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“More than most men am I dependent on sympathy to bring out the best that is in me.”

Commonplace Book

The “Ground-Floor” Maiden Lady Fanny Lebreton, George Gissing and Salomon Reinach

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Gabrielle Fleury stands out as Gissing’s main French translator. After their meeting in July 1898,¹ she became his companion, and not only did she exert a marked influence on his current work, but her translation of *New Grub Street* has made that his best known title in France. Yet she was not the first woman who translated Gissing into French.

Ten years earlier, in March 1888, another woman had tried her hand at *Demos*. Gissing noted in his diary: “14 March: To-night a letter from a certain Fanny Le Breton, 50 rue de Bourgogne, Paris, who writes wishing to translate ‘Demos.’ She is also reading ‘A Life’s Morning.’ I have always imagined it the most unlikely thing for a new English writer to find readers in Paris.”² His surprise did not end at that. A few months later he met his translator, who lived with her sister. After his first visit, on 13 October 1888, he was rather disappointed: “Found her an oldish and very plain woman, living with her sister, who is older and still plainer.”³ The visit lasted an hour and a half. The novelist added, somewhat surprised: “All French talk,” then in French, “somehow I managed.”⁴ Gissing gives one to understand that the two women are collaborators; they live on their literary work, assisting each other, being anxious to translate foreign works out of copyright.⁵ “They have just finished ‘Demos.’ Asked me what I demanded for ‘Thyrza’ and of course I told them I shouldn’t ask anything. Hachette will publish *Demos* presently. It was found ‘trop sérieux’ for the [*Journal des Débats*].”⁶ The publication in two volumes was to be several times delayed. Fanny Lebreton apologized in her reply to Gissing, who had asked for news of *Demos* on 28 July 1889, and who quoted part of it in a letter to his German friend Bertz on 4 August: “Je suis allée ce matin même chez M.

Hachette, qui s'est engagé à donner *Demos* à l'impression le 1^{er} Octobre. Je suis désolée de ce retard, mais vous êtes probablement plus philosophe que moi, qui ne le suis pas du tout. Enfin il faut courber la tête devant les Editeurs, qui sont les tyrans de notre époque civilisée."⁷ [I called this very morning on M. Hachette, who promised to put *Demos* in the hands of the printers on 1st October. I deplore this delay, but you probably take things more philosophically than I do—I don't at all. However we must submit to Publishers who are the tyrants of our civilized times."'] Gissing passed a fairly critical judgment on this translation published in late April 1890 and signed Hephell. Considering the German translation by Adèle Berger very superior to the French rendering he confided to his friend Eduard Bertz: "I have compared that chapter of 'Demos' of which you speak, & it is disgraceful. No translation at all; simply a rough sketch of the contents of the chapter, such as I might have scribbled out before sitting down to compose."⁸

At that the affair rested and no attempt was made to know better Fanny Lebreton, who published translations produced either by herself or with her sister's assistance under her own pseudonym, Hephell, that is her initials, FL.⁹ The task was not an easy one, so elusive the translator proves to be. She appears in the correspondence of Salomon Reinach (1858-1932), a member of the French Institute, who was Curator of the Museum of Saint-Germain-en-Laye and editor of the *Revue archéologique*. Among the thousands of unpublished letters deposited by Reinach in the Bibliothèque Méjanes of Aix-en-Provence, there happens to be a letter—a single one—dated 11 September 1889, signed "Fanny Le Breton, 50, rue de Bourgogne,"¹⁰ which naturally links up with the above quotation from Gissing's diary.¹¹ The translator of *Demos* and Salomon Reinach's correspondent are one and the same person. This was a point from which the enquiry could start, supplemented as it was by mentions of the Lebreton sisters and their approximate age in Gissing's papers.¹²

Consultation of the death records for the 7th arrondissement of Paris supplies a first clue. For 1894 they list the death of the two Lebreton sisters at no. 50, rue de Bourgogne—on the one hand "Charlotte Françoise Lebreton" deceased on "20 May 1894 at 1 a.m.," aged 64. This "spinster, of no known occupation," was the daughter of Caroline Drouet, "her father's first names being unknown"¹³; on the other, the daughter of François René Lebreton and Caroline Drouet, "Françoise Charlotte Lebreton," the widow of Louis Anne Xavier Raymond, who died on 28 May 1894, at "6 a.m.," "aged 65."¹⁴ The quasi simultaneous death, within eight days of each other,

has remained unexplained.¹⁵ Owing to some careless clerical error, or some confusion due to the sisters' similar first names, the latter have been inverted on both death certificates, and both women are said to have been born at "La Guerche (Loire-inférieure)."

Which is wrong as is attested by the birth certificates of both sisters. The records of the Legion of Honour for Charles François Xavier (1857-1921), son of Louis Anne Xavier Raymond and Charlotte Françoise Lebreton enable one to get nearer the truth.¹⁶ The mother of this officer, a colonel in the hussars, is correctly named Charlotte Françoise with the Christian names in this order, incontrovertible evidence of which is supplied by her birth certificate to be sought in the Sarthe, where her parents and grandparents had settled. Indeed Charlotte Françoise was born in Le Mans on 31 March 1828, the daughter of François René Lebreton and Caroline Drouet, who lived in the rue Auvray.¹⁷ Her parents had married in Le Mans on 21 April 1827.¹⁸ As for her younger sister Françoise Charlotte Lebreton, known as Fanny, she was born to François René Lebreton and Caroline Drouet on 15 November 1830 at Saint-Brévin,¹⁹ in the place called La Guerche, situated in what is now called Loire-Atlantique, where her grandfather, Charles Drouet, had vested interests.²⁰ In September 1826, in this parish on the estuary of the Loire, by the sea opposite to Saint-Nazaire, this landowner and entrepreneur employed some twenty men for earthworks and draining of his own marshes.²¹

The Lebreton family originated from La Suze-sur-Sarthe. The father of the two sisters was born in this village, a few kilometres south of Le Mans, on "10 fructidor an II," that is 27 August 1794.²² François René Lebreton was the son of François Pierre Lebreton, "marchand fabricant" [merchant and manufacturer] and Françoise Marie Catherine Poirier; they were united in civil marriage at La Suze on "22 floréal an II," that is on Sunday 11 May 1794.²³ The wife of François Pierre Lebreton was to die on "3 ventôse an V" (21 February 1797), leaving motherless very early François René, whose name occurs in 1817 in a list of officers on half-pay after he was dismissed from the army. Recruited on 1 January 1813, François René Lebreton, who lived at La Suze, served for 4 years and 7 months as an artillery officer.²⁴

He seems to have been the young man who struck up an acquaintance with Charles Goyet, a worthy in those parts, and with Benjamin Constant, a deputy of the Sarthe and man of letters. In the correspondence between these two men²⁵ mention is indeed made of a "young artillery officer, M. Lebreton, from La Suze." As Charles Goyet wrote on 26 March 1819 he

was one of his “most stalwart collaborators”²⁶ and his journey to Paris had no other aim than to apprise Constant of his election and “to give himself the pleasure of breaking to [him] the news of our success, the success of all the liberals.”²⁷ The previous year he had taken similar steps to announce to General Lafayette his electoral success. On 1 April 1819 this young Lebreton appears again in the correspondence with Constant.²⁸ Contrary to the latter, who communicated with Goyet on 29 March, the young man gave no news of himself. Goyet suspects laziness on his part, and hopes “Lebreton is not ill.”²⁹

Two years later, on 15 August 1821, Lebreton is in Paris, staying in Saint-Thomas du Louvre Street and Hotel. “Sorrows consequent in a breach of promise caused him to absent himself [from Le Mans] for some time.”³⁰ On 21 August Benjamin Constant engaged to send him a line, regretting Lebreton’s failure to visit him. “I am always aggrieved when someone from the Sarthe goes through Paris without giving me a friendly hail. All the more aggrieved in the case of M. Lebreton, who brought me the news that made me the happiest man in all my days.”³¹

In early April 1822 they had a new opportunity to meet. Maybe they did, but not as first foreseen. Benjamin Constant was not at home when Lebreton called. On 18 April Charles Goyet gave additional information to the deputy for the Sarthe. The visitor was not captain Michel Lebreton, whom Goyet had just recommended in a letter: he had not left La Flèche. “I presume that M. Lebreton, the man who announced he would call again, is a young officer from La Suze, he who announced to General Lafayette in 1818 that the voters of the Sarthe had voted him into the House where you both gloriously sit together to-day.”³² Goyet had forgotten that Lebreton had brought Benjamin Constant the news of his election.

François René’s track reappears in 1827. At the age of 32 he married in Le Mans on 21 April, described as an “ironmaster.” He has married well. His wife was Caroline Drouet, “aged 22,” the daughter of Anne Charlotte Guittet (1785-1833) and Charles Drouet (1779-1862), a great landowner, living in Le Mans. A “Juste Milieu” worthy.³³ Appointed mayor of Sainte-Jamme, a small place a few kilometres north of Le Mans, in 1830, he was to become a member of the Conseil Général under the regime of Louis-Philippe. In 1828, probably to consolidate the situation of the newly wed couple he restored the furnaces of Antoigné which had been extinguished since 1823 and as early as 1831 employed 350 men at the works. This entrepreneur-cum-tradesman is a highly cultured man: an eminent natural-

ist, he was passionately interested in regional antiquities and was instrumental in the foundation of the archaeological museum of Le Mans.

One year after her parents' marriage, Charlotte Françoise Lebreton was born in the rue Auvray in Le Mans, where her maternal grandparents lived. On 15 November 1830 the Lebreton couple, whose head was said to be "of independent means," had a second daughter Françoise Charlotte, known as Fanny. Her birthplace does not leave one indifferent. She was born at Saint-Brévin, where her parents now had their home and where her grandfather had for some years been reclaiming land. He did not dread returning to those marshy parts, where he had contracted cholera in 1826, from which he had recovered thanks to a self-administered treatment of albuminous water.³⁴ And once more Charles Drouet did not fail to associate his son-in-law with his own affairs.

With the advent of Louis-Philippe the career of Fanny's father took a radically different turn. Influenced by the liberal ideas of Benjamin Constant, he entered the prefectural administration. Appointed by the king on 28 February 1831 sub-prefect of Saint-Calais,³⁵ he held a similar post at La Flèche according to an ordinance of 19 May in the same year.³⁶ From 2 November 1838 he was head of the sub-prefecture of Mamers,³⁷ a post he vacated on 25 February 1848 when Louis-Philippe fell.³⁸ François René Lebreton was a man of the July Monarchy. The political commitments of his youth at first caused him to be viewed with suspicion. An information card supplied by Prefect Théodore Thomas and dated 12 July 1839, observes apropos of the sub-prefect: "He was received in the arrondissement of Mamers not unguardedly owing to his former Saint-Simonian opinions."³⁹ Another report reads: "M. Lebreton is a thoughtful man who was thrown into the most virulent opposition by the Restoration; he regarded the Revolution of July as the triumph of his opinions."⁴⁰ Like his father-in-law he belonged to the Party of Movement, that is the Centre-Left, the leader of which was to be Adolphe Thiers. He was also a landed proprietor who owned some of the territory he administered. In March 1836, he acquired from a Cormorin ironmaster, M. Goussot, property once confiscated in the days of the 1789 Revolution, a vast estate pertaining to the château de Thouars, in Saint-Mars-sous-Ballon. On 17 February 1859, the estate was bought back for 120,000 francs from Caroline Drouet, left a widow by François René Lebreton eleven years earlier.⁴¹

Charlotte Lebreton was barely twenty when she married Xavier Raymond who, born in Paris on 20 June 1812, was his wife's senior by sixteen years. The marriage took place in Paris on 10 June 1848.⁴² He was

just back from China after taking part as a historiographer in 1845 in the Mission Lagrené which negotiated on Guizot's behalf the first political and commercial treaty between France and China. Xavier Raymond had been—this showed his propinquity to François René Lebreton—a disciple of Saint-Simon in his youth.⁴³ He had even accompanied Barthélémy Enfantin (1796-1864) to Egypt in June 1832 while Enfantin dreamt of a dam across the Nile and of a Suez Canal. After writing for *Le Temps* and *Le Globe*, Raymond contributed to *La Revue des Deux Mondes* as well as to the *Revue britannique* and became a valued writer for the *Journal des Débats*. His work for this paper, where he was “especially in charge of foreign politics,” began in August 1839. This figure of journalism, who wrote numberless *Variétés* articles, specialized in travels, in questions of geography and navy—hence the nickname given him by his friends: the admiral.

