

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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The Collected Letters of George Gissing

Paul F. Mattheisen

The editors are pleased to announce a collected edition of the letters of George Gissing, to be published by the Ohio University Press beginning in January, 1990. This extensive project, which has been long in preparation, will be welcomed by Gissing scholars as the last important

publication of Gissing papers to see the light over the past three decades. It germinated when Arthur C. Young, after editing the letters to Eduard Bertz in 1961, discussed with Alfred Gissing the possibility of undertaking a larger collection of letters to various correspondents, or at least a very widely expanded, corrected and uncensored version of the letters to members of the family, which were edited by Algernon and Ellen Gissing in 1927, and then asked Paul F. Mattheisen to join him in preparing a manuscript of a size that might be acceptable to a press. Both editors were soon committed to other career matters, and the work on Gissing proceeded somewhat diffidently because for many years the interest in him which is now evident in the yearly scholarship and in the publication of the novels was yet to emerge from the cocoon. The book could not therefore be finally defined except in consultation with a press, but when Mattheisen and Young began submitting sample manuscripts in order to test the waters, the readers began advising that "what the world does not need now is yet another volume of Gissing letters," and that if a new edition "is going to reveal nothing more than further details about Gissing's family problems, then it doesn't seem to me worth a large investment on the part of a publisher." Several presses did show an interest, but even they could not say very clearly just what they wanted, although the Whitston Press, of Troy, New York, generously contracted to

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undertake a project if a larger academic press could not be found. Under these discouraging conditions the editors worked on somewhat fitfully and in a rather embarrassed silence, unfortunately without keeping in touch with the Gissing scholars who knew about it, but who therefore gradually came to think that the project had fallen into the abyss.

By 1986, however, the rising public and scholarly interest in Gissing encouraged Mattheisen and Young to send a manuscript of about three volumes to the Ohio University Press, where after long deliberation the new Director, Dr. Duane Schneider, suggested that it would be desirable to publish all of the available Gissing letters in a collected edition. Taken thus by surprise, and in order to insure that such a massive work could begin publication in a reasonable time, Mattheisen then consulted with Pierre Coustillas, who for a time generously agreed to act as contributing editor, but his help was so congenial and his knowledge, of course, so considerable that when the manuscript for the first volume was ready to send on, the three of us mutually agreed that Coustillas should join the team as third editor. He added a splendid genealogy of the Gissings and the Bedfords, a topic on which he knows more than any living scholar, and that volume is now scheduled for publication in January.

One of the distinctive features of this edition is that it will include letters to Gissing, whenever they are available and can be seen materially to aid our understanding of Gissing's life. Unhappily, not enough of these survive to warrant the title of "correspondence," but the first volume is considerably enhanced by the inclusion of more than eighty letters written by William, the second child in the family, who at the age of twenty succumbed to a lung condition, a disease which plagued his ancestors with surprising frequency. The family seems to have saved his letters as a kind of memorial to his attractive and somewhat heroic nature, and for the

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record of the early years, when Gissing's own letters have been lost or destroyed, those of William do give us a glimpse of Gissing's early London life, and they record the clash of ideas between the two brothers and provide a sense of the relationships among members of the family.

Later volumes will include several letters from such friends as Morley Roberts, but the chief aim of course is to bring together all the Gissing letters, published and unpublished, from whatever sources that present themselves, and to give them chronologically in a uniform edition,

so that the reader can follow the development of Gissing's life without tracking down letters widely scattered in reviews, journals, memoirs, auction catalogues and biographies, and without looking up the many singles and small groups in libraries throughout the world. Of the great number of letters to be published for the first time, those to Clara Collet and to Gissing's two chief literary agents, J. B. Pinker and William Morris Colles, are significant enough to mention here briefly. Collet, whom Gissing met in 1893, was a woman in whom Gissing trusted completely, one who befriended him and his family, who advised him, who cared for his children and watched over their welfare even after Gissing's death, and who on his death wisely administered his estate along with the other executors. The letters to her are among the most open and frank, revealing a good deal about his ideas and his psychic condition. The letters to Colles and Pinker reveal a side of Gissing that can hardly be observed in any other way, that is, the business side of writing, the dealings with various publishers and his concern for supporting those who depended on him.

No editors of such a collection as this can ever promise completeness, and in fact the record shows a great number of Gissing's letters have been lost, or at least have remained undiscovered. For this reason we will be especially glad to hear from any readers, scholars, collectors, or librarians who know of any Gissing letters that have eluded us in our search. We

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would greatly care to hear even about letters to which access is impossible, and in all such cases strict confidentiality can be depended on.

The Haunting Headmistress
Fredrika Bremer's *Hertha* and Gissing's *The Odd Women*

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Whereas Gissing scholars are aware that in writing *The Odd Women* the author used material collected during the autumn of 1889 when he was reading up on woman literature to write a novel on "female education," no one has pointed to any specific works which might have influenced him. In this paper I would like to demonstrate how Gissing's reading of the Swedish novelist Fredrika Bremer early that autumn suggested to him the very idea of writing such a novel, and supplied him with significant material which he used, or tried to use, several times before it was given its final form in *The Odd Women*.

Gissing's Diary documents four entries from September 30 to October 17, 1889 about his preparations for the novel, which was going to be called "The Head Mistress," including the much cited reference of October 15: "Worked at Museum, on Woman Literature."¹ A letter to Eduard Bertz dated October 21 shows that Gissing this time went about the work of planning his next novel in a way unusually methodical and careful:

Already I am working hard at my next book, which I think will be called

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"The Head Mistress." I do not mean that I am writing; only reading, and making notes, and reflecting. The book will deal with the "female education" question – in my way; the scene is in a provincial town ... My own mind is

not yet quite clear on the subject. But I can no longer write – as I used to – with slight preparation; I grow more and more laborious in my preliminary study.²

However, on August 12, a little more than six weeks before Gissing first recorded his thinking about a new novel, he wrote in his Diary: “Began to read ‘Hertha’ by Frederika [sic] Bremer”³ and the following day he was still “at Hertha.” In a footnote P. Coustillas informs the reader that Bremer is a “Swedish novelist whose strongly ethical interest and quiet humour are reminiscent of Jane Austen’s manner.”⁴ This might be true of Fredrika Bremer’s earlier production, but at the age of fifty, after a journey to America in 1849-51, where she was influenced by the newly founded Women’s Rights Conventions, she became a dedicated feminist and a pioneer of the movement for the emancipation of women in Sweden. She also visited England in 1851 and was deeply influenced by her English contemporaries Harriet Martineau, Anna Maria Hall, and Mrs. Gaskell, whom she met and corresponded with. Between 1843 and 1865 Mary Howitt translated into English eleven volumes of Bremer’s works which were widely read and reviewed, especially in the 1840’s.

Published in 1856 *Hertha* expounds the author’s views on the advancement and education of women, and pleads for the legal freedom of Swedish women. In fact, the novel contributed to the passing of a law in 1858 giving unmarried women of twenty-five the same rights as men. Although *Hertha* created a sensation in Sweden, where it was both praised and ridiculed because of its controversial content, the reception in England seems to have been more subdued. A review in the *Athenæum* states that although “the book is written in an excellent spirit, and

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contains so much that is true that it nearly disarms criticism,” the reading is said to be “painful and oppressive.” The fact that the novel was foreign obviously made it easier to dismiss its message as irrelevant to English women: “Miss Bremer’s solution of the social difficulties of female life hardly applies to the women of England . . . no change in laws of external things will do them any good.” *Hertha* was not to be reprinted in England. Now, more than a century later, Fredrika Bremer is largely unknown in England and in her home country her reputation as a champion of women’s rights has by far overshadowed her fame as a novelist.

