

“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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A New Gissing Attribution from Chicago

Robert L. Selig
Purdue University Calumet

Internal evidence suggests Gissing’s authorship of the *Chicago Post* story reproduced below (28 July 1877, p. 6; reprinted in weekly edition, 2 August 1877, p. 1). The indications of Gissing’s handiwork include the following: the names Hope and Murgatroyd (reappearing in *The Nether World* and in *Denzil Quarrier* respectively), the resemblance of both Slythorpe’s shirtfront and his foreign mispronunciations to those of Samuel Barmby, Jr. (*In the Year of Jubilee*), the narrator’s gratuitous remark about the dead father’s “powerful intellect” (a typically Gissingish concern), the thrashing scene paralleling one in “The Riding Whip,” and

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the prose style. For a full analysis of this evidence, see Robert L. Selig, “A Further Gissing Attribution from the *Chicago Post*,” *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, Vol. 80, 1st quarter (1986), 100-04. The complete text of the story follows. The misprints in the *Post* have been silently corrected.

One Farthing Damages

Chapter I

In a darkened chamber, dark with the awful shadow still more than with the lack of

material light, four persons were gathered around a bed, on which lay a man bearing in his face the unmistakable signs of the summons which none can refuse to answer. A weeping girl knelt by the bedside; her face bent over the nerveless hand which lay upon the coverlet, and which she held as though, by that convulsive clasp, she could hold her father still to life. The doctor and nurse stood quietly aside, as having done their part, and waiting for the inevitable end. A shaded lamp cast a ring of white light amid the surrounding gloom, and, within its gleaming circle, at a table covered with papers and writing materials, sat the dying man's solicitor engaged in the preparation of his will. The instructions were short and simple. Bernard Hope had but one near relative, his daughter Mary, now kneeling by his bedside, and to her, as was natural, he desired to leave his few possessions.

After an interval of silence, broken only by suppressed sobs of the weeping girl and the monotonous scratching of the attorney's pen upon the paper, he paused and inquired in a harsh, unpleasant voice:

"What names shall I insert as trustees? You should have two, at least".

The dying man paused ere he replied with an effort:

"Geoffrey Howard, major One Hundred and Eleventh, now in India. I have no other friend".

"In that case I may venture to offer my humble services, subject to the usual proviso. I

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should be delighted to be useful to Miss Hope, and, if your friend is abroad, there may be difficulties."

"True, Slythorpe. I thank you. Make yourself trustee, then, with Maj. Howard. Legacy £200 for your trouble."

"Nay, my dear sir, quite unnecessary. I really—"

But again the ready pen traveled over the paper, and a quarter of an hour later Mr. Slythorpe announced that the document was ready for execution, and in a low, mechanical monotonous tone read over its provisions. The sick man seemed more than once to lose consciousness during the reading, but at the close he appeared to nerve himself for a supreme effort.

"Yes, that will do. Give me the pen," he said, and with a shaking hand affixed his signature, and with eager eyes watched the doctor and nurse as they added their own as witnesses, after which he sank back exhausted on his pillow. "Thank God, that's safe!" he gasped. "Mary, my child, you and Geoffrey — you and Geoffrey! What was I saying? God bless you, my darling! God bless —"

These were the last words Bernard Hope ever spoke. For a little while he lay with half-closed eyes, still breathing, but past all consciousness of earthly things. The doctor stepped noiselessly to the bedside and laid a finger on the fluttering pulse, now failing altogether. Another quarter of an hour passed — a quarter of an hour which seemed an age to the anxious watchers — and then the doctor laid down the thin white hand and tenderly touching the head of the orphaned girl, he said:

"My dear, the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away. Your father has passed to a better world."

Chapter II

A year has [sic] passed away since Bernard Hope's death, and Mary still remained an inmate of the house of Mrs. Murgatroyd, the good woman whom we have seen in attendance at her father's last illness, and who, to her occasional occupation as nurse, added the more

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permanent one of letting lodgings. Mary's sweet face and gentle manner had quite won the heart

of her good-natured landlady, who was unceasing in her endeavours to soothe her grief and minister to her comforts. Mary still showed in face and figure the token of the trial through which she had passed. Her slight frown looked slihter in her soft black drapery, and the shadow of an unforgotten sorrow still rested on her delicate features. Mary Hope had been her father's constant companion; and she sorely missed the happy hours in which his powerful intellect and varied experiences had been unfolded for her benefit.

But she had, too, another trouble — none the less hard to bear that it was one in which she could have but few confidants. Major Howard, of whom mention has already been made, was not only her father's most valued friend, but had insensibly grown very dear to herself, and when, six months before Bernard Hope's death, he was summoned with his regiment to India, he left her his promised bride. Twice he had written within the first two weeks of his departure, since which time there had been a terrible silence; and in the same week which left Mary fatherless, a second blow fell upon her. The One Hundred and Eleventh had been engaged in a severe skirmish, the number of dead and wounded being considerable. Maj. Geoffrey Howard was reported among the fallen, and Mary had to mourn at once her lover and her father.

The death of Maj. Howard left Mr. Slythorpe sole trustee of Mr. Hope's will. This to Mary was a matter of the most perfect indifference. Suspecting evil of no one, she was willing that her little fortune, amounting to some £5,000 or £6,000, should rest in Mr. Slythorpe's hands as in those of any other person. But of late the attorney had begun to persecute her with attentions which, under existing circumstances, would have been distasteful from any one, but doubly so from a person she could not help regarding with an instinctive dislike. And, in truth, Mr. Slythorpe was not precisely the person to win a fair lady's fancy. Under-sized, high-shouldered,

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with blinking, lashless eyes, and a general angularity, not to say knobiness, of feature, he might have been expected to rise superior to weakness as to personal appearance [,] but such was by no means the case. In Mr. Samuel Slythorpe's own opinion, Mr. Samuel Slythorpe was a gentleman of considerable personal advantages, and it was his constant endeavour to make the very best of them. He was obtrusively, we might almost say offensively, clean. His shirtfront, collar and wristbands were of the most liberal dimensions, and of intense whiteness and starchiness, giving him the appearance of being, so to speak, "all shirt," while his hands, which were naturally coarse and red, were made still coarser and redder by perpetual washing. He was always profusely scented, and his short, scrubby hair was tortured by the combined use of the brush and the pomatum pot into the semblance of the split almonds wherewith tippy cakes are wont to be decorated. His hats and coats were always intensely new, and he perpetually creaked as he moved his patent leather boots, maintaining a friendly rivalry in this particular with his well-starched shirt front. In his habitual gorgeous array — indeed, if possible, looking even cleaner and neater than usual — Mr. Slythorpe, this morning, knocked at Mrs. Murgatroyd's door. The good lady was at that moment engaged in dusting Miss Hope's room, and catching sight of his approach, exclaimed:

"There's that nasty worrying lawyer again, I do declare. Slythorpe indeed, I'll Slythorpe him!"

It would be hopeless to endeavour to express on paper the intensity of meaning Mrs. Murgatroyd threw into her newly coined verb; but it was evident that "Slythorping," in her mind, included all the tortures of the middle ages, with a supplement of horse pond and other modern inventions. Mary smiled at the good lady's vehemence.

"My dear Mrs. Murgatroyd, you really should not be so severe. Mr. Slythorpe is a little peculiar, but I have no doubt he means kindly, and you know he is the trustee of poor papa's will."

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"I know that he is, my dear, and I wish he wasn't. I know he shouldn't be a trustee to a tom cat of mine, drat him!"

