attendance means. It means of course that I was in all respects my own servant. I did all my own cooking and all my own washing up. I cleaned my own room or at any rate I swept it.

At rare intervals, which however grew less rare as I began to make a little money, I had a charwoman in who washed the room down. I went out into the street and bought my own coals. When I wanted bread I went out and fetched it. My milk I bought in ha'-porths from the street vendors of what passes for milk in London. My groceries I got at a neighbouring shop which disdained not to sell bacon in rashers. When my exchequer warranted the extravagance and I wanted meat I bought it and brought it home in a piece of newspaper. I found my old experience of cooking in the wild places of the earth a great assistance to me in the wild parts of Chelsea. I was my own man, my own master, my own servant. There are times when I think a little experience of this kind would do some of my friends not a small amount of good. It makes one tolerant of the failures of those who wait on their social superiors. And when abroad I had worked for others and understood what it was for those who were over me not to comprehend the real meaning of the orders that they gave. There is such a thing as ignorance amongst those who think they know. One of the things that pleased me most in my life was the fact that I once ventured to give a lady a lecture on the management of her servants, and a long time afterwards

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her husband told me that she said everything in her household had gone much more smoothly since. I have some idea of what work is and what liberty is worth.

My recreations during this portion of my novitiate were naturally very few. In fact I had none but visiting my artist friends and playing chess. This game had always been a passion with me and it came within measurable distance of preventing me doing anything else. It is a game which has ruined the worldly prospects of many men, some of whom I have known. I played chess when I should be working and as I had to play it in a public restaurant it cost me at any rate the price of a cup of coffee and a penny for the waiter. I played it fairly well and sometimes played for money in order to eke out my poor livelihood. I remember once going in a state of desperate hunger to the place in which I played. I had sixpence in my pocket and that meant so little in the way of food that I determined to play for money if I could. I found someone in the café that I knew and I offered to play him for a shilling, knowing that if I lost I could pay him the other sixpence some other day. We were fairly matched but I was perhaps a trifle stronger than he. I felt confident and was careless and presently got into such a position that I had to sacrifice a knight to extricate myself. The odds were then largely on him. But I was desperate and now played as I had never played before. After an hour of the closest play I found myself in a winning position and a few minutes later I was in possession of one shilling and sixpence. I spent it all on food and walked home. This was a red-letter night indeed. I had had no such meal for many days: for it was rare for me to get enough except on those days that I went home to my people and had something there. As human nature is what it is I never went home when I was at my lowest and no one there knew the straits to which I was so often reduced. Yet my total expenses to a penny for the first three months of my life in Chelsea were only £8.10.6.

It must be quite obvious, even to the poor, that these expenses included nothing for clothes. I came to Chelsea with a poor enough stock but by the greatest care and some work with the needle, which I had learnt to use roughly while I was abroad, I managed to preserve a comparatively decent appearance. On rare occasions I even went out to dinner at houses where people would have been horrified to learn that I had eaten nothing that day and possibly nothing the day before. To consort with the comfortably situated at these times made me laugh. It was so odd to notice the point of view of the average person with regard to poverty, if it was ever

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discussed. It gave me extreme pleasure to speak of my own experiences of that very week as if they were experiences of days long past before I became a successful writer. It was a kind of

pose which did no one any harm.⁷ But it was only very seldom that I went into this kind of society. I have been prevented from accepting an invitation by the impossibility of getting a clean white tie. On the whole I was infinitely happier in a studio discussing art, or in my room with Aeschylus.