When reading *Hertha* today one has to endure circumstantiality, sentimental idealization of heroic deeds and high-strung emotions, and indeed, it is seldom read any longer. It is unlikely that Gissing admired the novel as a work of art; he probably appreciated it more as a vehicle of new ideas. The heavy, turgid style of the narrative, interspersed with lengthy sections of dreams, quotations of hymns and poems, and particularly its idealistic Christian message could not have appealed to him. But there remains even today a sincerity and an earnest indignation at the injustice which deprived women of means, education, and a meaningful purpose in life, offering marriage as the only alternative, and above all – the central point of this paper – there is the relationship between the heroine Hertha Falk and the hero Yngve Nordin, which bears so many striking resemblances to that of Rhoda Nunn and Everard Barfoot in *The Odd Women*.

Hertha Falk is a strong, self-willed woman, plain in appearance, who fights shy of the small provincial town’s social life, which is centred around the young women released on the marriage market, the chaperoning matrons, and the eligible bachelors. She declares that she will never marry, and her behaviour and thoughts are considered advanced and bordering on impropriety. Her surname, Falk, reflects her personality. The falcon, as a bird of prey, is charged with male characteristics like activity, aggression, and initiative. In contrast, the other

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young women in the novel have names alluding to the dove and the swan to indicate their beauty and docility. A young engineer, Yngve Nordin, just back from foreign travel, appears on the social scene. He is handsome, intelligent and charming, a ladies' man with a reputation for treating women's feelings lightly, just enough to rouse admiration and envy in men and some fear and excitement in women. He is in sympathy with the feminist movement and catches Hertha's interest by telling her about its progress among women in America. He is a man of the new order, a forward-thinking man, the first one to appear in this small, circumscribed society. He woos Hertha through respect and friendship until she reluctantly has to admit to herself that she is in love. Given her views on men, love, and marriage as a degrading institution for women, the situation creates a conflict in her; she is afraid of letting a man rule her and her life. A letter tells her that Yngve has often been seen at a young woman's (and friend of Hertha's) home and is accused of being her lover. Distrust and suspicions cause a crisis between the lovers, and Hertha goes away for a week, sick and driven to despair by jealousy. She returns determined to face Yngve and confront him about the letter. He turns out to be wrongly accused, the misunderstandings are cleared up, and he asks Hertha to marry him. But she turns down his proposal, explaining that marriage and motherhood alone cannot fill her life and cannot be reconciled to her ideals of helping to liberate her oppressed sisters. She wants to found a school for young women where languages, music and drawing would not be taught, but where the pupils would be awakened to higher spiritual needs and to their vocation as full members of society. When Yngve explains that he wants to help her in this enterprise and fight for the same ideals by her side, she agrees to marry him. For various reasons they do not marry until seven years later when Yngve is dying (the marriage is obviously never consummated), and

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meanwhile and for many years after Yngve's death she carries on her work with the school. Hertha – the headmistress – dies loved and respected by her pupils.

In *The Odd Women* the stern feminist Rhoda Nunn is wooed by the charming young engineer, Everard Barfoot, definitely a man of the world, who has come home after travelling abroad. Rhoda is much the same type as Hertha: plain in looks and dress, but with much dignity of manner and a strong, proud personality. She, too, is concerned about the women who cannot and would not marry and has herself chosen a life without marriage and children so as to help educate her fellow-sisters and promote the cause. Rhoda works at a secretarial school for young women – where Barfoot's cousin Mary is the headmistress – the purpose of which is also “to strengthen women's minds and characters” and make them capable members of a modern society. Barfoot attracts Rhoda's interest by expressing the very views on women and marriage she herself holds, and the rumours of his earlier sexual experience arouse her curiosity as much as they repel her. But finding herself in love creates a conflict also in Rhoda. At first, firm in her decision not to marry, she turns down his offer of a free union which she herself has earlier advocated, demanding a formal marriage as a token of Everard's love. In describing this complicated interplay between the lovers – a relationship which is soon reduced to a mere struggle for supremacy between the sexes – and the psychological implications of Rhoda's conflict with herself and her ideals, Gissing has definitely more in common with August Strindberg than with Fredrika Bremer, whose novel was written almost forty years earlier. But the core of each conflict is the same: Hertha and Rhoda both experience the difficulty of giving up some of their hard-won independence, they dread the prospect of having to submit to a man and being thrown back on a conventional woman's way of life.

Just as in *Hertha* the relationship between Barfoot and Rhoda comes to a crisis when he is

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observed in suspicious circumstances with another woman, who in the present case is also a friend of the heroine, it is striking that in both novels, this is made known by a letter sent to the heroine and arousing her jealousy. Desperate and humiliated, Rhoda faces Barfoot with a question, the phrasing of which is almost identical with that which Hertha asks Yngve: "is there at this moment any woman living who has a claim upon you – a moral claim?" Barfoot denies this but matters come to a deadlock and a question of principle is raised when Rhoda tries to force him to explain the circumstances mentioned in the letter: Barfoot insists she must trust his word. This turns out to be the end of their relationship. Barfoot marries successfully and conventionally, and Rhoda returns to the school, more dedicated to the cause than ever.

Both Hertha and Rhoda emerge from their unhappy encounter with love better prepared for the struggle ahead of them, both strengthened and humbled, knowing themselves capable of love, jealousy, even passionate despair, sharing in other women's experience instead of standing apart, bitterly critical.

A comparison between these two novels reveals too many parallels for these to be purely coincidental, and one perceives how, in his conception of the relationship between Rhoda and Barfoot, Gissing drew on Bremer's description of Hertha and her romance with Yngve Nordin. No doubt, Bremer here experimented with a "new man," a man emancipated from his role as oppressor, a fit partner for the emancipated woman. Still, it is surprising that not only did Gissing take over from *Hertha* the two main characters, their relationship, and the idea of a school for girls run by women, but that he also kept other significant details. It seems ironical that the two plain, strong-minded women, basically hostile to men and marriage, should be wooed, reluctantly but successfully, by the same kind of man: both engineers and great travellers, handsome and sophisticated ladies' men, showing a more or less genuine interest in

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woman's emancipation. Due to the romantic strain of the earlier novel, Yngve Nordin turns out to be the more high-minded and nobler of the two in the end (dying a hero's death), while Everard Barfoot fails when his ideals are put to the test and takes the easy way out. Each relationship develops along similar lines to arrive at an identical crisis of jealousy, provoked by a letter accusing the hero of infidelity with a friend of the heroine, and reaching a climax when she confronts her lover with the same question. The outcome is different, but even if Hertha is formally married for a short time, she meets with the same fate as Rhoda Nunn (and could equally well bear that name); they are both left on their own, dedicating their lives to the cause and their schools.

If the number and nature of the similarities between the novels preclude any possibility of mere coincidence, the point of time at which Gissing read *Hertha* also speaks in favour of the assumption that he made notes of what he found interesting in the novel; a letter to Bertz on March 5, 1891 shows that this was a method he used: "Yesterday I was looking all through my bundles of 'notes'. Heavens! I have material for all the rest of my life."⁶ In the relationship between Hertha and Yngve, Gissing no doubt found something new and inspiring, "good material" to develop in his own way.

Through Diary and letters we can follow how Gissing struggled with the material collected during the autumn of 1889 – one is tempted to say that it haunted him – until it came to fruition in *The Odd Women*. A few days after reading *Hertha* in August 1889 Gissing went to Guernsey with his sister for a month's holiday. Ten days after his return the first entry in his Diary reveals him planning "The Head Mistress," a project at which he worked for almost six weeks, then gave up when he left for Greece on November 11. Two weeks after he had settled again in London an entry of March 13, 1890 indicates that he had abandoned the project: "A week of

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thinking over new story. It is not to be 'The Head Mistress'; material for that will lie over."⁷ A series of false starts followed; novels began and abandoned. One of these was to be called "Hilda Wolff" – one cannot help finding the name reminiscent of Hertha Falk – and is recorded on August 25 to have been begun and started afresh. Probably Gissing was struggling again with his "woman material." On September 15, having finished volume I, he lapsed again, thought about another story, resumed work on "Hilda Wolff" after a week only to abandon it again the next day. Out of this chaos grew *New Grub Street* (1891). Another two novels were published in 1892 before time was ripe for *The Odd Women: Denzil Quarrier* and *Born in Exile*.