"Now, really, Mrs. Murgatroyd, you are too bad," said Mary, smiling in spite of herself. "I am sure poor Mr. Slythorpe isn't nearly so dreadful as you make out".

At this point the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of the gentleman in question, and Mrs. Murgatroyd, passing him with a final sniff of abhorrence, quitted the apartment.

Mr. Slythorpe, for once in his life, appeared ill at ease. He was got up with his accustomed care, and the suggestion of scented soap which accompanied him was even stronger than usual, but his usual self-satisfaction was wanting. He evidently had something on his mind — some piece of rascality, a physiognomist would have conjectured, which he either had recently perpetrated, or was about to perpetrate. Let us hope that the physiognomist would have been wrong.

"My dear Miss Hope," he began, after the first greetings had been exchanged, "I grieve to be the bearer of very unpleasant intelligence."

Mary looked up with quiet indifference, scarcely believing that, after all she had gone through, any news, good or bad, could have for her more than passing interest. Slythorpe continued:

"I am sure you will believe I did it for the best; but misfortunes will happen, you know, even with the utmost care and caution. I am sure I thought the investment was safe as the bank; but there's no trusting anything nowadays."

"What is the misfortune, Mr. Slythorpe, for you haven't told me? Nothing very serious, I hope."

"Only too serious, my dear Ma—", he tried to say "Mary," but couldn't get it out, and substituted "Miss Hope" — nothing less than the loss, I fear, of the whole of your little fortune."

Mary turned very pale, but gave no other sign of emotion.

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"How did it happen?" she said, with an effort.

"Your money was, as you know, in three per cents, where it produced a miserable £160 a year. In the hope of doing better for you, I sold out and invested in a new mining company, the Wheal Marina, which promised to pay a minimum dividend of ten per cent, and so would have just trebled your income. And this morning I am grieved to find from the *Times*, that the company is an utter smash. The directors have bolted, and the shareholders will lose every penny of their money."

"Is all gone? Nothing left?"

"Not a sixpence, and you remain liable for calls to the amount of about as much more."

Poor Mary's fortitude gave way.

"Oh, dear what shall I do? I haven't a friend in the world."

"No, no, don't say that, Miss Mary," said Slythorpe, in a gently patronizing manner. "It isn't as bad as that comes to. I haven't disguised my own feelings toward you; and though you've lost your money, you know, that needn't make any difference between you and me. My affection ain't of the mercenary sort; in fact, as I got you into the mess (though with the best of intentions, mind you), it's only fair I should get you out of it."

Mary had hidden her face in her hands, but she became aware, from the increased intensity of the all pervading scented soap aroma that Slythorpe was drawing nearer to her, and in another moment his arm was around her waist. She drew herself up proudly.

"Sir, I am willing to believe you mean kindly, but your offer under such circumstances is an insult. Be good enough to leave me." Slythorpe would have parleyed, but, with the air of an outraged queen, Mary Hope rang the bell, and, obedient to the summons, Mrs. Murgatroyd appeared.

"Open the door for Mr. Slythorpe if you please."

"You'll be sorry for this, you'll find, Miss Hope," said Slythorpe; but Mary vouchsafed no answer, and the attorney retired discomfited, Mrs. Murgatroyd holding the door for him with an

expression of thorough enjoyment. As soon as it was closed upon him, she bounced back to Mary's room, and flung open the windows.

"Let's have a breath of fresh air, for goodness' sake, after that nasty, slimy scented serpent. I always feel as if the house wanted disin—what d'ye call it — with Condy's Seasalt or Tidman's Restorer, or some of them deodorizers [sic], whenever he's been in it. Why, my poor lamb, whatever is the matter?"

Poor Mary's overwrought nerves had at last given way, and she fell upon the sofa in a fit of violent hysterics. Mrs. Murgatroyd, with motherly instinct, let her emotion have its own way, and Mary was so far recovered as to be able with many tears to tell the story of this new misfortune, finally crying herself to sleep on the good old woman's sympathizing bosom.

Chapter III

It was two days after the scene recorded in our last chapter, and Mary Hope, with the *Times* before her, was answering advertisements for a governess. Mary was not one to sit still under the pressure of calamity, however heavy, and, having got over the first shock of her misfortune, at once set about bravely to earn her own livelihood. With this view she was seeking to procure a situation, either as governess or companion, entering upon her task with a brave heart, though she well knew the trials to which such a position would probably expose her. She had answered three advertisements, and had folded and sealed her letters, and now, with her open desk before her, was counting her little store of ready money, calculating how long she could at any rate subsist before she found employment. In replacing her purse, her hand fell upon a portrait, which she took out and gazed at fondly. "Dear old Geoffrey, if you had lived, how different my future would have been. I suppose I ought to say God's will be done, but, oh,

it's very hard!" A few moments she continued gazing through her tears at the portrait, when a sharp knock at the outer door startled her, and she replaced it on the desk. She heard Mrs. Murgatroyd in conversation with some one, and then a quick, well remembered voice said "Where? This room?" And in another moment the door was flung open, and Mary Hope was sobbing in her lost lover's arms.

After the blissful excitement of the first meeting had subsided, a season of mutual explanations followed. Geoffrey Howard had been dangerously wounded, and had been a prisoner for the greater part of a year in an Indian dungeon, where for many weeks his life had hung on a thread by reason of an attack of malignant fever. His worn and sallow features, his skin bronzed to Oriental swartheness, and the scar of a deep saber cut across his cheek, scarce hidden by a rather ragged beard, bore eloquent witness to the perils he had passed through. He had landed in England but twelve hours previously, and had not lost a moment in seeking the presence of his darling and her father, for he was, of course, ignorant of Bernard Hope's death. Mary, too, had much to tell, and nestling by Geoffrey's side, her little white fingers hidden in the rugged brown hands of her lover, which held them as though they would never let them go, she told him all she had gone through — the loss of her father, the history of the will, and, lastly, the loss of her little fortune.

"I don't understand it," said Geoffrey. "The man has been playing some very deep game."

"Perhaps he really wished to get me more — what do you call it, — interest for my money. I dare say it was meant kindly enough, though it has happened so unfortunately."

"I don't believe it, darling. If he had really had your interest at heart he would have regarded safety before all things. You would have simply received three per cent., and Mr. Slythorpe would have pocketed the difference."

"O, Geoffrey, Geoffrey! I am afraid you have come home very uncharitable. Besides, what

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does it matter about a lot of stupid money, now I have got you back again? Unless, indeed, you would have liked me better for having my money.”

[There] was only one [possible answer] to such an accusation and Major Howard made it — that is to [say, he] called Mary a little goose, kissed her, and dropped the subject, having taken care, however, to ascertain the address of Mr. Slythorpe, and the name of the company in which Mary’s money had been lost. On leaving her he took a hansom cab and drove to the office of the liquidator of the company, when on his stating that he desired to make inquiries on behalf of their shareholders, he was informed, to his astonishment, that there was not and never had been any shareholder of that name on the books of the company. He next inquired whether, perchance, the shares were standing in Miss Hope’s own name, and was answered in the negative. Utterly bewildered he drove to Mr. Slythorpe’s office. Mr. Slythorpe was at home, and he speedily found himself in the attorney’s presence. Mr. Slythorpe was a little nervous with strangers till he knew their business, and Major Howard’s announcement that he called on behalf of Miss Mary Hope did not tend to increase his confidence. He was, however, far from suspecting Major Howard’s identity, but jumped to the conclusion that he was a hostile solicitor employed by Miss Hope to call him to account. Major Howard’s next remark tended to confirm that impression.

