

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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‘Not Enough Money’

A Sketch of George Gissing

George Orwell

(First published in *Tribune* of April 2, 1943, p. 15. Reprinted with the kind permission of Mrs. Sonia Orwell).

All books worth reading “date,” and George Gissing, perhaps the best novelist England has produced, is tied more tightly than most writers to a particular place and time. His world is the grey world of London in the ’eighties, with its gas lamps flickering in the everlasting fog, its dingy overcoats and high-crowned bowler hats, its Sunday gloom tempered by drunkenness, its unbearable “furnished apartments,” and, above all, its desperate struggle against poverty by a middle class which was

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poor chiefly because it had remained “respectable.” It is hard to think of Gissing

without thinking of a hansom cab. But he did much more than preserve an atmosphere which, after all, is also preserved in the early *Sherlock Holmes* stories, and it is as a novelist that he will be remembered, even more than as an interpreter of the middle-class view of life.

When I suggest that Gissing is the best novelist we have produced I am not speaking frivolously. It is obvious that Dickens, Fielding and a dozen others are superior to him in natural talent, but Gissing is a “pure” novelist, a thing that few gifted English writers have been. Not only is he genuinely interested in character and in telling a story, but he has the great advantage of feeling no temptation to burlesque. It is a weakness of nearly all the characteristic English novelists, from Smollett to Joyce, that they want to be “like life” and at the same time want to get a laugh as often as possible. Very few English novels exist throughout on the same plane of probability. Gissing solves this problem without apparent difficulty, and it may be that his native pessimism was a help to him. For though he certainly did not lack humour, he did lack high spirits, the instinct to play the fool which made Dickens, for instance, as unable to pass a joke as some people are to pass a pub. And it is a fact that *The Odd Women*, to name only one, is more “like life” than the novels of bigger but less scrupulous writers.

At this date Gissing’s best known book is probably *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, written towards the end of his life when his worst struggles with poverty were over. But his real masterpieces are three novels, *The Odd Women*, *Demos* and *New Grub Street*, and his book on Dickens. In an article of this length I cannot even summarise the plots of the novels, but their central theme can be stated in three words – “not enough money.” Gissing is the chronicler of poverty, not working class poverty (he despises and perhaps hates the working class) but the cruel, grinding, “respectable” poverty of underfed clerks, downtrodden governesses and bankrupt tradesmen. He believed, perhaps not wrongly, that poverty causes more

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suffering in the middle class than in the working class. *The Odd Women*, his most perfect and also his most depressing novel, describes the fate of middle-class spinsters flung on to the world with neither money nor vocational training. *New Grub Street* records the horrors of free-lance journalism, even worse than now. In *Demos* the money theme enters in a somewhat different way. The book is a story of the moral and intellectual corruption of a working-class Socialist who inherits a fortune. Writing as he was in the 'eighties, Gissing shows great prescience, and also a rather surprising knowledge of the inner workings of the Socialist movement. But the usual shabby-genteel motif is present in the person of the heroine, pushed into a hateful marriage by impoverished middle-class parents. Some of the social conditions Gissing describes have passed away, but the general atmosphere of his books is still horribly intelligible, so much so that I have sometimes thought that no professional writer should read *New Grub Street* and no spinster *The Odd Women*.

What is interesting is that with all his depth of understanding Gissing has no revolutionary tendency. He is frankly anti-Socialist and anti-democratic.

Understanding better than almost anyone the horror of a money-ruled society, he has little wish to change it, because he does not believe that the change would make any real difference. The only worth-while objective, as he sees it, is to make a purely personal escape from the misery of poverty and then proceed to live a civilised, aesthetically decent life. He is not a snob, he does not wish for luxury or great wealth, he sees the spuriousness of the aristocracy and he despises beyond all other types the go-getting, self-made business man; but he does long for an untroubled, studious life, the kind of life that cannot be lived on less than about £400 a year. As for the working class, he regards them as savages, and says so with great frankness. However wrong he may have been in his outlook, one cannot say of him that he spoke in ignorance, for he himself came of very poor parents, and circumstances forced him to live much of his life among the poorest of the working class. His

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reactions are worth studying, even at this date. Here was a humane, intelligent man, of scholarly tastes, forced into intimacy with the London poor, and his conclusion was simply this: these people are savages who must on no account be allowed political power. In a more excusable form it is the ordinary reaction of the lower middle class man who is near enough to the working class to be afraid of them. Above all, Gissing grasped that the middle classes suffer more from economic insecurity than the working class, and are more ready to take action against it. To ignore that fact has been one of the major blunders of the Left, and from this sensitive novelist who loved Greek tragedies, hated politics and began writing long before Hitler was born, one can learn something about the origins of Fascism.