I know now that I had a horrible time and I recognise that much of my suffering was due to a foolish and intolerable pride. And yet it was the same kind of pride that forbids the very poor to seek the kind or unkind help of the relieving officer. I could only tell those who were as poor as myself how poor I was. No doubt I ought to have attempted some journalism. But I could not stand a rebuff when to endure it meant attaining something that I wanted. It is far easier to put up with the insolence of fools when they can make no difference to one. But perhaps the fact that I could not worry editors and the like was in the end the best thing for me. I learnt an amazing deal about myself in those days and in such circumstances one learns the truth and not the current lies that furnish many writers with the means of an immediate and unworthy success. In truth I was a dreamer like so many men of active life who have left activity for another kind of work. I needed the hardest, bitterest stimulus to work at all at the discovery of what was in me. I suppose I believed in myself in those days, for if I had not done so I should have thrown up the sponge and have gone back to the rim of the Empire once again. If I had taken to working on newspapers I should be working on them now and I might have been writing articles till I died full of the words that with the average journalist pass for thinking. I have never been very successful and, as I know, I never shall be,⁸ but in one way I have attained to success. What I say or what I write is very much my own and that it is so is very largely due to the fact that I had to work out my own salvation in long years of such a bitter apprenticeship as I endured in Chelsea with no more than the help of a few books and the help that comes from the true companionship of kindred spirits. It is hard above all things to be one's self, for this is the last thing that the world asks of any man.

Morley Roberts

¹Roberts means those sections of Spring in which Gissing related his early literary experiences in the slums of London.

²The success of *The Western Avernus* (Smith, Elder, 1887) was doubtful and not quite immediate. Smith, Elder's ledgers show that Roberts did sell the copyright for £50, but that

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only 497 copies were disposed of in 1887, and another 117 by 1894, when Roberts bought back the copyright and the 833 unsold copies for £35. Constable published a new edition in 1896.

³William Henry Roberts, Superintendent Surveyor of Taxes, lived with his wife Catherine and their three daughters Marion, Bertha Annie and Florence Ida at 14 The Grove, Clapham Common, with Don, Bertz's former dog and sole witness of his adventures in Tennessee.

⁴He means Australia, Canada and the United States.

⁵These friends among the artists appear in Gissing's correspondence of the period as well as in *The Private Life of Henry Maitland* under pseudonyms. They were such men as Alfred Hartley (1855-1933; a member of the Quadrilateral, with Roberts, Gissing and W. H. Hudson), A. D. McCormick (1860-1943), Stirling Lee (1856-1916), and Frank Brangwyn (1867-1956). See Roberts's article "A Colony of Artists" in the *Scottish Art Review* for August 1889, pp. 72-77. Lee, a sculptor, was the founder of the New English Art Club and the International Exhibition of Painters, Etchers and Sculptors. Brangwyn was to be knighted in 1941, and there is a Brangwyn Museum in Bruges, his birthplace.

⁶Again Gissing's correspondence contains references to Roberts's contributions to periodicals at the time. *The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals* gives additional references. Roberts was thinking of his contributions to the *English Illustrated Magazine*, Murray's

Magazine, the *Cornhill Magazine*, the *Scottish Art Review* and *Macmillan's Magazine*.

⁷Roberts cancelled four lines after "any harm," but they are practically illegible: "and gave me the opportunity of laughing in my sleeve at some of the..."

⁸Confirmation of this pessimistic forecast can be found in the fact that Roberts had to apply for a pension on the Civil List in 1921.

We visit Gissing

Anthony Curtis
Kensington, London

At the end of April 1993 my wife and I visited Gissing. Now wait a minute! Gissing died ninety years ago in 1903 – which Gissing are you talking about? Alfred Gissing, perhaps – the novelist's younger son. No, not him either. He died in 1975 – though I did as a matter of fact visit him in the 1950s at his hotel at Les Marécottes, Switzerland. He was a sprightly old boy who had me – many years his junior – panting along after him as we went on a short mountain walk in the broiling summer heat. I had gone there with a tape-recorder on loan from the BBC

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to record his memories of his father for a radio programme I was compiling. Alfred had but the one memory-trace of GRG. He remembered as a small boy being lifted up and put into a railway-carriage by his father, presumably at a moment of separation. Though brief, it was nonetheless a poignant recollection and we lovingly recorded it onto the tape.