Early on the newlyweds settled at no. 44, rue de Bellechasse, in the seventh arrondissement of Paris, where they already lived on 21 August 1851, on which day the composer Hector Berlioz, a friend of the husband, addressed him in writing.⁴⁴ Xavier Raymond was to live there until his death on 29 January 1886. Charlotte must have left the flat shortly after her husband's death to join Fanny nearby at 50, rue de Bourgogne, where Gissing met the two sisters living together in October 1888.⁴⁵ The novelist never refers to their mother, but the latter, though we have no evidence that she shared her daughters' flat, lived in the same house. There it was that she died on 11 October 1891.⁴⁶

Consultation of the annual volumes of *Tout-Paris* from 1891 to 1897 yields some information on the inhabitants of the three-storeyed house with attics.⁴⁷ Neither Caroline Drouet nor her daughters appear in this reference work, a sure sign of their social status and income. At all events the place was one of good repute. Paul Gingeot (1838-1899), a doctor in the Hôtel-Dieu, private doctor to Louis d'Orléans and author in 1867 of *Un voyage en Australie*, lived there with his wife and received patients every day between 12.30 and 1.30.⁴⁸ During the years 1891-1897 we also find in the flats looking out over both the street and the courtyard: Countess Brassier de Jogas, Countess Vaugiraud, M. and Mme (*née* Villiers-Herluison) Auguste Longnon, a member of the Institute, head of the Ecole des Hautes Etudes. Until 1893 one Th. Revel also lived there who subsequently disappeared from the *Tout-Paris*. In the same year, new occupants appeared in the building: Count and Countess A. Richard d'Ivry as well as Baron and Baroness de Pritzbuër. These last arrivals promptly left the place, moving to 55 rue de Rome before 1897. By then Henri-Léon Feer (1830-1902), a

professor at the Ecole des Langues Orientales, and his wife had settled at 50, rue de Bourgogne.

If we consider that the people who had their names entered in *Tout-Paris* lived in the best apartments, we are led to infer that the flat occupied—singly or shared—by Mme Lebreton and her daughters must have been a small one, in the upper storeys or in the building at the back. But no definite conclusion can be reached and other circumstances are conceivable. The new arrivals in 1893 can be accounted for by the vacancy of the flat occupied by Caroline Drouet until her death in 1891. Gissing's testimony does not say whether Charlotte and Fanny lived with their mother or that their accommodation was unsatisfactory. He even refers to a call he made one afternoon, an occasion for him to meet, among other visitors, a French young lady of aristocratic origin.⁴⁹ Indeed the Feer couple is not unlikely to have taken over the flat of the Lebreton sisters after their death in 1894.

Fanny Lebreton remained single. She probably had a strong relationship with her grandfather, who had lost his wife as early as 1833 and remained a widower until his death in 1862.⁵⁰ At all events she did her best to keep his memory green. When in 1869 the first *Catalogue du Musée archéologique du Mans* appeared, "Fanny Lebreton-Drouet in Paris" was the only member of the family to be listed, but in a prominent place, among benefactors.⁵¹ In the preface, readers are reminded that Charles Drouet had instigated the foundation of the museum which in its early days he had to struggle to keep alive, and of which he was an unofficial director until a post was created and filled by Eugène Hucher (1814-1889), a faithful collaborator. Fanny Lebreton surely had an artistic temperament. She exhibited some of her works at the Palais de l'Industrie in 1879, but they were not necessarily much appreciated. Summing up the artists from the Mayenne exhibiting at the Salon, A. Varet wrote in the *Revue historique et archéologique du Maine*: "Let us note in passing a faience piece by Mlle Lebreton which we had better ignore for fear of discouraging the author."⁵² The following year, in an article published in the same review on "The artists of the Maine in the 1880 Salon" the chronicler was still more cruel when describing no. 5163 "exhibited by Mlle Lebreton under the title of 'Head from Nature.'"⁵³ The passage reads: "The flesh tints are yellowish and shadows violet, a very nice combination, though quite outrageous in nature: the head, devoid of all relief, is as flat as a medal and the piece of material, vaguely violet or blue, which covers it is all smudged; quite frankly the aspect is not a pleasant one."

It was precisely at the time when Fanny Lebreton showed her work—admittedly with doubtful success—to the Parisian public that she published her first books, translations from English, under the pseudonym of Hephell. Their number was not negligible. Between 1878 and 1894 eighteen different titles—some of which knew several editions—by fourteen authors, three of them American (Bishop, Gunter and Hay), were brought out by Plon, then Hachette. That is over one title a year, to which should be added a posthumous text in 1896. This steady series of volumes, in most cases preceded by publication in serial form in a daily or a review, was accompanied by a handful of articles for the *Journal de la Jeunesse*. Examples are “Meals in Greece” (6 January 1883) and “The Emperor and the Cobbler” (8 June 1889). Fanny Lebreton’s first book appeared under the imprint of Plon, the Paris publisher, in 1878: *Une visite à Khiva, aventures de voyage dans l’Asie centrale, par Frédéric Burnaby, capitaine aux royal horse guards*⁵⁴ [A Ride to Khiva—Travels and Adventures in Central Asia, Captain Frederick Burnaby, Captain Royal Horse Guards (1876)]. Burnaby’s book was destined to be regarded as a classic of travel literature. During a fantastic horse ride in 1875-1876 this English officer (1842-1885) whose features are immortalized in a portrait by James Tissot in the National Gallery, disregarded the tsar’s prohibition to venture into central Asia and the territories controlled by the last descendant of Mongol emperors. This epic makes “easy and amusing” reading,⁵⁵ as forcibly noted by Paul Leroy-Beaulieu (1843-1916), a professor of political economy at the Collège de France, in the *Journal des Débats*. This long assessment, covering three and a half columns can doubtless be accounted for by the good relations between this regular contributor to the *Journal* from 1871 onwards and Fanny Lebreton’s brother-in-law, Xavier Raymond, himself on the staff of the paper and very keen on historical geography.

In her stride Fanny published the following year, again with Plon, under the title *En canot de papier. De Québec au golfe du Mexique* [Voyage of the Paper Canoe: a Geographical Journey of 2500 Miles from Quebec to the Gulf of Mexico 1874-5], the story of a voyage made in 1874 down the waterways of North America after the Civil War by Nathaniel Holmes Bishop (1837-1902). In 1883 in *Les Partisans* [The Free Lances] she gave a French colour to a romance for young people from the pen of the Irish born Thomas Mayne Reid (1818-1883). Making available to French readers such tales of amusement doubtless partook of pot-boiling. And one would almost imagine the situation of the Lebreton sisters and their mother—suggested in an almost premonitory manner—when reading the opening

lines of *Barbara* [*The Story of Barbara*, by Mary Elizabeth Braddon (1837-1915)], a translation signed in 1881 by Hephell. So much so that one is tempted to believe that the double l at the end of the pseudonym corresponds to Charlotte Françoise and Françoise Charlotte. As translated from the French of Hephell the novel begins thus:

“*Having a larger house than they need,— write that, Mother,*” said Barbara, sitting on the carpet, both hands crossed on her lap, just under the prettiest chin in the world.

“Sixty words for 5 shillings!” exclaimed Mrs. Trevenock with a troubled air, her eyes wandering from some original text she is writing with the assistance of her two daughters.

“Yes, let us put it that way, Mother,” repeated Florence, kneeling near the table; “this is our only defence against humiliation. *A lady and her daughters having a larger house than they need would gladly consent to...*”

“*Would be pleased,*” suggested the mother.

“No, mother, it would sound much too humble; it would cheapen us too much. Write: *would gladly consent to...*”

“That would make more than sixty words I am sure, *would gladly consent to receive a boarder.*”

“*A boarder!*” exclaimed Barbara, pouting charmingly.

In 1887, again for Hachette, Fanny translated from the same author *Le Chêne de Blatchmardean* [*Just as I am*]. The following year she published a French rendering, *Vivant ou Mort*, of *Living or Dead* by Hugh Conway, pseudonym for F. J. Fergus born in Bristol (1847-1885). Three years later she published a collection of short stories by the same author. In 1892, she brought to the knowledge of French readers, under the title *C’était écrit*, *Blind Love*, the last work of Dickens’s friend Wilkie Collins, regarded as a precursor of the detective novel.

Although not very lucrative, translating enabled Fanny to increase her resources, all the more easily as English novels in translation were then in great demand. Gissing mentions this in a letter to his sister Ellen, quoting one from Fanny Lebreton.⁵⁶ Besides her correspondence with the novelist throws light on the way in which she selected the texts she was to translate as well as on her working method. She set great store by the advice given her from Britain by a privileged informant, Henry Reeve (1813-1895).⁵⁷ Reeve had a good knowledge of Paris, where he had resided as a young man. From 1835 he was often seen in the salon of Madame de Circourt and struck friendships with many writers and politicians like François Guizot and Adolphe Thiers. Successively Registrar to the judicial Committee of the Privy Council and editor from 1855 of the *Edinburgh Review*, Henry Reeve and his wife were on intimate terms with Xavier Raymond who,

from 1865, was his correspondent at the Société d'histoire de France.⁵⁸ Once more Fanny Lebreton is seen to benefit from her brother-in-law's network of acquaintances.

Indeed *Le Journal des Débats* never failed to recommend the translations signed Hephell. On 2 June 1886 *Le Bien d'autrui* [*The Breadwinners*] by John Hay (1838-1905) is described as “an interesting study of American manners.” The writer in charge of the pages on new books, who signed himself F. D.—Alfred Fernand Drujon⁵⁹—wrote: “The author analyzes the working of the American political system as it is, that is quite different from what we imagine after perusing certain panegyrics.” The same chronicler devoted a whole column to the plot of *Demos* on 6 May 1890. An article signed B.-H. G. lists on 17 July 1893, among remarkable new publications, “the translation by Hephell of an English novel the action of which is set in Australia and which is neither overlong, nor puritanical nor tiresome, *Miss Méphistophélès* [*Miss Mephistopheles*] by M. Fergus W. Hume (Hachette et Cie, 1 fr.)” This book, the original edition of which dates from 1890 and which was one of the first novels by a prolific English writer (1858-1932) enjoyed a real success in France since it was kept in print by Hachette until the First World War. Hephell's translations are on the one hand one of the pillars of Hachette's “Bibliothèque des meilleurs romans étrangers,” a popular, low-priced series. On the other hand their success is attested by their publication as serials in the *Débats*, before their reprint in book form. The publication from 10 March to 21 April 1885 of *La Maison du Marais* [*The House on the Marsh*], one of the many books of Florence Warden, an actress born in 1857, signals the beginning of a steady collaboration with the newspaper. “It is the moving story of an attractive young schoolmistress exposed to the seductive wiles of a master prepared to commit any crime, and whom her extreme ingenuousness successfully protects from danger.”⁶⁰

On 12 May 1887 came to an end the serialization, begun on 5 April, of *La Vie de château à Surrenden* [*A House Party*] by Ouida, alias Marie Louise de La Ramée (1839-1908), the English novelist of French origin through her father. In the same year, Fanny Lebreton translated *Othmar* by the same author, while in 1886 she had brought to light *Les Napraxine* [*Princess Napraxine*] in two volumes. As early as 1884 she had published Ouida's collection of short stories, *Les Fresques* [*Frescoes and Other Stories*], originally serialized in the previous spring in the *Revue des Deux-Mondes*.⁶¹ In 1882, to start her collaboration with this review, she had translated, under the title “Le caniche noir,” “The black poodle,” a short

story by F. Anstey reprinted in 1884 in *The Black Poodle and Other Stories*. In the *Journal des Débats* this time, from 2 December 1893 to late January 1894, appeared *Le Colonel Quaritch* [*Colonel Quaritch, V.C.*], the work of Henry Rider Haggard (1856-1925), known for his adventure stories set in the colonies, followed in 1896 by another Haggard title, *Béatrice* [*Beatrice*] brought out by Hachette under Hephell's signature, a posthumous publication and Fanny Lebreton's last piece of work.

Her choice of writers worth translating stemmed from a single strategy. On her own initiative she wrote to the author, seeking his permission to translate his book gratis. Besides Hachette astutely watched for loopholes in international copyright and in special clauses in authors' agreements. George Gissing echoed this in his correspondence with his friend Eduard Bertz: "The copyright of 'Demos' includes right of translation, & that I sold. But it appears that the publishers' right to demand a fee for translation only extends to the 3rd year after publication, for Smith & Elder told Mlle Le Breton that she was free to do it, now, without charge."⁶² It is no wonder she favoured works that were in the public domain.⁶³ Hence her interest in American writers, whose rights were less adequately protected.

The history of the French publication of *Demos* enables one to see at what speed and how Fanny Lebreton proceeded. In March 1888, she discovered *A Life's Morning* and had just finished reading *Demos*, the first edition of which is dated London, 1886. She immediately enquired about the possibility of translating the narrative concerned with current events.⁶⁴ By 23 May the translation was on the stocks.⁶⁵ Begun, it would seem, without being in competition with another project, the task was completed five months later, on 13 October.⁶⁶ Fanny was the initiator of this undertaking—a text almost 600 pages long—which was not accepted for serialisation in the *Journal des Débats*,⁶⁷ and she was in the front row when it came to convincing Hachette, who had agreed to publish the novel, to make it available in bookshops—a much delayed occurrence.⁶⁸ But the French version of *Demos*, issued in two volumes, is in a way a four-hand performance. Gissing refers to it in the plural: "They have just finished *Demos*."⁶⁹ And it is together, according to his testimony, that the two sisters plan to translate *Thyrza*, a project which was not carried through, despite the immediate waiving of the translation rights and the gift of a copy of the book to the Lebreton sisters in January 1889, through Morley Roberts, a friend of Gissing.⁷⁰

An unpublished document completes the portrait of Fanny Lebreton. Her character appears fairly vividly in a letter to Salomon Reinach dated 11 September 1889⁷¹:

My dear Salomon,

I have received a letter from Walter Scott (I have not in mind the shade of the celebrated novelist), but quite simply the publisher of “Mr. Barne [*sic*] de New York” [*Mr. Barnes of New York*], which incidentally I left at your father’s. He replied to me that the volume being American, I was entirely free to translate it. After this, I can no longer entertain doubts about my right to publish it in French.