*Note:* Readers are of course aware that George Orwell wrote another essay on Gissing after the publication of *In the Year of Jubilee* and *The Whirlpool* as Watergate Classics in 1947 and 1948 respectively. This second and more important essay was to have appeared in *Politics and Letters*, a magazine which ceased publication before the essay could be printed. It is now available in three places – the June 1960 issue of the *London Magazine*, vol. IV of the *Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell*, edited by Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (London, Secker & Warburg, 1968) and in *Collected Articles on George Gissing*, edited by P. Coustillas (Frank Cass & Co., 1968).

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### The Speech of Characters in *The Town Traveller*

P. F. Kropholler

*The Town Traveller* is partly a novel of class and indeed the book contains numerous remarks which go to show that the author was throughout keenly aware of the social class or standing of his characters:

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Few women of [Mrs. Clover's] class are prone to this kind of emphasis (p. 14 – references are to the 4th English edition). ... the domestic plot for sending Polly to "Coventry" – a phrase, by the by, which would hardly have been understood in Mrs. Bubb's household (p. 67).

Polly bridled – young women of her class still bridle – (p. 97).

It did not occur to Mr. Parish that such a detail might be left unmentioned (p. 124).

We may, therefore, expect that Gissing tried to make his characters not only act but also speak "in character."

If we start at the lowest end of the scale we must begin with those who speak the purest Cockney. In the very first chapter we are introduced to Mrs. Bubb and Moggie. Their not very distinguished names contribute to their lack of dignity. The following is a fair sample of how such persons express themselves in Gissing's pages:

Sally, you ain't a-goin' to school without brushin' your 'air? Do see after your sister, Janey, an' don't let her look such a slap-cabbage. Beetrice, stop that 'ollerin'; it fair mismerizes me! (p. 3)

A. C. Ward criticized Gissing's reproductions of vulgar London English. For one who is not a Londoner born and bred it is, of course, practically impossible to pass an opinion on such a ticklish subject. It is true that Gissing suffered from two handicaps. In the first place he was an Englishman from the north, who did not settle in London until he was about twenty. Secondly, although he was a keen and careful observer he was not a sympathetic one. In *Born in Exile* he even speaks of "an ear constantly tormented by the London vernacular."

The most interesting Cockney character is Polly's father, Mr. Sparkes, because he is so conscious of social distinctions. Though his salary was increased and "his 'tips' represented a much larger income than heretofore" (p. 44), he very much resents the fact that the restaurant in which he is head-waiter has lost its superior character. Surely a remarkable instance of snobbishness.

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Here is Mr. Sparkes about the food under the new organization:

Roast fowl; a old 'en as wouldn't be good enough for a real rest'rant to make inter soup! And the Camumber! (p. 45)

In spite of all its vulgarity, his daughter Polly's speech, strikes one as being on a somewhat higher plane:

And I'd no sooner met his eyes than I knew him. How

could I help? He don't look to have changed a bit. And I saw as he knew me. I saw it by a queer sort of wink he give. And then he looked at me frightened like – didn't he just! Of course, I didn't say nothing, hut I kept standing by him a minute or two (p. 107).

Although this is full of illiteracies it is, at least as regards pronunciation, made to look less vulgar than her father's English. It is true that children sometimes speak "better" than their parents. A more likely reason is that Polly appears far more often on the scene than her father and that Gissing did not want to tire his readers and himself by loading his pages with phonetic renderings of Cockney English, which with their numerous misspellings and apostrophes are apt to become boring. The wish to avoid too many eccentric spellings may also explain that when Polly and her father correspond (pp. 48-50) they express themselves as uneducated persons with correct spellings. Curiously enough Polly's speech deteriorates considerably when she is with her father:

I can't tell you who give it me, 'cos I've promised I wouldn't; but you'll know some day, and then you'll larff, It ain't nothing to fret your gizzard about ... (p. 47).