The object of my most recent Gissing pilgrimage was not a person but a place – the village of Gissing in Norfolk. It lies on the border with Suffolk and is mentioned in the Domesday Book where it is spelt *Gessinga* meaning the people of *Gyssa* (or *Gissi*). The novelist's father, Thomas Waller Gissing, who later migrated to Yorkshire, was born at Halesworth in Suffolk. In 1894, in his quest for a suitable place for his summer holiday with Edith and young Walter, Gissing made a day's excursion to Southwold. "It did not please me," he told his sister Nelly, "but I made another use of the journey. The junction for Southwold is Halesworth, father's birthplace, and there I spent two or three hours" (4 June 1894, *The Letters of George Gissing to His Family*, 1927). In spite of this reaction Gissing renewed his acquaintance with the coast of East Anglia the following year through his acquaintance with the writer and joint-stock banker Edward Clodd who had a large house at Aldeburgh – the town that is now a flourishing centre for musical performance thanks to Benjamin Britten and the Maltings. Clodd, a generous host, gave a men only house party at Aldeburgh to which Gissing was invited and which he much enjoyed. The activities included bookish chat and sailing on the river Alde. As for literary associations with the region, Gissing much admired – as we learn from Volume Three of the new definitive *Letters* – the work of the Suffolk poet the Rev. George Crabbe. "His verse stories anticipate," he tells his sister Nelly in August 1888, "in a remarkable way our so-called 'realistic' fiction; they deal with very low life frequently and in a way wholly original at that time."

We stayed for a week near a village some 20 miles to the north of Halesworth across the border into Norfolk – Pulham Market. A few miles away still is a village bearing the name Gissing: you'll need a pretty detailed map to find it but it is roughly the same distance from Norwich to the North as it is from Bury St. Edmunds to the South. We had rented an ancient Manor Farm house at Pulham – a fine Elizabethan construction with thatched roof, huge interior beams, plaster infilling and panelled wooden partitions dividing the rooms. It stands in splendid

isolation on an unmarked road, and is the property of the Landmark Trust, which maintains

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buildings of historic interest and lets them for short periods to anyone who cares to apply. (Write for handbook to the Trust at Shottesbrooke, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 3SW).

Our plan was to divide our time between the rural seclusion of our farmhouse and excursions, into Norwich to visit the cathedral and to see the fine collection of 20th century paintings and ceramics permanently on show in the Sainsbury Centre at the University of East Anglia, all of which we did. But as a confirmed Gissingite and subscriber to this Journal, I could not resist a detour to the village that bears the same name as our mutual hero.

It would be an exaggeration to say that it has not changed since the period of the Domesday Book, but it is nonetheless remarkably unspoiled, containing a cluster of well-kept brick houses and gardens, no shops and no post office, just a few streets and lanes surrounded by those green and yellow acres of flat arable land so typical of East Anglia, stretching uninterruptedly as far as the eye can see. The signs of communal village life were a bowling-green and the Crown Inn, a public house fronted by a large gravel car park with a blackboard offering Today's Special – Cod and Chips at £2.95. Although it was around lunchtime we resisted that invitation, but availed ourselves of the parking facility and made our way across the road to the building opposite, the church of Gissing St. Mary.

This fine historic building proved to be well worth the detour in its own right. It rates half a page in Pevsner's Penguin volume on the buildings of Norfolk and dates from Anglo-Saxon times with a round tower that goes back to the 10th or early 11th century. Inside there is a fine octagonally-shaped font probably made around 1400. The most striking feature is the magnificent 15th century double hammer-beam roof of the nave decorated with carvings of angels with outstretched wings. Gissing disliked Christian iconography but he surely would have appreciated this beautiful little church in perfect condition and clearly still much used for worship.

On our way out of the village we noticed a sign saying Gissing Hall, a country house hotel offering accommodation and meals. We headed the car down its stony, bumpy drive and soon found ourselves confronted by an imposing Tudor pile. Builder's equipment indicated it was undergoing some kind of much-needed face-lift. The original Hall was built in 1485 and the present façade was added in Victorian times, to which the further addition of a ball-room wing was made in the 1930s. It was then a private residence. It belongs now to Ann and William Brennan, who live there but have opened it to visitors. They aim to turn it into a comfortable

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hotel and conference centre retaining the character of the original house (write for brochure to Gissing Hall, Gissing, Diss, Norfolk IP22 3UN). There are eighteen bedrooms, plus library, drawing-room, dining-room and bar. We bought drinks at the latter and took them out into the garden on which a great deal of energy has been expended recently to turn it from a wilderness into a place where an author at grass, such as our old friend Henry Ryecroft, might sit contentedly perusing his favourite Greek and Latin poets. Weather permitting. Or indeed the Hall itself could be hired for some future International Congress of Gissing Studies. Wakefield permitting.

