

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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Gissing’s Veiled Period: An Imaginary Reconstruction

E. F. Matthiason

In June 1876, a little more than ninety years ago, Gissing entered upon what might be termed his veiled period; the barest twenty-eight days as one measures time, but to the sensitive, introspective youth of eighteen a nightmare experience, timeless and four-dimensional as an opium dream. A young Arts student of Owens College sentenced by the magistrates to one month’s imprisonment with hard labour. Convicted of theft, stealing from his fellow scholars the few odd shillings and coppers; and Society, in retaliation, will rob him of twenty-eight days’ freedom. Will brand his forehead for all the rest of his life, the iron penetrating his very soul. For, as that ruined dandy and man of genius, Oscar Wilde, was to discover in Reading Gaol twenty years afterwards, “All trials are trials for one’s life, just as all sentences are sentences of death....” Gissing on his discharge had remaining to him all but twenty-eight years; but who shall deny that something – some tender inborn herb of grace – had withered at the roots?

The veil had needs be drawn close; no word touching on Strangeways Prison (or whatever gaol it may have been) should ever pass his lips. Nor should any such word escape his pen in the writing

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of those powerful and sombre novels, *Nether World* and the rest. His letters, his memorabilia, his intermittent diaries and journals, betray nothing of the dread secret, gnaw at his heart though it unquestionably did. Those nearest him, his family and the handful of intimate friends, made his self-imposed reticence their own. Morley Roberts, in the thinly disguised *Private Life of Henry Maitland* (1912), confines himself to saying: “They got together a little money and on his release sent him away to America....” (“They” representing “several men of some eminence” in Manchester). Nothing of the incarceration itself, that searing ordeal, whether it be of one month or fourteen years, which gave Aldous Huxley, through the mouth of one of his characters, to cry out: “Prison is terrible – so terrible as to be almost fine.”

Recent biographers would appear to come up against a stone wall where locks, bolts and bars are concerned. Mr. Korg, in his unrivalled *George Gissing: A Critical Biography* (1963), is content to tread warily in Roberts’ footsteps, skirting the *terra incognita* of prison life. M. Coustillas, with Gallic economy, banishes the culprit to Limbo, in twenty words: “Arrêté le 31 mai 1876, Gissing fut emprisonné, officiellement renvoyé du Collège, jugé et condamné à un mois de travaux forcés.” It is for the imagination alone, as the iron-lagged door clangs shut on the boy’s heels, to see in him,

trembling and grey-faced, the lineaments of despair.

“With delicate, mad hands, behind his sordid bars,
Surely he hath his posies, which they tear and twine;
Those scentless wisps of straw, that miserably line
His strait, caged universe, whereat the dull world stares.’

For the present writer, blending considerable research with experience at first-hand in days long since, it wants not a deal of imagination to conjure up the *mise en scène*; the cell a “numbered tomb,” an iron and stone cage eleven feet by eight. The narrow barred window high up in the wall grudging its modicum of daylight, the ventilator beneath the window clogged with dust. All four

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walls limewashed; the scabby yellow iron door, twin-locked and with its “Judas hole,” or “squint,” at the level of a man’s eye, covered by a little round disc, which, drawn aside, affords a view of the cell. The Bible and prayer-book arranged neatly on the corner shelf, with one’s toothbrush, toilet paper, bit of carbolic soap, blunted tin knife, and spoon. The plank bed innocent of mattress; the built-in table two-feet square, with the “lantern” above it, a screen of thick ribbed glass about ten inches square, covering the naked gas-jet let into the wall. A wooden stool is there, on which the prisoner crouches at his task, the shredding into oakum of naval rope black with tar, until his fingers are skinned raw and their nails worn down to the quick. He works in perpetual twilight, daytime and evening alike. In winter the cell is an ice-box — “the deathly cold of Bedlam.” But on a summer night it can be stifling and fetid, at once living-room, bedroom and latrine.