Perhaps Polly did not want to humiliate her father unduly by speaking in a superior way. His speech may have proved infectious. Or, more probably, Gissing merely wanted to establish their common level.

As for Gammon, the "Town Traveller" himself, a "true-born child of town" there is no doubt about him. He is superior to the other inmates of Mrs. Bubb's boarding-house. Indeed, he owed his position as Quodling's representative to the "capability [which] declared itself in his speech" and to his "address" (p. 99). We have further evidence that he must be far better educated when he suggests a very

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reasonable solution to a kind of literary competition, whereas Polly does not rise above an inane guess. It is true he is given to the use of "ain't" but we should remember that this contraction was probably less vulgar in Gissing's day than in ours.

Vulgarisms are few and far between in Gammon's speech apart from an occasional "gyurl" (p. 108), "'umbly" (p. 89), and "the bloomin' door" (p. 81) at a moment of great stress.

The infectiousness of vulgar speech appears again on page 97, when he echoes Polly's "rine."

Quite often, however, Gammon's English is characterized by a certain jauntiness quite in keeping with his character as a London "boulevardier" of the nineties. He swears "by jorrocks," a fanciful expletive (after the character in Surtees' sketches?) and likes to refer to his dogs by the playfully childish word "bow-wows." His speech has a certain crispness as a result of his frequent omission of subject

pronouns:

Might have been better managed (p. 109).  
Can't say he did (p. 155).  
Needn't trouble ... Got it out of a book (p. 157).  
Hadn't an idea of it (p. 176).

Though she drops an occasional aitch the lady he eventually marries is well-spoken, as befits the owner of a fairly good-class china shop. The chief feature of her speech is the "pregnant pause," which consists in leaving a sentence unfinished. Here Gissing cannot resist the temptation to put her in her place by adding that this "form of speech [is] known to the grammarians by a name which would have astonished Mrs. Clover" (p. 14). It is at the same time a trick of speech such as Dickens liked to introduce although he would have made a good deal more out of it than Gissing.

A character whose linguistic standing is somewhat doubtful is Christopher Parish. He comes from a family which tries to give itself some airs and the brother even falls into ridiculous pomposity:

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I beg you will make a personal inspection. If ever a laundress refuses to let you make a personal inspection be sure there is something wrong. Just think how vital it is, this washing question. We send our clothes, our personal garments, to a strange house to be mixed with – (p. 111).

He even comes out with some spurious Latin when he warns against "affluvias."

The Parish family has a passion for what the younger Mrs. Parish calls "hyjene." Actually, this spelling is rather obscure as it might very well stand for the pronunciation of an educated English person. Probably Gissing meant it to represent a faintly vulgar accent.

Linguistically speaking Christopher manages to keep reasonably straight though he does stumble occasionally, as in "my 'ead" (p. 114), "meet me reg'lar" (p. 115) or "same 'ouse" (p. 120).

A difficult character to place socially is Greenacre. In Chapter V, which is largely devoted to him, he is called "a nondescript." His father is referred to as having been a lawyer and later on a coal merchant. He possesses "an air of lively graciousness" (p. 91), and Lord Polperro twice observes Greenacre had "a gentleman's education" (pp. 193 and 196).

He has nothing of the nervous breathlessness of his friend Gammon. In fact, he can be detailed to the point of pomposity:

I have excellent lodgings in the parish of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields (p. 32).  
How could you reconcile yourself to stand by whilst the law of your country was so grossly defeated? (p. 212).

The latter remark leads to Gammon's impatient exclamation: "Don't use such long words, old chap."

Greenacre can handle difficult words without slipping:

You should use a mnemonic system (p. 39).

When he has some bad news he likes to preface his remarks by "I grieve to tell you" (pp. 155, 210 and 213).

He can start a complicated sentence, make a parenthetical remark, and imperturbably resume the thread of his discourse:

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He did not; but I very greatly fear that those meetings – of course I have heard of them – helped to bring about the crisis under which he is now suffering, as also did a certain other meeting which you will recollect, Gammon (p. 155).

