An Exile's Cunning: Some Private Papers of George Gissing

Postmus, B.P.

Citation for published version (APA):
Acknowledgments

It gives me great pleasure in publishing this collection of Gissing papers to express publicly my gratitude to those persons and institutions that have so generously assisted me in my work. I am particularly indebted to Gissing’s granddaughter, Mrs Jane Pétremand Gissing, and her son, M. Xavier Pétremand, for granting me permission to publish.

The Faculty of Letters of the University of Amsterdam by awarding me a research grant enabled me to travel to the United States to work in one of the finest research libraries of the world, the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University, whose courteous curator, Mr Vincent Giroud, and his patient and ever helpful staff made it a joy to begin the preparatory work for my editions of Gissing’s American notebook and his poetry, in New Haven. A similarly generous welcome was extended to me by Mr William R. Cagle and his staff at the Lilly Library at Indiana University in Bloomington, where—as a recipient of a Ball Brothers Foundation Fellowship—I was allowed to examine and handle the incomparable riches of its Gissing collection, formerly owned by the Pforzheimer Foundation. A third equally august American place of learning deserves an honourable mention here. To the Huntington Library at San Marino, California, and in particular to its Curator of Literary Manuscripts, Sara S. Hodson, I am indebted for her prompt assistance and permission to publish Gissing’s memorandum book.

I am also grateful to the Assistant Librarian of the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich, Ms Rita Bryon, for her kind efficiency in tracing the ships in which Gissing sailed to America and back. To the staffs of the British Library Reading Room—under whose great dome Gissing spent so many happy and industrious hours—and the British Newspaper Library at Colindale and the Guildhall Library in London, I offer my thanks for help in unearthing a variety of seemingly untraceable sources.

When in 1962 Christel Saaf and I, with about forty others, began our study of English language and literature in the Engels Seminarium at Amsterdam, it would have struck both of us as quite unthinkable that one day she as Christel van Boheemen, Professor of English literature in her old university, would act as my promotor. That day has come and for her encouragement and readiness to help me overcome my long-held scruples in submitting myself to this traditional academic rite, I shall remain in her debt.

My co-promotor, Prof. Peter Verdonk, and I go back a long time too. We first met as English masters in the Kennemer Lyceum at Overveen in 1969. Over the years he has proved, in good times and bad, the most loyal and self-effacing of colleagues. If it
had not been for his patient insistence and timely support, my work might well have remained unfinished. I shall always treasure his friendship.

Finally, I should like to thank my French co-promotor, Pierre Coustillas, the doyen of Gissing studies, for his many invaluable suggestions for improving my work, for his stimulating faith in my research from the moment I mooted it and the unstinting gift of his (and his wife's) friendship and their precious time. With Gissing let me say to all those who helped: “More than most men am I dependent on sympathy to bring out the best that is in me.”

For my wife and children my addiction to Gissing must have seemed to fuel one of the more unfortunate sides to my character, the tendency to semi-monastic seclusion. That they have ungrudgingly and patiently and sometimes mockingly borne with me and to an extent been contaminated by my enthusiasm, has not been the least of my blessings over the last nine years.