Our George Gissing, in his personal habits fastidious as a woman, would have had his tin chamber-pot while reluctant to use it, lest its lustre be besmirched. Every morning at dawn he must polish his tins bright as silver, and woe betide him should he fail in this. His tin plate he must burnish, and his tin wash-bowl and ewer, the last holding half a gallon of water for drinking and ablutions. So, too, must he holystone floor and stool and table and bed-boards, scouring them white as bone. Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) who in the name of Utilitarianism had devised England’s “model prison” (his idea of cellular confinement legalized in 1839) saw in this daily exercise a means of “grinding rogues honest.” Gissing, intrinsically honest (that pilfering of his entirely out of character), was ground with the best, and the worst.

Towards the same reformatory end he had perforce go hungry for a month, the dietary in the ’Seventies (and in the ’Nineties for that matter) calculated to support life and no more. Unvarying from day to day, there would be a “toke” (four ounces of dry bread) and a tin of water for breakfast at seven o’clock; at noon one pint of coarse Indian meal stirabout (or “skilly,” as it was called); and at half past five another toke, washed down with a pint of ship’s cocoa without

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milk or sugar, lukewarm and oily with a scum of fat. The food was doled out to the fraction of an ounce, the prisoner consuming it in solitude. ‘Has he starved?’ Gissing in after days would enquire of some literary *arriviste* whose name might happen to be dropped in small talk. It was in gaol that the man posing the question had learned to starve.

Unmentionable indignities could have fallen to his lot as the days, each day centuries-long, crept by. Searches that were part and parcel of every day’s routine. “Snout” – that is to say, tobacco – was taboo under pain of death (flogging, if not death). Yet tobacco had a way of getting around;

was smuggled in from “outside,” passing deviously from hand to hand. The faintest tell-tale aroma and a key would grate in the lock, the cell door be thrust open, and the unsuspecting inmate pounced upon by a couple of “screws.” His two blankets, meticulously folded in army style, would be flung wide, his tins examined, his ventilator raked clean of dust, and himself stripped naked. As he stood with his arms extended against the wall, in the attitude of crucifixion, rough practised hands would make free of his body. Gissing had not only starved, but had as likely as not been man-handled. And that, for a man of his nature, would have been to taste the dregs of humiliation.

In any event his body was no longer his own; it was the Queen’s property, as signified by the Broad Arrow. Sixteen broad arrows were daubed over his “uniform” – stencilled black on drab jacket and knee-breeches. His hair was cropped short and his beard – if at eighteen he had anything of a beard – “stubbled” once a week with horse-clippers. Denied even a dog’s privilege, he went nameless. His number, giving his cell-location and by which he was called, was worn by him on a yellow felt badge, big, round as a saucer – “a felon, marked, quoted and signed.”

Authority for taking finger-prints in England was given by the Penal Servitude Act 1891, so at least Gissing was spared this further degradation. None the less he would have been subjected to the camera, both in full face and *tête de profil*. Once “hung” in Rogues Gallery (embellished with a

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written description of his body’s every mark and scar), do these portraits at this day lie buried under the accumulated dust of ninety years? Let us, who hold George Gissing in reverence, hope not.

In prison, it may or may not have been for the better schooling of his heart, he rubbed shoulders with the lapsed and lost. The Silence Rule was at that period, and as late as 1923, strictly enforced; but men – here and there an old lag far gone in iniquity – would talk out of the corner of their mouths. Whispers with not a movement of the lips, reaching the boy directly, might strike a note of doom: “You’ll come back, young ’un, mark my words! You’re along of us sort now and always will be. The rossers won’t ever let up on you!”

At the crank or labouring on the treadmill, from men who had spent half of their lives in the jug (as they boasted), he would learn of cruel stark things. Of flogging by the cat-o’-nine-tails, “toppings” (judicial hangings), and, breathed in less than a whisper, “the Woman!” She whom they called the Woman was the strait-jacket, and recalcitrant men could be broken in her embrace.