“You stated to Miss Hope, I think, a couple of days ago, that the property bequeathed to her by her father’s will had been invested in the Wheal Marina company, which has just come to grief. You are, of course, aware that an investment upon such a rotten security was a gross breach of trust, for which you are liable.”

“Not at all; the power of investment is unlimited. Indeed, shares of companies are specially included.”

“You are certain of that?”

“Quite so, I drew the will myself.”

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“Very good. The shares stood, I suppose, in your own name.”

“Ye-es; in my name, of course, as the sole trustee.”

“Then, pray how is it, My. Slythorpe, that I don’t find your name among the list of shareholders of the company?”

Mr. Slythorpe’s countenance fell.

“Because — because — I may as well make a clean breast of it — to tell you the truth the money was never in that company at all. It was a false alarm!”

“Then where on earth is the money, sir? and what do you mean by a false alarm?”

“I’ll tell you if you’ll have a little patience. As a brother solicitor, I am sure you won’t press me harder than you are obliged. Miss Hope’s money is the Wheal Mary Ann, one of the most flourishing companies going, and her shares are worth just double what I gave for them.”

“Then, what on earth induced you —”

“I’ll tell you. Between ourselves, I’ve taken an uncommon fancy to Miss Hope, and I had made up my mind to make her Mrs. S.; but somehow she didn’t take to me quite so kindly as I could have wished. Now, the other morning, when I took up the *Times*, almost the first thing I caught sight of was the smash of the Wheal Marina, and the similarity of names gave me quite a turn, for just at that moment I thought it was the Wheal Mary Ann. And then the thought struck me, ‘If it only had been, my lady, you’d been glad enough to say ‘Yes’ to Samuel Slythorpe.’ And then I thought I’d try it. It was *rose d’amour*, sir; a mere *rose d’amour*.” And Mr. Slythorpe smiled.

“You atrocious scoundrel!”

There was a sudden blow, a heavy crash, and Mr. Samuel Slythorpe measured his length on the floor. The clerk outside, hearing the downfall, popped his head into the room, but seeing the state of things he discreetly retired again, remarking:

“Beg pardon; thought you rang, sir.”

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Meanwhile, Major Howard, having knocked Slythorpe down, proceeded to knock him up again; and with his own dandy cane, which stood by the fire-place, gave him one of the most tremendous thrashings ever recorded in the pages of history. And the clerk in the outer office, who owed Slythorpe many a grudge for acts of petty tyranny, listened at the door smiling pleasantly at each “swish” of the descending cane, and finally indulging in a war dance expressive of triumph and exultation round the office stool.

A fortnight later, Major Howard, looking wonderfully better in health and strength, stood before the altar in a quiet city church with a graceful little figure by his side, and with no pomp or ceremony, no breakfast, no speeches, no wedding guests, with only good Mrs. Murgatroyd for bridesmaid, the true lovers were made one. And six months afterwards, in the Court of Queen’s Bench, the great assault case Slythorpe vs. Howard, was tried. And when the lawyers on both sides had had their say, the presiding judge said: “Gentlemen of the jury, it is not disputed that a very violent assault was committed on the plaintiff, and he is therefore entitled to your verdict. But in assessing the damages, gentlemen, you will consider the general merits of the case and give the plaintiff only such compensation as you think he fairly deserves.” And the jury in awarding one farthing by way of damages, expressed their unanimous regret that there wasn’t a smaller coin.

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“Against the Tyranny of Kings and Princes”
Radicalism in *Workers in the Dawn*

Andrew Whitehead
London.

Popular politics is a recurring theme in Gissing’s five “social” novels, all of which were first published during the 1880s. *Demos* (1886), perhaps the best known of these early novels, is sub-titled “A Story of English Socialism,” and is in part a less than complimentary account of the small socialist movement in England which had developed in the previous two or three years. There are episodes in others of these novels which reflect the author’s continuing interest in political movements — John Hewett speaking on radical platforms on Clerkenwell Green in *The Nether World* (1889), and Bunce’s determined atheism in *Thyrza* (1887). It is, however, in Gissing’s first published novel, *Workers in the Dawn* (1880), that he offers his most substantial description of organised radicalism.

The depiction of radicalism in *Workers in the Dawn* is particularly interesting because at the time of its writing, Gissing was at his most sympathetic to the cause of social reform. His interest in social movements had been stimulated by his friendship with a German émigré, Eduard Bertz; he was taking a growing interest in Positivism; he had ventured within a working men’s club to lecture on “Faith and Reason.” Very shortly after the publication of his first novel, George Gissing wrote a letter to his brother, Algernon — intended for wider circulation — in which he put forward his own estimation of the work:

The book in the first place is not a novel in the generally-accepted sense of the word, but a very strong (possibly *too* plain spoken) attack upon certain features of our present religious and social life which to *me* appear highly condemnable. First and foremost, I attack the criminal negligence of

governments which spend their time over matters of relatively no

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importance, to the neglect of the terrible social evils which should have been long since sternly grappled with. Herein I am a mouthpiece of the advanced Radical party. As regards religious matters, I plainly seek to show the nobility of a faith dispensing with all we are accustomed to call religion, and having for its only creed belief in the possibility of intellectual and moral progress.¹

Gissing sought to achieve these objectives both by a powerful description of life in the worst of London's slums, where drink and prostitution were almost unconquerable problems, and by focussing on the endeavours of individuals who strove to achieve social reform.

Although Gissing remained a religious sceptic throughout his life, his sympathy for radicalism quickly waned. His changing attitudes to the working class, and its aspirations for social improvement, are mirrored in his titles. *Workers in the Dawn* is resonant of optimism, and suggests that working people are at the start of an ineluctable process of advancement. It stands contrasted with the condescension implied in the title *Demos* and the bleak despair invoked by *The Nether World*. Gissing reflected on his transient political allegiances in *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* (1903), written towards the end of his life:

And to think that at one time I called myself a socialist, communist, anything you like of the revolutionary kind! Not for long, to be sure, and I suspect that there was always something in me that scoffed when my lips uttered such things. (Summer, XII)

He was scoffing openly by the summer of 1887, when he attended a radical gathering on Clerkenwell Green which prompted him to comment in a letter: "May we not live long enough to see democracy get all the power it expects."²

Much of the account of radicalism in *Workers in the Dawn* is set against the backdrop of

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the excitements of 1870 and 1871, one of the high watermarks of Victorian popular politics. In the mid-1860s, the Reform League had mobilised the largest numbers of politically minded artisans since the Chartist era twenty years earlier. The Reform Act of 1867 had given the vote to most skilled working men, who responded the following year by electing a Liberal government headed by William Gladstone. Yet in London, several local branches of the Reform League remained active and spawned a number of small but vigorous extreme radical organisations which came briefly to political prominence in the early 1870s. Prompted in large part by the political turbulence on the other side of the Channel, secularism and republicanism became formidable forces in London, and many radical working men's clubs were established which formed the backbone of a political culture which persisted for twenty years.