Undoubtedly, Gissing used some of the collected material in *Denzil Quarrier*, a novel which deals with the woman question from a more political (and also a more superficial) standpoint than *The Odd Women*. In Mrs. Wade, Gissing for the first time portrays an odd woman and feminist with considerable sympathy except for the disastrous role she plays in the death of Lilian. Mrs. Wade is good-looking, intelligent, and well educated (she reads Greek, always a positive mark of distinction with Gissing). She differs from Rhoda Nunn and Miss Barfoot in that she fights a political struggle for the right to vote, but agrees with them and the male protagonists in their contempt of the common, uneducated woman. This intelligent, dedicated feminist, too, turns out to be susceptible to the charms of an eloquent and urbane man, Denzil Quarrier, who publicly and theoretically supports the emancipation of women, but privately, Lilian tells Mrs. Wade, prefers a woman to be weak and submissive. In this novel, as J. Haydock has pointed out,⁸ it is primarily the section of the radical candidate Quarrier's lecture on "Woman: Her Place in Modern Life" given to the Polterham voters that foreshadows the ideas which were to be treated so thoroughly in *The Odd Women*. Quarrier pleads for better

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education for women and advocates that unmarried women devote themselves to the task of training the new female generation. Here, Haydock claims, is the germinal idea of *The Odd Women*: in Quarrier's views of the educational task to be carried out by superfluous women Gissing discovered the master idea of his next novel, whether he knew it or not. However, as I have tried to show here, Gissing did not build his master idea of *The Odd Women* on an unconsciously conceived idea from *Denzil Quarrier*: he deliberately made use of some of his collected material, and the idea sprang from his reading of Fredrika Bremer's feminist novel.

Thus, there is a continuous thread running from Gissing's reading of *Hertha* in August 1889, the collecting of material for "The Head Mistress" later that year, probably through the work on "Hilda Wolff" a year later in 1890, the writing of *Denzil Quarrier* another year later in 1891, to the thorough treatment and development of the material in the writing of *The Odd Women* in the early autumn of 1892.

Gissing remarks in his Diary on February 22, 1892: "Thus it always is with me; I fall back on old subjects which have had time to ripen in my mind."⁹ In this case the subject to which Gissing turned time and again over three years ripened into one of his most interesting and original novels and indeed one of the most remarkable novels of his time.

1. Pierre Coustillas, ed. *London and the Life of Literature in Late Victorian England: The Diary of George Gissing, Novelist* (Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1978), p. 169.
2. Arthur C. Young, ed., *The Letters of George Gissing to Eduard Bertz, 1887-1903* (London: Constable and Company Ltd, 1961), p. 75.
3. Diary, p. 159.

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4. *Ibid.*, p. 554.
5. *Athenæum*, June, 14, 1856.
6. *Letters to Bertz*, p. 119.
7. Diary, p. 211.
8. James Haydock, "Denzil Quarrier and the Woman Question," *Gissing Newsletter*, June 1967, pp. 1-3.
9. Diary, p. 271.

Gissing Down Under
(continued)

C. M. Wyatt, Canberra, Australia
and Pierre Coustillas

Anon., "Obituary: Mr. George Gissing," *Western Mail* (Perth), 2 January 1904, p. 42. A very short obituary mentioning Gissing's activities as a novelist, *Charles Dickens: A Critical Study* and the introductions to the Rochester edition of Dickens's works.

Anon., "Obituary: Mr. Algernon Gissing," *Weekly Courier* (Launceston), 2 January, 1904, p. 26. As in the Launceston *Examiner* of 30 December 1903, the details about Algernon's life and career were transcribed from the *Who's Who* entry. It was slightly misleading to state

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that he "was a solicitor, and followed that profession for a few years." Ten titles are listed, from *A Village Hampden* (1890) to *Knitters in the Sun* (1902).

Anon., "Obituary," *Canterbury Times* (Christchurch, N.Z.), 6 January 1904, p. 50. Gissing's works are said to belong to the school of English realism, and most titles are given with dates and an occasional word of comment, from *The Unclassed* to *Charles Dickens*. Another obituary, similar in most respects, appeared in the same number of the same newspaper under the title "The late George Gissing," p. 42. The last sentence, of crucial bibliographical importance, reads: "Several tales from the pen of the deceased author have appeared in our columns."

Anon., "Cablegrams," *Otago Witness* (Dunedin), 6 January 1904, p. 17. A short announcement of Gissing's death with a perfunctory allusion to his novels which "powerfully represent the life of the lower middle classes in rather sombre tone."

Anon., "News and Notes," *New Zealand Mail* (Wellington), 6 January 1904, p. 63. A paragraph from the London correspondent of *The Northern Whig* beginning: "It might throw some

light on the mystery of Miss Hickman's death if it could be known whether she was a reader of Mr. George Gissing's novels. In that author's fascinating but somewhat saddening story, *New Grub Street*, there is a lovable character named Harold Biffen, who, after struggling for years to earn his living by literary work, is at length driven by starvation and discouragement to commit suicide." An account of Biffen's death on Putney Heath is given in a dozen lines. Apparently Miss Hickman committed suicide under similar circumstances.

Anon., "Topic of the Week," *The Australasian* (Melbourne), 9 January 1904, p. 94. A short

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article on the literary losses of the past year, but essentially about Gissing, whose books "were stamped by a peculiar and powerful individuality that gave him a place in English fiction above any of his contemporaries, except Mr. George Meredith and Mr. Thomas Hardy. His books have not been as popular as those of many other writers of the day of far less merit and originality." The writer compares Gissing with Arthur Morrison and Hardy, and observes that "within his own limits his touch is marvellously sure, and all his characters are carefully drawn and lifelike. A striking feature of his books is their uniform excellence ... In some of his later stories, however, such as *The Whirlpool* and *Our Friend the Charlatan*, there are signs that he was acquiring a wider outlook upon life, and hence his premature death is deeply to be regretted. A strange and sombre genius, owing hardly anything to his predecessors, but from the first striking out a line of his own, George Gissing may safely be pronounced one of the most original and striking figures in modern English literature."

Anon., "Literary Notes," *Otago Witness* (Dunedin), 27 January 1904, p. 69. A long paragraph referring the reader to W. L. Courtney's article, "George Gissing," in the *English Illustrated Magazine* (November 1903, pp. 188-92), and consisting in quotations from *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* (Spring X).

Anon., "Personal Notes from England," *The Register* (Adelaide), 1 February 1904, p. 6. Subtitled "The Late George Gissing," this paragraph from the Special Correspondent of the *Register* in London is actually dated 1 January. The death of Gissing "has set the reviewers at work once more, and the general conclusion is that in the death of the

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'English Zola' literature has sustained a severe loss, albeit the productions of his genius were not of a kind to add to the sum of human happiness, or to the enjoyment or even edification of the general reader."

