

GEORGE GISSING.

A Sketch by His Fellow Novelist,
H. G. Wells.

The novel which the late George Gissing left unfinished at his death, "Veranilda," will not be accompanied when it appears in print, as has been expected, by an introduction from the pen of the author's friend, Mr. H. G. Wells. It seems that what Mr. Wells wrote did not satisfy Gissing's executors, Mr. Algernon Gissing, the novelist, and Miss Collett, and they have interdicted the publication of his essay with the book. The latter will have prefixed to it, therefore, an historical paper by Mr. Frederic Harrison on the Byzantine Empire, the subject of "Veranilda." Meanwhile, happily, we may read Mr. Wells's tribute to his fellow novelist in the August number of "The Monthly Review."

It opens rather unfortunately. Mr. Wells is scornful of those who, looking simply to Gissing's novels of sordid life in London, have called him "the master and leader of the English realistic school." The fact that he had a passion for antiquity cannot deprive him of that title, no matter how dogmatic Mr. Wells chooses to be on the subject. But the latter soon becomes interesting, telling us of his friend's boyhood and youth. "He could draw in those days with great skill and vigor—it will seem significant to many that he was particularly fascinated by Hogarth's work, and that he copied and imitated it." But especially was he in love with literature, reading even when he went out to walk. On the whole, he cared little for games. Theatricals at school, however, strongly appealed to him. "Gissing," writes an old schoolfellow, "was our shining light. He was at one and the same time stage builder, stage manager, instructor, leading actor and prompter, as well as our chief reciter." Among his books he was a prodigy, he won prizes at school, and later at Owens College, but he suddenly abandoned his academic career.

He crossed to America, and was for a short time a classical tutor in Boston. He threw up his place on some forgotten ground, and went in the vaguest spirit to Chicago. There he began to show still more clearly that practical incapacity, that curious inability to do the sane, secure thing, which is the hidden element in his career. It is not that he was a careless man, he was a most careful one; it is not that he was a morally lax man, he was almost morbidly the reverse. Neither was he morose or eccentric in his motives or bearing; he was genial, conversational, and well meaning. But he had some sort of blindness toward his fellow men, so that he never entirely grasped the spirit of everyday life, so that he, who was so copiously intelligent in the things of the study, misunderstood, blundered, was nervously diffident and wild and spasmodic in common affairs, in employment and buying and selling, and the normal conflicts of intercourse. He did not know what would offend, and he did not know what would please. He irritated others and thwarted himself. He had no social nerve. In Chicago he came near to absolute starvation. And there it was that, with some journalistic fiction, quite lost to the world, his career of print began; though, of course, he had written much both of verse and prose before that time. He was nearly twenty.

Returning to London, he threw himself into the composition of those novels by which he ultimately won his repute. Mr. Wells thinks that "the story of Balzac's indomitable industry must have had a singular appeal to him. . . . He would in those days say of So-and-So, 'How can he write? He has never starved!' More or less deliberately he set himself to the scheme of an English 'Comédie Humaine.' . . . It was surely the most unhappy and presumptuous of undertakings." This, we fancy, is where Gissing's literary executors objected to Mr. Wells's essay. They may well have resented the patronizing tone he takes toward the dead man's realistic novels. Mr. Wells is far more useful when he writes of his friend in this vein:

It is well to attempt some picture of him at this stage. His boyhood of study had neither dwarfed nor disfigured him, and he was then a figure of youth, vigor and promise. He was of rather more than average stature, finely proportioned, and, save for a droop of the shoulders and that slight failure from grace that neglect of exercise entails, he carried himself well. His head was finely formed, and, though he was spare, his skin was well seeming, and he had in his flushed moments the ruddy English color. His features were clear cut and regular, his eyes dark and his hair, which was brown with a pleasing reddish tinge, flowed back from his forehead very handsomely. He had quite distinctly a presence. His voice was sound and full, and a youth in which books had overtopped experience had made his diction more bookish and rotund than is common. He was at first a little shy in intercourse, but then intelligent, self-forgetful, inaggressive and enthusiastic. He must have seemed, he did seem, to those who met him in those days, a man of the richest possibilities.

Yet the same insidious weakness at the point where imagination and thought pass into action had already, behind this front of promise, contrived an arrangement of absurdities. He occupied a flat near Regent's Park, and he moved in cultivated society. He had such friends as Mr. Frederic Harrison, whose sons he instructed in Greek, and who was assiduous in his interest. He entered spheres in which bishops' wives are not unknown, and he has described to the present writer a conversation upon the decay of butlers with one of these ladies. She asked him how he managed. But, indeed, he dispensed with a butler's attentions. It will be incredible to every level minded reader, but as a matter of fact he maintained this fair appearance, he received his pupils in his apartment, he talked and wrote unceasingly upon scarcely any food at all. Partly, no doubt, it was poverty; he grudged every moment taken by teaching from his literary purpose, and taught as little as he could, but mainly it was sheer inability to manage. His meals were of bread and dripping, stewed tea, cheese at times, soup bought desiccated in penny packets, and such like victual; and a common friend, himself no mean novelist, has described his entertainment there of a Sunday afternoon. Gissing, with flushed face and shining eyes, declaiming Greek choruses and capping sonorous quotations, "There are miserable wretches," he would say, "who know not the difference between doctrials and anti-pasts"—until hunger could wait no longer. Thereupon he would become spasmodically culinary in a swift anti-climax. "Now for the squalid meal!"