The novel, it seems to me, was written for the delight of serial readers; since your brother was good enough to leave his ground-floor at my disposal for the January term, I beg you kindly to go through “Mr. Barne [*sic*] de New York” and to tell me whether you encourage me to translate it for *La République Française*?

You would render me a signal service.

I should be all the more grateful to you as I know how busy you are solving problems of highest antiquity which, it seems to me, leave the mind a little in suspense. But what I have also become aware of at Saint-Germain and, allow me to say, come still more to appreciate than your immense learning, is your unflinching urbanity and great kindness. So it is trustingly that I ask you to reply to this note, and to rest assured, my dear Salomon, of my old affection for you.

Fanny Le Breton

My kind remembrances to all around you. I am leaving for a few days in the more or less Dry Champagne [formerly called “Champagne pouilleuse,” now “Champagne crayeuse,” between the Seine and the Aisne].

50 rue de Bourgogne

11 September 89

This letter begins on a humorous note—with the mention of the well-known London publisher of the American novelist Archibald Clavering Gunter (1847-1907).⁷² It testifies to the excellent relations between the Lebreton sisters and the Reinachs and to their familiarity with a certain place: Saint-Germain-en-Laye. Fanny lent books and paid visits to Salomon’s father, Hermann Reinach. Born in Frankfurt-am-Main in 1814, this tradesman and banker, enriched by railway building, died in 1899 in the days of the Dreyfus affair.⁷³ Retired from business shortly after 1870 and his wife’s death, he devoted himself to the education of his three sons, Joseph, Salomon and Théodore, the number of whose successes at the *Concours général* remained unequalled.⁷⁴ The father of the three young men, whom *chansonniers* in the Montmartre cabarets called the brothers “Je-Sais-Tout” [I know everything], shared his life between his Paris mansion at 31 rue de Berlin and the mansion he had at Saint-Germain, where he was a neighbour of Adolphe Thiers. Hermann Reinach constantly served the interests of the man who was a minister under the July Monarchy and the first President of the Third Republic. Being proprietor since

1848 of the daily *La République Française*, Hermann Reinach associated with Louis Benloew, Claude Bernard, Eugène Forcade, Ernest Renan and many others. He belonged to the generation of Xavier Raymond with whom he was on “familiar terms.”⁷⁵ They had a common friend of their age, the editor of the *Journal des Débats*, John Lemoine (1815-1892). This admirer of English institutions was to write in 1886 an obituary⁷⁶ of his collaborator, Charlotte Lebreton’s husband. A French academician, he had rallied to Thiers in 1871 and once he had become a senator in 1880 supported republican conservatism.

Having struck up a friendship with the father, Fanny Lebreton also had business relations with the eldest of the Reinach brothers, who was Gambetta’s secretary in the days of the “Great Ministry.”⁷⁷ In 1886 Joseph became the editor of *La République Française*. A supporter of Jules Ferry, he did his very best, through his press campaigns, to ruin the ambitions of General Boulanger. Three weeks after Fanny’s letter to Salomon, Joseph pocketed the dividends of his political fight. On 6 October 1889 he was elected deputy for the constituency of Digne. So as to ensure a large circulation for this committed daily, its head must attract readers and fill the bottom of the first page—“the ground-floor”—with serialised fiction. Fanny’s translations and her knack for ferreting out new authors (a talent long sustained, admittedly, by the advice of Henry Reeve, the editor of the *Edinburgh Review*), made her a valued collaborator.

She needed to make a living from her publications, but this was not incompatible with the consultation of the second-born of the Reinach brothers. Salomon, who got the first prize for English at the Concours général, a first-rate linguist, had perfect command of Shakespeare’s tongue, which he translated and spoke admirably.⁷⁸ A member of the Ecole française d’Athènes, he contemplated applying to Xavier Raymond, whose links with officers of the French Navy were solid, to facilitate his embarking on a ship of the Piraeus squadron in view of an archaeological mission in the Aegean sea.⁷⁹ For a long time anyway he had had free access to the *Journal des Débats*, which in 1882 had published a “Letter from Athens” in which Salomon gave an account of the ceremonies that attended the preparatory work to the piercing of the Corinth Canal.⁸⁰ He owed this publication to a bosom friend, Gabriel Charmes,⁸¹ whose death in 1886 deeply affected him. With his brother Xavier, director of missions in the Ministry of Education, Gabriel was the man who, in his many articles, defined the political line of the newspaper and fostered the colonial projects of the Third Republic in Africa and the Middle East.

Fanny knows how kindly Salomon deals with his interlocutors. Gifted with a generous but tormented mind, he has been pleading since early manhood for what he called “parthenagogy”⁸²—female education. He dreams of seeing women participating in intellectual life and encourages them to educate themselves—since they are deprived of easy access to higher education—notably through the practice of translation. From the moment they are published, Fanny has a flair for choosing the books which the masses will enjoy—of *Mr. Barnes of New York* three million copies were sold in the United States, and there were two film adaptations in the early 20th century!—but she knows how much Salomon, who cares for beauty, is a man of taste. Reinach’s reply has remained unknown. Neither in 1890 nor the following year did *La République Française* serialize *Mr. Barnes of New York*. The novel was to be published by Hachette in 1891. The translation is said to be by Madame Savary, a translator’s name not to be found in the Catalogue of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. Could this be a mask behind which Fanny Lebreton chose to hide?⁸³

[I wish to express my grateful thanks to Pierre and Hélène Coustillas for translating my article into English. Thanks are also due to M. Samuel Gibiat, Conservateur en chef du patrimoine, head of the Departmental Archives of the Sarthe, for his assistance in the course of my researches.]

¹ See Pierre Coustillas, *The Heroic Life of George Gissing*, London: Pickering and Chatto, 3 vols, 2011-2012, Part III.

² 14 March 1888, in P. Coustillas, *London and the Life of Literature in Late Victorian England: The Diary of George Gissing, Novelist*, Brighton: Harvester Press, 1978, henceforth abridged as *Diary*. The spelling of Gissing’s correspondent varies according to the documents consulted, even under her own pen. He doubtless followed her usage in her letters to him and always wrote her name as Le Breton.

³ *Diary*, 13 October. He called on her at 1.30 p.m.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ This is confirmed by a letter in French to his brother Algernon dated 16 and 17 October 1888, followed by its translation, in Paul F. Mattheisen, Arthur C. Young and P. Coustillas (eds), *Collected Letters of George Gissing*, Ohio U.P., 9 vols. 1990-1997, Vol. III, 1886-1888: “Mlle Le Breton is the person who has undertaken to translate ‘Demos.’ I called on her the other day, and I found two old women—or at least elderly—sisters who live together and help each other in their literary work. They were ‘delighted to make my acquaintance.’ They do not speak English, and for an hour and a half we had a very friendly conversation. ‘Demos’ is completed, and Hachette speaks highly of it. The two ladies told me that notices of my books have appeared in French newspapers on various occasions.”

⁶ *Diary*, 13 October 1888.

⁷ *Collected Letters*, Vol. IV (1889-1891), letter to Eduard Bertz of 4 August 1889.

⁸ *Collected Letters*, Vol. V (1892-1895), 17 March 1892.

⁹ In note 3 to Gissing’s letter to his sister Ellen of 14 March 1888, *Collected Letters*, Vol. III, Coustillas offered some useful information about Fanny Lebreton’s work: “The only

piece she translated for the *Revue des Deux Mondes* was ‘Le caniche noir,’ by F. Anstey, which appeared on December 15, 1882, but was not published in volume form in England until 1884, under the title *The Black Poodle and Other Stories*. By 1888 she had published at least eleven translations of books by such authors as Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Ouida, Mayne Reid and Hugh Conway.”

¹⁰ Bibliothèque Méjanes (Aix-en-Provence), Salomon Reinach Collection, Box 97 (LAR-LEF). I wish to thank M. Philippe Ferrand, Conservateur des fonds patrimoniaux, and his staff for their courtesy and assistance.

¹¹ Another mention occurs among others in Gissing’s *Diary* for 11 October 1888: “A note from Hachette, giving me Mlle Le Breton’s address—50 Rue de Bourgogne.”

¹² *Diary*, 13 October 1888 and *Collected Letters*, Vol. III, 17 October 1888, letter to Ellen: “I have visited Mlle Le Breton, & found—as I expected—an oldish little woman living with a still older sister.”

¹³ Death certificate, Paris, 7th arrondissement, register VAE8621, Lebreton no. 899.

¹⁴ Death certificate, Paris, 7th arrondissement, register VAE8621, Lebreton, widow of Raymond, no. 940.

¹⁵ Perhaps the result of an epidemic of smallpox, of which there was a new outbreak in Paris in the last 6 months of 1893 (260 victims) and the first six of 1894 (166 victims)—figures to be compared to 17 deaths in 1895 and 22 in 1897. See Dr. Saint-Yves Ménard’s report, *Revue d’hygiène et de médecine préventive*, 19 (1897), p. 308.

¹⁶ National Archives, Paris, Legion of Honour file, Reference LH/2273/54, no. L2273054 (30 sheets including birth certificate and family status).

¹⁷ Departmental Archives of the Sarthe (Le Mans), birth certificate, Le Mans, NMD 1828, southern section, Reference 5 Mi 191_217-219, no. 40 in the register, views 42-43 out of 405.

¹⁸ Departmental Archives of the Sarthe (Le Mans), marriage certificate, Le Mans, MD 1827, southern section, Reference 5 Mi 191_215-16, no. 20 in the register, views 48-49 out of 267.

¹⁹ Departmental Archives of the Loire-Atlantique, birth certificate, Saint-Brévin-les-Pins, N 1830, no. 26 in the register.

²⁰ See the substantial article by Jacques Hantraye, “Charles Drouet (1779-1862), notable et savant, membre du conseil général de la Sarthe sous la Monarchie de Juillet,” in *La Province du Maine*, first semester 2010, pp. 145-159. However, the author establishes no link between Charles Drouet, his daughter Caroline and his son-in-law François René Lebreton.

²¹ *Observations faites, en 1826, à Brévin (Loire-Inférieure), sur le choléra-morbus*, par M. Drouet, Le Mans: Belon, 1832, p. 4.

²² Departmental Archives of the Sarthe (Le Mans), birth certificate, La Suze-sur-Sarthe, NM 1793_1812, Reference 2 Mi EC 382_9-10, register pages 15-16, views 47-48 out of 683. File 2 M 63 in the same Archives contains an undated notice concerning François René Lebreton, sub-prefect of Mamers: his date of birth is given as 26 August 1794. The date (with a mistake in his parentage) is mentioned again in *Les Préfets de la Sarthe, Actes du colloque de l’abbaye de l’Epau des 22 et 23 mars 2003* (Nadine Vivier and René Plessix eds), *La Province du Maine*, 2005, p. 343.

²³ Departmental Archives of the Sarthe (Le Mans), marriage certificate, La Suze-sur-Sarthe, NM 1793_1812, Reference 2 Mi EC 382_9-10, views 362-364 out of 683, register pages 14-16. Bridegroom and bride are of age: François Pierre was born on 22 August 1763 at La Suze-sur-Sarthe; Françoise Marie Catherine Poirier, on 25 November 1766. The

bridegroom's father was François Lebreton, aged 67, and his mother, Madelaine Blin, aged 60. François Pierre had two brothers: Noël Lebreton, aged 29 and Julien Lebreton, aged 26. Françoise Marie Catherine Poirier was the daughter of René Poirier and Françoise Le Roy.

²⁴ General List of artillery officers on half-pay—artillery train 1 October 1817, Law of 25 March 1817, Royal Press, 1817. The notice in file 2 M 63 mentioned above gives François René Lebreton as “lieutenant in the 2nd horse artillery regiment.”

²⁵ Ephraïm Harpaz (ed.), *Benjamin Constant et Goyet de la Sarthe: correspondance 1818-1822*, Genève : Droz, 1973.

²⁶ E. Harpaz (ed.), *op. cit.*, Letter XXXVI, p. 71.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ E. Harpaz (ed.), *op. cit.*, Letter XXXVIII, p. 73.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ E. Harpaz (ed.), *op. cit.*, *Postscriptum*, p. 539.

³¹ E. Harpaz (ed.), *op. cit.* p. 596.

³² E. Harpaz (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 670.

³³ According to the phrase used by J. Hantraye in the article referred to in note 20, p. 149, which meant he was a follower of Louis-Philippe, who intended to keep to a middle-of-the-road policy.

³⁴ See Charles Drouet's booklet referred to in note 21.

³⁵ *Affiches, annonces judiciaires, avis divers* [Posters, law notices, miscellaneous announcements] *du Mans et du département de la Sarthe*, Friday, 4 March 1831.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, royal ordinance of 19 May 1831. Lebreton replaced Lelong at La Flèche. According to his file in the Departmental Archives of the Sarthe he entered upon his duties on 2 June.