For an hour each day the boy had release from his cell, the “break” divided between treadmill, crank and exercise-yard. In the yard he would go slouching with the others, one man and the next three paces apart. Warders, mounted upon stone plinths, loud-mouthed and with their truncheons gripped at the ready, kept their “herd of brutes” Undeterred, some prematurely senile from years of clausturation, men drooled incontinently of their masturbations, one vying with the other in obscenity. From another mouth, stubbled and close-lipped, might come a hint of poetry, of affection for wife or child. And with the keen ears of youth the boy would listen, while his omnivorous eyes (the eyes of your born novelist) lose nothing of the pageant; but no syllable of what he heard, nor the smallest detail of the things his eyes absorbed, should be given to the world. Such is the paradox of George Gissing.

His cell, one prefers to think, was his refuge. One cell in a vast honeycomb of cells; an Iron City where laughter was a crime and men were rendered dumb. Where, to save men who might be

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tempted to make an end, wire suicide-nets were strung bellying across the hall from one nethermost gallery to the other.

Here, in solitary confinement for twenty-three hours on end, he was lord of space and time. About him was a silence more profound than Trappists know; no sound but of his own beating heart. After the first week he would have picked his oakum mechanically as to the least infinitesimal crumb he devoured his toke, day-dreaming the while. One can believe that he turned the pages of the Bible, savouring in the Authorized Version "the wine of strong words." And the Book of Common Prayer for the sake of the Litany, its Elizabethan cadences pure and undefiled. Serving but a month, he would not have been entitled to any book other than these two. Nor, by regulation, was he permitted either to receive or write a letter. The world beyond the gate was dead to him, even "Nell" vanishing as though she had never been. She whose allurements had tested him to destruction, enslaving him body and soul.

Crouching there on his stool, or padding up and down in his stockinged feet (pacing endlessly, like a caged beast), he no doubt sat in judgment on himself. Convicted himself in terms harsher than the justices had dared set on record, their condemnation still ringing in his ears. In silence, voiceless, tearless, he has nothing but to confront a life laid in ruins. His Shakespeare Scholarship forfeited.... Expelled from Owens.... His name a byword... All that he had dreamed of accomplishing swept into the void.

Yet somehow, though it might entail prodigies of labour, he would win through, as other men had done. Gifted creatures who had stumbled on the wrong side of the Law, and been deprived of their liberty in consequence, "*ad continendos, non ad puniendos.*" Verlaine, five years before, imprisoned at Mons, the haunting beauty of *Sagesse* engendered in squalor and defeat. Cervantes, in 1592, thrown into that loathsome gaol at Castro del Rio; and there for the world's glory was *Don Quixote* begotten. Richard Lovelace twice imprisoned, while finding it in him to conceive *Althea*.

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Bunyan, "a vagrant oft in quod," often penniless, albeit leaving mankind for ever in his debt. The weak brilliant lovable Leigh Hunt immured in the old Surrey Gaol; Kit Smart who died mad and was Johnson's friend; Rabelais whose dying words, "La farce est jouée," he, Gissing, was to echo in his last days. Their name was Legion who had eaten their bread in captivity.

He, this boy in his 'teens, would somehow, incredibly, when at length the gate opened to him, live by the pen. In "le monde de Grub Street," as M. Coustillas has it, no credentials would be asked of a man ready to sell a hundred thousand words for fifty pounds. *Workers in the Dawn* had, who knows, already taken shape in his mind. Some London garret, of Dickens' sort or Johnson's, would give him shelter until such time as he brought forth.... And "Nell," now lurking in the shadows, should be restored to him. Touched into warm breathing life. Playing Galatea to his Pygmalion.... He would educate her – teach her Greek.... His lips not improbably framed a prayer, though born less of hope than resignation, as he stood gazing up at the barred window.

It may not have occurred to him that the gods punish us by answering our prayers.

* * * * *

Miss White a Source for Miss Rodney?

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In a recent number of the *Gissing Newsletter* (November, 1968) Pierre Coustillas writes of Rachel Evelyn White, whom Gissing met at the East Anglian Sanatorium in the summer of 1901,

and with whom he subsequently corresponded. Mr. Coustillas remarks that Gissing was impressed by Miss White, that her “dynamic temper” drew from him “sympathetic envy and admiration.” In a letter to Wells Gissing himself expressed admiration for the young woman, describing her as “a very vigorous type, who will serve me one of these day.” But Gissing was near the end of his career

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and “did not have time,” observes Mr. Coustillas, “to portray her like in the couple of novels he was still to write.” It is my opinion that while Rachel White is not presented in any novel Gissing wrote after meeting her, he managed nonetheless to portray her – accurately and fully – in one of his short stories.