Book Review

George Gissing's American Notebook: Notes G. R. G. 1877, edited by Bouwe Postmus, Lewiston/ Queenston/ Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1993.

The existence of this notebook has been known for about four decades. Mabel Collins Donnelly was the first scholar who gave some idea of its contents, but as she called it a diary, it is doubtful whether she understood the full significance of the document she was privileged to handle and quote from. Still, like some of her successors, she acknowledged its interest as a source of information about Gissing's stay in Chicago – mainly about what he read while there and the subjects for stories that he contemplated turning to some account at the time. A thorough and definitive study of the notebook was needed, and it is now a pleasure to place Dr. Postmus's book on the same shelf as the other editions of the writer's private papers – his commonplace book, his diary, "Extracts from My Reading," "Reminiscences of My Father," and others.

If perfection is unattainable in literary matters, at least in such fields as bibliography and editorial work, some scholars come close to it, and Bouwe Postmus is one of them. It is difficult to imagine how this book could have been made better. All the contents of the notebook have been transcribed with remarkable accuracy, and anyone who has had no opportunity to see the original can now imagine it as it is awaiting him in the vaults of the Beinecke Library. Maximum light is thrown on the entries in the 184 endnotes. The introduction, the bibliography

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and the index offer the material and the finding aids that the user, whether familiar with the manuscript and its contents or altogether uninitiated to the Gissing mysteries, really needs. The exemplary critical material is concerned with facts and rarely ventures into speculation, although the temptation to do so more frequently must have been great in places. The editor has gone as far as possible in reconstructing Gissing's life from early March to early October 1877 without covering ground already trodden by Robert L. Selig in his recently published *Lost Stories from America*. Indeed the two volumes are complementary in that the introduction to the collection of stories concentrates on young Gissing as a writer at work while the study of the notebook focuses on his movements and cultural activities. But the latter volume should also be considered as an index to the writer's reading in the late 1870s very much in the way "Extracts from My Reading" documents his exploration of world literature from 1880 to the mid-1890s, being in turn gradually relayed and finally superseded by the *Commonplace Book* and the *Diary*.

Especially valuable in the Introduction are the time scheme for the period between the abrupt departure from the home of the Reverend Benton-Smith in Waltham to the landing in Liverpool on 4 October 1877, the analysis of Gissing's reading of English, French, German, Italian, Latin and Greek literature during the short period covered by the notebook, and the enquiry into his income (did he send part of his literary earnings to Nell?). We now know that Gissing sailed to America on the Cunard S.S. *Parthia*, and came back on the *Spain*, a steamer owned by the National Steamship Company, and that he went on writing in his notebook after his return from America – until the late summer of 1878. But were his contributions limited to the papers which collectors and scholars have examined? Does the mention of a Philadelphia newspaper suggest that Gissing may have contributed to it? Some surprise may be in store for us.

Equally appreciated will be the seven illustrations. They include Gissing's portrait by Naudin at the time *The Unclassed* was published (no earlier one was available to the editor), his lodgings at Waltham in 1877, the Chicago railway station in 1877, a page from *Punch* for 31 March 1877, with bits of nonsense verse in French by Anatole de Lester-Scouère, i.e. George du Maurier, and photographs of New York, of the *Spain*, and of Liverpool landing stage, where the

budding writer set foot on his return.