M., "George Gissing: An Appreciation," *The Book Lover* (Melbourne), 1 February 1904, p. 20. A thoughtful, sympathetic, if unpretentious assessment of Gissing's works. The world is perceptibly the poorer for Gissing's death. He was one of the great creative masters in his art, essentially a novelist of London, more constant and greater in this capacity than a dozen other novelists such as Anstey, George Moore, Zangwill, Jerome and Arthur Morrison. The writer then surveyed the early works from *The Unclassed* to *New Grub Street*, stressing Gissing's candid depiction of the underside of society which corresponds to Waymark's avowed aim: "The novel of everyday life is getting worn out; we must dig deeper and get to untouched social strata." But "as time went on, Gissing came

to recognize, as all sane genius must, that life is not all tears. And with this recognition came the maturing of his powers. The bitter pessimism of his earlier days became merged in a more hopeful outlook, a change which was naturally reflected in his work." Of the two periods after that of the early working-class studies, the first was noteworthy for such works as *The Emancipated*, *The Whirlpool* and *The Crown of Life* and the second for purely literary volumes like *By the Ionian Sea* and *Henry Rycroft*. The author of this article, "M.", may have been Joseph Woolf, a Melbourne solicitor, a friend of H. H. Champion and an admirer of Gissing, who appears in the latter's diary in early 1896.

The same number of *The Book Lover* (pp. 14-15) contained a series of paragraphs, obviously written by H. H. Champion about his friendship with Gissing; extracts from

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letters of 8 January 1896, 9 May 1900, and 11 January 1902, the last that Champion claimed to have received, are printed. His statement that he received "many" letters from him and is offering extracts from three of them, apparently taken at random, should be taken gingerly. Champion probably heard from Gissing more than three times after their meeting in London in late 1893, but quite infrequently.

Anon., "London Personal Notes," *The Advertiser* (Adelaide), 2 February 1904, p. 7. A belated obituary from the *Advertiser* Special Correspondent, dated London, 1 January 1904. A respectful assessment stressing the fact that, owing to his pessimism, Gissing "failed to win the fame and popularity which his work merited." Yet "Mr. Gissing possessed the faculty of enchaining the attention of his readers by sheer power of simple and direct description. The crude devices of sensationalism he despised, and no one could accuse him of undue exaggeration in depicting the hopelessness of poverty and its soul-killing influence, but he was altogether too fond of gazing on the seamy side ... His penmanship was microscopic and was the amazement of the compositor. He wrote upon sheets of foolscap, and upon one sheet he would place three thousand words, or about ten times the quantity reckoned for by the ordinary writer; and, like his writing in its larger and literary aspect, every word was completely legible."

Anon., "Personal Notes from London," *The Age* (Melbourne), 6 February 1904, p. 17. An obituary from that newspaper's London correspondent, dated 1 January. Once more his limited success with the public is blamed upon the allegedly depressing nature of his works, and it is wondered why "Mr. George Gissing, who was a scholar and a man of

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unusual refinement, should have confined his studies as a novelist mainly to the sordid and melancholy existence of the lower middle classes in this country." The answer given is of the expected kind: "It was partly a morbid tendency, developed by the unhappiness of his domestic life and his long struggle to make a living." The well-known anecdote on the circumstances of composition of *New Grub Street* and the usual comparison with Zola are followed by an admission that "he was a master craftsman in his way." The conclusion is slightly inaccurate: "His two closest friends among contemporary writers were Mr. H. G. Wells and Mr. Morley Roberts, both of whom were at his bedside when he died."

Anon., "The English Zola: Death in France of Mr. George Gissing," *Morning Herald* (Perth), 6

February 1904, p. 14. A comparatively long obituary which drew its substance from that published in the London *Daily Mail* (29 December 1903, p. 3). The author of the article regards Gissing as both “a direct disciple of Dickens” and “the English Zola.” He was the author of many novels “which placed him high in the English school of realism.” Only three of his novels are mentioned, *Born in Exile*, *The Whirlpool* and *Our Friend the Charlatan*, together with *By the Ionian Sea* and *Henry Ryecroft*, and some factual details are gross errors. Gissing simply cannot be said to have been “a great and constant traveller”; nor were many of his books written abroad, only the last few.

A paragraph of “Literary Gossip” on the same page is borrowed from the London *Literary World* of 8 January 1904. It is concerned with Gissing’s idealistic temperament and pessimistic outlook, and with the anecdote about *New Grub Street* previously mentioned.

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Anon., “In the Papers,” *The Argus* (Melbourne), 6 February 1904, p. 5. Two paragraphs of anecdotes, with a quotation from *By the Ionian Sea* (“Every man has his intellectual desire ... a new perception of things beautiful”). The anecdote about *New Grub Street* is reprinted without acknowledgement from *The Literary World* while the notion of Gissing being by nature essentially a scholar and a recluse is taken from the *Westminster Gazette* of 29 December 1903, p. 1. There follows a paragraph of uncertain origin and of doubtful veracity about the visits to and stays in the London districts he wished to and did describe in his novels.

Anon., “Books and Authors,” *The Queenslander* (Brisbane), 13 February 1904, p. 40. Same paragraph as in the *Morning Herald* of 6 February 1904, “Literary Gossip.”

Anon., “Our London Letter,” *Tasmanian Mail* (Hobart), 13 February 1904, p. 37. A letter from the newspaper’s London correspondent dated 1 January. A brief account of Gissing’s career with a quotation from an unknown source about the London of Gissing being the same as that of the third of Henley’s “London Voluntaries.”

Anon., “Literary Notes,” *The Australasian* (Melbourne), 13 February 1904, p. 386. Contents similar to those of the first paragraph of “In the Papers” in the *Argus* for 6 February 1904.

Anon., “Literary Gossip,” *Morning Herald* (Perth), 13 February 1904, p. 12. Two paragraphs about the forthcoming publication of *Will Warburton* by Constable, it being still unknown whether the manuscript of *Veranilda* was completed, and about the availability of *Sleeping Fires* in Unwin’s “Autonym Library.” Unwin circulated this paragraph

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widely. It emphasized the difference between *Sleeping Fires*, with its Greek setting, and Gissing’s novels of London life.

Anon., “Literary Notes,” *The Age* (Melbourne), 13 February 1904, p. 4. A paragraph about Gissing’s untimely death “at a time when some measure of prosperity, long withheld, had descended upon him.” Praises the “lucid and poetic prose” of *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*.

Anon., “Books and their Writers,” *Sunday Times* (Sydney), 14 February 1904, p. 13. Same

paragraph as in the *Australasian* for 13 February 1904.

Anon., "Literature and Art," *New Zealand Herald Supplement* (Auckland), 20 February 1904, p. 4. A laudatory paragraph on Gissing's critical assessment of Dickens's works.

Anon., "Letters on Literature: A Glance at the Academy," *Brisbane Courier*, 27 February 1904, p. 13. An article on Gissing and Puritanism based on *The Emancipated* and *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*. The anonymous commentator attempts to demonstrate that, even if the former book reads like an attack on Puritanism and testifies to an exquisite perception of natural beauty, Gissing had much of the Puritan temper and habit.

[H. H. Champion], "[Gissing in two English weeklies]," *The Book Lover* (Melbourne), 1 March 1904, p. 29. Champion deplors that the notices of Gissing's death throw very little light on him, but he quotes two exceptions. The first is a long passage by John o' London, in *T. P's Weekly* (8 January 1904, p. 45) about London as reflected in Gissing's novels. The second is a letter by G. B. Burgin, who had known the novelist personally. It reads in part: "George Gissing is dead. Letters, allusions, anecdotes, hints, pour in upon us.

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Everyone apparently now agrees that he was a genius, everyone hints darkly of a life which was full of hopeless misery and struggle, and with all this universal knowledge so few appear to have done anything to help him. A hundredth part of the sympathy lavished on George Gissing dead, would, it seems to me, have made a far happier man of George Gissing alive" (*British Weekly*, 14 January 1904, p. 387).

Anon., "Two Notable Men: Mr. George Gissing and Sir Wm. Allan," *New Zealand Mail* (Wellington), 2 March 1904, p. 78. Dated from London, 1 January, this obituary by the newspaper's Special Correspondent, is the same as that in the *Adelaide Advertiser* for 2 February 1904 under a different title. Under "Literary Gossip," p. 23, the same number of the *New Zealand Mail* contained a paragraph about *Sleeping Fires* similar to that in the *Perth Morning Herald* for 13 February 1904, but with an additional sentence: "Since Mr. Gissing's death his travel-book, *By the Ionian Sea*, has been in special request." It must be noted that if Unwin was trying to push the sales of *Sleeping Fires*, he was already planning to create a demand for *By the Ionian Sea*, soon to be published in his Colonial Library.