³⁷ *Almanach royal et national pour l'année 1841*, p. 588. The notice in the Sarthe Archives file 2 M 63 shows his income was assessed at 8,000 francs.

³⁸ *Bulletin de la Société d'agriculture, sciences et arts de la Sarthe*, volume 61-65, 1947, p. 24 : “He resigned in favour of Charles Granger,” a representative of the new government. See *Les Préfets de la Sarthe, op. cit.*, p. 305.

³⁹ *Les Préfets de la Sarthe, op. cit.* p. 305.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* In the bundle of documents referenced 2 M 61 in the Sarthe Archives file concerning François René Lebreton are to be found letters discussing “the difficulties of his position”; he had “declared himself against the Chouans” and “exasperated the legitimist party.” See the notice devoted to the sub-prefect of La Flèche in *Les Préfets de la Sarthe, op. cit.*, p. 270.

⁴¹ *La Province du Maine*, 1943, p. 39. Julien Rémy Pesche's *Dictionnaire topographique, historique et statistique de la Sarthe, suivi d'une biographie et bibliographie* (vol. V, p. 379) gives it to understand that Lebreton had also acquired the château de Thouars. He died on 29 September 1848, on his Thouars estate, Saint-Mars-sous-Ballon. Death certificate, Departmental Archives of the Sarthe, Saint-Mars-sous-Ballon, D1836-1852, Reference 5 Mi 331_13, no. 80 in the register, views 157-158 out of 207.

⁴² V3E/M 858, brief certificate from the Register of Paris, “recreated” after the regrettable disappearance of the original at the time of the Commune and the setting on fire of the Town Hall.

⁴³ Information about him, his early commitments and his activities as a journalist are to be found in *Le livre du centenaire du Journal des débats 1789-1889*, by Joseph Thuilley, Paris: Plon, 1889, pp. 569-70.

⁴⁴ Pierre Citron (ed.), *Hector Berlioz, Correspondance, tome IV*, Paris: Flammarion, 1972, letter of 21 August 1851, p. 83.

⁴⁵ *Diary*, 13 October 1888: “At 1.30 to Mlle Le Breton, 50 Rue de Bourgogne, just behind the Chambre des Députés.”

⁴⁶ Certificates of the Paris Register, 1891 register, no. 1833.

⁴⁷ *Tout-Paris, Annuaire de la société parisienne, Noms et adresses, classés par noms, par professions et par rues...suivi d'un dictionnaire des pseudonymes*, 7th year, Paris: A. La Fare, 1891. I was unable to consult the directories for 1895 and 1896.

⁴⁸ The information is given by the *Guide Rosenwald, Annuaire de statistique médicale et pharmaceutique* for the year 1893, p. 208. In 1891 the doctor consulted between 1 and 2 p.m.

⁴⁹ George Gissing, *Diary*: “22 October [1888]: Afternoon to call on Mlle Le Breton and her sister Mme Xavier Raymond. Several other people came in. For the first time saw an example (off the stage) of the jeune fille,—rather an aristocratic one too, I suppose, for her father was referred to as ‘le Général,’ and she spoke of being fond of riding.”

⁵⁰ In his death certificate, Departmental Archives of the Sarthe, Le Mans, D 1860-1862, Reference 5 mi 191_330-332, view 617-673, no. 741 in the register, he is said to be a widower, his late wife being “Anne Charlotte Guittet.”

⁵¹ E. Hucher, *Catalogue du Musée archéologique du Mans concernant la description de tous les objets existant dans ce musée à la date du 1^{er} janvier 1860*, Le Mans: Ed. Monnoyer, 1869, p. 6.

⁵² A. Varet, *Revue historique et archéologique du Maine*, 1879, p. 260.

⁵³ A. Varet, *Revue historique et archéologique du Maine*, 1880, p. 102.

⁵⁴ Fanny Lebreton’s translation was recently reprinted, with a preface by Michel Le Bris, in Frederick G. Burnaby, *Khiva—Au galop vers les cités interdites d’Asie centrale*, Paris: Phébus, 2001.

⁵⁵ Number for Tuesday, 16 April 1878.

⁵⁶ *Collected Letters*, Vol. III, letter to Eduard Bertz, 6 December 1888: “Mlle Le Breton told me that there never had been such a demand for translations of English novels. It is true that they mostly appear in feuilletons—but then I used to see the bookshops full of Hachette’s series of foreign novels. The serious English books (I include novels) are no good, it is true.” See also what George wrote to his brother Algernon on 4 May 1888: “There is a craze for English novels at present in Paris.”

⁵⁷ Gissing echoes these relations in his *Diary*: “18 December [1888]: Letter from Mlle Le Breton, in which she says she has lately seen Mr and Mrs Henry Reeve (ed[itor] of the *Ed[inburgh] Review*) who declare themselves great admirers of my novels.” See also *Collected Letters*, Volume V (1892-1895), letter to Bertz, 20 May 1892: “And yet I was told by Mlle Le Breton that her acquaintance, the editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, insisted to her on the importance of my work.”

⁵⁸ The name of Xavier Raymond and allusions to visits and exchange of correspondence occur in Reeve’s *Memoirs*. See John Knox Laughton (ed.), *Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Henry Reeve*, London: Longmans, Green, 1898.

⁵⁹ See *Le livre du centenaire du Journal des débats 1789-1889*, Paris : Plon, 1889, p. 606.

⁶⁰ Announcement of the publication of the novel on the first page of the number for Thursday, 5 March 1885.

⁶¹ Instalments in March-June and July-August 1883. It was in this review that Hephell published a short story—original work and text with a ring of autobiography?—“Le bosquet du roi,” in which appear M. Elsewhere, Didier, Miss Ethel, and a woman who has spent all

her life with her uncle and godfather, Mlle d'Aumel, owner of La Mulerie, *Revue des deux mondes*, January-March 1887, volume 79, pp. 419-46.

⁶² *Collected Letters*, Vol. III, letter to Eduard Bertz of 6 December 1888.

⁶³ *Collected Letters*, Vol. IV, letter to Eduard Bertz, 1 February 1889: "Yes, S & E. themselves told Mlle Le Breton that the book ["Demos"] was *domaine public*."

⁶⁴ *Collected Letters*, Vol. III, letter to Ellen, 14 March 1888: "I am much pleased by receiving this evening a letter from a Frenchwoman, from Paris, asking if she may translate 'Demos'! She says that she has published translations of many novels in the *Revue des deux Mondes*, &c. Also she speaks with much interest of 'A Life's Morning.'"

⁶⁵ George Gissing, *Diary*: "23 May: Replied to Fanny Le Breton, who has begun translating 'Demos.'"

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 13 October 1888.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, "It was found 'trop sérieux' for the [*Journal des*] *Débats*." Fanny believed it might be accepted. See *Collected Letters*, Vol. III, 4 May 1888, to his brother Algernon: "I am in correspondence with a Frenchwoman who is about to translate 'Demos.' Hachette has consented to publish, & she thinks she can get it first of all into the *Journal des Débats*. There is a craze for English novels at present in Paris."

⁶⁸ The novel appeared in two octavo volumes of 305 and 270 pages, selling at 2 fr. 50. Gissing regretted in his correspondence this delayed publication; on 4 August 1889, he told Bertz, who was unhappy about his inability to mention the French translation in a long article he was writing on Gissing: "I can't understand such delay. It will be too late for your purpose."

⁶⁹ *Diary*, 13 October [1888].

⁷⁰ *Collected Letters*, Vol. IV: 23 January 1889 to his brother Algernon: "Je vous prie d'envoyer à Morley Roberts, 4 Danvers Street, Chelsea S. W., la somme de 3/6, en même temps le remerciant d'avoir expédié à Paris l'exemplaire de 'Thyrza' à Mlle Le Breton." A note from Roberts, received on 19 January, had informed Gissing that the book had been duly sent.

⁷¹ Bibliothèque Méjanès (Aix-en-Provence), Collection Salomon Reinach, Box 97 LAR-LEF.

⁷² It is worth noting that of the hundred copies of Gunter's books listed in the Catalogue of the British Library not a single one was published by Scott. *Mr. Barnes* appeared under several imprints in the United States in 1887, and in England was brought out in the same year by Routledge. Perhaps Scott did also publish the novel, and perhaps Fanny Lebreton found his name on the cover of the copy she lent Salomon Reinach's father. Or maybe again she merely wrote to him for advice about the American copyright. However, Fanny Lebreton is rather careless where details are concerned. She misspells the title of the book she wishes to translate! As for Gissing he quickly realized that his French translator, whose spoken English was not good enough for conversation, had produced a rather unfaithful rendering of his novel.

⁷³ See H. Duchêne, "Salomon Reinach devant les hommes et devant Dieu," in Salomon Reinach, *Cultes, Mythes et Religions*, Paris: Robert Laffont, Bouquins, 2006, pp. xi-xii.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. xiii-xv. The Concours général is a national competition open to the best pupils of lycées, dating back to the 18th century, and now open only to the last two upper forms.

⁷⁵ See E. Pottier, biographical notice published above the "Bibliographie de Salomon Reinach," Paris: Belles Lettres, 1936, p. xlii. See also *Revue archéologique*, 36 (1932).

⁷⁶ *Journal des débats*, Sunday, 31 January 1886. The obituary begins with this sentence : “Encore un vieil ami, un ancien compagnon de travail, un camarade des temps troublés à qui nous devons dire adieu” [One more old friend, a former work companion, a comrade of troubled times to whom we must bid farewell].

⁷⁷ See Hervé Duchêne, “Joseph Reinach, historien de l’Affaire,” in J. Reinach, *Histoire de l’Affaire Dreyfus*, Paris : Robert Laffont, Bouquins, 2006, vol. I, p. xx (illusions ruined in 1881 after the failure of the electoral reform concerning voting for several members), and pp. xxii-xxxiii (dealing with the fight against General Boulanger).

⁷⁸ Oxford and Cambridge were familiar places to Salomon, a friend of Arthur John Evans, the archaeologist, and of James George Frazer, the author of *The Golden Bough*, a doctor of several British universities, and translator of the American scholar Charles Lea’s monumental *History of the Inquisition*.

⁷⁹ An echo of this project occurs in an unpublished Spring 1880 letter from Joseph Reinach to his brother: “Je t’ai déjà écrit à ce sujet te demandant des lettres pour Ferry et Jauréguiberry et t’annonçant que je me chargeais de toute la négociation. Inutile d’écrire à Mme Cahen et stupide d’écrire à Raymond.” On this archeological mission, see H. Duchêne, “Salomon Reinach et les archipels égéens. A propos d’un voyage sur le *Latouche-Tréville*,” *Revue des Études anciennes*, 103 (2001), pp. 61-81.

⁸⁰ *Journal des débats*, 23 May 1882.

⁸¹ H. Duchêne, “De Délos à Carthage ou comment Salomon Reinach devint Africain,” *Journal des Savants*, 2006, Vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 307-45.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 339. See also the notice I have devoted to the scholar on the site of INHA at: http://www.inha.fr/IMG/article_PDF/article_a2511.pdf

⁸³ But then this Mme Savary, the translator, might just as well be the novelist L. Savary, who published with Hachette in 1906 *La Tour de la lanterne*, which is set in La Rochelle; the book was noticed in the *Figaro* on 17 and 20 December 1906 and went into a second edition in 1913.

Gissing Reviewed on Amazon

ROBIN FRIEDMAN

[In our January number we reprinted a first batch of reviews of Gissing’s works published on Amazon by Mr. Friedman, of Washington D. C., in the last few years. We now offer a second batch.]

“Thyrza,” 19 January 2010

“And thou art dead, as young and fair
As aught of mortal birth;
And form so soft and charms so rare
Too soon return’d to Earth!”

George Gordon Lord Byron, “Elegy on Thyrza”

George Gissing’s (1857-1903) novel *Thyrza* (1887) centers upon the death of a beautiful young woman with the unusual name in Byron’s poem. The book was Gissing’s fifth published novel and one of a series of early works

in which he explored the lives of the London poor. A young naïve Gissing sold the copyright to the book for a pittance, although the novel would achieve some success during his lifetime. *Thyrza* is a lengthy book with a difficult and intricate plot and a distinctly dated Victorian writing style. These considerations help explain why the book is little read today. But I love the book and wanted at least to raise awareness of it in this review. With the advent of digitalization, it is easy for those who wish to pursue this novel to do so. I offer the following bare outline of the novel.

Most of the story is set in Lambeth, a poor working-class area of London. The characters are not at the bottom of the economic ladder, but they are poor factory workers who must work for long hours at thankless, mindless drudgery to live. Much of the book is a story of class conflict. The primary male character is Walter Egremont, a young man of wealth who has inherited his father's oil-cloth factory. Egremont is weak, unfocused, but well-meaning. As with many people today, he does not know what to do with his life. At length he forms the plan of giving lectures on English literature to a select group of workers in Lambeth to raise their perspective on life from their day to day activities and to instill in select individuals a love of beauty and learning. Before leaving for his planned mission in Lambeth, Egremont proposes to a lovely young woman of his own class, Annabel, who rejects him.

