

THE GISSING NEWSLETTER

“More than most men am I dependent on sympathy to bring out the best that is in me.”  
– George Gissing’s *Commonplace Book*.

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Volume XX, Number 4

April, 1984

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Gissing: Six Major Essays

David Dowling  
Glasgow

Of Gissing’s numerous essays and articles there are six which very clearly illuminate his opinions on social questions and literature. These are his three articles on Social Democracy, written in 1880 and reprinted by the Enitharmon Press in 1968, “The Hope of Pessimism,” 1882, unpublished by the author and first printed by Coustillas in *George Gissing: Essays and Fiction*, 1970, “The Place of Realism in Fiction,” *The Humanitarian*, July 1895, and “The Coming of the Preacher,” *Literature*, January 1900, reprinted by the Enitharmon Press, 1978.

These articles show a strong consistency of mind throughout Gissing’s career and

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Editorial correspondence should be sent to the editor:  
10, rue Gay-Lussac, 59110-La Madeleine, France  
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Subscriptions

Private Subscribers: £3.00 per annum  
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demonstrate his ideas in a way which his letters, being concerned with different small points to different people, do not.

The earliest and most straightforward are the three political articles. The circumstances of their publication are as follows. In the hope of gaining attention for *Workers in the Dawn* Gissing sent a copy to Frederic Harrison, the leading Logical Positivist of the day. Harrison wrote him an encouraging letter and introduced him to John Morley, editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Morley

commissioned three articles on German Social Democracy which duly appeared in the September 1880 issues. They are also a valuable record of Gissing's views at the time and, more importantly, leave no room for conjecture as to whether a fictional character's opinions coincide with the author's. The descriptive detached tone indicates the sympathetic observer rather than the partisan. His irony at the expense of the exiled German Socialists and their emotional oratory shows that his dislike of demagoguery did not emerge with *Demos* and was almost certainly a fixed cast of mind, while his detachment is evident from his statement of his aim in writing. He means to "inquire briefly what the ends of the Social Democrats really are, how they propose to attain them, and what, if any, would seem to be their chances of success."<sup>1</sup>

Party propaganda or political self-serving obscures practically all writing on this subject in a cloud of special pleading but Gissing aims at, and achieves, clarity of exposition. He begins by declaring that "the loudest and clearest answer to the current ills of civilization" comes from Karl Marx. Clarity is not one of Marx's strong points and Gissing must mean that once the difficulties of Marx's texts have been penetrated he provides the best solution to social ills. Gissing accepts the analysis from Volume I of *Capital* that social misery is caused by the accumulation of the means of production into fewer and fewer hands till all "the small masters" have become wage labourers themselves. Having accepted the economic analysis, Gissing quickly drops Marx and turns to the

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more moderate Lassalle. He was obviously repelled by Marx's proposed methods – violent revolution and the liquidation of private wealth by expropriation. He must have been horrified by the phrase "dictatorship of the proletariat." He was naturally more attracted by Lassalle's ideas which were much more moderate and did not necessarily demand violent means. In his pamphlet Gissing seems to imply, perhaps for the sake of simplicity, that Lassalle was still on the scene. The sensational events surrounding Lassalle's death were such a *cause célèbre* that it is impossible to imagine Gissing thinking him still alive. There had been a novel, *The Tragic Comedians*, 1880, by Meredith, an author greatly admired by Gissing, on the extraordinary final phase of the revolutionary's life.

Gissing proceeds at once to an exposition of the Gotha Programme of 1875 and since the background of this movement is not well known I will attempt a brief explanation.

Ferdinand Lassalle, born 1825 in Germany, was killed in a duel in 1864 but his ideas and his party, The International Working Men's Association, transformed into The All German Workers' League, lived on, led by Lassalle's disciples, Hasenklever, Hasselman and Tolk. In 1875 at Gotha a *rapprochement* was effected with The Social Democratic Workers Party, whose Eisenach Programme was formulated by Liebknecht and Bebel. The new manifesto which resulted from this fusion of parties was called the Gotha Programme and was extremely Lassallean. In brief it was designed to bring about approximately the social changes which the Labour Party achieved from 1945-51 in this country, though, as Gissing points out, some of its demands, such as freedom of expression, and freedom from unrestricted police surveillance, were already achieved in this country, while abolition of the standing army was irrelevant as we had never possessed one.

Because of its tolerance of class enemies and especially for its advocacy of co-operation with the Prussian state, the Gotha Programme provoked an outburst of fury from Marx in London and

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caused him to write his *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, 1875. This is Marx's most important work of a programmatic nature, much more detailed and definite on the development of the

Communist Party than the better known *Communist Manifesto* of 1848 and warning of difficulties and dangers in the way of the revolution which the earlier work did not foresee. The unification of Germany in 1871 “by the Prussian way” had appalled Marx, and the idea of the Social Democratic Movement lightly allying itself with Bismarck he denounced as gross opportunism:

It is by no means the aim of the workers, who have freed themselves from the narrow outlook of humble subjects, to set the State free. In the German Empire the “State” is almost as “free” as in Russia. Freedom consists in transforming the State from an organ dominating Society into one completely subordinate to it.<sup>2</sup>

Despite Marx’s condemnation the ideas of the Gotha Programme inspired most moderate Socialist opinion and even influenced the founders of the British Labour Party. On the other hand Marx’s new insistence in his *Critique* on avoiding contact with “revisionists” was followed by Lenin in *State and Revolution*, 1917, and *Left-wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder*, 1920.

Gissing ends the first article by noting what seems to him a quality of fanaticism in German Politics leading easily to violence. He believes that this tendency to extremism is repugnant to all classes in this country. He admits that even the Lassallean measure of Socialism is sweeping by English standards. “That nothing less than a revolution, political, social and economical, is ultimately involved is clear on the face of the programme,”<sup>3</sup> and Gissing indicates that obviously there was no mass support for such a thing in this country in 1880. He warns, however, that though there may be individual agitators with strange and very extreme views, the leading theorists (all

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Germans) have “historical and practical knowledge which commands respect.”<sup>4</sup> While sympathetic, this is not partisan; commanding respect is much less than commanding conviction. The leading theorist, Marx, was promulgating a materialist philosophy linked to a determinist view of history which sought to render his conclusions irrefutable. Since Gissing does not pursue or comment on these large philosophic and theoretical matters one can only suppose that the German habit of explaining contingent facts by pre-arranged systems is not acceptable to his pragmatic English mind.