As an accomplished man of the world he occasionally indulges in a colloquialism:

No, hang it, Miss Polly (p. 159).

Ta-ta, Gammon (p. 160).

As hurry is unacceptable in a man of his supposed standing, he likes to repeat himself for the sake of emphasis, either in the same words:

I am sure we do not wish Lord Polperro's death.

I am sure *you* do not, Miss Sparkes (p. 156).

or by way of elegant variation in synonymous words:

You will now see the necessity for using great caution, great consideration, in this strange affair (p. 155).

Such a superior person affects a touch of snobbishness:

I happened to be talking with my friend Beeching yesterday – Aldham Beeching, you know, the Q. C. – (p. 91),

and is not above a polite interest in his food:

Now these boys were produced in court, then it was seen – excellent soup this – that they bore little if any resemblance to each other (p. 92).

However, Greenacre's creator cannot help hinting at the man's real personality, for Greenacre gives himself away on page 131, when he explains the name of his favourite place of refreshment, the Bilboes:

I originated it in the days gone by. The proprietor was a man called William Bowes – you perceive (p. 131).

Finally, a word about the – socially – highest ranking character in *The Town Traveller*, Lord Polperro.

Here Gissing has made things easy for a student of his characters, for His Lordship speaks indeed like a lord and stands on his dignity when his inferiors forget themselves:

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You forget yourself, Gammon, I know we are old friends,  
but you forget our positions (p. 198).

Still, even a drunken lord will lose control of himself:

“How often have I a damned chance of enjoying myself?”  
It was the first syllable of bad language that Gammon had  
heard from Polperro’s lips (pp. 199-200).

*The Town Traveller* has sometimes been dismissed as an insignificant novel and, of course, it cannot rank as a major work. The main question here is to what extent the conversational parts are successful. The novel has a humorous intention, but are the conversations really funny in themselves? They owe their humour in the first place to their reproductions of vulgar or pompous speech. At the same time *The Town Traveller* has a realist setting and within these limits the conversations are in character. As far as a conclusion may be drawn from this, it seems that Gissing was more successful as a realist than as a humorist.

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### The Art and Challenge of George Gissing

Abstract of PhD Thesis, NYU, 1968

James A. Rogers  
New York Institute of Technology

George Gissing belongs to a distinguished line of English novelists who have in their portrayal of character pursued the ideal and broadened the psychological. The author in his initial effort, *Workers in the Dawn*, shows his tie to this group. The novel, according to him, is an attempt at a “*work of art*.” Charles Dickens intrudes heavily upon *Workers*, but George Eliot and Henry James are the key influences in its construction. They represent a classical tradition. Other influences make their appearance – Naturalism and Formalism – yet it is Classicism which is the core of Gissing’s art and its foremost challenge. *Workers in the Dawn* and *The Unclassed* have many of the ingredients that give shape and substance to the author’s major novels.

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*Isabel Clarendon* propels Gissing onto the stage of achievement. Attracted directly by figures on the Continent, principally, at this stage, Ivan Turgenev, Gissing veers away from the subject matter of workers and enters the “gentle pastel shades” of a rustic love story and a middle-class situation. It is a work of emotion and gravity. The anti-hero, Bernard Kingcote, and the vacillating heroine, Isabel Clarendon, are sophisticated versions of actors met before. The author departs from the proletariat and raises a basic point about his development. He is more successful with picturing the middle class.

A strident, naturalistic note overwhelms Gissing’s novels of the late 1880’s. *Demos* and *The Nether World*, despite splashes of lyricism, are not books of character and finish. Lessons imbibed by the author from his reading of contemporary classical writers are laid aside in these violent concerns with the lower depths. Not only Zola is impressing Gissing at this stage. Unbridled poetry stamps his work. A source of such wildness is the romanticism of Charlotte Brontë and Thomas Hardy. These two novelists are staunchly upheld by Gissing in his correspondence and criticisms, while he plays down or ignores George Eliot and Henry James. Still, it is the latter two who will predominate in Gissing’s art. The author is a perfect contradiction in that he insists on subjectivity in fiction, yet he is forced more and more to employ objective measures in the spirit of Eliot and James.