Egremont's lectures are received indifferently in Lambeth but he presses on and tries to fund and establish a free library in the community. He asks a middle-aged candle worker named Gilbert Grail, who has read extensively during a harried life, to serve as the librarian. Gilbert uses the opportunity for economic freedom that Egremont has offered him to propose to the beautiful and frail Thyrza Trent, age 17, with whom he has shared his love of literature and reading, and whom he has loved from afar. Thyrza has a beautiful, untrained singing voice. Thyrza accepts Grail's proposal. As the novel goes forward, Thyrza falls in love with Egremont. Egremont loves Thyrza as well but, because of her engagement to Grail, tries to suppress his feelings. Shamed at breaking her engagement to Grail, Thyrza runs away from Lambeth and almost dies.

She is rescued by an elderly woman friend of Egremont's, Mrs. Ormonde, who tries to make a lady of Thyrza (a Pygmalion-type theme is common in Gissing) and to train her heretofore untutored singing voice. Mrs. Ormonde opposes Egremont's passion and contemplated marriage to Thyrza on grounds that the two are of radically different and irreconcilable social classes and backgrounds. She persuades Egremont to spend two

years away in America after which, she promises, she will not interfere if Egremont decides to propose to Thyrza. At the close of the two years, Egremont's idealism much diminished, Mrs. Ormonde again persuades him not to propose to Thyrza. Heartbroken, Thyrza returns to Lambeth and offers to marry her original suitor, Gilbert Grail. But she dies before the marriage can take place. Egremont then proposes again to Annabel and is accepted. In accepting, Annabel tells Egremont that he has missed the opportunity to make something valuable of his life by marrying Thyrza. The marriage of Annabel and Egremont will be comfortable but dull and passionless.

Much of the force of *Thyrza* derives from its descriptive passages, of nature, of upper-class England, but especially of the streets, shops and people of Lambeth. For example, in a scene in which a group of poor children dance to a barrel-organ playing on Lambeth Walk, Gissing describes (Chapter IX):

“the life of men who toil without hope, yet with the hunger of an unshaped desire; of women in whom the sweetness of their sex is perishing under labour and misery; the laugh, the song of the girl who strives to enjoy her year or two of youthful vigour, knowing the darkness of the years to come; the careless defiance of the youth who feels his blood and revolts against the lot which would tame it; all that is purely human in these darkened multitudes speaks to you as you listen. It is the self-conscious striving of a nature which knows not what it would attain, which deforms a true thought by gross expression, which clutches at the beautiful and soils it with foul hands.”

Gissing offers sympathetic, rounded portrayals of many people of Lambeth, including Thyrza's older sister Lydia, Gilbert Grail, a working girl named Totty Nancarrow, a young man named Luke Ackroyd who, like Egremont, has difficulty finding direction for his life. He ultimately marries Lydia. Egremont, the most modern character in the tale with his vacillation, good intention and ultimate lack of passion or commitment, receives a convincing portrayal. Thyrza herself is an idealization.

As with much of Gissing, *Thyrza* is a mixture of social realism and romantic love. For all its emphasis on Lambeth and on the difficulty of uplifting the poor through programs of literary education, the focus of this novel is on passion and on the rarity and supreme importance in Gissing's eyes of true love. The heroine, Thyrza, is willing to break her engagement because she feels the force of love, physical as well as intellectual for Egremont. Egremont in the last analysis lacks the courage to act upon his feelings, and his life remains forever poor and atrophied as a result.

While the story threatens at times to lapse into sentimentality, *Thyrza* is a deeply-felt and thoughtful novel. It will never be widely read but its name deserves to be known. *Thyrza* will continue to find its own small group of readers.

“Godwin Peak,” 29 November 2010

Just before publication in 1892, George Gissing changed the title of his novel to the evocative *Born in Exile* from the name of its primary character, the difficult, complex anti-hero, Godwin Peak. Although written after Gissing had made a name for himself with *New Grub Street* and other books, *Born in Exile* was a hard sell to the publishers. The book was rejected several times and nearly passed over. It has remained little read over the years. Yet it is an extraordinary book, perhaps Gissing’s best. For all its datedness, and its length, this book will reward careful reading.

The book is a detailed study of its title character and a novel of ideas. It is among the first and the best novels to explore the relationship between Darwinism and geology and traditional religious beliefs. The book has much to say about sexuality, about the life of the mind, the erosion of values, social classes, and social change. Gissing seemed greatly influenced by Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment* and by Turgenev’s *Fathers and Children* in writing *Born in Exile*.

In some respects, Peak is modelled on Gissing himself and Gissing described the novel to a friend as “a book I had to write.” Born, as was Gissing himself, to a struggling lower-middle class pharmacist, Peak is intelligent, broodingly introspective, sceptical, and rootless. He is ashamed of his origins. He both envies and scorns the upper classes and believes his intellectual gifts entitle him to a higher place. Thus Peak sees himself, in a phrase repeated several times in the book, as “Born in Exile.”

As a young man, Peak secures a scholarship to Whitelaw College where he distinguishes himself both in the sciences and in literature but cannot decide what he wants to do. In an odd but critical turn in the book, he leaves Whitelaw before his final year because his uncle proposes to open a cheap restaurant in the community and Peak believes this association with his uncle would shame him. He moves to London where he graduates from the London School of Mines, becomes a chemist, and falls in with a group of radical freethinkers and journalists. He has what seems to be the makings of a successful life. Peak is a skeptic and anonymously publishes an article, “The New Sophistry,” in a leading magazine which criticizes severely efforts to reconcile Darwinian science and geologic time with religion. The

various types of arguments on all sides seem not much different from those in current debate.

Dissatisfied with his social position, Peak leaves London to try to ingratiate himself into the upper classes. He says to a friend in a key passage of the book that he does not believe women need to be intelligent or enlightened: women need to be sexual. And so Peak goes to look for a wife and self-destructs in the process. He meets a family with a landed estate, the Warricombes, whom he had known from his days at Whitelaw. The father of the family, Martin Warricombe, is a student of geology. Peak pretends to have shifted his career goals to become a minister in the Church of England. He ingratiates himself with Martin Warricombe, who is surprisingly liberal-minded, by trying to show Warricombe the sincerity of his beliefs and the compatibility of religious traditionalism with scientific modernism. He is interested in Warricombe's daughter, Sidwell, lovely and reserved and religiously traditional and unadventurous. At first, Sidwell is something of a stand-in for class, rather than a person Peak loves for herself. As the story develops, Peak seems to develop something of a genuine love for Sidwell. And oddly, Sidwell comes to love Peak.

Peak lives with tension in his pursuit because he knows he is practising deceit and living a lie. He is ashamed of doing so. Ultimately the truth comes out when Sidwell's brother, Buckland, an old Whitelaw friend, discovers that Peak was the author of the anonymous article "The New Sophistry" which condemned efforts to reconcile religion and science. Buckland is himself a skeptic whose views are rough and not deeply considered but still are similar to Peak's and to modernity. Buckland has found his way to Peak's former small group of friends in London who are amazed that Peak is trying to pass himself off as a prospective clergyman. Buckland confronts Peak with what he has learned and tells Sidwell and Martin. Peak is disgraced and must leave Exeter. Even though she knows the truth, Sidwell still loves Peak. Her own religious and moral views have broadened under their acquaintance to something approaching free thought. Sidwell has achieved a substantial intellectual independence from her family and background. Before Peak leaves, the door is left open that they will marry if Peak establishes himself.

Peak is miserable and lonely but he receives a bequest from an intellectual woman, Marcella Moxey, who unreciprocatedly had long loved him. With his financial future secured, Peak writes Sidwell a love letter, the first time he has opened himself up, proposing marriage. After much anguish, Sidwell rejects Peak and terminates the relationship. For all her intellectual

change, Sidwell finds she cannot leave her family and its estate. Rootless and alone, Peak sets out for travel on the continent where he apparently lives the short life of a rake, contracts a disease, and dies homeless and alone.

Born in Exile is a study of a modern type, an intelligent, rootless, and confusedly amoral individual, in the dress of late Victorianism. The novel explores the loss of traditional religious faith and the lack of any apparent standards to replace it. Gissing, himself a nonbeliever, did not see humanism, social activism, or other nostrums as providing an adequate substitute for religion. Hence his novels, particularly this one, have a pessimistic philosophical cast.

The book is long, with extensive passages of wordy dialogue and introspective commentary, both of which are typical of Gissing. Other than the masterful portrayal of Peak, and to some extent the characterization and growth of Sidwell Warricombe, none of the other many characters and scenes is well-developed. It takes perseverance to read this book. For interested readers, perseverance will be richly rewarded. Although never likely to become popular, *Born in Exile* is a troubling and deeply perceptive exploration of modernity. Unfortunately, this novel appears to be out of print. It richly deserves a new edition. I read this book in a Hogarth Press edition from the mid-1980s with an introduction by the Gissing scholar Gillian Tindall.

“Eve’s Ransom,” 1 January 2009

George Gissing (1857-1903) was a late Victorian novelist whose best-known works are *New Grub Street*, a story of the difficulty of the literary life in an age of commercialism, and *The Odd Women*, a novel which examines British feminism in the late 19th century. Gissing’s remaining novels tend to go in and out of print. They attract a small, if devoted, readership. Gissing was a realistic, if highly self-centered, author who tried to portray poor and lower-middle class London life as he found it. He writes, as suggested above, of the difficulties of finding meaning in an age of commercialism and of the difficulties of and ambiguities in relations between the sexes. I have long loved Gissing’s books, and wanted to revisit him again.

I was pleased to see that Gissing’s short novel *Eve’s Ransom* (1895) is again in print. (I knew the book through an old Dover Press edition.) Most of Gissing’s other novels are lengthy, in the three-volume model of the Victorians. *Eve’s Ransom* is short, and the somewhat modernistic form of

the book suits Gissing well. It remains one of my favorites among Gissing's works and is a good short introduction for those coming to him for the first time. Because of its unfamiliarity, I will offer a somewhat extended summary of the story in the hopes that it will interest some readers in the book or the author.

Put simply, *Eve's Ransom* is a story of a young man who loves a woman who doesn't love him back. The primary character is a young man named Maurice Hilliard, possessed of a terrible temper which comes to harm him in the course of the story. Hilliard is unhappily employed as a mechanical draftsman in Dudley, England. He has a contentious encounter with a man named Dengate which results in Dengate repaying Hilliard a debt of over £400 that he had long earlier borrowed from Hilliard's father. With some reason, Dengate predicts that Hilliard will soon dissipate the money and go to the devil.

Hilliard bids farewell to his close friend, Robert Narramore, quits his job, and forms the ambition to experience what life is about if only for a short time before the money runs out. Before he leaves Dudley, Hilliard's landlady shows him a photograph of a young woman named Eve Madeley who has moved to London. Hilliard becomes enamored of her. With leads from the landlady and others, he is able to find and become acquainted with Eve in London.

The book tells of Hilliard's relationship with Eve and with her friend, the somewhat naïve Patty Ringrose. Eve, through intelligence and effort, has worked her way from the poverty of her birth to a solid position as a bookkeeper. She still fears poverty and is determined to avoid falling back to it. Unwittingly, Eve was involved with a married man, but she terminates the relationship when she discovers the marriage.

Ultimately, Eve asks Hilliard for a loan to assist her troubled former lover. Hilliard agrees on condition that Eve and Patty accompany him to Paris, at his expense, so that Eve can free herself from her relationship. Eve reluctantly agrees. She feels grateful to Hilliard for the help but also comes to resent the hold the money and her feeling of gratitude to Hilliard have on her. She does not have the same romantic feelings for Hilliard that Hilliard has for her.

In Paris, Hilliard spends time with his old friend Narramore who is vacationing with a friend named Birching. Narramore has inherited money and is making a success of himself selling beds. Birching is an architect. At Narramore's contrivance, Hilliard uses most of his remaining money to apprentice himself to Birching's firm—seeking to put his drafting talents

and his interest in architecture to good use. He relocates to Birmingham and lives again in poverty as he pursues his architectural apprenticeship. Eve seeks out work, with the expectation that she will marry Hilliard when he becomes able to support himself through architecture. A triangle develops with Hilliard, Eve and Narramore which is resolved in the later part of the book.

Gissing's story involves, as is frequently the case in his books, two flawed and not entirely likeable primary characters, Hilliard and Eve. The value of the story lies in Gissing's understanding of his characters and in his unerring descriptions of dreary places and people such as rooming houses, small apartments, dingy shops, railway waiting-rooms, landladies, in London, Dudley, Birmingham and elsewhere. In contrast to other Victorian writers, Gissing had a harsh, misanthropic view of people. Gissing's pessimism is on display in this tale of failed love but with something of a light touch. As the story ends, there is a suggestion that Hilliard has found, in a roundabout way, the freedom from care and the ability to live that he hoped to experience when he received the £400. If chastened, Hilliard has not gone to the devil in the manner that Dengate had predicted. As Gissing eloquently ends his tale: "And Maurice Hilliard, a free man in his own conceit, sang to himself a song of the joy of life."

"Renewing Love in Middle Age," 2 January 2009

Sleeping Fires (1895) is a short novella by the English novelist George Gissing (1857-1903) that explores the possibility of finding a former love and overcoming grief and guilt in middle and late life. Gissing has never been a popular novelist; but his books have lasted. He has a small but loyal group of readers and his books are becoming accessible and in print once again. Some critics, such as John Halperin in his biography *George Gissing: A Life in Books*, rate *Sleeping Fires* highly indeed within Gissing's output.