The second article is shorter and more factual than theoretical. It does not question ideas but describe’s Bismarck’s repressive measures in Germany. These, according to Gissing, had attracted very little attention in the British press. He makes us see how astonishing the operations of a police state seemed to a nineteenth-century Englishman. From all the abuses of absolute authority he picks out one which shows “a degree of infamy which could not easily be surpassed; in short, correspondence is handed over by the Post Office to the police, and examined before delivering!”<sup>5</sup>

The exclamation mark is of course Gissing’s. His indignation throughout this article is obvious but is not necessarily that of the committed socialist. He was indignant on behalf of any victims of police brutality and at the exercise of excessive state power, an attitude not different from that of the mass of the British public of his time.

In the final article he is frankly critical of the socialist movement. He sees it as a foreign growth likely to have little appeal to the British workman, in whom he sees a spirit of personal independence and desire for freedom of action.

The forcible linking of socialism and atheism was also offensive to Gissing. As a Logical Positivist himself at the time of writing he was an agnostic and regarded religion “as a matter of purely individual concern.”<sup>6</sup>

He felt that, in addition to the intolerable intrusion which the need for an individual to accept a certain doom entailed, there should be no link between politics and economics on the one hand and religion on the other. Insistence on such a point, he believed, would merely divide religious and atheistic socialists, hampering the progress of the movement, while not in any way resolving any religious issue.

In the second article he had expressed his indignation at the brutal treatment of German conscript soldiers by their officers, but in the third he was even more outraged at incitement in a socialist pamphlet that these conscripts should shoot their officers, pointing out with calm reason that if only some individual soldiers are socialists, such an action, apart from its barbarity, is useless, whereas if the socialist conscripts were in the majority, killing would be unnecessary, as a whole army could refuse to obey orders and proclaim the Social Democratic State. The most that Gissing will concede to violence is ask whether, if Bismarck continues to suppress the people's liberties by military despotism

And if the Socialists sincerely believe that by means of a violent and bloody revolt a vast alteration for the better can be at once brought about, are they not justified in adopting almost any means to shorten the period of agony?<sup>7</sup>

This very circumspect justification of violent revolution, of course, refers to the tyrannical German state, not to Britain.

His final statement is extremely cautious. Though German workmen, unlike their British counterparts, frequently proclaim themselves socialists, he wonders how far they understand the scientific theory supporting what they profess:

It needs little special inquiry to convince one that the vast majority are only following a vaguely luminous ideal of material comfort.<sup>8</sup>

Progress, he thinks, can only be slow and the masses will always be led by educated people.

His final word indicates that he really parts company with any socialist who advocates violence to gain his ends.

The value of these articles at the time was that they illuminated an area of which the British public was ignorant. The British press, as Gissing said, had paid little attention to events in Germany and the majority of British people were vague on socialism. The articles present original material in an authoritative manner. They seem to be written by a well-established foreign correspondent, not by a young man with no previous journalistic experience who had never been to Germany. Their interest to us now is in their revelation of Gissing's attitudes and their relation to his fiction writing. He was in the curious position of being a middle-class, highly educated person who had not merely come in contact with the poor but was actually living among them. This made Gissing feel as Bernard Shaw did when he wrote, "I do not love the poor, I hate them and wish to abolish them."

Gissing was as unsentimental about the poor as Shaw, but Shaw, who had never had to live with them, continued to believe that they could be abolished, that is, upgraded by correctly administered doses of education and good working conditions, whereas Gissing, even if he had ever

been quite so optimistic, soon changed his mind under the influence of direct experience till he came to believe that the poor were beyond improvement. While Socialism as an intellectual theory continued to appeal to the rational side of his mind, he became highly distrustful at the emotional level, and his imaginative literary side being very much fuelled by his emotions, his remaining "working-class" novels, *The Unclassed*, *Demos*, *Thyrza*, and *The Nether World*, are an elaborate working out of his farewell to Socialism.

A specific farewell to Socialism and a rejection of its philosophic basis is contained in the essay paradoxically entitled "The Hope of Pessimism," 1882. Gissing here pours scorn on the ideas

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of Auguste Comte and the Positivist Philosophy, ideas to which he seems to have been committed up to this time. Gissing has been converted to the system of the philosopher of Pessimism, Schopenhauer, though exactly which works he was reading is not well documented. Schopenhauer was hardly known in this country in 1882 nor were all his works translated, but Gissing seems to have read *The World as Will and Idea* in the original German.<sup>9</sup> He devotes the first two-thirds of the essay to an attack on Positivism which he refers to as Agnostic Optimism both for concealment and as an effective contrast to Pessimism. The need for concealment or disguise arose because at the time of writing he intended to publish the essay and did not want to offend his Positivist friends, notably Frederic Harrison. In fact he did not try to get it published as it "developed into nothing less than an attack on Positivism ... I should feel uncomfortable at the thought of Harrison reading it."<sup>10</sup> For my purposes I shall use the terms of Positivism and Agnostic Optimism interchangeably.

Gissing begins by asking Kant's metaphysical question, "What *can* I know?" The Agnostic Optimist regards this question as unanswerable and for him all such speculation "falls under the rather contemptuous title of metaphysics" and he asks instead "What *do* I know?" He believes that an analysis of this question can lead to a complete system of physical sciences, the whole constituting a compendium of possible knowledge. Unfortunately, as Gissing points out, the question "What *do* I know?" is logically dependent on the rather more difficult one "What *can* I know?" and Comte had not answered the latter, merely declared it unanswerable, that is had really failed to take it into consideration. Consequently his philosophy is possibly flawed and certainly without authority.

Gissing continues that the modern spirit of scientific inquiry "is rigidly and dogmatically agnostic" and the agnostic optimist takes this to be the final stage of men's thought, in Gissing's telling phrase "making his conclusion tributary to his hopes." He rejects Comte's ideas that human

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knowledge progresses in three stages from theological to metaphysical to scientific as a final point. He affirms that experience shows a continuing evolution in thought with different interests and emphases in succeeding generations.

He goes on to state that the agnostic optimist is deluding himself concerning the state of mind of the ordinary man. You may easily convince the man in the street, "indeed you probably already have convinced him," that science has overthrown the dogmas of religion but Gissing contends that this does not enable him to understand agnosticism. "In all probability the best of them have reached the stage of pantheism." Question uneducated men closely, he believes, and you will still find a theological theory of the world.