Anon., "Books and Authors," *The Queenslander* (Brisbane), 5 March 1904, p. 40. "By the *Ionian Sea*, by the late Mr. George Gissing, one of the most charming of English writers, will be out shortly, so we are advised by the publisher, Mr. Fisher Unwin."

Anon., "Literary Notes," *Otago Witness* (Dunedin), 9 March 1904, p. 70. Same paragraph as in the *New Zealand Mail* for 2 March 1904, p. 23.

Anon., "Books and their Writers," *Sunday Times* (Sydney), 13 March 1904, p. 13. Subtitled

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"Posthumous Book by Gissing," this paragraph reveals the subject of *Veranilda* and quotes from a letter to Edward Clodd of 17 October 1903: "It is harder work than any I ever did – not a line that does not ask sweat of the brain."

Anon., "Literary Notes," *Otago Witness* (Dunedin), 11 May 1904, p. 69. An astonishingly well-informed paragraph of some fifty lines about Gissing's life and career in which the writer gives the impression of knowing much more than he says. His remarks are triggered by an observation made by O. O., i.e., William Robertson Nicoll in the *Sketch* (27 January 1904, p. 58), that there have been many complaints against the neglect with which he was treated by the world, and by C. F. Keary's article in the *Athenæum* (16 January 1904, p. 82). "As a matter of fact, Gissing's beginnings were very hard, in the sense that he received small sums for first books. I question, however, whether his publishers made money by them. He had not gone very far when critics of standing recognised his power, and I have known editors take him up and do their utmost for him, by printing his stories and otherwise. They found that the public did not relish him, and were obliged to desist. But for a fair number of years he had been well paid for his books. The amount he received for two or three of the later among them would surprise the reader, and there was quite a competition among publishers for any new novels he wrote. Unfortunately, he was not popular as a serial writer. The professional novelist looks to receive much of his remuneration from serials. It would have been dangerous to print one of Mr. Gissing's gloomy stories as a serial. As to the troubles of his private life, it may be said in the first place that there were friends who did their very utmost to help him in difficult circumstances, and, for the rest, they were troubles in which no man can do

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much for another. Even the little he can do must be done on solicitation. There were not many who would have ventured to rattle the skeletons of George Gissing's life."

Anon., "[An Imitation of *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*]," *The Book Lover* (Melbourne), 4 July 1904, p. 79. Two paragraphs on *The House of Quiet, An Autobiography*, edited by J. T. (London: John Murray), which book so closely resembles Gissing's last book published in his lifetime that it looks like plagiarism.

Anon., "[Wells and Veranilda]," *The Book Lover* (Melbourne), 1 October 1904, p. 122. A quotation from Wilfred Whitten's apology for Gissing in the *Globe* ("Literary Gossip," 13 August 1904, p. 8.)

Anon., "Literary Notes," *The Australasian* (Melbourne), 1 October 1904, p. 828. A long quotation from H. G. Wells's article in the August *Monthly Review* ("Two of his friends spent a spring-time holiday with him and his sister at Budleigh Salterton ... under the fear of the Gothic King") with this comment: "No man of letters was less understood (as regards his personality) than the late George Gissing, whom popular fancy painted as a realist with a clever, but drab-coloured, imagination, and little breadth of outlook."

Anon., "Literature: Books and Authors," *The Queenslander* (Brisbane), 15 October 1904, p. 26. Mentions Wells's article in the *Monthly Review* and quotes from the comment passed upon it by the London *Literary World* (26 August 1904, p. 157): "Probably no more powerful and incisive critique of friend by friend ... many features of the novelist's work that have been hitherto inexplicable are now at least partly explained."

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Anon., "[Wells and Veranilda], *The Book Lover* (Melbourne), 1 November 1904, p. 130.

Comment on Wells's reply to the criticism of his article (*Sphere*, 10 September 1904, p. 244). "Mr. H. G. Wells chiefly defends himself on the grounds that he knew Gissing more intimately than most. The defence may be sound so far as the details of Gissing's life are concerned, but does not concern, in the slightest degree, his critical estimate of the value of Gissing's writings. Mr. Wells, in the opinion of many, with whom I agree, does not understand the real merits of Gissing's achievements, and consequently underrates them." This paragraph was most likely written by H. H. Champion.

Anon., "Literary Notes," *Otago Witness* (Dunedin), 2 November 1904, p. 73. Again quotations from Wells's article and a reference to the *Pall Mall Gazette* (1 October 1904, p. 5), which observed that the publication of *Veranilda*, whether the book proved a success or not, could only intensify the irony and the pity of its authors early death.

Anon., "Literature: A Posthumous Novel," *Sydney Mail*, 16 November 1904, p. 1222. A short review of *Veranilda*. "The most striking feature of the book is the picture it gives of a picturesque period, and its reflection of the author's own later spirit when he looked for peace and for the more intellectual and easeful side of life, yet found its suffering too manifest to be passed by."

Anon. "Literature: Some New Books: The Late George Gissing," *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney), 26 November 1904, p. 4. A substantial review of *Veranilda*. "By the death of Mr. George Gissing, English fiction has lost one of its most distinguished exponents, a man who wrote prose of singular beauty, and who brought to the work of novel-writing qualities of culture and scholarship all too rare in the ranks of contemporary novelists ... While the

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scholar and the student will find a rich treasure of sound knowledge in this story of the times of Justinian, the ordinary novel-reader may grow impatient, for there can be no doubt that the story, colored as it is with the brilliant hues of the later Roman Empire, and bathed in the atmosphere of the time when Goth and Roman opposed each other under the very walls of Rome, lacks the liveliness, the brightness, the telling contrasts of character, and the piquant freshness of dialogue which the great mass of the public expect to find in novels written for their entertainment. 'Veranilda' is rather a real historical episode, presented in the garb of fiction, than a work of pure imagination." The reviewer then analyses the plot and the principal characters, and concludes: "In its pictures of the cruelty, rapacity, and sensual indulgence of Rome under the later Empire; in the description of the intrigues between the Arians and the Christians, and of the machinations of the priestly class, this book reads in many places like an erudite and scholarly amplification of the pages of Gibbon. It is heavy reading throughout, and while it testifies to the indefatigable research and the solid scholarship of Mr. Gissing, it is not likely to make a strong appeal to the general body of the novel-reading public."

[H. H. Champion], "[*Veranilda*]," *The Book Lover* (Melbourne), 1 December 1904, p. 145. Another review of *Veranilda*, which begins with a brief presentation of the subject, then goes on as follows: "George Gissing was eminently fitted for such a task. He was a sound scholar, and, as we know from his charming book, 'By the Aegean Sea' [sic], had made a particular study of this period in the writings of that faithful historian, Cassiodorus, who had been secretary to Belisarius, and long survived him. And he has been eminently successful. 'Veranilda' will stand out as the most faithful reproduction of the life of old Rome in our literature. But it is more than this; it is a romance of great

charm and most absorbing interest. Gissing has, then, accomplished two of the three essentials of a historical romance of the first rank: he has got the true atmosphere of the period, and has constructed a plot which will hold fast the attention of his readers. He has also achieved the third essential: his characters are not dummies, nor are they mere modern men and women dressed up to pose as genuine antiques. They live for us in his pages as flesh and blood Romans and Goths, men and women ... All this was quite a new departure for George Gissing, but his experience and skill as a craftsman, his command of a singularly pure and clear style, and his conscientious determination to put into his work the very best of himself, have stood him in good stead. 'Veranilda' will be his best monument."