“Miss Rodney’s Leisure” (1903) was written in February or March of 1902. At that time the memory of Miss White was fresh in Gissing’s mind, and furthermore the story was composed perhaps at the very time he was corresponding with her. Under the circumstances Miss White might well have been the prototype for Miss Rodney, but the similarities they share are even more convincing. Detecting these similarities demands little of one’s imagination, for Miss Rodney in almost every detail projects faithfully and without distortion the personal characteristics of Miss White. Only in one detail does Gissing idealize the portrait: Miss White was known to smoke cigarettes (daringly provocative for the time), but Miss Rodney, though equally advanced, does not smoke.

From Gissing’s remarks we know that Miss White was a liberally educated “new woman,” a blend of the best of the old ideal of womanhood with the best of the new, but extreme enough to disregard the dictates of Mrs. Grundy. She was vigorous and vital, witty and well-read, and she possessed that quality which Gissing admired most in women – intelligence. A teacher, but no ordinary teacher (“erudite,” Gissing said), she was for many years a lecturer in classics at Newnham College, Cambridge. A sprightly talker, she was “the friend of everybody one can mention,” but also devoted to her work. Quietly confident of herself, she made herself at home in a man’s world, and apparently she enjoyed making herself the topic of conversation. When Gissing met her she was thirty-four and in the early years of her career.

Miss Rodney is also a teacher, the highest-ranking teacher in all of Gissing’s work, but in one of the new high schools. Had he made her an instructor at a university he would have faced two problems – credibility on the part of his readers (a case of truth being stranger than fiction?) and too

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close an identification with his source. Yet by any standard his fictional teacher is a fine example of the new woman. Clearly reflecting Miss White, she is bright, energetic, opinionated, forceful, and with a purpose. She works long hours, often reading and writing letters at midnight, but facing the challenge of the new day with enthusiasm and vigor. About twenty-eight (perhaps a compliment to the real woman who was six years older), Miss Rodney is dressed in tailor-made clothes (a tag of the new woman), walks faster than anyone in Wattleborough (another tag), and yet never seems hurried (self-control). When she crosses a muddy street, with careless gusto she ignores her skirts, but somehow they remain clean. She holds up her head “like one thoroughly at home in the world,” and instead of casting her glance demurely downward in the presence of men, she looks them straight in the eye. A university graduate, she knows many important people and has a reputation for being remarkably clever. Soon after her arrival in town all the ladies are talking about her, but with admiration. “She had a quiet decision of speech and manner which was found very impressive in Wattleborough drawing-rooms.” The comment could well be applied to Rachel White.

In conversation Miss Rodney minces no phrases, caring little for the opinions of Mrs. Grundy, and yet as the story unfolds we learn that she is pure-minded as well as strong-minded. The behaviour of Rawcliffe, merely suggesting the unsavory, is enough to rouse anger and aggression. On the whole, however, her sense of humor (Gissing described Miss White as "Humorous") provides her with patience, and her daily activities reflect sensitivity and kindness. Yet time for her is a precious commodity, and she cultivates "a notable brevity" in matters of business. In dealing with people she is direct, forthright, honest, outspoken and often critical, but always cheerful. She commands attention, speaks with authority, skillfully manipulates people, and even rides a bicycle. The townspeople soon conclude that she is no ordinary person, nor was Rachel White.

The title of the story suggests a number of projects that keep Miss Rodney (the name is subtly

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descriptive) active during her leisure hours. Taking up residence in the Turpin boarding-house, she employs modern psychology to solve Turpin's drinking problem. To the carpenter she explains: "I teach mathematics at the High School, and I have an idea that I might make certain points in geometry easier to my younger girls if I could demonstrate them in a mechanical way. Pray look here. You see the shapes I have sketched on this piece of paper; do you think you could make them for me in wood?" Before long Turpin is so engrossed in Euclid that he forgets his sorrows and the need to drown them in drink.