The next step in Gissing's argument at last brings him to Schopenhauer's Pessimism, the ostensible subject of the essay. This step counteracts the claim that agnostic optimism goes hand in

hand with an altruistic morality. Comte in fact coined the word “altruism” but Gissing claims that far from Positivism promoting a Religion of Man, with each individual devoted to the general good of the human race, it would lead to an intensification of individual struggle, each person determined to gain what modicum of enjoyment he could out of his single lifespan. “Optimism of this kind is but egotism under another name,” is Gissing’s verdict, and the optimistic philosophy is reduced in his eyes to “merely the spirit which unconsciously possesses and actuates the mass of men,” while the Positivist, far from having a philosophy, is merely “giving himself up to the current of active life.”

Gissing’s attack is extremely scathing and he has reached the point of saying that Positivism is not a philosophy but a glorification of the following of instinct and the path of least resistance. Schopenhauer’s ideas are quite the opposite and this may explain their attraction to Gissing. He quickly sets forth the points which he believes refute Comte, saying that optimism, which is really

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egotism, is “the affirmation of the will to live”; and that the conquest of this instinct is “the achievement of true pessimism.” Gissing is in danger here of revealing Schopenhauer’s Pessimism as just as much a truism as the Optimistic philosophy he has been attacking. However the evaluation of the two philosophies would be out of place here. Gissing prefers the Pessimistic one and goes on to explain the paradox of the essay’s title. The denial of the will is the hope for mankind. The widespread recognition that the goods of this world are dross would eliminate egotism and competition. Buddhism and Christianity, “the foremost religions of the world, alike recognise this.” He is careful to indicate that he is referring to Christianity in its earliest form, categorizing modern Protestantism as merely another form of optimism as destructive as the philosophy he is attacking.

As a literary artist Gissing could hardly stick to this total Pessimism or he would have had to deny the will to create art. “There is, in truth, only one kind of worldly Optimism which justifies itself in the light of reason, and that is the optimism of the artist.” He quotes Schopenhauer to the effect that though the will is not denied in artistic creation, the disturbing consciousness of self is eliminated and, in the mood of artistic contemplation preceding and succeeding the creative act, the will is in abeyance. In this one instance, Gissing believes, “good does prevail over evil and there is excellence in the sum of things.”

Gissing’s criticism of Comte is probably the view of that philosopher most commonly accepted today, but in the late nineteenth century he had a very large and influential following among intellectuals. Though Gissing demonstrates very clearly the defects of Comte’s epistemology, he is over-severe. In the application of scientific principles to the study of society Comte was in the forefront and one of his many neologisms is the word sociology itself.

Near the end of his career Gissing wrote an article, “The Coming of the Preacher,” for the

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magazine *Literature* which is a pithy and condensed restatement of the attitudes in “The Hope of Pessimism,” but directed towards literary rather than philosophical matters and in particular to the prospects of the novel. Gissing is concerned to emphasize the aesthetic value of the form and is distressed to see it being put to non-artistic uses. He objects both to didacticism and mere entertainment. For example, he sees the influence of Tolstoy as “affecting the better thought of our time.” But the great man’s pamphlet *What is Art?* is a condemnation of all works of the imagination including his own. Great as Gissing thought Tolstoy, he is dismayed to see him turn from being a

literary genius into a prophet. "Not the Artist have we now to look for, but the preacher."

Tolstoy abandoned Art altogether but "M. Zola, in a leisure left to him by political strife, writes fiction vehemently didactic." The novelists of continental Europe "seek to communicate a social or political creed, a moral or spiritual conviction." While deploring their disregard of the aesthetic value of the novel Gissing pays tribute to the intellectual power of these men. It is for the writers of his own country that Gissing reserves his most scathing comments, remarking that "novel writing in England is now so largely a branch of industry." He also mentions scornfully the new and very popular school of blood and thunder.<sup>11</sup>

He mentions no names here but it must have been very galling for Gissing that younger men like Rider Haggard, A. E. W. Mason and Conan Doyle were becoming rich and famous while he earned the respect of the literary world but very little money. When personally bitter Gissing adopts a tone of lofty intellectual disdain:

Even the neo-barbarism which seeks an outlet in story-telling must be regarded as a protest against "mere" literature, as an effort to teach some primitive theory of human rights and obligations.<sup>12</sup>

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This literature, which does not aspire to art, Gissing believes "lacks the novelist's prime virtue, the ability to create and present convincing personalities."<sup>13</sup>

He believed that unless one could do this, there was no point in writing novels, and he had succeeded in doing it over a twenty-year period. He concluded that there was currently little appreciation of artistic work in the novel and the time was unpropitious for aesthetic values. He called science "bankrupt before the human soul," encouraging material interests only, and while he thought that the novel could express spiritual, moral and intellectual ideas he did not think that it should be harnessed to any propaganda task no matter how worthy. He concludes that "Literature is everywhere affected by a restless preoccupation with things alien to its sphere."

The final article to which I wish to allude is "The Place of Realism in Fiction," which appeared in *The Humanitarian*. I considered "The Coming of the Preacher" and "The Hope of Pessimism" together because of the strong thematic link between them, though chronologically "The Place of Realism in Fiction" comes between them in 1895.

This short essay of five paragraphs is an admirable condensation of Gissing's ideas on his own craft. He begins by wishing "that the words realism and realist might never again be used, save in their proper sense by writers on scholastic philosophy."

He rails at the prevalent notion that the depiction of the brutal and ugly is necessarily realism or that only such depiction can qualify as realism. He is almost certainly thinking of Zola here and, no doubt with irritation, at the categorization of himself as "the English Zola," a comparison which the mordant Frenchman might have found highly comic had he known of it.

Gissing finds the label of realism almost equally annoying when attached to that fiction "devoted to a laborious picturing of the dullest phases of life." Unfortunately he gives no examples here and it is difficult to guess which authors he means. He had of course been himself attacked for

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precisely the same alleged defect. However this may be, he continues that "once again the word realism acquired a quite accidental significance" in this connection. He concludes that the only way to escape confusion is to discard the term altogether and ask of any work of fiction, first, whether it

is sincere, second, whether it is craftsmanlike.

By sincerity Gissing means the ability in an author to shape and present his own vision candidly and vividly. He dismisses the idea of the objectivity of the realist by declaring that apart from the personality of the author no literary art can exist. This is quite another matter, he insists, from the imperfect method of certain novelists who intervene to direct the action. His example is the much discussed objectivity of Flaubert, who, though he never speaks in person, “triumphs by his extraordinary power of presenting life as he, and no other man, beheld it.”

