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

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Acknowledgments

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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.

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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.

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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.