In a striking passage about half way through *Workers in the Dawn*, Gissing seeks to explain the influence on English radicalism of the overthrow of Napoleon III of France in 1870 following the military defeat inflicted by Germany and the brief flowering of the Paris Commune in the following year. It can be stated with confidence that his source for much of this passage was an article in a radical paper, the *Weekly Dispatch*. It has already been established that Gissing was familiar with this journal, for Professor Coustillas has identified it as the source of one of the clerical anecdotes in *Workers in the Dawn*.³

In the summer of 1879, the *Weekly Dispatch* began publication of a thirteen-part series entitled "Red London," giving a sympathetic and well-informed account of radical and secular clubs and organisations in London. The author was given simply as "E. D. J.," but can be

identified as E. Douglas Jerrold.⁴ Gissing drew directly from just one of these articles, that on the London Patriotic Club which appeared on 6 July 1879. Part of the article looked back on the

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charged political atmosphere at the beginning of the decade. The correspondence between passages in this article and in *Workers in the Dawn* suggests that Gissing may have had the cutting in front of him when he wrote this part of the manuscript in August 1879:

In April, 1870, an excited meeting was held in Trafalgar Square by the Land and Labour League. Messrs. Hennessy, Eglinton, Weston &c., passed resolutions calling upon the Government to consider the deplorable condition of the working classes; and to the bonnie blare of the "Marseillaise" the speakers marched down to Downing Street and deposited the resolutions in Mr. Gladstone's letter-box then and there. The Franco-German war gave rise to many similar meetings. (*Weekly Dispatch*, 6 July 1879).

As early as April of that year [1870] a great public meeting had been held in Trafalgar Square, at which resolutions were passed demanding the attention of the Government to the scandalous sufferings of the working-classes.

The notes of the "Marseillaise" were occasionally heard in the open streets. Republicanism of an advanced type was loudly advocated on numerous platforms and in open-air assemblies; active associations, such as the Land and Labour League, spread a knowledge of the wrongs of the poor and the tyranny of the ruling classes, far and wide over the country. (*Workers in the Dawn*, II, 49)

And again:

A number of new organisations came of this reflex action of French revolution. None among them attained such sudden notoriety as the London Patriotic Society ... Take up any newspaper you choose bearing the date 1870-71, and in leading article or report, in news paragraph or descriptive

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column, the Patriotic Londoners are sure to figure. The Hole in the Wall was for the moment as famous as Westminster, and rather more popular. (*Weekly Dispatch*, 6 July, 1879)

The war between France and Germany came to aid, with the impulse of a new excitement, the movement for justice and liberty ... One of the ripest outcomes of the time was the London Patriotic Society, whose meetings at the tavern called The Hole-in-the-Wall, excited the attention of rich as well as poor, and for the suppression of which indirect efforts were before long made by the Government. (*Workers in the Dawn*, II, 50).

The Land and Labour League, it should be explained, was established in October 1869, and was for the next three years the foremost extreme radical organisation in London. It advocated nationalisation of the land, secular and compulsory education, currency and electoral reform, and a reduction in working hours. It was closely associated with a radical journal, *The*

Republican, and gained particular prominence by its championing of the new French Republic and later by its defence of the Commune. The Patriotic Society was also founded in October 1869. Some of the speakers at its debates at the “Hole in the Wall” near Hatton Garden attracted the attention of the police. To escape the interference of detectives and pliant landlords, the Club moved to its new premises on Clerkenwell Green in 1872 and remained there for twenty years. Gissing occasionally attended meetings on Clerkenwell Green and must have been aware of the Club’s existence and indeed he may have had the Patriotic in mind, when, in *The Nether World*, he describes the radical club in Clerkenwell of which John Hewett is a member.⁵ Both the League and the Club would have attracted support particularly from men working in the skilled artisan trades in central London.

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The character in *Workers in the Dawn* who perhaps reveals most about Gissing’s ambiguous attitude towards popular politics is Helen Norman. Gissing provides a densely written account of the intellectual process by which Helen, a young woman of elevated social standing, loses her religious faith and embraces a form of rationalism. Her life is devoted to philanthropy in the form of attempting to develop the sensibilities of a select group of young working women, and this she does under the aegis of a nonconformist clergyman and without any expression of her own social and religious views. Helen Norman keeps aloof from any kind of organised politics, yet the point is made very effectively in the novel that she achieves a great deal more in social terms than does the principal character, Arthur Golding, either through his liaison with a socially disadvantaged young woman, Carrie Mitchell, or through his intermittent political activity. Gissing’s descriptions of poverty in London are at their angriest in *Workers in the Dawn* and his account of radicalism is generally sympathetic, but he already appears to have a grave distrust of any collective enterprise to achieve social and political change.

The novel contains several memorable portraits of radicals who befriend Arthur Golding and mould his political outlook. His interest in radicalism is nurtured by Samuel Tollady, the gentle, philanthropic and learned master printer with whom Arthur is apprenticed. Gissing presents Tollady as an honourable and kindly man: “gentleman was written upon every line of his face, notwithstanding his circumstances” (I, 108). Tollady’s expression of his political views is concentrated in a few powerful pages (I, 159-67) when he walks with the young Arthur around Smithfield and along Whitecross Street, where Arthur’s father had died in destitution.⁶ Tollady’s most forceful denunciation is of religion:

“...These faiths, one and all, great and small, from the most grovelling superstition of the cannibal to the purest phase of devotion nurtured in the

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mind of a Christian, trust me, they are nothing but remnants of the primeval darkness, *clinging* to man as he toils laboriously upwards, clinging in spite of all his efforts to shake them off.” (I, 160)

At the root of Tollady’s radicalism, however, is an outrage at the extent of social inequalities:

“...Is it not hideous, I say, that places such as those courts off Whitecross Street should be suffered to exist, places where not even a litter of pigs could grow up healthy?” (I, 164)

After Tollady’s death, the mantle of the principal radical in the novel falls on Will Noble. As if to reinforce this point, Noble makes his first appearance in the chapter after that in which Tollady’s burial is described. There are several points of similarity between the two — both are printers, and men of generous spirit and evident sincerity. They are presented, however, as

belonging to different generations of radicalism. Tollady's outlook is above all ethical, while Noble's emphasis is on organisation and education. At one point, the reader finds Noble studying J. S. Mill's *Political Economy*, with books by Ricardo and Malthus at his side. Nearly all the volumes in Noble's bookcase are "works bearing on social problems ... he knew little of literature in its more humanising products; poetry and all the sweet and tender off-shoots of the imagination he cared nothing for" (II, 218-19). This stands in contrast to the description of Tollady's library: "evidently that of a man who had known how to cultivate judiciously the emotional side of his nature; the only books really bound with any degree of richness were the poets" (I, 114).

The club which Will Noble runs when he is introduced to the reader, and of which Arthur Golding becomes a member, combines political discussion with philanthropy. It meets in a yard behind a tin workshop off Oxford Street. Noble's speech to the first meeting attended by

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Golding is quoted at length, its theme being the role of education in improving the lot of working people:

"... In my mind there is only one answer: *We must get taught!* The rich domineer over us not only because we are poor, but still more because we are too like the animals, we have too little of that grand intellectual power which, by taking entirely the place of bodily strength, distinguishes civilisation from barbarism! Yes, we must get taught." (II, 19)

The only other meeting of the Club described at length is that convened in September 1870 to celebrate the fall of Napoleon III. Arthur Golding is the main speaker, and again his remarks are recounted at length. Golding argues that a French Republic will demonstrate to the English the burden imposed by monarchy, the duty of the government to advance the welfare of its citizens, and the desirability of state education. He goes on to advocate what comes close to a political general strike:

"... Suppose every working-man in England got up to-morrow morning, and, instead of going to his work, walked to the great square in the town where he lives and declared that he was sick to death of the life he led and *would* have things otherwise. You say that the army would be marched against us, and violence would naturally result. Yes, but are not the soldiers themselves working-men, men hired to the despicable toil of making themselves machines in order to be able to slaughter their fellow-men with skill? ...

Friends, the work for the future lies with such clubs as this of ours. Not content with helping to keep our fellows alive, we must *teach them their power!*" (II, 52-3)

Immediately after this oration, Arthur Golding asserts that political endeavours are his proper concern, and he expresses shame for his "days and nights in useless labour" as an artist.