Finally the critic must evaluate the technical merit in the execution of a novel while keeping in view that “all is but dead material,” unless the artist has been true to his own vision. A novel must not be written just to please people, disagreeable facts cannot always be kept out of sight, there is no necessity for a plot nor a conventional happy ending and the only limits imposable on the novelist are those which he imposes on himself.

Gissing and his contemporary George Moore are the two most European of our novelists. Gissing’s sound knowledge of the principal languages gave him an intimate knowledge of things European and, like a European intellectual, he was impelled to relate his ideas, even his states of mind, to philosophical systems. Though his fictional subject matter remained so very English, these six essays show him defining his position very much in the fashion of a French *écrivain-savant*. Consideration of these six essays takes some of the speculation out of our conclusions on Gissing’s socialist phase or on the widespread idea of Gissing, the reluctant novelist. No single viewpoint on

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politics can be derived from the five working-class novels and Gissing would be a very simple novelist could such a derivation be made. However, the state of mind revealed in the three political essays, that of uncommitted, though well-wishing observer, throws a strong light on the complicated and shifting viewpoints of the five novels. “The Hope of Pessimism” reveals Gissing’s unsentimentality and clarity of mind. His character has secretive, even furtive elements but set against this is the very rare quality of uncompromising intellectual honesty. Unable any longer to believe in Logical Positivism, he rejected it even though quite lucrative journalistic work was available by maintaining the connection with John Morley.

“The Place of Realism” and “The Coming of the Preacher” dispel for ever the notion of Gissing as belle-lettrist dilettante or classical scholar *manqué*. We now see why he did not write half a dozen variations on *Demos* when it was popular and make himself a fortune. “The Coming of the Preacher” shows the artistic integrity which made him follow *Demos* with its corrective *Thyrza*, a novel completely out of step with public taste. Even his one undoubted potboiler *Sleeping Fires* is not merely meretricious. The reader recognizes that the writer is trying to give him value but is failing through exhaustion.

1. George Gissing, *Notes on Social Democracy*, ed. Jacob Korg, Enitharmon Press, 1968, p. 2.
2. Karl Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, ed. C. P. Dutt, 1938, p. 27.
3. *Notes on Social Democracy*, p. 4.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
9. *George Gissing: Essays and Fiction*, ed. Pierre Coustillas, 1970.



10. Letter to Algernon, October 6th, 1882, *Letters of George Gissing to Members of His Family*,

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ed. Algernon and Ellen Gissing, 1927.

11. *George Gissing on Fiction*, ed. Jacob and Cynthia Korg, 1978, p. 95.

12. *Ibid.*

13. *Ibid.*, p. 96.

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### A "Lost" Gissing Manuscript Recovered

Joel J. Brattin  
Stanford University

Professor Pierre Coustillas, in his useful review of volume IV, part one, of the *Index of English Literary Manuscripts*,<sup>1</sup> mentions that the compiler of the Gissing section overlooked a number of important items, and specifies that the manuscript of Gissing's introduction to Dickens's *Martin Chuzzlewit* is "privately owned and currently in America."<sup>2</sup> Gissing scholars will be pleased to learn that this important manuscript is now part of the Kenyon Law Starling Collection, housed in the Department of Special Collections, Stanford University Libraries.

The signed holograph consists of 3 3/4 pages of text (not 3 1/4, as the *Index* indicates), written in greyish-black ink on cream colored paper of approximately 20 x 25.5 cm. It is bound in a slim volume of maroon calf which contains no other text, but several other blank pages. The essay itself is written in the tiny hand characteristic of Gissing in the late 1890's; though the essay takes up seventeen pages in print, it consists of only 194 lines in Gissing's holograph. The first page has 49 lines, in addition to the title *Martin Chuzzlewit*; the second and third each have 53 lines, and the final page has 39, as well as Gissing's signature.

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Gissing originally intended to have this essay, composed 20-23 June 1899, serve as the introduction to the Rochester edition of *Martin Chuzzlewit*, but due to slow sales, the publishers abandoned the project, and the *Martin Chuzzlewit* volume never appeared in print.<sup>3</sup> Gissing's introduction was first published in *Critical Studies of the Works of Charles Dickens* (New York: Greenberg, 1924), pp. 72-88.

Careful examination of the holograph reveals several discrepancies between the published text and the words Gissing actually wrote. Most important, perhaps, is the fact that Gissing quoted Dickens far more accurately than the published text would indicate. Gissing praises the language of Mrs. Gamp, finding it "unparalleled in his work, or in that of any other author"; it is pleasing to learn that all four of the errors in her quoted speech were apparently made by Greenberg's compositors. Similarly, Gissing notes that Dickens's "Americans express themselves with a racy vigour which has a great air of verisimilitude," and then quotes Elijah Pogram, describing Hannibal Chollop. In one short paragraph, the published text of Gissing's introduction contains no less than ten errors, including the substitution of "mineral drinks" for "mineral Licks", and of "Buffaloes" for "Buffalers"; the manuscript establishes conclusively that Gissing himself is responsible for none of them.

In the published text Gissing appears to allude to the “luring shrewdness” of Mrs. Gamp, which seems highly improbable. Reference to the manuscript provides the solution to this little puzzle: what Gissing actually wrote was clearly “leering shrewdness” (3.7/81).<sup>4</sup>

An examination of the manuscript can do more than simply clear up the errors of careless editors, however. Gissing’s revisions and deletions are, themselves, well worth studying. We see him avoiding extravagant praise, and exercising prudent second judgment when he interlines a saving “perhaps” to the strong statement that were it well-structured, *Martin Chuzzlewit* “would

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rank as [Dickens’s] finest” novel (1.23/72), and we see him avoid the opposite error when he softens his judgment of the novel’s first chapter: originally writing that it is “bad” from every point of view, he alters this to “weak” (4.20/86).

Though Gissing’s deletions in this introduction are all necessarily quite short, several are very revealing. In one such deletion, Gissing treats Dickens’s portrayal of the Americans, stating that in their portraits, Dickens presents “the faults & foibles significant in his countrymen & in his time” (3.35/83); pointing Dickens’s criticism back at Dickens’s – and Gissing’s – own society in a way the published text does not. Two lines later, Gissing notes that Dickens “possessed in a high degree the artistic virtue ... & extraordinary power of original observation” (3.37/83); this passage, too, was deleted.