If ever this book is reprinted one correction and two additions could be made. The date of publication of *A Life's Morning* on p. 68 should be 1888; and Gissing did give the Christian

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name May to a character, May Tomalin in *Our Friend the Charlatan*, and did use Rufus as well in the late short story "The Scrupulous Father." Meanwhile let us hope Dr. Postmus will trace the original of Freeman Stirling, Gissing's second benefactor in America. The task may not prove impossible to such a gifted researcher. And let us agree with him that "as a record of the most formative sixteen months of his life the notebook is unique, documenting not only the practical aspects of a writer's life, but also, and more engrossingly, those singular character features, the prodigious intellect and emotions, that were to remain unchanged and unbroken, the inspiration and foundation of his art, despite their often self-destructive impulses, through all the vicissitudes of his brief life." – Pierre Coustillas

Notes and News

The publication of Gissing's *Collected Letters* goes on steadily. Volume IV has been available for some time, and the editors are busy reading the proofs of Volume V, which is to appear early next year. The period covered will extend from January 1892 to June 1895, three years and a half during which Gissing's reputation rose sharply. With this volume, a number of new regular correspondents are to appear, notably Clara Collet, C. K. Shorter, William Morris Colles, Edward Clodd and Henry Hick. A review of Volumes III and IV by David Grylls will be published in our next number.

As previously announced, in May 1992 the Lilly Library at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana acquired the Gissing collection assembled by Carl Pforzheimer largely in the 1920s and 1930s. Through a generous grant from the Ball Brothers Foundation Bouwe Postmus, of the University of Amsterdam, was enabled to undertake a month's research at this splendid institution last February. His primary objective was a study of Gissing's Scrapbook, with a view to preparing a critical edition of what David Grylls has called "the single most important manuscript source that might be made available to Gissing scholars." In return for the generous welcome extended to him and the tireless efforts of Lilly librarian William Cagle and his staff, Bouwe Postmus agreed to give a talk for The Friends of the Lilly Library on February 25, 1993 in the lounge of the library. Due to heavy snowfall the audience was not as large as had

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been hoped, but the setting proved ideal for what amounted to a first introduction to Gissing and his works for the great majority of those who had braved the elements. Particularly the firsthand report on his work in progress met with a great deal of response and provoked some probing questions. Wine and cheese rounded off this most pleasant occasion. Gissing scholars in search of a challenging and stimulating work environment take note: the Lilly Library in Bloomington is about as ideal as one could imagine.

An account of the lecture was published in the Spring 1993 number of the *Friends of the Lilly Library Newsletter* (no. 20). Penelope Mathiesen echoed in it some remarks of the lecturer on the progress of his editorial work. Three hundred items in the Scrapbook had by late

February been connected with passages in the novels and short stories. A facsimile of a small portion of a well-known document compiled by Algernon Gissing at the time he more or less earnestly contemplated having a collected edition of his brother's work published is reproduced below Ms Mathiesen's name. "George Gissing's Works./ Dealings with copyrights./ Workers in the Dawn. Remington & C^o 3 vols./ Author paid to them £125 in three instalments for publication of the book. After deduction of advertising expenses he is to receive two thirds of profits. Published May 1880."

Jacob Korg notes an allusion to Gissing in a popular modern novel which is not likely to be familiar to present-day readers. In Eric Ambler's 1937 adventure tale, *Background to Danger*, the point is made that the typically beleaguered protagonist prefers urban scenes to rural ones, and it is put this way: "He preferred Satie to Delius, George Gissing to Richard Jefferies, and the feel of pavements beneath his feet to that of the springiest turf ever trod by Georgian poet." Ambler is given to highbrow allusions, perhaps as a way of enabling his readers to relieve the guilt they feel for their quasi-scandalous indulgence in his deliciously trashy stories. Looked at that way, the allusion to Gissing is something of a tribute.

The 1890s: An Encyclopedia of British Literature, Art and Culture, edited by George A. Cevasco of St. John's University (Garland Publishing, 736 pages, 7 x 10, ISBN 0-8240-2585-7, \$95) is a reference book which is sure to prove useful to scholars interested in the last decade of the nineteenth century. It contains over 800 signed, alphabetically arranged entries which cover

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the many forms of artistic activity of the period – fiction, verse, painting, drama, history, journalism, politics, etc. Especially welcome are articles on such subjects as the Diamond Jubilee, the Society of Authors, Feminist Periodicals, the New Fiction and Music Hall Entertainment. However the major emphasis is on individuals and specific works. An altogether different kind of useful reference book the existence of which we have – belatedly – discovered is Walton Beacham's *Research Guide to Biography and Criticism* (Washington, D.C.: Research Pub, 1985). See "Recent Publications" below.