Sleeping Fires is set in Greece and in London. The two major characters are Edmund Langley, age 42 and Lady Agnes Revill, age 37. As the book opens, Langley is touring in Greece. He is well-to-do, has never had to work, and feels a sense of emptiness in his life. Sixteen years earlier Langley had courted a young woman named Agnes Forrest, but his marriage proposal was rejected when he confessed to her father that he had fathered a son out of wedlock three years earlier. The mother had taken the boy away and married another man. Langley did not know of the child's whereabouts. Langley had remained unmarried, living an essentially lei-

surely life. Agnes Forrest had married a Member of Parliament to become Lady Agnes Revill, in consequence of which she had moved in powerful British society, become socially prominent, and conservative in outlook. Revill died, leaving her a widow courted by another influential Member of Parliament, Lord Henry Strands.

While in Greece, Langley meets a companion from his college days named Worboys who has become a classical scholar—and an unmitigated pedant. Worboys is accompanied by an 18-year-old boy, Louis Reed, who bears an uncanny resemblance to Langley. It develops that Reed is the ward of Lady Revill who has sent the lad on tour because the youth is coming under what she fears is the unfortunate influence of a woman named Mrs. Tresilian, who has liberal views about social equality and about improving the condition of the poor. When Reed gets a letter from Mrs. Tresilian saying that her relationship with him must end due to his guardian's objection, Langley agrees with Reed to sail back to England and discuss the matter with Lady Revill. Langley is still unhappy over the rejection years earlier by Lady Revill and her family.

When the two meet after so many years, it is with an awkward formality, as Lady Revill informs Langley that Louis Reed is his son. Louis soon thereafter dies in Greece, and the two former would-be lovers engage in a sharp dialogue of recrimination. Lady Revill blames Langley for fathering the child and not offering to marry the mother. Langley, in turn, blames Lady Revill for not telling him about his son and for making a loveless marriage following her rejection of him.

With Louis dead, the story shifts to the possible renewal of the relationship between Langley and Lady Revill. Much of the tale is played out in dialogue between the two, which is frank and cutting for a Victorian novel. Langley and Lady Revill excoriate themselves and each other for what they see as the meaninglessness of their lives. Lady Revill exchanges letters with Mrs. Tresilian, who works with the poor in a London slum, and comes to appreciate the value of Mrs. Tresilian's efforts and of Louis's idealism in trying to follow her. Langley renews his proposal of many years earlier and is again sharply rejected. Agnes Revill does not want to surrender her independence and her will. But with time, she softens and reluctantly admits that she still loves Langley. She asks for time to reflect as Langley returns to Greece to attend to burial arrangements for his son.

Here is a key passage from the end of the story in which Langley pursues his marriage proposal:

How strange it is, Agnes. We seem so far apart. The long years of utter separation—the meeting at length in cold formality—the bitterness, the reproaches—so much that seems to stand between us; and yet we are everything to each other. If you were the kind of woman who has no will of her own, could I love you as I do? And if I were less conscious of my purpose would you listen to me? There is no question of one yielding to the other, save in the moment which overcomes your pride and leaves you free to utter the truth. Those are the old phrases of love-making—they rise to a man’s tongue when his blood is hot. We shall never see the world with the same eyes; man and woman never did so, never will; but there is no life for us apart from each other. Our very faults make us born companions. Your need of me is as great as mine of you. We have forgiven all there is to forgive; we know what may be asked and what may not. No castles in the air; no idealisms of boy and girl; but two lives that have a want and see but the one hope of satisfying it.

Unlike much of Gissing, *Sleeping Fires* ends with a sense of hope as Langley and Agnes Revill move towards each other in hope for the “day that is still granted to us.” With all its Victorian trappings, this story speaks clearly of love as the source of meaning in human life. The manner in which the two primary characters verbally expose each other’s shortcomings is highly modern. The book can be read easily in a single sitting. While probably not the best of Gissing, the book will reward reading.

Book Reviews

Pierre Coustillas, *The Heroic Life of George Gissing, Part III: 1897–1903*, London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012.

With the publication of the third and final volume of Gissing’s biography Professor Coustillas has completed the monumental task to which he devoted his entire career over the course of five decades. One wonders in sympathy whether he will ever succeed in kicking the Gissing habit now that one imagines him to have “laid down his biographer’s pen with a sigh of thankfulness.” It seems right and fitting to begin this review by expressing on behalf of his readers the great debt of gratitude for the 1,100 pages dedicated to a novelist whose achievement and popularity owe so much to Coustillas’s untiring efforts.

Part three of *The Heroic Life of George Gissing* covers the last seven years of Gissing’s life and is divided into two sections, “V. Port after

Stormy Seas,” and “VI. Epilogue.” The ambivalence of the title of section V. in its allusion to Spenser’s *The Fairie Queene* becomes perhaps more evident by quoting the last line from the stanza: “Ease after warre, death after life does greatly please.” Though there is enough reason to think of Gissing’s last years as a period in which he finally reached a safe harbour after the vicissitudes of his second marriage, there was no doubt at the same time a growing awareness on his part that his ailing physical condition might sooner rather than later lead to the arrival of the “welcome repose” of death following upon life.

The opening chapter follows Gissing on his third journey to his promised land of Italy. In an early poem (“Italia”) probably dating from the months prior to his expulsion from Owens College in the summer of 1876, he described the country as “gleam[ing] in the light of holiday,” while his heart, like that of an exile pining for his home, “leapt at the name of Rome.” Soon after his arrival at Siena he writes to his sisters at Wakefield in a tone of exuberant happiness and youthful enthusiasm how his land of dreams has come true once again. The long-horned white oxen drawing carts along the steep and winding Siena streets, remind him of his favourite classical authors, Homer and Virgil, and he sums up his feelings by stating “it is a beautiful country, beautiful beyond all possibility of describing it to those who have not been here” (2). While suffering from a bad cough and liver trouble, he was busily engaged in writing his critical study of Dickens’s works (which, amazingly, he completed in five weeks), the sudden death of his landlord interrupted his steady progress, reminding him of the ever-present proximity of death. Yet, on the day when his landlord was buried, Gissing observed in his typical fashion: “A relief, after all, to think that the poor fellow is no more.”

Early in November 1897 he left Siena for Naples, where he began his journey to Calabria, later recorded in *By the Ionian Sea*. At Crotona, once described by Augustus Hare as “God-forsaken” and “entirely wretched,” he fell seriously ill in the Albergo Concordia with congestion of his right lung, for which he was treated with quinine, which caused him to have visions: “wonderful pictures ... a delight, in spite of my feverish suffering” (21). Thanks to the good offices of Riccardo Sculco, the excellent local doctor, and the kind and sympathetic attentions of the servants (“horribly uncouth, filthy and barbarous”), Gissing was nursed back to health after five days of fever.

One is struck again by Gissing’s obvious happiness in the company of simple strangers in unfamiliar lands or regions. Quite often this happy

mood comes upon him as a welcome by-product of freedom regained, when he is travelling by himself abroad or at home as e.g. upon his return to England after a long absence in the spring of 1900. However, the beauty of say, the town of St. Neots and the surrounding countryside is not just appreciated and celebrated in and for itself, it is unfailingly recognized as an experience that will feed into some of his most moving writing. To claim that Gissing was essentially a solitary creature is not to deny the genuine pain of loneliness suffered during too many days of his life.

The ambivalent longing for a world both without end and sound Gissing expressed in the final paragraph of *By the Ionian Sea*, the travel book in which he recorded his Mediterranean experience:

Alone and quiet, I heard the washing of the waves; I saw the evening fall on cloud-wreathed Etna, the twinkling lights come forth upon Scylla and Charybdis; and as I looked my last towards the Ionian Sea, I wished it were mine to wander endlessly amid the silence of the ancient world, to-day and all its sounds forgotten.

Coustillas quotes the passage and refers to it as the “concluding lines of [Gissing's] travel narrative.” Yet the meaning of these lines is unmistakably reminiscent of the words—often interpreted as amounting to a death-wish—spoken by Ulysses in Tennyson’s dramatic monologue of that name. Surely it does not seem too fanciful to see the final lines of *By the Ionian Sea* as marking the end of a book, but more suggestively as an anticipation of the writer’s death.

It would be misleading though to conclude that Gissing was ready to die when he travelled to Rome by way of Naples in December 1897. Not for the first time in his life he was attracted by female charm in the form of a widow eight years his junior by the name of Mrs. Rosalind Williams. Her sympathy for Gissing was from the first aroused by a strange almost helpless appeal about him. According to the biographer “they became very much interested in each other,” though Gissing “remained extremely discreet about his relationship with her” (59). True to form Coustillas unearthed an unpublished memoir entitled “George Gissing,” written by Mrs. Williams in 1946 and now held by the John Rylands University Library in Manchester. In it she wrote that after their return to England they regularly saw each other in the summer of 1898. Apparently they discussed the possibility of Mrs. Williams’s coming to live with him, though she could not legally become his wife. In the end she decided that her defying the conventions might possibly ruin her son’s future, which she was not

prepared to do, so once again, after earlier attempts involving Bella Curtis and Constance Ash, Gissing's matrimonial hopes were dashed.

Little did he suspect that his life was to take a radical turn for the better before the month of July 1898 was out. Since May he had established himself at Dorking, where he had taken a house at 7 Clifton Terrace. After a first meeting at the Wellses' at Worcester Park, Mlle Gabrielle Fleury, a young cultured woman from Paris, on 26 July 1898 spent the day with Gissing to discuss further her translating his *New Grub Street* into French. Within a week he writes to her every day ("a passionate flood of amorous assurances" [74]), addressing her as "My Dearest." Her coming to him must have seemed nothing short of a miracle and despite seemingly insuperable obstacles Gissing was absolutely determined to have her for his third wife. During Gabrielle's second visit to Dorking in October the two lovers agreed to start their life in common in the spring of 1899. Until then he would rely on letters as a means of self-revelation, and an analysis of his aspirations and temperament. For all their rapid growth of intimacy, Gissing failed to bring himself to let Gabrielle into the dark secrets of his expulsion from Owens College and his first marriage to Nell Harrison. Not until after Gissing's death would Gabrielle learn about the tragedy at Manchester and its evil consequences.

For the composition and inspiration of his next major novel, *The Crown of Life*, he was obviously as indebted to Gabrielle, the new woman in his life, as he had been to Edith Underwood for *New Grub Street* when he was courting her. These unions in the words of Roger Milbrandt "seem to have steadied and concentrated Gissing's literary focus." He finished *The Crown of Life* in about four months and with the book out of the way, he started his preparations for what Coustillas calls "his self-contrived exile, inspired by love."

Chapter 4, "The Ideal Put to the Test," opens in a room of the Hôtel de Paris at Rouen on 6 May 1899, where Gissing had arranged to meet "his illicit spouse" on the eve of the private ceremony planned to solemnize his union with Gabrielle. Coustillas claims that "for the third time in his life, Gissing felt he had committed himself irretrievably" (111). And his third "marriage" was indeed only dissolved by his death four and a half years later. That it was in many respects greatly superior to his previous marital experiences, should not make us blind to the very real questions about the adverse effects upon Gissing of living with a domineering mother(-in-law) in the cramped environment of a Parisian flat that he came to detest. Sometimes one is tempted to think that Gissing's commitment to Gabrielle

was tested to breaking-point, particularly over her vehement and angry opposition to her husband's plans to extend his stay in England in order to enter the East Anglian Sanatorium on account of the precarious state of his right lung.

Gabrielle's letters addressed to the Wellses (where Gissing was staying in June 1901) testify to "the most difficult period" (181) of their married life and they "show her in a markedly unattractive light." Coustillas's verdict is unequivocal: "If George could have read her letters of the time to Wells and his wife, he would have been distressed, indeed chastened." (183) Despite Gabrielle's objections Gissing was persuaded by his English friends and doctor to spend six weeks in the Sanatorium at Nayland. At the end of his stay he travelled to Couhard in France, joining his wife and mother-in-law, Maman (Mme Fleury) at the Chalet Feuillebois they had rented for the summer. Its rural peace proved ideal for him to resume his serious writing. By the end of September he finished the revision and recasting of "An Author at Grass" by removing the very "passages in which his hostility to French domestic life had previously transpired angrily." Coustillas takes this as "oblique evidence that Gissing's personal situation had stabilized, and that the crisis with Gabrielle and her mother had been surmounted" (196).

At the recommendation of Wells Gissing in the autumn of 1898 had replaced his agent William Colles by the up-and-coming James B. Pinker, to whom he promised the manuscript of *The Crown of Life*. His confidence that with a more effective agent he would obtain better terms was justified: both *The Crown of Life* ("a love story written by a man in love") and *Our Friend the Charlatan* realized a combined £400 each for the English and American rights. The highest prices any of his titles ever fetched!

Though he continued to add short stories to his *oeuvre* during the years he shared with Gabrielle, his output was much reduced: only ten stories in all. The income from works like *Charles Dickens: A Critical Study* (1898), his travel-book *By the Ionian Sea* (1901), and *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* (1903), supplemented his income and through these titles he established himself as a recognized man of letters. In view of the growing worries about his health it is remarkable that he managed to complete works that were to be ranked with the best he ever wrote.