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Golding's association with the club turns out to be short-lived. He relinquishes his membership of the club, which has already lost half its small complement, when he takes on the task of improving and marrying Carrie Mitchell. He remains in contact with Noble, and it is through him that he learns again of his other love, Helen Norman, on the eve of his marriage to Carrie. Will Noble appears again just as Golding is at his lowest ebb, in despair at the evident

disaster of his marriage, and it is explained that the club has collapsed. Noble's final appearance in the novel comes when he visits Arthur Golding to announce that the club is to be reestablished. A successful builder has offered to pay the rent of the club house if Noble can find six working men willing to subscribe a shilling a week. Golding has returned to his ambitions as an artist, and although he is willing to subscribe to the club he refuses to commit himself to any active role. When Noble chastises him, Golding responds: "... believe me, I am making a better use of my life than you would have me do" (II, 306). This same rejection of social reform is echoed in *The Unclassed* (1884), when Waymark, who has been introduced to the reader as a radical and freethinker, asserts:

"... I have no longer a spark of social enthusiasm. Art is all I now care for, and as art I wish my work to be judged." (*The Unclassed*, 211)

Both Golding and Waymark in turn reflect Gissing's own rejection of political activity to achieve social change and his turn towards more exclusively literary ambitions.

Two other working class radicals appear in the novel, and are perhaps the most interesting of the incidental characters in *Workers in the Dawn*. Mark Challenger and John Pether, one a tailor and the other an umbrella-maker, are introduced as friends of Samuel Tollady. They are portrayed as a sinister pair, whose radicalism is based not on intellectual persuasion but on their personal miseries and misfortunes.

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Mark Challenger is described as very short with a stoop and bandy legs, bloodshot eyes, a hooked nose, few teeth and no hair. He advises Tollady to educate the young Arthur in radical politics: "Make a Radical of him — a Revolutionist!" (I, 118) As the novel progresses, Challenger becomes a more sympathetic character. He is a firm friend of Arthur Golding, lodging in the same house, and it is he who introduces Arthur to Noble's club.

John Pether, on the other hand, is a remarkable description of a root-and-branch radical. Challenger explains at one point that Pether is too insurrectionary for the club:

"... John won't hear of any other way of righting things except by violence, and it's just that that our club won't have anything to do with." (II, 9)

Pether is presented as declining into madness, and a predisposition towards instability is suggested by what is presented of his life story. His mother had been hanged for murder a month after Pether was born; he was brought up in a workhouse, and later imprisoned for stealing a halfpenny from a callous employer; he recounts how he unsuccessfully tried to kill himself by drowning. The initial description of John Pether is every bit as dour as that of his friend: tall, bald, of morose aspect, habitually nervous and constantly biting his lips, his left cheek marked "with a large wine-coloured stain which gave a decidedly unpleasant look to his countenance." His most forceful peroration comes on the death of Samuel Tollady:

Then the hollow voice once more broke the silence, but speaking with a terrible concentration of energy which almost froze the hearer's blood.

"Another gone," it said. "Another trodden down into the grave in the struggle against the tyranny of kings and princes, of idle lords, and all the pestilent army of the rich, whose rank breath poisons the bitter crust they

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throw to us! How many more, how many more of us shall perish before we learn the courage of the dog which leaps at its tormentor's throat? It is not gentleness and kindness and forgiving words that will end our miseries, but

swords and cannon-balls and every river of the earth red with blood. It is good you are gone; the fight that is coming would have been too stern for you; your heart would have been moved to pity by the shrieks of dying wretches when the hour came for killing, and killing without mercy, man, woman and child. We will make the earth fat with their thick blood, and it will grow us better bread! We will pull down their palaces which shut out the air of heaven, and build houses out of the ruins, for we are tired of creeping into dens for our rest!" (I, 354-55)

Pether persuades Arthur Golding to swear on Tollady's body never to "make peace with the tyrants of the earth" and never to "be the friend of a rich man." A few pages later, Pether misrepresents this oath to Helen Norman saying that Golding has sworn never again to speak to her. So results the misunderstanding but for which, the reader is led to assume, Arthur and Helen would have married, avoiding the grotesque unhappiness which results from Golding's liaison with Carrie Mitchell.

John Pether's fanaticism does not diminish, and even on his deathbed his mind is filled with newspaper accounts of "the Communist rebellion in Paris" which have been his reading fare for several months. In his delirium, Pether imagines that he can hear the drums and bells heralding the beginning of a revolution in London:

"... We are fifty thousand strong, and already half London is in our hands. Everyone who is ragged or hungry or oppressed, everyone who knows the bitterness of long and hopeless waiting for justice, everyone whom wrong has driven into crime, everyone whom tyranny has made *mad* — all are with

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us! Hark! Now the drums have ceased, and the firing has begun. They will fight desperately, these rich men, for their bags of gold and their palaces overflowing with luxury. But what can they do against the millions of us slaves who have cast away our fetters, and know our strength? Cannon, too; not a house shall be left standing, not the latest-born of our tyrants shall live another hour!" (II, 203)

It is John Pether who is dead within the hour. In his stupor, he rises and attacks Arthur Golding and in so doing upsets an oil lamp and sets alight his piles of newspapers. Pether dies in the blaze, consumed by his revolutionary enthusiasm.

John Pether is not presented sympathetically — it would be difficult to portray anyone of his ilk in a favourable light; nor is he irremediably bad. He is not mendacious; nor, in spite of all his vengeful utterances, is he guilty of any act of violence save the delirious assault on Golding. He is depicted as sincere within his own terms and able to partake in friendships. It is a very human account of a man who, in appearance and in political appetite, is almost inhuman.

John Pether is not unique in the literature of his period. There is, for instance, a similar sounding character of extreme radical persuasions, Rob Pegler, in a novel entitled *The Democracy* which appeared a few years before *Workers in the Dawn*. Robespierre Pegler, also known as "89," is a comic character, who divides his time between inciting discontent and earning a living as a pot-house orator promoting beer consumption at public-house debating societies by speaking forthrightly against the consensus on any issue under discussion. Pegler is devious and dishonest and fanatical to the point of keeping a "black book" of names of those who cross him so that slights can be avenged after the revolution. He tells the young hero of the novel: "I am not a man, but a cause — I am '89 — I am the Revolution. I am the proletariat in arms, I am death to tyrants — do you mark the word, boy? — tyrants"⁸

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The Democracy is about a boy, Paul Nethersole, who runs away from his miserly father, and eventually settles with a kindly if cantankerous publisher of infidel and radical literature. Paul reads widely in radicalism, and champions the slogan “War to the Rich.” His ideas begin to mature through a rigorous programme of self-education, and under the patronage of an old radical acquaintance who turns out to be a peer, Paul becomes a Radical M. P. His ideas continue to change, however, and he effectively cuts short his political career by declaring at a radical meeting: “if you were at once to become absolute masters of your own political destinies, you would imperil your future, and perhaps that of the whole race.”⁹ He had been unaware that the kindly Christian daughter of the publisher was in love with him, and is instead infatuated with the aristocratic sister of his patron. Shortly after his cathartic speech, Paul declares his love but is rebuffed — and the reader is given to believe he commits suicide.

The novel shares a number of features with *Workers in the Dawn*. Both books concern a young man who moves from humble circumstances into a more elevated social sphere through the patronage of a man of wealth; this central character strives to promote social justice, but it transpires that his commitment is not sufficiently single-minded; he has two women in his life, one genteel and unobtainable and the other of lower social standing. Most remarkably, both novels end with the suicide of the main character. There must be at least a chance that Gissing was familiar with *The Democracy* and borrowed from it when devising the plot of *Workers in the Dawn*.