Anon., "Fiction of the Day: George Gissing's Final Novel," *The Argus* (Melbourne), 2 December 1904, p. 9. A long, laudatory review of *Veranilda* stressing the idea that this unfinished romance is the work which satisfied, most of all, Gissing's tastes and predilections. "Certain it is that throughout *Veranilda* the touch of a loving, careful hand is manifest, and the man who writes his book in such a spirit is bound to infuse a little of it into any reader who is at all sympathetic." There follows a detailed analysis of the successive stages of the narrative and a positive conclusion: "The novel is a fine one; the characters stand out like living personalities; the atmosphere of the little-known period is realised as only a true enthusiast could have realised it; and, with those who have any interest in its time and theme, the book will rank as Mr. Gissing's finest work."

Anon., "George Gissing's last Work," *The Australasian* (Melbourne), 3 December 1904, pp. 1371-72. A long, positive review of *Veranilda*, an attempt to assess its significance in the whole of Gissing's work and its rank as a historical novel in English literature. The

reviewer, despite his high opinion of Gissing's performance, declines to endorse Frederic Harrison's judgment about it. "Among Gissing's stories *Veranilda* holds much the same place that *Esmond* does among Thackeray's, and *Romola* among George Eliot's." The plot and historical background are analysed at length and accurately. "There is plenty of incident, and the scenes of town and country life are admirably described. The great change that has taken place in historical fiction of late years, the superior knowledge and accuracy with which it is written, is strikingly shown in this remarkable work."

Anon., "Literary Notes," *Otago Witness* (Dunedin), 7 December 1904, p. 73. An uncritical response to *Veranilda*, consisting mainly of a definition of its subject and a long quotation from Harrison's preface.

Anon., "Literature and Art," *New Zealand Herald Supplement* (Auckland), 10 December 1904, p. 4. A paragraph on the variety of critical reactions to *Veranilda*, with on the one hand, a trio of enthusiastic critics – Harrison, Wells and Courtney, – on the other a majority of tepid appraisers. Some "competent" writer is reported to have observed that "it is a pity that an author so purely Protestant in his tone and spiritual temperament should ever have attempted to portray men of the Latin race," and that "it is remarkable that Rome under the Byzantines should be peopled by a race so strongly marked by the mental characteristics of Bloomsbury." The origin of this quotation still has to be traced.

Anon., "The Review's Bookshop: History of Disguise," *Review of Reviews* (Melbourne), 20 December 1904, p. 603. A short review of Frederic Harrison's *Theophano* and of *Veranilda*. Gissing is merely said to have "woven a narrative of absorbing interest round

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the incidents connected with the Gothic invasion under Totila. It is a fine tale finely told."

Anon., [Announcement]," *The Observer* (Adelaide), 24 December 1904, p. 29. Serialization of *Will Warburton* will begin in the *Observer* on 7 January. "It is a tale of love, of honour, and of manly struggle under the adverse circumstances of competitive city life, strikingly and ably told." Judgments on Gissing and his works by H. G. Wells, Thomas Hardy and the *Fortnightly Review* are appended to the announcement.

Anon., "Literature: Notes and Reviews: Mr. Gissing's Incomplete Novel," *West Australian* (Perth), 24 December 1904, p. 14. A long review of the Colonial edition of *Veranilda*. Despite his obvious preference for Gissing's stories of modern life the reviewer observes that the present historical romance is a very carefully executed picture of life in the sixth century, and he gives some idea of the variety of characters present in the book. "The setting is one of infinite corruption. But more impressive than that is the sense of decay. The Romans move amid ruins, they are incapable of even repairing their great aqueducts. A strange ennui, an incurable lassitude, appears to afflict them. They are the prey of every spoiler, the victim of every barbarian who can handle a sword, the target of every churchman who can play on their unhealthy superstitions. That Mr. Gissing should have selected so depressing a story is not unexpected, for he seldom attempted to contribute to the gaiety of nations, and London on his canvas seemed often approaching some such strange decrepitude as he found in ancient Italy."

Anon., "Literature: Books and Authors," *The Queenslander* (Brisbane), 31 December 1904, p. 19. Only a paragraph about the publication and subject of *Veranilda*.

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A. G. S., "The Red Page," *The Bulletin* (Sydney), 19 January 1905, Red page, An insulting paragraph which reads: "George Gissing, as a novelist, was a kind of literary embalmer of the living: in *Veranilda* he tries vainly to resuscitate the dead. The book is laboured and tedious. It requires the vitality of a Scott or a Dumas to recreate a vanished age by dint of imagination: weak-pulsed men must thrust their heads into the side of life to bring assurance of existence. – We see Gissing left an estate of £959, beside his novels."

Anon., "Books and Authors," *The Queenslander* (Brisbane), 21 January 1905, p. 20. Same contents as in *New Zealand Mail* for 8 February 1905.

Anon., "Competitions: Competition V," *The Book Lover* (Melbourne), 1 February 1905, p. 24. Those readers who entered for this competition were asked to send in lists of the twelve books which, in their opinion, were the most suitable for holiday reading. *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* came out second with 33 votes, after *The Virginian* by Owen Wister (39 votes). *The Call of the Wild* (31), *Elizabeth and Her German Garden* (27), *The Lightning Conductor* (26) and *The Day's Work* (24) were placed respectively third, fourth, fifth and sixth. But Kipling was the author most frequently mentioned (68 votes), followed

by the author of *Elizabeth and Her German Garden*, Elizabeth von Arnim (44), Owen Wister (43), Gissing (33) and Jack London (31).

Anon., "Books and Authors," *The Queenslander* (Brisbane), 4 February 1905, p. unknown. A paragraph about the forthcoming publication of *Will Warburton* in the spring. "The work, although perhaps not one of his more serious enterprises in fiction, will, it is said, rank with *Eve's Ransom* as among the best of Gissing's later novels."

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Anon., "Literary Notes: The Exile of George Gissing," *Otago Witness* (Dunedin), 8 February 1905, p. 70. Only a note about "an able article in the first number of *The Albany*." The author was Morley Roberts and this number was the Christmas 1904 number. The article has been reprinted in *George Gissing: Critical Essays*, ed. Jean-Pierre Michaux (1981).

Anon., "Other Publications," *New Zealand Mail* (Wellington), 8 February 1905, p. 20. A paragraph reminding the newspaper's readers of its praise of *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* (see entry for 17 June 1903, p. 20), and quoting the *World* on *Veranilda*, now in its second edition: "His grand, beautiful story, so scholarly, without one single disconcerting suggestion of pedantry, will lift his readers out of their own day and their own grooves, and will transport them into that vanished era of the old world ... with power which makes us feel that the author's gift really was genius" (18 October 1904, p. 636).

Anon., "Literature: Publications Received," *The Queenslander* (Brisbane), 11 February 1905, p. 23. A short descriptive review of *Veranilda* with a quotation from Harrison's preface. "The joys and tragedies of life are presented with freshness and unusual power."

Anon., "Competitions: Competition VI," *The Book Lover* (Melbourne), 1 March 1905, p. 36. Those readers who entered for this competition were asked to send in lists of the twelve books which had most interested them during the past twelve months. At the top of the list was Kipling's *Traffics and Discoveries* (1904), with 35 votes. *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, published in 1903, was placed 22nd with 14 votes.

Anon., "Literature and Art," *New Zealand Herald Supplement* (Auckland), 25 March 1905, p. 4.

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A paragraph about the forthcoming publication of an inexpensive edition of *By the Ionian Sea* by Chapman & Hall. "It will be very welcome, especially to those who preferred Gissing the optimist."

Anon., "Literature: Unwin's Colonial Library," *Tasmanian Mail* (Hobart), 8 April 1905, p. 7. Unwin is issuing a Colonial edition of *By the Ionian Sea*, which "is by many critics reckoned his best work." There follows a brief description of the contents of the book with this conclusion: "Full of poetical feeling and refined classical scholarship, it is a piece of literature which has enduring value."