This corrected holograph will be of great interest to scholars of both Dickens and Gissing. Through the generosity of a private collector, it is now available to researchers for perusal at Stanford University.

1. *Index of English Literary Manuscripts*, Volume IV, 1800-1900, Part 1 (Arnold-Gissing), compiled by Barbara Rosenbaum and Pamela White (London and New York: Mansell, 1982).
2. Pierre Coustillas, *Gissing Newsletter*, 19, no. 4 (Oct. 1983), pp. 36-40.
3. See Pierre Coustillas’s *Gissing’s Writings on Dickens: A Bio-Bibliographical Survey* (London: Enitharmon Press, 1969), p. 6.
4. In citing the manuscript, I give first page and line numbers, and then the page number of the corresponding passage in the first edition.

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#### Dutch Commentaries on Some of Gissing’s Works

Marysa Demoor  
University of Ghent

Literary circles in the Netherlands remained virtually ignorant of George Gissing’s writings until some time after that author’s death in December 1903. Perhaps their attention was too exclusively fixed on the endeavours of a dynamic young generation of artists – the so-called “Movement of 80” – who had manifested themselves ostentatiously for the first time, in October 1885, when they launched the new bimonthly *De Nieuwe Gids* (*The New Guide*).

Now these young authors<sup>1</sup> – like some of their elders – did know, admired, and let themselves be inspired by foreign literatures, mainly French and English. But, if they read the latest French

naturalistic novels as well as the established French classics, they knew far less about living English writers; Keats, Shelley and Rossetti seem to have represented the most recent English literature they, initially, had been acquainted with.<sup>2</sup>

Some years later, however, when the enthusing novelty of the movement had somewhat worn off, a few among them looked around and tried to know more about the latest developments in England. Willem Kloos, probably the most eccentric member of the group fell – not surprisingly – an easy prey to Swinburne’s luscious verses. Oscar Wilde was another obvious focus of attraction. This notorious Englishman drew comments from the same Willem Kloos, but also from the Dutch dandies Louis Couperus and Lodewijk van Deyssel.<sup>3</sup> As a matter of fact, it was Couperus’ wife who translated *The Picture of Dorian Gray* into Dutch, Wilde having sent a copy of his novel to Couperus as a token of admiration for the latter’s *Footsteps of Fate*.<sup>4</sup> Another author whose works these Dutchmen soon grew to know was George Moore. Yet his preoccupation with French naturalism was generally disliked by members of the group.<sup>5</sup>

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Notwithstanding this healthy interest and in spite of their efforts to understand and appreciate their English contemporaries, representatives of the “Movement of 80” judged the latest British publications to be below the standard of French literature. Frederik van Eeden, the most popular of the *New Guide* artists, put it in his own very special way:

I believe English authors are superior to the French. Yes, I know damned well that no European can draw a bird like a Japanese, – and that no Englishman at this moment can write a book like a Frenchman. That does not change my belief.

They cannot see, they cannot write like Frenchmen, – they are worse artists now, but they are better human beings.

.....

O those dark Romans, that dark, short mixed race, – how it has filled my inner being with bitter regret that they dominate literary Europe now. That they can calmly ignore the language of Shakespeare, of Milton, of Keats, of Shelley, of Dryden, Spencer, Marlowe, de Foe, Swift, Johnson, Fielding, Sterne, Coleridge, Scott, Wordsworth, Byron, Brontë, Thackeray, Eliot, Browning, Rossetti, Tennyson, Poe, and Swinburne, as if it were a finished business.<sup>6</sup>

Van Eeden was, if possible, even more outspoken in a letter he wrote in English to Edmund Gosse:

Kipling interested me very much. He is really original, he has “cachet.” But the English prose-books are in general very formal, very tedious and pale – Accustomed to the French strong, coloured and rhythmic prose we can hardly

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get through the best English novels. And the movement seems to be more intellectual than artistic among the younger.<sup>7</sup>

The discovery of one George Gissing, when it came at last, gave rise to greater acclaim than

one was led to expect. His death in December 1903 still passed unnoticed. But the following year there appeared a first translation: *Eve's Ransom* or *Eve's Losprijs*, introduced by Willem Gerard van Nouhuys, a critic of high repute.<sup>8</sup>

Van Nouhuys claims to know only a few essentials of Gissing's life, the rest he is tempted to derive from the author's fictional works, especially from *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*. Thus, for instance, he endows the novelist with an intense love of the Ancients, not only because many of the personages Gissing created are devotees of classical literature but also, indirectly, because his style preserves a certain distinction – even when treating the meanest of subjects – which testifies to a spiritual and intellectual refinement. Another characteristic of the author, which Van Nouhuys feels justified to mention, is his being a lonely man with an utterly pessimistic view of life. Indeed, as the critic well knows, Gissing himself suffered bitter hardships during his life and it is very often the predicament of the poor and the underprivileged which the latter set himself to describe at first hand and in a most realistic way. Van Nouhuys then gives a succinct account of Gissing's main novels and he points at the role money plays in each of them. His personal preference manifestly goes to *New Grub Street*, a work in which Gissing poignantly painted the broken fortunes of an unsuccessful though gifted novelist. This particular story now is, still according to the critic, so charged with emotions that one cannot but confer an autobiographical value upon it; and the same goes for the notebooks of Henry Ryecroft. To conclude this exposé, Van Nouhuys quotes Reardon's disillusioned observation that:

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A year after I have published my last book, I shall be practically forgotten; ten years later, I shall be as absolutely forgotten as one of those novelists of the early part of this century whose names one doesn't even recognise.<sup>9</sup>

If this was meant to be a belittlement of Gissing's personal endeavour, Van Nouhuys observes, then the author's pessimism was ungrounded, for the value of his work is now clearly being acknowledged both in England and abroad.