A consultation of his doctor in Paris in November 1901 led to the conclusion that he should spend the winter in the south of France. Arcachon, on the Atlantic coast, was recommended, but it soon became clear that Gabrielle would not accompany her ailing husband, as "she

placed her duties to her mother first” (198). It is difficult to understand why *Maman* (Mme Fleury) could not have joined her daughter and son-in-law in a health resort that had been established specifically to look after the needs of patients. So in the next four months we find Gissing on his own, at first in the Villa Souvenir at Arcachon, followed by another month of house-hunting. Another (lengthy) separation of husband and wife.

While at Arcachon he learned that his wife (Edith Underwood) had been removed from her lodgings at Brixton to the Workhouse Infirmary, as she was suspected of insanity. She was later transferred for the next two years to Hoxton House asylum in Lambeth. Gissing commented on Edith’s fate: “The poor creature must pass altogether out of our thoughts, as one dead. I cannot distress myself about her fate...” (205).

In May 1902 he found a suitable new residence at Ciboure and henceforth he would spend the last 20 months of his life in the Basque Country. He began his novel *Will Warburton* there, and in January 1903 was gratified by the reception of *The Private Papers*, which readers, correspondents and reviewers alike ranked as his greatest achievement. In July he moved to St. Jean-Pied-de-Port husbanding his limited energy in a desperate attempt to finish *Veranilda*, the historical novel, he himself regarded as his greatest achievement. When he died on the same day of the year as his father: 28 December 1903, his last book remained unfinished by five chapters. The exile had finally arrived in port.

Two more chapters complete the biography, “Assessment and Controversy (1904-6),” and “Gissing’s Afterlife: A Century on (1906-2003).” The first chapter focusses on Gabrielle’s initial grief and on the risible claim by the Rev. Cooper that Gissing had “died in the fear of God’s Holy Name, and with the comfort of the Catholic faith.” It is hard to understand why Gabrielle “out of regard for George’s mother and sisters and their narrow religious views, should have agreed for him to be buried according to the ritual of the Church of England” (260). Her justification smacks of hypocrisy and is manifestly untrue: there simply is not a single instance of any real regard on Gabrielle’s part for George’s mother and his sisters.

The final chapter consists of a comprehensive history of Gissing’s reputation, such as could only have been written by the man who for more than half a century made it his business to extend and enhance that reputation. Future Gissing scholars would do well to turn to this chapter as an indispensable guide to the major critical works on Gissing produced through the twentieth century.—Bouwe Postmus, University of Amsterdam

George Gissing, *Collected Short Stories*, Volume Two. Edited and introduced by Pierre Coustillas, with the assistance of Barbara Rawlinson and H el ene Coustillas. Grayswood, Surrey: Grayswood Press, 2012. Pp. xviii + 402.

George Gissing, *Collected Short Stories*, Volume Three. Edited and introduced by Pierre Coustillas, with the assistance of Barbara Rawlinson and H el ene Coustillas. Grayswood, Surrey: Grayswood Press, 2012. Pp. xvi + 344.

With the publication of these two volumes Grayswood Press has completed one of the highlights of the publishing year. A total of 1,056 pages of Gissing’s short stories is now made available for the first time in an edition by the foremost Gissing scholar of our day, Pierre Coustillas. Volume two offers a total of fifty-one titles, of which twenty-five fall into the category of short stories, while the remaining twenty-six come under the heading of sketches.

The latter were commissioned by the editor Clement K. Shorter (1857-1926), when he met Gissing in June 1895 while they were staying with Edward Clodd at Aldeburgh. Shorter offered Gissing three guineas for each of twenty sketches, to be published in his weekly the *Sketch*. Fittingly, Shorter’s portrait has been selected for the frontispiece of volume 2, as he was instrumental in persuading Gissing to return to the genre that first made him turn to writing during his year in America. In the spring of 1893 Shorter, this time in his capacity as editor of the *English Illustrated Magazine*, had first approached Gissing, requesting a short story “like the Bank Holiday scene in *Nether World*.” The request did not fall on deaf ears for the very day he received it Gissing set off for London, taking lodgings in Kennington Road, and starting to explore the background for what less than three weeks later became the finished story “Lou and Liz.” Shorter was pleased with the result and over the next ten years commissioned a total of twenty-six short stories and twenty sketches, which amounted to 40 per cent of Gissing’s shorter fiction.

“Lou and Liz” provides an illuminating insight into Gissing’s working methods. Well aware that his powers of invention were the “weakest of his various weak points,” he came to rely increasingly on collecting and accumulating materials derived from real life. From the mid-1880s he made determined efforts to go in search of locations, people, vocabulary and language, situations and trades that he needed for the construction of the works of his imagination. The glorious Easter week spent in the abominable lodgings in Kennington Road, where he was kept awake by bugs,

fleas, the crowing of cocks and a bestial row well into the night, proved eminently useful for his purpose. The story owes its existence as much to the imaginative appeal of the Rosherville Gardens explored by Gissing during his visit to London, as to a judicious selection of entries made in his *Scrapbook*. Among these are references to a “baby kept awake past midnight by a girl banging away on a piano,” a popular music hall song about the man who broke the bank at Monte Carlo, phrases of Cockney slang he had heard in the streets, and specific information about particular occupations (book folder, quill toothpick maker) and conditions of pay. Finally, he turned to good account a newspaper cutting (“Polyandry at the East End”) from the “Private Life of the Working Classes” dossier in his *Scrapbook*, which supplied the pivotal plot feature of the story.

Coustillas in his “Introduction to Volume Two” refers to “the twenty sketches that appeared in Shorter’s weekly number of the *Sketch*” as having “benefited from the closest analysis” in the light of their sources, which was published in 2004 in the Italian scholarly review *Rivista di Studi Vittoriani*. It may be helpful to those readers who have no easy access to that publication to quote two instances of the material supplied by the contemporary press. In the case of “Lord Dunfield” (p. 374) Gissing turned to good account the following two entries (the first in his *Commonplace Book* and the second in his *Scrapbook*):

At a fashionable wedding in Bayswater the other day (Oct. ’91) so great was the noise & general indecency that the incumbent said: “I beg the congregation to remember that they are in a church, & not in a theatre.” Yet the behaviour of the fashionables was not, it is said, worse than usual on such occasions.

The ending of the sketch is strikingly documented in the *Scrapbook* entry:

At Lord Lurgan’s wedding (casually says “Belle” in *The World* of Feb. 15th ’92 [actually 1893]) Lord Somebody, eager to get out of church after ceremony, “took the pews like fences.”

The second fascinating example of Gissing starting from a press-cutting is provided by “A Conversion.” In the “Occupations” dossier of the *Scrapbook* we find the following entry:

A sporting friend who has recently *been employed at a club to “protect” the card games* that go on there, has, says a correspondent, given me some interesting particulars of sharpers’ tricks. His duty was to stop any “work”—that is the general term for all underhand practice—and to keep professional card players out of the house, and he did both so quietly and so well that nobody except the culprit knew the real character of his employment. A tap

on the shoulder, an interview in the hall, and a man who went downstairs and never came up again, that was all there was to it....

Gissing's underlining is all the emphasis we need to conclude that he was beginning to think of creating the character called Klimper, whose transformation from a betting-man to a lay preacher denouncing the sin of gambling is sketched in "A Conversion."

Of the stories and sketches in the second volume three were to a greater or lesser extent inspired by aspects of Gissing's own experiences with women: "A Lodger in Maze Pond," "By the Kerb," and "The Fate of Humphrey Snell." Henry Shergold, at the mercy of the silly and vulgar daughter of his landlady, is unable to resist her when alone with her, and proposes to her. He is the main character in "A Lodger in Maze Pond," which Gissing in a letter to Clara Collet admitted to be a portrait of "his own silly self." Mrs. Billings, the "young wife of a town traveller" who neglects her, begins an affair with a shop-assistant who lodges with her. It goes on for two years until she fears her husband is beginning to suspect her. Mr. and Mrs. Billings must have been modelled on George and Annie Coward, with whom Gissing lodged at Chelsea between September 1882 and May 1884. Morley Roberts described the relationship between the lodger (Gissing) and his landlady (Mrs. Annie Coward) as a straightforward affair, which ended with Gissing being obliged to leave the house owing to the suspicions of his landlord. In "The Fate of Humphrey Snell" the location and circumstances of the first encounter of Humphrey and the girl named Annie Frost is strongly reminiscent of Leonard Vincent's encounter with Laura Lindon on the first page of the first story he ever wrote, "The Sins of the Fathers." The gloom of the scene, the weeping girl in distress, the impulse to relieve suffering and the later separation of the two lovers, all are connected with the quintessential experience of Gissing's life: his meeting with Nell Harrison and its fatal consequences that were to haunt him until the end of his days.

It may be due to the autobiographical details of these stories that I prefer them, but in addition one is affected by the greater urgency of the narrator's voice and the greater stylistic finesse of these narratives.

The short period covered by Volume Two (1893-1896) demonstrates Gissing's impressive range of subject matter, together with an obvious delight and remarkable confidence in the genre that he had perhaps neglected for too long. It proved lucrative, too. Between April and December 1893 he wrote 14 stories, which only took him about seven weeks in all to

complete, and for which he received around £170. Up to that time he had never received more than £150 for any of his novels.

Coustillas argues in his “Introduction to Volume Two” that Gissing’s move from Exeter to Brixton in 1893 was mainly motivated by his desire to get closer to “what he later called ‘the seat of war,’ that is the centre of literary life” (p. xi). He realized that there was more financial profit to be gained from short stories than from novels and was prepared to pay for the services of an agent who would help him place his stories with the greatly increased number of journals catering for such material.

There is some of Gissing’s finest work in this volume. No one can paint the drudgery, the monotony, the quiet suppressed suffering and the intense pathos of life in the miles of mean streets of South and East London better than he does. In the realms of self-respecting genteel poverty he stands *facile princeps*. Unequaled, chiefly because he knows the struggle for life in these sad quarters only too well. The “grim reality of an appalling family tragedy” (Rawlinson) in “The Day of Silence,” despite its harrowing poignancy, in the final analysis expresses an idealized and universal experience of human suffering and this magically has a cathartic effect upon the reader not unlike a tragedy like *King Lear*. Upon receiving the manuscript, William Colles, Gissing’s agent, at once recognized it as the “inimitable piece of work” (p. 41) that it is.

Volume Three offers the reader the last 29 stories Gissing wrote between 1896 and his death in 1903. In his “Introduction to Volume Three” Coustillas claims that in those years Gissing was no longer regarded exclusively as a writer of fiction. His critical study of Dickens, his travel-book *By the Ionian Sea* and *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, that odd mixture of fiction and autobiography, all contributed to his new status as a complete man of letters. When he turned to shorter fiction now, it was frequently because “the composition of a short story was associated with some episode in his life” (p. x).

A good example is provided by “Miss Rodney’s Leisure,” whose “leading character was inspired by a young woman—a fellow patient, Miss Rachel Evelyn White (1867-1943), a lecturer in Classics at Newnham College, Cambridge—with whom he became acquainted while staying at the East Anglian Sanatorium, Nayland, Suffolk, in the summer of 1901.” She must have struck him as an original, for soon after Gissing began his cure at the Sanatorium he wrote in a letter to H. G. Wells: “The most interesting person here is a Miss White ... a very vigorous type, *who will serve me one of these days* [my italics, BP]. Humorous, erudite, smokes

cigarettes—the friend of everybody one can mention.” And serve Gissing she did, when he turned to the portrayal of Miss Rodney. Apart from Miss White’s smoking habit, probably omitted to protect her privacy, most of her characteristic features were used for the eponymous heroine of the story.

Another example of an actual encounter in real life inspiring Gissing to the composition of the story “Fate and the Apothecary” was “a singular pharmaceutical chemist that Gissing ... met during a ramble in Surrey or Sussex, in the late spring of 1898.” He became the original of Farmiloe, the apothecary-cum-postmaster in the story.

Among the stories in this volume we find such acknowledged masterpieces as “Christopherson”—with its authenticating reference to a bookshop on the corner of Great Portland Street and Marylebone Road, where Gissing in his youth picked up a first edition of Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall*—, “The Scrupulous Father,” and “A Daughter of the Lodge.”

Though Gissing’s fees for the stories he wrote long remained mostly static (between £2/10 and £3 per 1,000 words), there was a distinct improvement from around 1900 to about £4 per 1,000 words. The best paid stories were “A Despot on Tour,” published by *Strand Magazine*, and “Humplebee,” published in the *Anglo-Saxon Review*.