Going further down this by-way, the title page of *The Democracy* gives the author as one Whyte Thorne, which appears to have been a pseudonym of the writer Richard Whiteing.¹⁰ Whiteing’s most successful novel was *No. 5 John Street*, which appeared in 1899. One of the characters in it is a fanatical radical-cum-anarchist known as “Old ’48,” echoing Pegler’s

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nickname of “89” in *The Democracy*. “Old ’48” was an only slightly disguised description of Dan Chatterton, a communist and atheist propagandist of late nineteenth-century London — a “half-crazed Jeremiah of the slums” in the words of the socialist H. H. Champion, who was incidentally at one time an acquaintance of Gissing.¹¹ Chatterton’s reputation as a political maverick developed in the 1880s, when his insurrectional pamphlets and street oratory won him considerable publicity. He had, however, been around for a long time. He was on the council of the Land and Labour League in the early 1870s, and on the committee of the Patriotic Club in 1873. His first pamphlet, which appeared in 1872, argued that once the police and armed forces began to think for themselves they would join the people in a revolution:

in fact, an entire smashing-up of kings, queens, princes, priests, and policemen, land and money mongers, and rascality of all sizes and degrees in a word, an entire re-organisation of Society on the basis of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity.¹²

In July 1879, the British Museum received a copy of Chatterton’s latest penny pamphlet. It bore the title *The Homes of the Poor and the Board of Works Swindle: by one of ye hungry gutted*, and it asserted:

Oh, yes! workers of to-day, there is nothing left for you to-day but to steel your nerves, dry your powder, sharpen your weapons, tighten your grasp, and drive the bright, flashing steel clean through the quivering heart of your Blood Stained Foe.

The echo of John Pether’s anger and despair is unmistakable. Did Gissing have in mind some encounter with Dan Chatterton when he devised the character of John Pether? It can be nothing more than surmise. Yet in the *Weekly Dispatch* article on the Patriotic Club from which Gissing

borrowed, the author recalled some of the more daring discourse of the “Hole in the Wall” days.

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Among those mentioned by name is Dan Chatterton:

the Communist Chatterton was the sincere and simple type of reformer that looks from the meanness and misery about him —

*And sees aloft the red right arm
Redress the eternal scales.*¹³

All page references to Gissing’s novels refer to the Harvester Press editions.

1. This letter of 8 June 1880 is reproduced in Pierre Coustillas and Colin Partridge (eds.), *Gissing: The Critical Heritage*, London, 1985, pp. 49-50.
2. Letter to his sister of 27 August 1887, in *Letters of George Gissing to Members of his Family*, edited by Algernon and Ellen Gissing, London, 1927.
3. *Workers in the Dawn*, p. xlix. The issue of the *Weekly Dispatch* concerned was that for 9 March 1879.
4. The identification is made, almost sotto voce, in Edward Royle, *Radicals, Secularists and Republicans: popular freethought in Britain, 1866-1915*, Manchester, 1980, pp. 141-42, 178.
5. *The Nether World*, p. 183. For the Land and Labour League, see Royden Harrison, *Before the Socialists*, London, 1965, chapter 5. The most detailed published account of the Patriotic Club is to be found in Andrew Rothstein’s *A House on Clerkenwell Green*, London 1966.
6. Surprisingly, Gissing had intended, in his unpublished revisions, to delete most of this chapter and to make the setting of the walk not Whitecross Street, with its powerful associations for Arthur Golding, but Whitechapel.
7. Whyte Thorne, *The Democracy: a novel*, 3 vols., London, 1876. Rob Pegler seems to have been based very loosely on a Chartist and radical leader, Bronterre O’Brien, who died in 1864.

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8. *The Democracy*, I, p. 189.
9. *Ibid.*, III, p. 229.
10. The British Library index makes the identification between the pseudonym Whyte Thorne and Richard Whiteing. *The Democracy* is listed as one of Whiteing’s works in John W. Cousin, *A Short Biographical Dictionary of English Literature*, London, 1910, p. 454.
11. For a Brief account of Dan Chatterton’s life and labours, see Andrew Whitehead, “Forgotten Freethinkers: ‘Old Chat,’” *Freethinker*, vol. 105, no. 9 (September 1985), pp. 136-37, 140. H. H. Champion’s remarks about Chatterton appear in his review of *No. 5 John Street* in the *Book Lover* (Melbourne), August 1899.

12. [Dan Chatterton], *The Revolution in the Police*, London, [1872], p. 4.

13. *Weekly Dispatch*, 6 July 1879.

Two Gissing Letters from France

Pierre Coustillas.

Over eighty years after Gissing's death, hitherto unknown letters from him to members of his family and to miscellaneous correspondents keep appearing in sale rooms and antiquarian bookdealers' catalogues. A recent example is the most interesting and characteristic letter to

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Professor Walter Raleigh written at Cosenza on 19 November 1897, which first surfaced at a Sotheby auction some years ago, then in one of David Holmes's catalogues. Not a few letters to Algernon and Ellen have emerged in the last ten years and some of them have just reached a permanent home in America. As often as not such letters, which may appear singly or in batches of ten or twenty, are absolutely new to Gissing scholars. Doubtless a large number still has to surface — how many do we know of the fifty or so replies to the strangers who wrote to him spontaneously about *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*? — and those that will frequently be found not to be mentioned in the author's diary or to have been written in periods when he did not keep it.

The two following items of correspondence, admittedly of moderate importance and significance, are not recorded in *Book Auction Records* and *Book Prices Current* as having appeared in a sale room after the first World War. Nor has patient research in the American auction catalogues from the interwar period to the 1950s produced anything but negative results.

The first letter is interesting as an example of the unpredictable manner in which Gissing responded to requests from journalists. Although he usually steered clear of interviewers — two opposite cases are offered by Frederick Dolman and Joseph Anderson¹ — he could reply to an absolute stranger in a friendly way. The circumstances under which he answered Whitelock's question would make one expect a polite refusal rather than a conditional acceptance. His common-law marriage to Gabrielle Fleury was known only to a handful of people like Edward Clodd, H. G. Wells and Morley Roberts; neither his relatives in Wakefield nor his struggling brother in his ever-changing abodes were aware of his current domestic circumstances, and he was anxious that no paragraph hinting at his ambiguous marital status should appear in the press. But perhaps had Whitelock come over to Paris to interview him, Gissing would have suggested

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some other place than Mme Fleury's flat at 13 Rue de Siam. As it happened the request for an interview and the consequent suggestion that questions might be answered in writing had no positive results. The only references to Gissing in the index to the *New York Times* concern his short story "Our Learned Fellow Townsman"² and a number of his books.³

Little is known about William Wallace Whitelock on this side of the Atlantic, but he made enough of a reputation for himself in four decades to earn an entry in the *Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, where he appears as "poet and author." Born in 1869, he was the son of William Whitelock and Jane Stockton Woolston, and of English descent — his great-great-grandfather Isaac had migrated from Leeds to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in 1740. He belonged to a wealthy family with some literary interests. The *Cyclopaedia*, where his father appears in a separate entry, tells us that the latter was "a Baltimore merchant, landowner, banker and insurance executive, and the author of *Life and Times of John Jay*."