Humphrey Snell, the herb-gatherer, was somehow a mutual friend of Gissing and W. H. Hudson. Dennis Shrubbsall reminded us of this in an interview by Mike Chamberlain which appeared in the *Western Gazette* ("Retired Colonel retraces steps of famous writer," 11 March 1993, p. 8). The article is illustrated with good photographs of Wells Cathedral and the Bishop's Palace, on the surroundings of which both Hudson and Gissing wrote appreciatively.

The Gissing Centre, Thompson's Yard, Westgate, Wakefield, is open every Saturday, April to October, from 2 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. The theme of the exhibition this year is Italy (*Wakefield Express* [*Midweek Express*], 8 April 1993, p. 5). The leaflet available lists the following attractions: exhibition material about the novelist, Gissing family memorabilia, a collection of books by and about Gissing, videos about him and his Wakefield novel *A Life's Morning*, and a model of Gissing's family home. Admission is free.

Recent Publications

Volumes

Paul F. Mattheisen, Arthur C. Young and Pierre Coustillas (eds.), *The Collected Letters of George Gissing, Volume Four, 1889-1891*, Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1993. Off-white paper-covered boards with a grey tape binding and, on the spine, gilt titling on dark green panel. Dark green dust-jacket with pattern in light green. xxxii + 363 pages. \$55.00. ISBN 0-8214-1054-7.

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Bouwe Postmus, *George Gissing's American Notebook: Notes - G.R.G. - 1877*, Lewiston, Queenston and Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1993. Red cloth. [x] + 95 pages. £19.95 or \$39.95. ISBN 0-7734-9227-5. Individuals may order this book at 50 % off list price by using Mastercard or Visa and phoning in their order to (716) 754-2788 (US and Canada), (0570) 423-356 (UK).

George Gissing, *Born in Exile*. Edited by David Grylls. London: J. M. Dent; Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle Co. Everyman Paperback, 1993. Pictorial cover. xxi + 439 pages. £6.99 or \$6.95 [sic]. ISBN 0-460-87241-9.

George Gissing, *The Day of Silence and Other Stories*. Edited by Pierre Coustillas. London: J. M. Dent; Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle Co. Everyman Paperback, 1993. Pictorial cover. xxv + 230 pages. £4.99 or \$6.95. The book contains sixteen short stories ranging chronologically from "Lou and Liz" to "Miss Rodney's Leisure." ISBN 0-460-87242-7.

George Gissing, *The Odd Women*. Introduction by Elaine Showalter. New York and London: New American Library, [1993]. Sixth impression. Pictorial cover. xvi + 388 pages. \$7.00. ISBN 0-452-01014-4.

George Gissing, *Zeilengeld*. Adele Berger's 1892 translation of *New Grub Street*, revised by Wulfhard Heinrichs and Helga Herborth. Frankfurt am Main: Eichborn Verlag (Kaiserstrasse 66, D 6000 Frankfurt/ Main 1), 1993. Blue and white stiff wrappers. Gilt titling on dark blue panel on spine. 586 pages. Limited edition. On the occasion of the publication of the hundredth volume in Die andere Bibliothek, ten titles have been reprinted by Eichborn in a special edition. The volumes cannot be bought individually. ISBN 3-8218-4400-0.

George Gissing, *Sulle Rive dello Ionio: un vittoriano al Sud*. Translation of *By the Ionian Sea* by Margherita Guidacci and Mauro Francesco Minervino, with Virginia Woolf's 1912 essay on Gissing and extracts from Gissing's letters and diary. Turin: E.D.T. Edizioni di Torino (19, via Alfieri, 10121 Torino), 1993. Stiff pictorial wrappers. xvii + 142 pages. Lire 25 000. ISBN 88-7063-175-3.

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Mauro F. Minervino, *La vita desiderata: George R. Gissing, un vittoriano al Sud*, Cosenza: Editoriale Bios s.a.s. (Via Sicilia, 5, 87100 Cosenza), 1993. Dark green wrappers. 188 pages. No ISBN number given.