As another project of her leisure time she makes up her mind to rid the house of its "highly connected gentleman." Of democratic outlook, she is not impressed by Rawcliffe's high connections (as are the Turpins). For imposing himself parasitically on the Turpins (who can ill afford it), and for being too friendly with the Turpin girls, she holds him in contempt. Displaying "firm will and bright intelligence," she insists that Mrs. Turpin turn the parasite out. "The man is a blackguard," she declares. That expression echoes Gissing; but it suggests, too, that she considers men, especially idle and libidinous "gentlemen," her common enemy. By "force of will" alone she opposes the old order of social distinction, and has the satisfaction of seeing the artisan class dampen the arrogance of the gentle class. Her triumph is in direct contrast to the humiliation and defeat of May Rockett, who fronts a similar situation in "A Daughter of the Lodge" (1901). Gissing published that story a month after he met Miss White, but it was written, significantly, more than a year before.

Still another project of "the energetic lady" is to inspire by slow degrees a sense of duty and self-respect in the slovenly Mrs. Turpin, and thus make the boarding-house more comfortable. Then as the story ends Miss Rodney is making plans, against impressive odds, to send Mabel and Lily Turpin into service. They consider themselves too good for servanthood, and she must break down

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their prejudices. Her story is a study of the impact that an active, clever personality may have upon lazy, apathetic, poorly motivated people; and though Gissing depicts her with touches of irony, it is clear that he likes her.

That in itself might seem reasonable evidence for deducing Rachel White's influence, for in 1895 Gissing portrayed Linda Vassie, another vigorous new woman, with no sympathy whatever. In the story "At High Pressure" (1896) Miss Vassie displays qualities similar to those of Miss Rodney (and Miss White), but her life is without direction and she is idle even when most busy. Gissing admired Rachel White, and though some readers may view Miss Rodney as a meddling busy-body, Gissing quite obviously admired her too – perhaps because he knew that she reflected Miss

White. The marked similarity, Gissing's attitude towards the two, the time he wrote "Miss Rodney's Leisure" all argue for the probability that Miss White was the source for Miss Rodney. It is likely, therefore, that Miss White, striking up a friendship with Gissing, supplied him with the materials for creating one of his most colorful characters.

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A Bibliography of Gissing's Works in Progress

Pierre Coustillas

For some time now John Spiers and I have been gathering material for an exhaustive bibliography of Gissing's works. A circular has been sent to English University Librarians as well as to those of some noted schools, requesting them to send us lists of their Gissing holdings, that we may collect as much information as possible on all editions issued since 1880. This circular has already produced excellent results: thus have been brought to light a copy of a colonial edition of *Our Friend the Charlatan* (George Bell and Sons) and various unrecorded reprints issued by Lawrence & Bullen, John Murray and Sidgwick & Jackson. It is our intention to send a similar circular to University Librarians in the United States and in former British colonies, but we also

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wish to appeal to any person who possesses copies of Gissing's books: we shall be grateful to collectors, in however modest a way, who will get in touch with us. They may have copies of extremely scarce reprints without being aware of it. Among the points which we are trying to investigate we may list: the description of nearly all American first editions and early reprints (thus we have so far been unable to locate American first editions of *A Life's Morning* or *The Nether World*), colonial editions, yellowbacks, binding variants, etc. We have on our shelves nearly four hundred different editions or impressions of Gissing's works; they will be useful but we still have many blanks to fill. Any oddity must be known and is worth recording. The standard we are aiming at in our work – perhaps rashly – is that of the Soho Bibliographies.

Correspondents may write either to John Spiers at 10 The Garden House, Clifton Place, Brighton, Sussex, BN1 3FN or to Pierre Coustillas at 10, rue Gay-Lussac, 59-La Madeleine-lez-Lille, France.

The following is a list of various editions or reprints which are known to have been published but of which we have been unable to locate copies.