The mere fact that an eminent man of letters provided the introduction to *Eve's Losprijs* – though he said very little indeed about the book at hand – gave the publication a substantial shove and Gissing emerged from obscurity in the Netherlands. The leading periodical *Groot Nederland*, of whose editorial board Van Nouhuys was a member, commented: "It has taken a long time for this author to attract attention according to his deserts." But the reviewer expresses the hope that other translations will follow this one, since *Eve's Ransom* is by no means Gissing's best work though it does reveal that author's peculiar view of mankind and the world. The singular psychological analysis grips the reader, the notice reads on, but, just as in real life, the eventual solution to the problem at issue may come as a disenchantment because of its simplicity.<sup>10</sup>

The liberal weekly, the *Nederlandsche Spectator*, on the other hand, did not think the novel thrilling at all, despite that magazine's admiration for the solidity of the author as well as the close likeness of the story to real life.<sup>11</sup> A noteworthy observation in this review is that "the author is a realist and a pessimist, nourished by the classics, without the knowledge of which – according to Schopenhauer – it is impossible to be a good and polished stylist." The context in which the name

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of the great philosopher is mentioned, on the other hand, leads one to think that the writer failed to

realize how right he was to connect Schopenhauer with Gissing's work.<sup>12</sup>

The author of the notice in the *Vooruitgang* concurred with his colleague of *Groot Nederland* in doubting the representative nature of this particular novel. He declared himself unable to find a penetrating analysis of the characters' psychology which, Van Nouhuys had announced, was so typical of Gissing, nor was there any indication of the novelist's predilection for the Ancients.<sup>13</sup>

The clerically tinted *Tijdspiegel* wondered why George Gissing enjoyed so little fame during his lifetime. The reviewer attributed this to the author's failure to contrive a complicated plot for which readers, whether English or not, usually have a partiality. But besides that he inferred that Gissing's lack of success was probably the result of his distaste for publicity and the preliminary arrangements and connections this requires.<sup>14</sup>

The slenderness of the plot in *Eve's Ransom* was also remarked upon by the literary columnist in the *Haerlemse Courant*. In his opinion, however, the literary value of the novel was redeemed by the artistic use of the language and style, the sharply delineated situations and the forceful character-drawing.<sup>15</sup>

Finally, the reviewer of the literary magazine *Nederland* focussed on the characters of the story, dissuading sensitive souls from reading the novel because "'they' do not get each other; 'they' being Hilliard and Eve Madeley." Still according to this commentator, it is the sombre, uncouth but kindhearted nature of a Maurice Hilliard, which comes closest to the author's own personality.<sup>16</sup>

In spite of this, on the whole quite appreciative reception, it was not until 1920 that a second, and last, translation appeared. The long lapse of time in between the two publications, however,

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probably accounts for the total silence which surrounds the appearance of *Uit de nagelaten papieren van Henry Ryecroft*.<sup>17</sup> Still, we are not without any comment whatsoever concerning this more important work of Gissing's. But the estimations I found concern the original English version of the book and not the translation.

In December 1909 Frederik van Eeden laid hands on a copy of *Ryecroft* and was deeply impressed by the work:

I have now found the right Gissing. "The Secret of the North Sea" was by Algernon.<sup>18</sup> But "The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft" is by George. And the latter is by far the greater author. They are probably brothers. George Gissing's book is conceived as "de Nachtbruid"<sup>19</sup> but it is better in some respects, weaker in others. It is more modest, more harmonious, subtler – but not so penetrating, less significant, less powerful. If it is a creation, with no autobiographical basis then it is masterly. But it is also simpler, easier, more trivial. It is the perfect picture of an "homme de lettres" like Macdonald/Lady Welby's friend.<sup>20</sup> His aversion for "the people," his exclusive love of the past, his dislike of "Psychical Research" characterize him as the typical weak new man, who aligns himself with the free-thinkers and the originals but who lacks the strength and the inclination to assert himself. His love-power is not big enough – and yet his influence can be considerable, only by means of the sincere recording of his feelings.<sup>21</sup>

Curiously enough, Van Eeden left it at that. There is no evidence that he was ever tempted to read the other works of the author who so much appealed to him; neither did he voice these conside-

rations in a publication. The Dutch critic Antonius Gerardus van Kranendonk, on the other hand did devote a review to *Ryecroft* albeit nine years later, and in an article which purports to compare Gissing's *chef d'oeuvre* with Van Deyssel's *Frank Rozelaar* (1911).<sup>22</sup>

To be sure, six of the nine pages of this essay serve as an introduction to Gissing and his work, only in the remaining three pages does the author set out to demonstrate the similarity between the two works. The critic seems well informed about Gissing's life and writings. He views the late novelist with great sympathy, pointing out that most of his works are truly artistic. Still, according to Van Kranendonk, there are too many influences to be detected in Gissing's work for the author to be more than a good but minor Victorian author. Only the unalloyed originality of *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* entitles him to a place among writers of international renown. He goes on to observe that there are autobiographical elements in much of his fiction but that this gift for self-analysis was only exploited to the full in the very special conception of *Henry Ryecroft*. It is, no doubt, this autobiographical aspect of *Ryecroft*, as well as the unconventional philosophy of life and the extremely suggestive style which induced Van Kranendonk to compare the work with Van Deyssel's *Frank Rozelaar*<sup>23</sup>:

Both lived secluded from the world, Ryecroft entirely alone, Rozelaar with wife and child. Both have found fulfilment and even the highest happiness in the simple, earthly life. (83)

And just as "Henry Ryecroft" was able, by means of his style, to impart to everything in his diary the glow of his sweet joy of living, his sincere disposition, just so did "Frank Rozelaar" succeed through his style to make everything alive in the bright light of his extraordinary objectivity. (p.84)

Both authors gave us, each in his own manner, "the best of art" in their diaries; each of these diaries is important, also because they are the totally-personal and sincere expression of a very special, fine personality. (p.85)

[my translation]

The publication of Gissing's work in the Netherlands was no unmitigated success. But among the few comments it elicited there are some noteworthy eulogistic remarks by distinguished men of letters. Van Nouhuys, Van Eeden, Van Kranendonk, and, finally, Van Deyssel, each in turn spoke in high terms of the English novelist. Not a mean feat to achieve for an author who, to the Dutch people, remained totally unknown during his life-time, to catch the attention and even win the admiration of such a select company.

1. The chief names associated with the movement as well as with the new periodical seem to have been those of Frederik van Eeden (1860-1932), Willem Kloos (1859-1938), Frank van der Goes (1859-1939), Willem Paap (1856-1923), Frans Netscher (1864-1952), Hélène Swart

(1859-1941), Louis Couperus (1863-1923) and Herman Gorter (1864-1927).