Women are the chief subject of Gissing’s novels. Supplementing them but never subordinate are the men. The pattern is an unusual one, running counter to conventional attitude. As Royal A. Gettmann has put the issue, “Gissing repeatedly tested a man’s character by appraising his response to a woman.” The testing required a deft and new analysis. Arthur Schopenhauer, unhelpful on questions like women and ethnic groups, aided Gissing on the question of aesthetics. The Platonic Idea derived from the philosopher as well as from the nineteenth-century masters

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of the novel. Gissing responded to Schopenhauer on the priority of the artist and the conception of the idea.

Gathering from both philosophy and art, Gissing was able by the 1890’s to forge an approach that made for outstanding success in *The Emancipated*, *New Grub Street*, and *Born in Exile*. That defects and weaknesses appear in Gissing’s progression do not take away from the higher caliber of this writing. In *The Odd Women* and *The Whirlpool* Gissing grapples with even sterner issues of content and style. Henry James, of weight with the author throughout his career, is an undeniable influence in these last two novels. *The Odd Women* is a redoing of *The Bostonians*, and *The Whirlpool* introduces a subtle and effective “centre” in its male protagonist. George Gissing is in his middle-class novels a writer of the first order, a man of deep feeling and mature accomplishment.

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## Some Gissing Blasts

Jacob Korg

Wyndham Lewis, the great pioneer of modern art and literature knew Gissing's work and felt that he could refer to him familiarly, if not always favorably. Gissing's name turns up unexpectedly in two places in the first number of the eccentric periodical, *Blast*, which Lewis edited, and which was published only twice, in June of 1914 and July of 1915. The second is a passing allusion in an obituary of the artist, Frederick Spencer Gore, who died in March, 1914. Lewis says of Gore, "... his grey conception of the artist's life, his gentleness and firmness, should have matured into an abundant personal art, something like Corot and Gissing." It is interesting to see Gissing placed in this way by the sensitive Lewis, as a member of a characteristic nineteenth-century class of artists whose work shares the qualities of realism, understatement and personal flavor.

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The first allusion is both significant and puzzling. In his opening statement, "Long Live the Vortex," Lewis launches one of his many attacks on the Futurists, complaining in particular of what he regarded as their sentimental attitude toward machinery. He says: "Wilde gushed twenty years ago about the beauty of machinery. Gissing in his romantic delight with modern lodging houses was futurist in this sense. The futurist is a sensational and sentimental mixture of the aesthete of 1890 and the realist of 1870."

Gissing, of course, was only thirteen in 1870, not yet much of a realist. But the real question is, where does he express a "romantic delight with modern lodging houses"? Certainly not in the *Ryecroft Papers*, where he is critical of country inns and laments their decline from their former grandeur.

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A Sonnet by Gissing

### The Death of the Children

(Burnt in a Workhouse Fire, Christmas, 1883)

O Children, Death in kindness bade you rise  
And quit the game, while life was yet but play;  
Though sad to us the closing winter day  
That clench'd the gleam of laughter in your eyes.  
What though the anguish of the dread surprise  
Marr'd the young faces when at rest they lay?  
One moment summ'd the sorrow-laden way  
We weary o'er in growing old and wise.

Mourn not the children. If we needs must mourn,  
Be it for those their loss leaves desolate,  
While death withholds his oft-entreated boon.  
And should *they* sorrow, that, by toil unworn,  
Their dear ones rest so early, and kind fate  
Spares them the heat and burden of the noon?

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Note:

Gissing sent the poem to Mrs. Frederic Harrison about the time he composed it. Her son Austin printed it in the *English Review*, which he edited, in the number for January 1920, p. 10. It is reprinted here in the belief that very few subscribers to the *Newsletter* have so far had an opportunity to read it.

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Recent Publications

Anonymous. Review of the Penguin edition of *New Grub Street*, *The Times*, June 1, 1968, p. 20.

Anonymous. Review of *Collected Articles on George Gissing*, *L'Osservatore Romano*, March 15, 1969, p. 5.