At the time he got in touch with Gissing, W. W. Whitelock already had a not inconsiderable experience of life. After receiving his early education in France and Switzerland, he had graduated at Pennsylvania Military College in 1887 and at Johns Hopkins University in 1890, ultimately taking a Ph.D. degree in history at the University of Munich three years later. After that he had served a brief law apprenticeship in New York City but, being attracted to journalism, had become associated in an editorial capacity with the *New York Mail and Express* and the *Criterion*. His most recent major experience was as “chief yeoman” on the *Gloucester* during the Spanish-American War (1898), of which he was to write an illustrated history.

As Gissing’s letter indicates Whitelock was in 1901 on the staff of the *New York Times*, more especially “foreign correspondent of the literary section” of that newspaper. Early that

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year he was seeking contact with the leading writers of the period. Interviews with Zola, Kipling, Hardy, Wells and George Moore are on record, but he was not invariably successful. Meredith’s reply at all events was a none too gracious refusal. It can be read in C. L. Cline’s edition of *The Letters of George Meredith*. Writing on 7 February 1901 Meredith ironically observed that Whitelock’s letter of application made him long for an equivalent form of politeness in refusing the interview that was applied for, “whether from a fiendish opposition to Journalism or in the vanity of exclusiveness, I cannot say.”⁴

Gissing’s letter is easy to situate in the flow of his activities in the early days of 1901. He was then struggling with his story of Roman and Goth, provisionally entitled “A Vanquished Roman,” a story quite different from *Veranilda*, as his preparatory notes for his historical novel testify.⁵ But he was not pleased with the first few pages and was to rewrite them in February. Good news came from Pinker, who was doing his best to place *Our Friend the Charlatan* and *By the Ionian Sea*. But Gissing was in bad form, suffering from a severe cold, and the gap in his diary from 5 to 23 of January is a sure sign that he was not making headway and felt unhappy. However, nothing of all this can be inferred from his letter to Whitelock. To a journalist who asserted that the object of his interview would not be personal — words which he must have read with relief — he was not likely to make any remarks which could be read as uncalled-for confessions.

13, Rue de Siam,
Paris.
Jan. 11. 1901.

Dear Sir,

In reply to your letter in which you request an interview as representative of the New York

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Times, I regret that the fact of my residence in Paris makes it impossible for me to give you an appointment just now — unless, indeed, you think of coming to France, in which case I would see you with pleasure.

You mention that the object of your interview would not be personal. Could I, then, answer in writing such questions as may have occurred to you? If so, pray let me know, and I will reply as soon as I can.

I am, dear Sir,
Very truly yours,
George Gissing.

William Wallace Whitelock Esq.

If Whitelock ever commented in print on Gissing’s works, it was probably anonymously.

He published a number of books in the next four decades — in particular three volumes of poems and a novel — and wrote at enormous length for a variety of newspapers and periodicals. His satire “The Literary Guillotine,” first published anonymously in the *Reader* in 1902, made a sensation — it remains to American readers of the *Newsletter* to check whether Gissing appears in it. He was married in London on 10 January 1901 — the day before Gissing replied to him — to Baroness Mary von Stockhausen, survived his correspondent by some thirty-seven years, and died in New York City on 28 January 1940.

The second item of correspondence is an unillustrated postcard addressed to “Mrs. Gissing. | 9 Wentworth Terrace. | Wakefield. | Angleterre.” It is undated but the Saint-Jean de Luz postmark shows it was posted on 29 June 1903 at 12a.m. while the Wakefield postmark reads “11.30 AM JY 1 03.” Together with Gabrielle and Mme Fleury, Gissing was on the point of leaving the Maison Lannes at Ciboure, an attractive house which can still be seen on the

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Place de la Mairie. Shortly before he had contemplated moving to Cambo-les-bains, some miles inland, where the popular French dramatist Edmond Rostand made his home, but he had finally opted for a house in the small village of Ispoure, just outside Saint-Jean Pied de Port, much further inland, very close to the Spanish frontier. A postcard to his literary agent, James B. Pinker, of 30 June, also gave the address that was to be his last. Only Gabrielle, in her own correspondence, was to be a little more accurate, supplying the name of the house — Maison Elguë — a name one finds to this day in the local churchyard. It was in that strongly built two-storeyed house that he wrote *Veranilda*.

The reference to Nelly is significant in that, of all his relatives in Wakefield, it was with his younger sister that he most willingly communicated. But exchanges of correspondence were now becoming infrequent. Of course some of his letters of the period addressed to his family may still be in private hands, but it would seem that he had not written to Ellen since March. The present postcard falls between a letter to Margaret of 25 May 1903 (misdated in the 1927 collection, which has it only in part) and letters to Mrs. Gissing of 2 August (Yale), to Algernon of 12 September (Yale) and to Ellen of the same day (also misdated in the 1927 volume; original untraced). He no longer felt inclined to write to them at length on his own literary activities. He had become convinced that his friends — Bertz, Clodd and Roberts — could understand him much better than his relatives. Still he felt compelled to write to Wakefield every few weeks, partly because it was from Wakefield, by Ellen especially, that Walter’s schooling was watched more closely.

No letter to Walter is available for 1903, although there is no reason to doubt that Gissing wrote regularly to his elder son. Walter, by then eleven and a half years old, was a boarder at the Holt Grammar School in Norfolk (also known as the Gresham Grammar School from the name of its founder), where he had gone on his leaving Miss Rickard’s school at

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Ilkley, Yorkshire in the autumn of 1902. Gissing had hoped that his son would succeed in getting a scholarship after his first year at Holt, but, as is shown by a letter to Clara Collet of 12 June 1903, a couple of weeks before he wrote the present postcard to his mother, his hopes had failed to materialize: “Walter — alas! is not doing at all well at Holt Grammar School, not the faintest chance of a scholarship. Idle and careless, say the masters”.⁶

New address:

Ispoure.

St. Jean Pied de Port.

(B. P.)

France.

Please let Nelly tell me anything new about W; but not to write till necessary. Love to all of you.

G.G.

It is to be hoped that a new batch of letters to Walter covering the last year of Gissing's life will surface before long. They would surely help to answer Gissing's own question about his son better than the few letters to his Wakefield relatives that we have for the last six months of 1903.

(For kind permission to publish these letters I am very grateful to their present holder, Mark Samuels Lasner, of Charlottesville, Virginia. Warm thanks are also due to Professor Paul F. Mattheisen for sending me a photocopy of the entry on W. W. Whitelock in the *Cyclopaedia of American Biography*.)

1. Frederick Dolman unsuccessfully begged for an interview (Diary entry for 2 April 1891), but was not thereby discouraged from commenting at length on Gissing's novels on at least two occasions. See his article "The Social Reformer in Fiction" (*Westminster Review*,

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May 1892, pp. 528-37) and "George Gissing's Novels" (*National Review*, October 1897, pp. 258-66). — Joseph Anderson, brother of the once famous actress Mary Anderson (Mrs. De Navarro), wrote to Gissing asking for an interview in the spring of 1896. They met at the Café Royal; the article was submitted to the novelist, who revised it before it appeared in the *Boston Evening Transcript* for 13 June, p. 24 (diary entries for 1 and 21 May, 2 June, 1 July and 1 August 1896).

2. Published in two instalments on 20 and 21 March 1896, pp. 9 and 9.
3. From *The Nether World* to *The House of Cobwebs*, seventeen Gissing titles were reviewed in the *New York Times*.
4. *The Letters of George Meredith* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1970), Vol. III, p. 1382.
5. See the forthcoming critical edition of *Veranilda*, ed. Pierre Coustillas (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1987).
6. Letter in the possession of Robert Collet.