Quite remarkable is the great number of stories in Volume Three that were to be translated, most of them long after Gissing’s death, for the benefit of readers in France, Germany, Japan, China, Poland and Sweden. A sure sign of his world-wide popularity as a writer of short fiction. It is to be hoped that this fine edition, with some attractive original illustrations will find its way over the world. The publisher and the editorial team deserve to see their work in as many hands as they could wish.—Bouwe Postmus

Eduard Bertz, *Philosophie des Fahrrads*, Herausgegeben von Wulfhard Stahl, Hildesheim: George Olms Verlag, 2012

It was not until 1961 that the figure of Eduard Bertz began to assume very accurate dimensions in Gissing’s life, that is when Arthur Young, then a leading name in Gissing studies, published in both England and the States an edition of the letters that escaped destruction in the first decade of the early twentieth century. Not that until then the name of Bertz was absolutely unknown to journalists and critics who felt strongly attracted to Gissing’s work. It had been known to the family in Wakefield from the early 1880s. Even old Mrs. Gissing in her modest Yorkshire home could

have said that Bertz was a friend of George and she probably classified him in her incurious mind as a potentially dangerous person. Algernon, a rather lethargic individual since babyhood, was the only member of the Gissing family besides George who ever met Bertz. Later, as Gissing's career drew to an end, Gabrielle, whose knowledge of the German language was definitely a cultural asset, corresponded with George's friend with mutual profit and the link with the Gissing family was maintained for a few years after his death. How and when the link was broken will probably never be known. Perhaps Gabrielle was discouraged by Bertz's naïve failure to see that Western Europe was heading for war—as late as 1913 he assured one of his English correspondents that there was no anti-English feeling in his country—a remarkable statement if any.

By the time the present book on bicycling was originally published in 1900 no such feeling should normally have found its way into it, although Bouwe Postmus's excellent review—in the January 1998 issue of this journal—of the second edition (issued by Snayder Verlag in 1997 and also edited by Wulfhard Stahl) makes this assumption more idealistic than realistic, considering that Bertz occasionally rambles pretty far from his subject in the ten chapters he devotes to, among other things, the history of the bicycle, its help in fighting the degeneration of the race, feminism and cycling—down to the best cycling costume for women—or the enemies of the bicycle. All this not only in connection with what he witnesses around him in Germany, but what he knows to exist in other countries such as England or the United States. The main feature of the book when it came out was the novelty of its subject, the extent of which will be realized if its teaching is placed alongside the images of bicycling offered by some of Gissing's short stories first published in the *English Illustrated Magazine*, “The Schoolmaster's Vision” for instance or by his 1901 novel, *Our Friend the Charlatan*. Gissing praised his friend's book and commented on it at length in his letter of 7 May 1900, finding it “far more practical than [he] had expected” and adding that Bertz had “put into this book a great deal of [his] mature thought on the gravest of modern subjects.” Both Bertz and Gissing enable us to capture the atmosphere of the Nineties which we sense growing in Gissing's work of the period, *The Odd Women*, *In the Year of Jubilee* and *The Whirlpool* as well as in Wells's *The Wheels of Chance*, in which Gissing was rather pleasantly surprised to find his name before he met its author. We feel we shall soon be in the company of Arnold Bennett and that Galsworthy was not far behind.

More than ever we are bound to see Bertz as a satellite of Gissing—also, but this is another story, of Whitman. One would like to know how he came to view the Great War. Fortunately for him doubtless, fate spared him the sight of Nazism and all its innumerable atrocities, what a French historian aptly called *l'ère des tyrannies*. Essentially for ideological reasons, he should be remembered as the author of *The French Prisoners*, a narrative which brilliantly testifies to his excellent knowledge of English. After this attractive third edition of *Philosophie des Fahrrads*, to which Stahl has added eleven pages of valuable notes and a revised and enlarged Afterword, we look forward to the revival of other Bertzian titles; *Das Sabinergut*, another period piece, which shows the writer and his dog, the famous Don, in America, would be a good candidate. Meanwhile, for those readers whose knowledge of German is at most rather shaky, the well-chosen illustrations—among them the remarkable caricature already used on the back cover of the second edition, entitled “Bicyclanthropos curvatus,” by Adalbert Seligmann (1862-1945), the Austrian artist,—of this *Philosophy of Bicycling* will remain a treat for compulsive browsers.—Pierre Coustillas

Notes and News

Bouwe Postmus has made a startling triple discovery. It had been known for years that *Will Warburton* had been serialized in weekly instalments in 1905, in the *Yorkshire Weekly Post* from January to May and in the *New Age*, from January to June, as well as in the *Adelaide Observer* from January to May. Recently Dr. Postmus shared with the Gissing community his discovery of another serialization in the *Morning Bulletin* of Rockhampton, Queensland from 4 February to 17 June 1905, and he now reports that he knows of three serializations in the New Zealand press and there may have been a fourth. The forgotten versions will be found in the *New Zealand Truth* (Auckland), the *Weekly Press* (Canterbury) and the *Auckland Star*. The dates are the same for the three newspapers, 11 January-3 May 1905.

Again we must thank Bouwe Postmus for drawing our attention to a book put on line by the American novelist and playwright Dorothy Bryant, *Last Words: Imaginary Letters from Real People*. The third exchange, “Unhappy Endings,” covering pp. 45 to 60, consists of Gissing’s very long imaginary last letter written on his deathbed to “the friend who epitomizes

the New Woman he nurtured in his fiction, if not in his life,” that is Clara Collet, and her short reply to him. Mrs. Bryant makes Gissing look back on the whole of his life as a man and as an artist, and displays throughout her piece of fiction remarkable empathy with her subject, giving a sensitive image of an often misjudged and misunderstood man. She obviously knows him very well, and admires the hard-working, dedicated artist, who managed to be so productive during his short, frustrating life. Free download of the book is available on

<http://www.dorothybryant.com/LastWords.html>

Markus Neacey informs us that the new edition of *New Grub Street* in the Penguin Library Series will be published on 25 October. See link <http://www.penguin.co.uk/nf/Book/BookDisplay/0,,9780141199931,00.html>

It is highly to be wished that new Gissing titles will be added to their catalogue. The portrait of Gissing by Mrs. Clarence Rook will be new to most present-day readers. It is dated 8 June 1901. Gissing had considerably changed since the summer of 1899 when he had been photographed by the Paris photographer Laperrière.

We hear from John Spiers that the BBC is currently making a two or three-part series on the history of the railways in Britain, to be screened during the coming winter. The programme is being made by the historian Dan Snow. Last month Professor Spiers was interviewed by him on the preserved railway station at Horsted Keynes as an expert on “railway libraries” produced by major British publishers in the 19th century. John suggested that he could supply yellowbacks and other decorative 19th century books and stock the original W. H. Smith’s bookstall there with appropriate books. This would form an appropriate backdrop to the interview. The bookstall was rescued by the “Bluebell Railway,” the preservation line in Sussex, when the old station at Hassocks was demolished. John took with him his copies of Gissing’s six yellowbacks, and shelved them on the bookstall—their first appearance on a railway bookstall in well over a century!

In the *Independent on Sunday*, 29 July 2012, D. J. Taylor had this about Gissing in his column “Opinion—Coe, the corporate reality softener”:

Q.: What is the link between *Hello! Magazine* and the novelist George Gissing, author of such gloomy late Victorian masterpieces as *New Grub Street* (1891) and *Born in Exile* (1892)? The answer, I discovered from reading Professor Pierre Coustillas’s monumental *The Heroic Life of George Gissing Part III: 1897-1903*,

is that Gissing, albeit indirectly, was responsible for our current use of the collective noun “paparazzi.”

Visiting the southern Italian town of Catanzaro in 1897 [...] Gissing lodged at the Albergo Centrale, whose proprietor was a certain Coriolano Paparazzo. Sixty years on, having come across a copy [of the Italian translation] of Gissing’s travelogue *By the Ionian Sea* (1900), in which Sr Paparazzo appears, Fellini gave this name to the seedy snapper in “La Dolce Vita.”

At the 4th Annual Conference of the Victorian Popular Fiction Association, held at the Institute for English Studies, University of London on 11th-12th July 2012, Tom Ue read a paper on “Literary Communities and the French Connection: Daudet’s *Jack* and Gissing’s *New Grub Street*.” In his paper Tom Ue examined the influence of Daudet’s 1876 novel on Gissing’s 1891 work, and ultimately showed how the industrialisation of art and writing paved the way for the emergence of new kinds of literary communities and of writer-characters.

Richard Dennis visited this summer the “Turner Monet Twombly: Later Paintings” Exhibition held at the Tate Liverpool (22 June-28 October 2012). Two sculptures by the American artist Cy Twombly are, he told us, of boats that “appear to be made out of driftwood, though online images refer to them as cast in bronze.” The Exhibition Guide for room 5, Naught so sweet as Melancholy, presents these sculptures thus: “Drifting silently, Twombly’s boats are reminiscent of the words of George Gissing, after whose book, *By the Ionian Sea 1901*, one of these works is titled. In taking a last look at the sea Gissing expressed his desire to ‘wander endlessly amid the silence of the ancient world, to-day and all its sounds forgotten.’” Richard Dennis added: “Twombly’s very simple but quite moving piece can be seen online, for example at

http://www.cytwombly.info/twombly_gallery_sculpture_1.htm

where it is image no. 14.

Recent Publications

Volume

George Gissing, *Collected Short Stories*, Volume Three. Edited and introduced by P. Coustillas, with the assistance of Barbara Rawlinson and Hélène Coustillas. Grayswood, Surrey, England: Grayswood Press, 2012. Pp. xvi + 344. £30.

Articles, reviews, etc

Brian Bouchard, "George Robert Gissing (1857-1903) A novelist, who gave notable expression to the suffering of sensitive souls in sordid environments—a resident of Epsom from 1894 to 1897," and Jeremy Harte, "George Gissing in Epsom," *Epsom and Ewell History Explorer*, 2011, on www.epsomandewellhistoryexplorer.org.uk Both articles are attractively illustrated.

Antonio Cerminara, "Trasporti negate: Alla Giornata delle ferrovie noi ci andiamo in Pullman," *Il Crotonese*, 21 April 2012.

Colin Strachan, "New flats will open at hotel," *Wakefield Express*, 29 June 2012, p. 12. With photo of the former Stoneleigh Hotel, Doncaster Road, Wakefield.

J. C., "N.B.: Professional Foul," *Times Literary Supplement*, 29 June 2012, p. 32. A few lines on Gissing.

Markus Neacey, "A Bibliography of Morley Roberts's Writings," *English Literature in Transition*, Vol. 55, No. 3 (July 2012), pp. 361-93.

Allan Massie, "In our Strange Time," *Times Literary Supplement*, 13 July 2012, pp. 7-8. Review of volumes I and II of *The Heroic Life of George Gissing*. Also on p. 2, "This Week" by A. J. has a paragraph on Gissing with Mrs. Clarence Rook's portrait of him.

Anthony Quinn, "Letters to the Editor: Gissing," *Times Literary Supplement*, 27 July 2012, p. 6. About Allan Massie's review of *The Heroic Life of George Gissing*.

Martha S. Vogeler, review of the second volume of *The Heroic Life of George Gissing* in *Choice*, July 2012.

Deborah B. Luyster, "Letters to the Editor: Gissing," *Times Literary Supplement*, 10 August 2012, p. 6. On *In the Year of Jubilee*.

D. J. Taylor, "Death of a Hero," *Spectator*, 1 September 2012, p. 33. Review of volume III of *The Heroic Life of George Gissing*.

Leah Price, *How to Do Things with Books in Victorian Britain*, Princeton University Press, 2012. Gissing appears on pp.30-31, 41, 55, 77, 258-59.

Kate Macdonald, "The British & Irish Novel in English, 1880-1940," *English Literature in Transition*, Vol. 55, No. 1 (January 2012), pp. 116-18. Review of *The Oxford History of the Novel in English, Volume 4: The Reinvention of the British and Irish Novel 1880-1940*, Patrick Parrinder and Andrzej Gasiorek, eds., New York: Oxford University Press, 2010, 520 pp. "In the first half of the book Hardy, Moore, Bennett, Wells, Conrad, Gissing and Lawrence form a dominating canon of realist authors, cited and discussed again and again."

Tailpiece

[After reading some Wordsworth, Percy Withers takes up a pocket copy of Marcus Aurelius's *Meditations*, in which he has pencilled favourite passages.]

"Men seek retreats for themselves, houses in the country, seashores, and mountains; and thou too art wont to desire such things very much. But this is altogether a mark of the most common sort of men (this was underscored), for it is in thy power whenever thou shalt choose to retire into thyself. For nowhere either with more quiet or more freedom from trouble does a man retire than into his own soul."

I shame to say that I read the lines without uneasiness. I was convicted a glaring example "of the most common sort of man." Yet had that passage not been marked in some former day, when its fine sentiment stirred me and its harsh judgment applied to anyone or everyone else, I should assuredly have marked it now, sitting by the lake and looking over the mountains to which I had come at the first possible moment in full retreat. Like George Gissing, who put him, if ever man did, to the test of gold and all precious metal, I hold Marcus Aurelius not only in reverence but affection; he has been my companion on mountain-tops and in dark towns; I have begun many a day with him, ended many; his sayings have been good to me in health and in sickness. These two books, of the Lake Poet and the Roman Emperor, are the most freely scored and best thumbed of all the books I possess. Yet, also like Gissing, I lay no claim to discipleship. I do not know that the Aurelian philosophy has made any but the slightest of my burdens one whit easier to bear, or greatly strengthened me for those still to come. With a toothache I suspect his stoicism would avail me nothing; and all his contempt of the vanity of human affairs and all his cold indifference to death do not make life less sweet or the unborn day less coveted.

Percy Withers, *In a Cumberland Dale*, The Saint Giles Library,
London: Jonathan Cape, 1940