Anon., "Literary Gossip," *New Zealand Mail* (Wellington), 12 April 1895, p. 19. Same contents as in preceding item.

Anon., "Literary Notes," *Otago Witness* (Dunedin), 19 April 1895, p. 73. Same contents as in two preceding items.

Anon., "Reviews of Books: Travel Notes," *The Register* (Adelaide), 29 April 1905, p. 9. A lukewarm review of Unwin's Colonial edition of *By the Ionian Sea*. Gissing's classical erudition is praised but his personal adventures "are somewhat lacking in distinction," and he is accused of being "a trifle inconsistent" concerning his opinion of the Italian people.

Anon., "Books and Authors," *Brisbane Courier*, 20 May 1905, p. 13. An anecdote about the choice of the same title, *The Whirlpool*, by Gissing and Morley Roberts some years before. But the anecdote which was originally reported in the *Daily Chronicle* for 8 January 1897 (p. 3) has been seriously altered. The conversation is said here to have taken place in the dining-room of H. G. Wells, and "the spin of a coin" to have settled the ownership of the

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title. Both the original newspaper paragraph and Gissing's version of the incident in his diary give the lie direct to these elements of the anecdote. Roberts's novel was published under the title of *Maurice Quain*.

Anon., "Publications Received," *The Queenslander* (Brisbane), 3 June 1905, p. 22. A short descriptive review of the Colonial edition of *By the Ionian Sea*. "It will not do to take up *By the Ionian Sea* to skim it through and then cast it aside." The last lines of the book are quoted.

Anon., "Current Literature: *Will Warburton*," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 August 1905, p. 4. An allusive and imperceptive review of the novel. "We have no means of knowing at what stage of his literary life the book was written, but the indications, so far as they indicate a more hopeful view of life, would seem to point to a date subsequent to the appearance of the books that made Mr. Gissing's fame. *Will Warburton* is essentially commonplace." The plot is then analysed so as to give the impression that the characters are either fools or crooks. Yet "everybody has his reward in this book, which is arranged on the most prosaic principle. The naughty persons meet their deserts by excessive prosperity, and the good persons obtain a position of comfortable respectability after infinite trouble. If one did not know that *Will Warburton* was written by George Gissing, one might have attributed it, so far as artistic treatment is concerned, to the late Mr. Boothby, or to any other person who recognised the solid truth that success in literature and the worship of conventionalities are convertible terms."

Anon., "Books and Magazines: Mr. George Gissing's *Will Warburton*," *Western Mail* (Perth), 19 August 1905, p. 50. A long review of the novel in Constable's Indian and Colonial

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Library. "*Will Warburton* will be read with great interest by all admirers of the late Mr. George Gissing, and they will be pleased to find that it is in his best style, dealing with the congenial subject of hardships in London and their effect on human character. Mr. Gissing worked out a most interesting plot, and carried his hero and heroine to an almost unexpectedly happy conclusion, considering the inclination to tragedy which he showed in so many of his other novels." The reviewer subsequently sums up the plot, outlines the main themes and praises the characterization. To finish with he quotes from Will

Warburton's analysis of his own character and from one of his conversations with Allchin.

Anon., "New Books," *The Age* (Melbourne), 19 August 1905, p. 4. A fair, perceptive view of *Will Warburton*, which begins with a distinction between Gissing's earlier works, with their personal and pessimistic note, and this novel which offers instead "a broader, brighter stretch of that middle class life, the strange world he has made peculiarly his own." In *Will Warburton* "only occasionally does his revolt against things as they are, his cynical regard of the fetters of modern conventionality, find expression." The characters are skilfully drawn, and "so deft is the handling that the uncompleted career of Warburton carries an absorbing interest from first to last." The reviewer acknowledges that the book is not a great work and that it cannot be ranked among Gissing's best, but "there is a quality of heartiness, a more kindly and less gloomy outlook, that prompts its acceptance in the spirit in which the author offers it as 'a romance of real life.'"

Anon., "Literature: Mr. George Gissing's *Will Warburton*," *West Australian* (Perth), 22 August 1905, p. 8. Same review as in the *Western Mail* of 19 August.

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Anon., "Books and Authors," *The Queenslander* (Brisbane), 26 August 1905, p. 19. A paragraph on *Will Warburton*. "There is nothing in the book, judging from the reviews, above the heads of ordinary readers, but a good deal of satire of middleclass snobbery, particularly of the feminine variety."

Anon., "New Novels," *The Australasian* (Melbourne), 26 August 1905, p. 527. A laudatory review of *Will Warburton*, which is "far less depressing than the cheerless stories of middle-class life and hopeless struggles for existence" by which Gissing gained his "peculiar reputation." The reviewer relates the major developments of the plot in their social context, then turns to the variety of tones to be found in the story: "While the details of grocerdom are described in Mr. Gissing's realistic manner, there is something like romance in the love affairs of Will and his friend, Norbert Franks, the artist. The episode of Warburton's journey to the Pyrenees after Rosamund Elvan is amusing. The best result of his experiment is that he finds the right woman to marry – one who is not ashamed to accept him as a husband although he is a grocer. The characters, as usual with George Gissing, are lifelike and individual. One of the best is Allchin, Will's shop assistant, whose matter of fact way of looking at the business contrasts admirably with his master's sensitiveness and scruples. The humour and geniality of this excellent story make one realise more than ever the loss that literature has sustained by the premature death of this remarkable novelist."

Anon., "Fiction of the Day: George Gissing's Last Novel," *The Argus* (Melbourne), 1 September 1905, p. 9. Another laudatory review of *Will Warburton*. "Most readers will be disposed to agree that Mr. Gissing's last novel ... is distinctly his best. Dolorous folk may prefer him in his early pessimistic vein, but for the health-minded 'Will Warburton' will

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rank higher than anything else he has written. It will appeal to a wider audience than 'Veranilda' could reach, because it deals with everyday life and everyday people. It is a natural story, naturally told." Some elements of the plot are then revealed and the major female characters briefly discussed: "Bertha Cross, the girl who becomes Warburton's

wife, is as fine a woman character as Mr. Gissing has ever drawn. Eminently sensible, thoroughly kind-hearted, and free from any trace of snobbishness, she has a fund of quiet humour, which is constantly called into play by the egotism of her friend, Rosamund Elvan. Rosamund is herself blissfully unconscious of her own selfishness and pretentiousness, but at times she suspects the friendly irony of Bertha's comments. There is another self-centred being, almost as unconsciously egotistical as Rosamund, in the artist lover, whom she jilts and subsequently marries. The relations of these two provide much entertainment for readers who like gentle humour, suggested rather than pronounced. All the characters reflect the author's undoubted insight into human nature, and are the truer to life because he has abandoned his gloomy spectacles, and taken his last look at the world with unclouded eyes."

Anon., "Publications Received," *Brisbane Courier*, 9 September 1905, p. 14. A short review of *Will Warburton*, which the commentator mistakenly regards, after *Veranilda* and *By the Ionian Sea*, as the third of the author's posthumous works. The analysis of the plot is reduced to the triangle Will-Bertha-Rosamund. "There are some clever bits of character in the book, which is worthy of the author of *New Grub Street*, but quite unlike *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, and *Veranilda* – those beautiful books which may be classed with many of the highest things in English prose."

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[H. H. Champion], "[*Will Warburton*]," *The Book Lover* (Melbourne), 1 October 1905, pp. 110-11. A positive, melancholy account of the author's last novel of modern life, "a story in the telling of which Gissing has no equal in the literary life of our day ... His last words to us are full of hope." Champion evokes the London setting, Cheyne Walk, and the Pyrenees. "It is good that this last novel should be so bright and cheering, although he was dying when he wrote it."