2. On the various influences which members of the "Movement of 80" underwent see Gerben Colmjon, *De beweging van tachtig, een cultuurhistorische verkenning in de negentiende eeuw* (Utrecht: Het Spectrum, 1963), pp. 189ff.; see also an unpublished letter from F. van Eeden to Edmund Gosse, dated April 20, 1891: "The authors we read mostly in our youth, in the time

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of our development, were: Shelley, Keats, Rossetti, Poe, and from the French: Flaubert, Zola, de Goncourt. The Scandinavian and Russian literature had no serious influence on us" (quoted by kind permission of the Brotherton Library, Leeds University).

3. See e.g. Willem Kloos, "Oscar Wilde en de Alexandrijnen," *Letterkundige inzichten en vergezichten* (Amsterdam: L. J. Veen, n.d.), V, pp. 133-46. Couperus and Van Deysell's comment on Wilde is extensively discussed by Karel Rijnders in *Couperus bij Van Deysell, een chronische konfrontatie in beschouwingen, brieven en notities* (Amsterdam: Polak & Van Gennep, 1968), pp. 618-27.
  4. *Footsteps of Fate*, a translation by Clara Bell from the Dutch *Noodlot*, was published by Heinemann in 1891, the same year *Dorian Gray* appeared. More about Couperus' connection with Wilde is to be found in Henri van Booven, *Leven en Werken van Louis Couperus* (Velsen: Schuyt, 1933), pp. 141-42.
  5. See e.g. Lodewijk van Deyssel, *Gedenkschriften, edited and introduced by Harry G. M. Prick* (Zwolle: Tjeenk Willink, 1962), p. 427; or Frederik van Eeden, "Nieuw Engelsch Proza," *Studies: Tweede Reeks* (Amsterdam: W. Versluys, 1902), p. 132: "George Moore? – oh no! – For shame! – he ought to be ashamed of himself – imitating Zola – becoming a Frenchman and being an Englishman – for shame!" [my translation].
  6. Translated from F. van Eeden, "Nieuw Engelsch Proza," *Studies: Tweede Reeks*, pp. 131-32.
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7. Unpublished MS, dated April 5, 1891, Brotherton Library, Leeds University. Here, as in other quotes from Van Eeden, the spelling has been corrected when necessary.
  8. *Eve's Losprijs*, translated by Johanna F. J. J. Buijtendijk (Haarlem: De Erven F. Bohn, 1904). Willem Gerard Nouhuys (1854-1914) was recognized as an authority on foreign literatures.
  9. *New Grub Street*, Penguin edition (Harmondsworth, 1968), p. 83.
  10. "Bibliography," *Groot Nederland*, March 1905, vol. III, part 1, pp. 383-84.
  11. "Engelsche kroniek," *De Nederlandsche Spectator*, December 2, 1905, no. 48, p. 384.
  12. On the importance of Schopenhauer's theories for Gissing's philosophy of life, see George Gissing, "The Hope of Pessimism," *George Gissing: Essays and Fiction*, ed. Pierre Coustillas

(Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1970); and John Spiers and Pierre Coustillas, *The Rediscovery of George Gissing. A Reader's Guide* (London: National Book League, 1971), pp. 37-38.

13. From a press cutting dated May 17, 1905, kept in the De Erven F. Bohn archives.

14. "Nieuwe uitgaven en vertalingen," *De Tijdspiegel*, March 1905, 62nd year, pp. 359-60.

15. From a press cutting dated May 29, 1905, kept in the De Erven F. Bohn archives.

16. "Kroniek," *Nederland*, March 1905, 59th year, pp. 374-75.

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17. *Uit de nagelaten papieren van Henry Rycroft*, translated by A. Gorter (Arnhem: Van Loghum Slaterus & Visser, 1920).

18. On December 8, 1909, he had noted in his diary that he was reading "'A secret of the North Sea' by Gissing"; see Frederik van Eeden, *Dagboek 1878-1923*, introduced and annotated by Dr. H. W. van Tricht (Culenburg: Tjeenk Willink-Noordwijn N.V., 1971), II, pp. 1051-52.

19. *De Nachtbruid* was Van Eeden's latest novel, published in 1906. Personally, I find there to be little similarity between the two works, Van Eeden's *Nachtbruid* being a fictional autobiography of the Italian Count Vico Muralto, mainly focussing on the relationships he enjoyed with three different women.

20. Victoria, Lady Welby-Gregory (1837-1912) was a close friend of Van Eeden's. He was a welcome guest at Dentham Manor, Grantham, the estate of Lord Welby, whenever he crossed the Channel. It is more difficult, however, to identify the Macdonald mentioned here, the name being such a common one.

21. Translated from Frederik van Eeden, *Dagboek 1878-1823*, II, p. 1053.

22. "George Gissing's 'Rycroft' [sic] en 'Frank Rozelaar,'" *Groot Nederland*, July 1918, pp. 76-85 (the correct spelling of Rycroft has been restored in the quotations). Van Kranendonk was Professor of English literature at the University of Amsterdam from 1933 onwards.

23. Lodewijk van Deyssel himself read Gissing too, but probably not before 1935. On August 12 of

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that year, he wrote in his diary: "Gissing's little book, The private papers of Mr. Rycroft is good until page 150" (quoted by Karel Reijnders in *Couperus bij Van Deyssel*, p. 434).

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Book Review



George Gissing, *The Town Traveller*, ed. Pierre Coustillas, Brighton: The Harvester Press. Paper, 1981.

The lively affairs of Polly Sparkes, Gammon, Greenacre and their friends now appear in a paperback edition of the Harvester reprint of 1981, edited by Pierre Coustillas and reviewed in the *Newsletter* of July, 1982 by David Grylls. This is the latest in a long series of reprintings, for *The Town Traveller* was one of Gissing's most popular novels, and, as Coustillas' bibliographical note says, has been reissued several times in England, Canada and the United States since its first publication in 1898.

*The Town Traveller* is one of a triad of novels (the others being *The Paying Guest* and *Eve's Ransom*) which Gissing wrote quickly, with the avowed purpose of earning money, and which, unlike his major novels, treated working-class subjects with toleration and a measure of respect. He wrote them to please his readers rather than to express his convictions, and it is not surprising that they sold well and earned more than his more serious books. *The Town Traveller* illustrates one of the many ironies of Gissing's career. With the possible exception of *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, the books Gissing liked best failed to achieve popularity, while those he considered unimportant (or was actually ashamed of having written) had good sales and were praised by the

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reviewers. In a final irony, they displayed a deft workmanship that Gissing himself tended to underrate. These books do not have the qualities Gissing valued most, sincerity and an individual impression of life. But if the major Gissing is absent from these novels, they do exhibit some of the minor aspects of his genius, capacities for humor, intrigue, plotting, the creation of suspense and the projection of simple, but well-defined characters.