Workers in the Dawn, Bowling Green Press, New York. 1930. 2 vols. Intr. by Rebecca West. This was a still-born edition. A few sets of sheets have been preserved. As I have managed to find a vol. II in reddish brown cloth which is sure to have originated from a publisher's, I hope a copy of the first volume will some day turn up.

The Unclassed, Routledge, 1905, text on two columns. This was a sixpenny reprint.

The Unclassed, Bell & Sons (Bell's Indian & Colonial Library), 1895. The edition in buff paper wrappers.

The Unclassed, Fenno, New York, 1896. Issued in brown cloth with a portrait of Gissing as a frontispiece. Also issued in wrappers.

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Demos, Smith, Elder, 1888. Yellowback. The front cover, according to Gissing, showed Adela discovering the lost will.

Cheaper editions of *Demos* are said to have been published in 1930 and 1936, but no copies of these reprints with introduction by Morley Roberts can be found.

Demos, Harper, New York, 1886. Wrappers. Published anonymously.

Demos, Tauchnitz, 1886. 2 vols. Wrappers. This edition was anonymous, but it would seem that reprints appeared with the author's name on the title-page.

Thyrza, John Murray, 1907.

Also a Grayson reprint of the same novel, issued in 1930 according to *The American Catalogue*.

A Life's Morning, Smith, Elder, 1889. Yellowback. Also the 1890 edition in red cloth, and a Grayson reprint issued at 3/6 in January 1938, according to *The English Catalogue*.

A Life's Morning, Lippincott, 1888.

The Nether World, John Murray, 1903. Also a reprint by Nash & Grayson issued in 1930 according to *The American Catalogue*.

The Nether World, Harper, New York, 1889.

The Nether World, E. A. Petherick and Co. Colonial Edition.

The Emancipated, A. H. Bullen, 1901. Probably maroon cloth. Also the colonial edition issued in wrappers by George Bell & Sons in 1895.

New Grub Street, a reprint issued by Nash & Grayson seems to have appeared in February 1938, preceded by an equally doubtful one in 1930. Less uncertain is a John Murray reprint to all appearances dated 1908.

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Denzil Quarrier, George Bell & Sons, 1894. Wrappers.

According to Seccombe, in the *DNB*, a reprint appeared in 1907. If the information is correct, the publisher must have been A. H. Bullen. Copies with the Lawrence & Bullen imprint, but bound for Sidgwick & Jackson are known to have appeared.

Denzil Quarrier, Heinemann & Balestier, 1911 (The English Library, New Series).

An Australian edition issued by Petherick probably appeared in 1892.

Born in Exile, George Bell & Sons. The date is uncertain: 1895 or 1896. Appeared in pink cloth and in wrappers.

In the Year of Jubilee, A . L. Burt Co. Apparently published in 1905.

In the Year of Jubilee, George Bell & Sons, 1894 or 1895. Pink cloth or wrappers.

Eve's Ransom, George Bell & Sons, 1895. Pink cloth or wrappers.

The Whirlpool, George Bell & Sons, 1897. Wrappers.

The Whirlpool, Stokes, New York. Undated copies without any mention of edition. Also copies of the second American edition.

Human Odds and Ends, George Bell & Sons, 1897. Pink cloth or wrappers.

Charles Dickens, a Critical Study, Gresham Publishing Company. Reprints were issued by that firm in 1912, 1913, 1914, 1922, 1923 and 1925, but it is unlikely that any of them was dated. So, any undated copy of this book may help us to solve a difficult problem.

Charles Dickens, a Critical Study, Colonial editions issued by Blackie & Son.

Also the second American edition with the Dodd, Mead imprint published some time between 1898 and 1904.

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The Crown of Life, Methuen. Wrappers. Undated but published in 1905. This was a sixpenny reprint.

Our Friend the Charlatan, Chapman & Hall, 1906. The title-page may not bear the date of publication. This was also a sixpenny reprint.

Our Friend the Charlatan, Holt, New York, 1901. Second Impression.

By the Ionian Sea. According to the *Publishers' Circular* the book was included in Unwin's Colonial Library in 1905. Scribner editions published in 1905 and 1917 have not been located yet, nor has an edition by P. Smith issued in 1933.