(to be continued)

Notes and News

Christina Sjöholm, the author of the article on Fredrika Bremer and Gissing in the present number, is a doctoral candidate in the Department of English, Uppsala University; she is preparing a thesis on the marriage question in Gissing's novels.

Besides identifying herself, Miss Sjöholm has kindly answered a number of questions which, for years, puzzled a few bibliographers who had no access to Swedish libraries. For instance, it had long been known that R. E. Zachrisson, in his *Thomas Hardy as Man, Writer and Philosopher*, a book published in Uppsala in 1929, mentioned a *Hardy-Gissing Reader*, edited by H. Svartengren, and the contents of the latter book remained mysterious. Now Miss Sjöholm reports that this *Hardy-Gissing Reader* is in fact *A Gissing-Hardy Reader*, edited by T. Hilding Svartengren, and published in Stockholm by Magn. Bergvalls Förlag in 1916. It contains four chapters from *The Nether World*: Pennyloaf Candy, "Io Saturnalia!", Sunlight in Dreary Places, and The Soup Kitchen. The rest of the contents consists in a poem by John

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Masefield, "London Town," from *Ballads and Poems*, and a shortened version of Hardy's *The Greenwood Tree*. Svartengren reprinted chapters VIII, XII, XV and XXVIII of Gissing's novel

in Smith Elder's last impression under their imprint, published in 1907. He recommended Thomas Seccombe's introductory survey in *The House of Cobwebs*. His brief judgment (in English) on *The Nether World* is devoid of originality. "Few writers with more savage persistence have depicted the utter hideousness of modern city life. And few writers have gone to the task of describing the miseries of Late Victorian London with a mind more sensitive and a faculty of observation better trained and more photographically faithful than did Gissing. We see him at his best in *The Nether World*."

It will be remembered that Gissing read Björnstjerne Björnson's book, *The Heritage of the Kurts*, in October 1892. While she is not surprised that Gissing liked the book and remembered its fascination well enough to send it to his brother two years after buying a copy, Miss Sjöholm does not think that Gissing was influenced by it in any specific manner, though he may have been in a vague and general way. The Norwegian novelist dealt with subjects which appealed to Gissing: "heredity, education, friendship and solidarity among women, sexual morals, which at that time in Scandinavia was focused on the question of men's purity. Björnson is frank about these matters in a way Gissing could never dream of for his own part. The novel is a family chronicle with a young teacher, ugly and lonely, as protagonist. He is an outsider in society, burdened with the heritage of violence and insanity running in his family. The school at which he works is very modern, to say the least: the pupils are taught the latest in science, the use of the microscope, anatomy, and given sex education. Several pages are devoted to a speech the young teacher makes on the necessity for young people of both sexes to take up the fight against

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the double standard of morality. The critics of the school find support for their argument about the dangers of this experience when a young pupil is seduced and becomes pregnant. The dénouement is tragic, comic and warmly humane at the same time."

Miss Sjöholm has also succeeded in tracing the Gissing short story which had been known for years to have appeared in Swedish translation in *Allt för Alla*, but which no librarian had been able to find in that periodical because it has no index. *Allt för Alla* was alive for twenty years, and as four or five stories appeared in each number from 1912 to 1932 the whole file may well contain some 5,000 short stories, nearly all of which were published anonymously. After some absorbing research the Gissing story proved to be "The Pig and Whistle." It appeared on 12 December 1924 in the supplement to no. 50 for that year. The Swedish translation by Elisabeth Waern-Bugge is entitled "Värdshuset 'Grisen och Visselpipan.'"

Readers of *George Gissing at Work* will have noticed that entry 103 – Voltaire's "Le secret d'ennuyer est celui de tout dire," that is, the secret of being wearisome is to spell everything out – puzzled the editors: "It is uncertain whether Gissing was actually reading Voltaire in the autumn of 1884. He may have come across this quotation in a book by another author." The problem was solved accidentally by one of the editors while going through a file of the *Athenæum*, a journal which Gissing read assiduously in the early 1880s. The quotation from Voltaire occurs in a review of J. A. Froude's *Thomas Carlyle: A History of His Life in London, 1834-81* (Longman & Co., 2 vols.) which was published in the *Athenæum* for 25 October 1884, pp. 524-26. A similar case was that of the words of Charlotte Corday (entry 109), which Gissing had come across while reading Walter Pater's essay on Winckelmann in *The Renaissance*. The entries on such other French writers as Turgot, Chamfort and Pascal are also likely to have been

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transcribed from other sources than these writers' works. In the case of entry 103, the date of the *Athenæum* review fits in with the chronology on pp. 10-11 of *George Gissing at Work*.

In his review of this book (January 1989) John Sloan suggested that, in the light of these 'Extracts' from the novelist's reading, the influence of Goethe on Gissing will now have to be critically reassessed. This may be quite true, as the subject is obviously a wide one, but Patrick Bridgwater himself discussed important aspects of the question in his essay on Gissing and Goethe in *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. V (1982), pp. 169-78.

Kenneth W. Faig, Jr. who, besides Gissing, is actively interested in the life and works of H. P. Lovecraft, draws our notice to the affinities between the two writers. In *The Private Life of H. P. Lovecraft* (West Warwick, R. I.: The Necronomicon Press, 1985), Sonia H. Davis (1883-1972) discusses the impact of the *Ryecroft Papers* on her former husband's work. "In order to understand Howard Phillips Lovecraft better ... the reading of Gissing's *Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* would elucidate much. In fact he sent me this book early in the life of our romance. His attitude toward the multitudes is well expressed in this book" (p. 18).

Oscar Wilde's London, which is listed among recent publications, is one of the best recent books on the 1880s and 1890s. The three authors have explored the various strata of society and they have found many little known or unknown illustrations of the period.

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Recent Publications

Volume

Max Foran with Nonie Houlton, *Roland Gissing: The Peoples' Painter*, Calgary: The University of Calgary Press, 1988. Light brown cloth and pictorial dust jacket. xi + 74 pp. \$34.95 plus postage and handling (\$1.50 in Canada and U S., \$2.00 outside North America). Outside Canada the price is in US dollars. The book contains many illustrations and photographs of Roland Gissing. It will be reviewed in one of our next few numbers.

Articles, reviews, etc.

Wolf von Eckardt, Sander L. Gilman and J. Edward Chamberlin, *Oscar Wilde's London: A Scrapbook of Vices and Virtues 1880-1900*, New York: Anchor Press, Doubleday & Co., 1987. A splendidly produced book, profusely illustrated. Contains allusions to and quotations from Gissing.

Patricia Thomas Srebrnick, "Book Reviews," *Victorian Periodicals Review*, Vol. XXI, no. 3, Fall 1988, pp. 133-35. Review of *The Paradox of Gissing*.

Yukimitsu Namiki, "The Early Days of George Gissing," *Metropolitan* (Tokyo), Vol. XXXII (1988), pp. 83-108. Deals essentially with *Demos*. In Japanese.

Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate (eds.), *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy, Volume Seven: 1926-1927*, with addenda, corrigenda and general index, Oxford:

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Clarendon Press, 1988. The index, where Gissing appears on pp. 221-22, confirms that Gissing is to be found in volumes I, II, IV and V.

Simon Gatrell, *Hardy the creator: A Textual Biography*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988. Gissing appears on pp. 5, 25 and 131.

Robert Langenfeld, *George Moore: An Annotated Secondary Bibliography of Writing about Him*, New York: AMS, 1988. Gissing was mentioned in many reviews of Moore's books and in articles about him.

Patrick Bridgwater, *George Moore and German Pessimism*, University of Durham, 1988. Contains references to Gissing who, like Moore and other contemporary writers, was influenced by Schopenhauer's writing.

Charlotte Rotkin, *Deception in Dickens' 'Little Dorrit'*, New York, Bern, Frankfurt am Main and Paris: Peter Lang, 1989. See p. 28.