Collinson, C. S. Review of *Collected Articles on George Gissing*, *Etudes Anglaises*, January-March 1969, pp. 84-86.

Delteil, Francois. Review of *Les Carnets d'Henry Ryecroft*, *La Croix* (the Paris Roman Catholic daily), January 21 and 22, 1968, p. 2 of the supplement.

Gerber, Helmut E. Review of *Collected Articles on George Gissing*, *English Literature in Transition*, vol. XII, no. 2, 1969, p. IV.

Goode, John. "Gissing, Morris and English Socialism," *Victorian Studies*, December 1968, pp. 201-226.

Gross, John. *The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters*. Aspects of English Literary Life since 1800. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1969. Contains many references to Gissing. John Gross, it will be remembered, wrote an introduction to the Bodley Head edition of *New Grub Street* (1967).

Hyde, Montgomery. *Henry James at Home*, Methuen, 1969. Gissing appears on pp. 179, 186, 188-90, 294. Visitors at Lamb House, Rye, Sussex, can see a copy of *New Grub Street* (Smith, Elder, 1891, 3 vols., Second Edition) bearing the

following inscription in James's hand: "George Gissing at Lamb House with H. G. Wells." It records the only occasion on which James and Gissing met, in June 1901, when Wells brought Gissing to Lamb House and they stayed for the night.

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Kelly, Doris B. "A Checklist of Nineteenth-Century English Fiction about the Decline of Rome," *Bulletin of the New York Public Library*, June 1968, pp. 400-13. Duly mentions *Veranilda* – in flattering terms.

Maes-Jelinek, Hena. Review of *Les Carnets d'Henry Ryecroft*, *Revue des Langues Vivantes* (Brussels), December 1968.

Salgado, Gamini. Review of *Tradition and Tolerance in Nineteenth-Century Fiction, Essays in Criticism*, April 1968, pp. 207-28. Contains some perceptive paragraphs on Gissing.

Weber, Carl J. "Hardy and James," *Harvard Library Bulletin*, January 1968, pp. 18-25. Gissing is mentioned in a letter from Hardy to James.

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#### Forthcoming Publications

P. Coustillas

Several new publications by or about Gissing are to appear in the next few weeks or months. They will make available a number of texts to which only some privileged persons have had access up to now.

The Enitharmon Press will publish simultaneously two more monographs, *George Gissing at Alderley Edge* and *Gissing's Writings on Dickens*. The first one will give a full account of the novelist's schooldays in Cheshire. I have been lucky enough to consult the almost complete file of the school-magazine, after the school had been transferred from Alderley Edge to Colwyn Bay, and I have made important discoveries on the personality of the Principal, the atmosphere of the school, Gissing's activities in it. Together with Gissing's own reminiscences of the school, which I reprinted in *Etudes Anglaises* (April-June 1967), the booklet will contain the

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articles by Arthur Bowes and T. T. Sykes on Gissing. They first appeared in obscure journals and the novelist's biographers have overlooked them. The booklet will also reproduce an anonymous letter sent to the editor of the school-magazine at the time *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* were published serially in the *Fortnightly*

*Review.* An old boy, on reading the section of Spring dealing with military service, wrote to say that on that point Mr. Ryecroft's reminiscences were certainly those of Mr. Gissing and identified the sergeant who addressed young Gissing as Number 7.

*Gissing's Writings on Dickens* is a detailed study, biographical and bibliographical, of all the introductions and articles, and of course the book, Gissing wrote on the author of *David Copperfield*. I have listed the dozens of reviews I have unearthed from the contemporary press concerning these publications. This study is followed by the texts of the two contributions Gissing made to *The Times Literary Supplement* shortly after this journal came into existence. They are a leading article on Dickens and Swinburne and a long review of F. G. Kitton's biography of Dickens (1902). Kitton, it will be remembered, collaborated with Gissing to the editing of the Rochester edition of Dickens' Works, published by Methuen; he also asked him to write an introduction to *David Copperfield* for the American publisher, George Sproul. The publication of *Gissing's Writings on Dickens* will be a useful complement to the two volumes recently reprinted in America — *Charles Dickens, a Critical Study* (Kennikat Press) and *Critical Studies of the Works of Charles Dickens* (Haskell House).