Forster's Life of Dickens, Chapman & Hall. Any edition except those dated 1903 and 1907 and issued in blue cloth. Also any American edition,

The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft, Constable. Editions dated 1915 (pp. 298), 1919 or 1920, 1922, 1940. Also any colonial edition and any American edition except the following: 1903 (Dutton, green cloth), 1905 (Dutton. Sixth Impression, green cloth), 1910 (Dutton, pocket edition, blue cloth), 1912 (Dutton, maroon cloth, de luxe edition with or without frontispiece, undated on the title-page), 1918 (Modern Library, green cloth), 1927 (Dutton, Everyman's Library, blue cloth), 1928 (Mosher), and the recent Dolphin and Signet Classics editions.

Veranilda, Constable's Colonial Library.

Veranilda, Mershom, 1904, and Dutton, 1905.

Will Warburton, Constable's Colonial Library, 1905 and 1910 in particular.

The House of Cobwebs, Dutton, 1906. Any American edition subsequent to 1907.

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Lectures and Publications

On November 28th, Mr. Ian Greenlees, director of the British Institute of Florence gave a lecture on Gissing for the British Council in Milan. Two days later, Dr. Francesco Badolato also lectured on Gissing at the Students' Club of the International Language Centre, Seregno, Milan.

Several books published recently contain significant references to Gissing as a professional writer. One of them is *International Copyright Law and the Publisher in the Reign of Queen Victoria*, by Simon Nowell-Smith (The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1968). In the last three chapters the author deals with the continental firms which, like Tauchnitz, published English books in the original language, with the problems that confronted English authors whose works were published in America, and with the various "Colonial Libraries." Gissing's earnings and sales are compared with those of other contemporary novelists. The figures quoted had been revealed previously, but it is interesting to read that when Gissing received 25 guineas from Heinemann & Balestier for *Denzil Quarrier* he was not badly treated after all. Mr. Nowell-Smith writes that "in 1875-7 Gladstone was happy to accept £25 each for three volumes of political essays. In the eighties Macmillan's, apart from celebrities, regularly sold novels to Tauchnitz at about £20 or £30." And Stevenson had received only £20 for *Treasure Island* in 1884.

Of considerable interest also is *The Author's Empty Purse and the Rise of the Literary Agent*, by James Hepburn (Oxford University Press, 1968). *New Grub Street* is discussed on pp. 19-21. Thanks to Mr. Hepburn it should be possible to reevaluate Gissing's relations with his various agents in a more serene and objective manner.

It is pleasant to note that in a French book devoted to the history of ideas in Great Britain, Gissing is not only mentioned but quoted at some length. This volume by Pierre Vitoux, entitled

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Histoire des Idées en Grande-Bretagne (Paris, Armand Colin, Collection U2, 1969), is divided into two parts. The first one is a long essay, the second one an anthology. The latter contains a four-page extract from *Demos*, reproducing a conversation between Hubert Eldon and Wyvern. It is aptly headed "Un Socialiste désenchanté."

In *Stories of the 90's*, edited by Derek Stanford (John Baker, 1968), Gissing's short story "Comrades in Arms" – a good, yet not excellent choice – occupies pp. 231-42. Unfortunately, the introduction is full of a variety of errors. Mr. Stanford can be trusted neither as regards dates (*The Rycroft Papers* certainly did not appear in 1908) nor when he uses foreign words (Gabrielle Fleury

is said to be “a French woman of the intellectual bourgeoisie”). It is also a pity that Morley Roberts should suddenly become Morley Richards on p. 231.

Of the other fairly recent contributions to Gissing criticism, P. J. Keating’s article on *The Nether World* (*East London Papers*, Summer 1968, pp. 47-51) is the most interesting.

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- Gissing G. *Notes on Social Democracy*. Introduction by Jacob Korg. Wrappers. Enitharmon Press. 1968. 22/6
Articles contributed by Gissing to the *Pall Mall Gazette* in the 1880’s and now reprinted for the first time.
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