Articles, reviews, etc.

Walton Beacham (ed.), *Research Guide to Biography and Criticism* (Vol. 1), Washington D. C.: Research Pub, 1985. Entry on Gissing by Anne-Marie Foley on pp. 492-95.

Carolyn J. Perry, "A Voice of the Past: Ruskin's Pervasive Presence in Gissing's *The Odd Women*," *Publications of the Missouri Philological Association*, Vol. 13 (1988), pp. 63-70.

Peter Collister, "Some Literary and Popular Sources for Mrs. Humphry Ward's *The History of David Grieve*," *Review of English Studies*, May 1989. pp. 215-31. Discusses the influence of *Demos* and *Thyrza* on this Victorian bestseller.

Leslie [Kathleen] Howsam, "'Sound-Minded Women': Eliza Orme and the Study and Practice of Law in Late-Victorian England," *Atlantis* (Halifax, Nova Scotia), Autumn 1989, pp. 44-55. Gives the fullest account of Miss Orme's life and career to date and duly mentions Gissing and his domestic difficulties.

Tim James, "Language and conflict in Gissing: articulating class," *Pretexts*, Winter 1990, pp. 14-37.

Anon., "Classic Returns," *Library Journal*, 15 May 1991, p. 112. Notice of the Marlboro Press edition of *By the Ionian Sea*.

Anon., "New in Paperback: Nonfiction," *Book World*, 7 July 1991, p. 12. Notice of the Marlboro Press edition of *By the Ionian Sea*.

Martha S. Vogeler, "Reviews," *Scholarly Research and Review*, Summer 1992, p. 55-57. Review of Jacob Korg's edition of Gissing's college essay on Robert Burns. Another review, by Robert L. Selig, of the same book, appeared on pp 57-58. In the same number Jacob Korg and Pierre Coustillas reviewed *Lost Stories from America*, pp. 128-29 and 129-31.

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Barbara Leah Harman, "Going Public: Female Emancipation in George Gissing's *In the Year of Jubilee*," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, Fall 1992, pp. 347-74.

Anon., "Recent Books," *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, December 1992, p. 399. Notice of *Lost Stories from America*.

Anon., "Lilly Library Annual Report 1991-1992: Acquisitions, British Literature," *Annual Report of the Lilly Librarian July 1991-June 1992*, pp. 3-4. On the acquisition of the Gissing collection in the Carl H. Pforzheimer Library.

Gordon Campbell *et al* (eds.). *The Year's Work in English Studies*, Volume 70: 1989. Oxford: Blackwell. 1992. See pp. 452 and 472-74.

Robert L. Selig. "Reviews," *Nineteenth-Century Prose*, Spring 1993, pp. 75-78. Review of Vol. II of the *Collected Letters*.

Anon.. "Books Received," *Victorian Newsletter*, Spring 1993. p. 47. Notice of Vol. III of the *Collected Letters*.

Francesco Badolato. "Inedito di George Gissing studente: saggio su Robert Burns," *Il Corriere di Roma*, 15 April 1993, p. 6. An article by the same author, "Viaggiatori stranieri nel XIX

secolo: Reggio Calabria nelle acute annotazioni di Lear e Gissing” is in the number for 30 April, p. 23.

G. A. Cevasco (ed), *The 1890s: An Encyclopedia of British Literature, Art and Culture*, New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1993. Contains entries on Gissing and his brother Algernon, on *New Grub Street* and *The Odd Women*. Gissing is mentioned in many entries on his contemporaries and on journals of the period.

Anon., “To the letter,” *Wakefield Express [Wakefield Plus]*, 4 June 1993, p. 10. Notice of Vol. IV of the *Collected Letters*.

Masahiko Yahata, Instructor in English at Beppu University Junior College, has kindly sent us offprints of five essays and translations from his pen which we shall list in our next number.

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Information for Contributors

The Gissing Journal publishes essays and notes on Gissing and his circle. Contributions may deal with biographical, critical, bibliographical and topographical subjects. They should be addressed to the editor, Pierre Coustillas, 10 rue Gay-Lussac, 59110 La Madeleine, France.

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