The Harvester Press has now almost ready a new edition of *Isabel Clarendon*, the only novel by Gissing which had never been reprinted. It is a photographic reprint of the Chapman & Hall two-volume edition which appeared in June 1886. Nearly ten years after publication, Gissing was asked by A. H. Bullen to revise his novel for a new edition. Lawrence & Bullen had then republished *The Emancipated* (1893) and *The Unclassed* (1895), originally issued by Bentley and Chapman & Hall, and naturally enough, they wanted to add *Isabel Clarendon* to the six Gissing titles

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they had in print. The author consented, bought a copy at Mudie's and settled down to cut down and revise his novel. For reasons which, I think, have little to do with the value of the book, he gave up his task on the same day. I have listed his revisions which will be found at the end of the second volume. The critical introduction examines at some length the circumstances of composition of the book, the negotiations with Chapman & Hall, the role Meredith played in the revision of the manuscript and the reception of the novel by contemporary critics. It also discusses its artistic interest and the place it occupies in the development of Gissing's social and philosophical ideas. The text, particularly in the passages where Kingcote and Vissian talk about literary topics, being studded with literary allusions and quotations, I have thought it useful to elucidate these points, as I have tried to trace the origin of Knightswell, the source from which Master Percy Vissian is advised not to drink too much. To me the story of Knightswell has been very much what the Lady of the Strachy was to Percy's father. The critical apparatus also includes a biographical notice and a bibliographical note on the first edition and the manuscript.

Finally, I am glad to announce that the edition of unpublished Gissing material I edited some years ago will appear in a few months under the imprint of the Johns Hopkins Press. The texts included are: 1 – "The Hope of Pessimism" (see Jacob

Korg's *Critical Biography*), 2 – "Along Shore," a descriptive essay not unlike "On Battersea Bridge" (which Mr. Alfred Gissing reprinted from the *Pall Mall Gazette* in his *Selections Autobiographical and Imaginative from the Works of George Gissing*, Jonathan Cape, 1929), 3 – "All for Love," a *novella*, written early in 1880, quite different in subject and tone from what Gissing wrote at the time, 4 - six short stories, five of which belong to the years 1880-84, "The Last Half-Crown," "Cain and Abel," "The Quarry on the Heath," "The Lady of the Dedication," "Mutimer's Choice," and "Their Pretty Way," which was written in 1894. A long introduction

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relates all these texts to the corpus of Gissing's published works. The relations between "All for Love" and *Denzil Quarrier* for instance are quite fascinating.

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In my last advertisement I said that copies of *Workers in the Dawn* and *Isabel Clarendon* were not currently available but I'm delighted to report that this situation has now been remedied. This time I can offer the excellent Shafer edition of *Workers in the Dawn* and all readers of the *Newsletter* will be pleased to hear that *Isabel Clarendon* is about to be reprinted.

GISSING, G. *Workers in the Dawn*. Introduction by Robert Shafer, 2 vols. New York, 1935. £11

GISSING, G. *Isabel Clarendon*. Critical Introduction and Notes on the Text by P. Coustillas. 2 vols. (1886) reprinted by the Harvester Press 1969. £5.5.0

This handsome new reprint includes the revisions which Gissing made for the novel and which have never been published before. *I.C.* is the rarest of all Gissing's books – now all libraries and collectors can at last read the novel in this splendid new reprint.

*George Gissing and H. G. Wells, Their Friendship and Correspondence*. Edited with Introduction by R. A. Gettmann. Proof copy in wrappers, 1961. 45/-

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GISSING, T. W. *The Ferns and Fern Allies of Wakefield and its Neighbourhood*. Illustrated with Coloured Plates by J. E. Sowerby. Good copy in the original cloth, Wakefield, 1862. £4

GISSING, G. *Thyrza*. 3 vols. 1/2 roan (badly rubbed), short copy but cheap example of the 1st Edition. 1887. £12

*George Gissing to his Sister*. By Jacqueline Steiner. First publication of 17 letters from Gissing to his sister Ellen. Contained in two issues of *More Books* (The Bulletin of the Boston Public Library) for November and December 1947. Original wrappers, Boston 1947. 30/-