Notes and News

A belated word of comment is in order about Robert Lee Wolff's *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, a multi-volume catalogue of Wolff's library published by the Garland Publishing Company, Vol. II (D-K), which appeared in 1982, offers descriptions of a number of novels by the Gissing brothers (pp. 122-25) and gives answers to several bibliographical questions which have puzzled one or two specialists. Wolff was a wealthy man though an academic, and he must

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have spent enormous sums of money on Victorian novels, which he collected over a period of some forty or fifty years. The catalogue of his library naturally invites comparison with Michael

Sadleir's own catalogue, similarly titled and arranged, but as regards George and Algernon Gissing, its interests is in several respects superior. For one thing, Sadleir had no use for Algernon; nor did he hold any presentation copy with an inscription in the author's hand (*The Unclassed* was not signed by Gissing, but by Hardy). Besides his collection of sixteen titles, with no copy of *Workers*, also ranks second to Wolff's twenty-one. Considering the number of Algernon's books inscribed to or signed by his eldest daughter Enid, it is clear that Wolff either bought most of the Algernon titles from Enid herself or as a lot from a bookdealer who had purchased them from her. *Arrows of Fortune* (1904) has an inscription "Enid Gissing Novr 1904" and *Baliol Garth* (1905) is inscribed to "Enid Gissing with all love from her father A. G. May 1905." *Joy Cometh. in the Morning*, Algernon's first book, published in two volumes, is a copy which he once presented to his mother, and which contains a long inscription to E. A. B. Barnard together with a letter dated 13 June 1928 to the same correspondent. *Love in the Byways* (1910), a collection of short stories, is signed "Enid Gissing, Novem: MDCCCXII," an obvious mistake. Two three-deckers, *A Masquerader* (1892), and *A Village Hampden* (1890), were once presented to Emma Shailer, a relative of the Gissings on the Bedford side who is mentioned in George's diary. His own novels in Wolff's collection are all first editions. Two copies are of special interest: *Human Odds and Ends* (Lawrence & Bullen, 1898) with "A. H. Bullen" on the spine, which unmistakably points to a late binding-up of sheets; and *The Nether World*, inscribed "From 7.K to Smallbrook Cottage. April 1889." This copy, which George presented to his brother at the time they lived at 7K Cornwall Residences and Smallbrook

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Cottage, Willersey respectively, has been known for years. It was described by Walter T. Spencer in his informative but unindexed book, *Forty Years in my Bookshop* (1923), and was recorded in saleroom catalogues between the wars, but its present location had become uncertain. To some readers who care for the outside as much as for the inside of books, the presence in Wolff's library of a first edition of *Veranilda* "as new in dust-jacket, grey-green paper, lettered in navy blue" is likely to be startling news.

A noticeable sign of evolution in Gissing's reputation recently is the increasing number of translations of his work. There have been in the last ten years translations of *New Grub Street* into Romanian, French, German and Swedish, and a revised translation of Osamu Doi's Japanese version is soon to become available. The Swedish translation, only just received as a present from the publishers, has been done by the same hand as that of *The Odd Women*, and the afterword is again by Ulf Brandell. We hope to publish reviews of the two Swedish translations as well as of the Romanian translation of *Thyrza* some time next year.

Wulfhard Heinrichs reports that *Zeilengeld* has been very favourably received in Germany. At DM25 the volume, very attractively produced, is a bargain. Information about Gissing in the country of Eduard Bertz is not quite up to date. The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* still has Gissing study at Jena, but like the other German journals which reviewed the book, it sees in the volume a social document of lasting importance and rejoices that Hans Magnus Enzensberger, the editor of "Die andere Bibliothek" has "discovered" such a book. The *Lübecker Nachrichten* regard *New Grub Street* as a "special pearl." Wulfhard Heinrichs has also sent a copy of the original poem on Gissing by Edfelt: the Swedish original appeared in Johannes Edfelt, *Dikter* (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Forlag, 1979), p. 135.

The Harvester critical edition of *Veranilda*, introduced and edited by Pierre Coustillas, has

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been announced for December. Proofs of the critical material, well over 100 pages, were read in early September. Besides the book's history related in the Bibliographical Note and the

Bibliography, which is longer than one would expect for a novel so infrequently reprinted since 1904, the Harvester edition will offer abundant textual notes partly based on Gissing's own notes (90 pages in the Carl H. Pforzheimer Library) in preparation for his novel, a detailed study of these notes which Gissing took from a wide variety of books from 1895 to the last few months of his life. The manuscript of the novel, also held by the Pforzheimer Library, is discussed in a special section, as is the literary and historical interest of the book in the Introduction.

As announced earlier the Hogarth Press will publish new editions of *Denzil Quarrier* (ed. Gillian Tindall) and *In the Year of Jubilee* (ed. John Halperin) in December. The Hogarth titles to appear in 1987 have not yet been chosen. The Chatto & Windus/Hogarth Press catalogue for August 1986-January 1987 shows the new covers in the collected paperback edition.

The epithet "Reardonesque" appeared again in the *Times Literary Supplement* (29 August 1986, p. 931) in a review of *The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad* by John Lucas. It looks as though it will ultimately work its way into the next supplement to the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

Recent Publications

Volumes

David Grylls, *The Paradox of Gissing*, Hemel Hempstead: Allen & Unwin, 1986. Pp. xiv + 226. Brown cloth. £20.

George Gissing, *Brödskrivargatan (New Grub Street)* translated into Swedish by Gemma

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Snellman with an afterword by Ulf Brandell, Stockholm: Bokförlaget Trevi, 1982. Pp. 528. Pictorial cover. This volume is uniform with *Udda Kvinnor (The Odd Women)*, published by the same firm in 1980.

George Gissing, *The Nether World*, London: Dent, 1986, Pp. xx + 392 + 4 (advertisements). Blue and white paperback. This latest impression in Everyman's Library has the familiar introduction by Walter Allen.

Articles, reviews, etc.

Robert L. Selig, "A Further Gissing Attribution from the *Chicago Post*," *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, Vol. 80 (1986). First Quarter, pp. 100-04. This article concerns "One Farthing Damages," the story we reprint in the present number.

Peter Kemp, "Nineteenth-Century Love: 'Pourings into Journal of Porings over the Emotions,'" *The Listener*, 19 June 1986, p. 25. Regrets that the author of *The Bourgeois Experience*, Vol. II: *The Tender Passion*, should have overlooked *New Grub Street*.

Jenny Hainsworth, "From Ahem to Eheu," *Antiquarian Book Monthly Review*, Vol. XIII, no. 8, August 1986, p. 307. Review of *George Gissing: A Bibliographical Study*.

Laurel Brake *et al.*, "Nineteenth Century: Victorian," *The Year's Work in English Studies*, Vol. 64 (1983), London: John Murray for the English Association, 1986. Some of the books and articles on Gissing which appeared in 1983 are reviewed. An incomplete reference to an article about a letter of early 1903 from Henry James to Gissing is given (*American Literary Realism*).

Martha Vogeler, "Book Reviews: 11. Hudson and Gissing," *English Literature in Transition*, Vol. 29 (1986), no. 4, pp. 453-55. Review of *Landscapes and Literati: Unpublished Letters of W. H. Hudson and George Gissing*. Rachel Bowlby's "Just Looking" is reviewed by

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Lorraine Fletcher in the same number, pp. 455-57, under the title "Counter Culture."

Robert L. Selig, "Book Reviews," *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 29, no. 4, Summer 1986, pp. 623-24. Reviews of Rachel Bowlby's *Just Looking* and Francesco Badolato's *George Gissing: Antologia Critica*.

"Landscapes and Literati," *Times Literary Supplement*, 19 September 1986, p. 1020. A descriptive notice.