All of these appear in the backgrounds of his longer novels, and in fact, as Coustillas shows in his introduction, the contrast between *The Town Traveller* and the main body of Gissing's social novels is less abrupt than it might seem to be. *The Town Traveller* employs the accurate sociological observation and immersion in working-class manners that Gissing excelled in, but uses them for comedy rather than Social criticism. He had tried this vein before, in some of the Dickensian passages of *Workers in the Dawn*, but wisely set it aside until he was able to manage it with a lighter touch. The characters of *The Town Traveller* are recognizable examples of the types that appear in Gissing's other novels, but they are the subjects of comedy rather than satire.

One of the chief attractions of this edition is the apparatus that qualifies it as a critical edition. In his introductory material, Coustillas supplies many facts about the composition and publication of the book; his bibliography lists articles and reviews about both the English and American editions, and gives separate listings of books and articles that allude to *The Town Traveller*. The notes to the introduction and text give some fascinating information about the sources Gissing used for facts about angling and dog-handling. The introduction traces the relation between the plot involving the disappearance of Mr. Clover and a current news event in which the widow of a shopkeeper petitioned for the opening of her husband's grave because she believed that he was really a nobleman who had, like Lord Polperro, adopted a humble identity.

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*Newsletter* readers will recall that David Grylls did ample justice to the noteworthy features of the novel when he reviewed the hardback edition in 1982. He observed that *The Town Traveller*

reflects Gissing's re-reading of Dickens, and attributed the novel's vitality to its authentic reportage of social life, based on active observation and information painstakingly culled from the press. He noted that the careful rendering of working-class speech functions as a distancing device which enables Gissing to set his characters within a certain perspective. And he agreed with Coustillas that *The Town Traveller* reflects many of Gissing's personal concerns and displays his artistry.

Grylls observed that the character of Greenacre embodied Gissing's own admiration for the aristocracy, and this minor figure is perhaps one of the most interesting elements of *The Town Traveller*. Gammon can never be quite sure of his social position, which veers between that of the driver of an advertising van and an intimate of Lord Polperro, and he is at least Gammon's equal in intrigue. His bearing and speech are those of an educated man, and Gissing gives no cause – except the suggestion that he has a taste for drink – that might explain his reduced circumstances, but there is a touch of pathos as Gammon leaves him on the steps of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, “a strange object in his borrowed suit of mourning, and his antiquated hat.” One feels satisfaction in his mysterious rise to comparative prosperity and a position of power in the novel as he becomes able to help Gammon in his quest for Mr. Clover and the benign deception practised on Polly.

Critics have generally found it difficult to find the right place for *The Town Traveller* in Gissing's canon. There has been a tendency to dismiss it as mere hack work, and some studies fail to mention it at all. Coustillas' analyses correct this view by showing that Gissing's usual artistry and conscientiousness are to be found in it, and that it has a clear continuity with his more serious works, though it is written in an entirely different mode. – Jacob Korg

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(Note: It may be relevant to mention for bibliographical reasons that the present paperback edition of *The Town Traveller* consists of sheets of the 1981 edition which were bound late in 1983; hence the date, 1981, on the verso of the title page.)

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#### Notes and News

Martha S. Vogeler's important book on Frederic Harrison, the Positivist leader who played a significant part in Gissing's early career, has just appeared. It is a study which no Gissing scholar will find it possible to ignore because it offers a thorough survey of the relationship between the novelist and his patron, but also because it contains a wealth of references to persons who appear in Gissing's correspondence and papers, for instance Edward Beesly, the Crackanthorpes, the Lushingtons, James Cotter Morison and Mark Pattison. For the first time it would seem, a photograph of Gissing's pupils, Austin and Bernard Harrison, is reproduced in a book, as well as various portraits of Frederic Harrison and his wife. The volume will be reviewed in one of our next numbers.

Both *A Life's Morning* and *Workers in the Dawn*, edited by Pierre Coustillas, are to appear shortly under the imprint of the Harvester Press, in hardback and in paperback. Both editions include studies of the MSS (only a fragment survives in the case of *A Life's Morning*).

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## Recent Publications

### Volumes

George Gissing, *Thyrza*, edited with an introduction by Jacob Korg, Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1984. Yellow cloth; titling on blue panel on spine. This is a new impression of the 1974 edition. This title is also available in a yellow and grey pictorial paperback. The prices are respectively £10.95 and £5.95.

George Gissing, *The Whirlpool*, edited with an introduction by Patrick Parrinder, Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1984. Red and grey pictorial paperback. £5.95.

Martha S. Vogeler, *Frederic Harrison: The Vocations of a Positivist*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984, 493 pages. The provisional price, announced several months ago, was £25.

### Articles, reviews, etc.

W. Eugene Davis and Helmut E. Gerber (eds.), *Thomas Hardy: An Annotated Bibliography of Writings about Him*, Vol. II, 1970-1978 and Supplement for 1871-1969, De Kalb: Illinois, 1983. Contains a number of references to Gissing unrecorded in the Index.

Robert L. Selig, "Biographical Decoding: Gissing's Life and Work," *Review* (An Annual published by the University Press of Virginia), Vol. 5 (1983), pp. 203-10. Review of John Halperin's *Gissing: A Life in Books*.

Peter Kemp, "Book Reviews: Father, Mother and Son," Vol. 309, 14 June 1984, pp. 643-44. Review of Anthony West's *H.G. Wells: Aspects of a Life*, with a significant passage on Gissing.

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John Halperin, "How Gissing Read Dickens," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Vol. 83, no. 3, Summer 1984, pp. 312-22. This is a slightly revised version of the paper read at the Gissing Symposium in 1981.

Anon., "Recensioni e segnalazioni," *Tuttoscuola*, 4-18 July 1984, p. 52. Review of *George Gissing: Antologia critica*.

- Anon., "Gissing Now," *The Financial Times*, 28 July 1984. Notice of some paperbacks in print.

- G. Rulli, "Rassegna bibliografica," *La Civiltà Cattolica*, Anno 135, Quaderno 3219-3220, p. 334. Review of *George Gissing: Antologia Critica*.

- Kikuo Oku, "George Gissing, Plant Lover," *Toho Gakuen Junior College Bulletin*, Vol. 14 (1984), pp. 103-15. This is a study of Gissing as a botanist.