Following this is an account of Gissing's first piece of good luck, when he was sufficiently in funds to go "straight by sea to the land of his dreams, Italy," and of his enthusiastic explorations of Rome. He was still what we may call a practising realist, but in 1897, with illness beginning to trouble him, "he had two or three

great Latin tomes in which he read and dreamed he was annotating the works of Cassiodorus, edicts and proclamations and letters written for Theodoric the Goth, and full of light upon the manners and daily life of the time." Once, mourning for Italy, which he fancied he would never see again, he showed to a friend certain little souvenirs of his journey to the South which he treasured in an old pocketbook, "the empty cover of his railway tickets home, a flattened blossom from Hadrian's villa, a ticket for the Vatican Library." But fate was kind and sent him again to Rome, and as time went on circumstances permitted him to attack "Vera-



GEORGE GISSING.
(From a photograph.)

nilda," which had long been forming in his mind, and to wreak all his passion for the historic past on this sixth century story. He was working on it at the time of his death, and left it unfinished and unrevised, but Mr. Wells states that it was carried so far forward that even the end for the two principal characters, the Princess and Basil, was practically told.

THE VENUS OF DELOS.

A Newly Discovered Masterpiece of
Antiquity.

Paris, August 10.

An archaeological discovery of the highest importance has just been made at Delos, the Cyclades island which contains the ruins of the altar to Apollo, once reckoned among the seven wonders of the world. For twenty-five years the work of scientific excavation carried on under the auspices of the French government by the French School at Athens led to meagre results owing to the lack of adequate funds. An American savant, the Duke of Loubat, who has an un-failing scent for buried antiquarian treasures, whether in Mexico or Greece, endowed the section of the French School at Athens engaged at Delos with an annuity of \$10,000, and the strenuous impulse thus given to the excavations has during the last two months been rewarded by brilliant developments. An official communication made recently to the French Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres by M. Homolle, curator of the Louvre; by Professor Maurice Holleaux, director of the French School at Athens, at present making the excavations at Delos, and by the Duke of Loubat, discloses the fact that seven superb statues have already been unearthed, and that it is no exaggeration to say that Delos will have as great an archaeological and artistic interest as Pompeii. There is a profusion of temples, altars and monuments there, and a whole town is being brought to view just as it was at the time of its ruin. A magnificent marble Venus, hereafter to be known as the "Venus of Delos," has been discovered by Professor Maurice Holleaux, and, in the judgment of archaeologists, will rank among the most interesting antique statues extant.

It is in excellent state of preservation. The Venus stands erect, with her left arm partially concealing the body. The god Pan, in an access of passion, is grasping her forearm with brutal force. She looks at the thick-set, rugged divinity with an expression of scorn, while above both figures a merry faced god of love, with one hand fondly caressing the head of Venus and the other hand encouraging Pan, draws the couple toward each other. The purity of this bold triple statue is thus profaned by human passion. It is a work that will arouse keen discussion among our modern masters, having, as it has, an aroma of Parisian modernity about it. One of the missing hands of the Colossus of Naxiens has also been dug up by Professor Holleaux. There are several smaller marble statuette, all intact. Two large marble statues of Silenus were discovered in June, also a marble statue of a young god seated, probably Dionysos. A letter written by Professor Holleaux during the last week of July brings the important news of two more marble statues of Silenus being unearthed. In one of them Silenus is larger than life size. The lips are thick and sensuous, and, with uncertain step and an expression of drunken levity, the naughty old man is walking along supported by a stout staff. A number of epigraphic stones and monuments have been discovered, and two of these are re-

garded by the French savans as of very great value. One of the inscriptions consists of a document concerning Grecian finance, and another is a decree to the inhabitants of the Cyclades.

In the neighborhood of the theatre already excavated Professor Holleaux has unearthed an entire house in a remarkable state of preservation. The rooms have walls standing to a height of eight feet, and to these are attached objects of every day furniture, cooking utensils, pots, jugs, plates, jars and a massive table of fine slate stone, carved and decorated with elaborate designs and painted in subdued colors. The table is round in shape, and Professor Holleaux says that as far as he is aware there is no other such antique table, or anything analogous to it, in existence. The objects brought to light by the Delos excavations cause something of a sensation in academic circles here, and the Duke of Loubat, M. Homolle and Professor Holleaux are recipients of hearty congratulations. C. I. B.

SUMMER NOVELS.

Stories by "Dodo" Benson and
Some Others.

THE CHALLONERS. By E. F. Benson. 12mo., pp. 345. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company.

THE INTERLOPER. By Violet Jacob (Mrs. Arthur Jacob). 12mo., pp. x, 318. Doubleday, Page & Co.

THE DAYSPRING. By Dr. William Barry. 12mo., pp. 331. Dodd, Mead & Co.

The author of "Dodo" is always sprightly, and he has not omitted to introduce into his latest novel a certain amount of that amusing dialogue which has done so much to win popularity for his clever stories of fashionable London life. But the main argument of "The Challoners" is drawn from a situation in a vicarage far from the distractions of the great city. There a clergyman of noble character but narrow intellectual outlook dwells with a son and a daughter whose natures he but imperfectly understands. Martin, the boy, whom he wants to turn into a scholar, is bent upon becoming a musician. Helen, the daughter, though not provided with as definite a cause for rebellion against the unwritten laws of the house, ends by falling in love with an atheist. Poor Mr. Challoner, overflowing with tenderness toward his children, and profoundly concerned for their welfare, nevertheless finds himself in a state of something like blind rage toward them both. The motive is not startlingly novel, and Mr. Benson does not handle it with marked originality. But he is sympathetic and skilful. He not only enters into Martin's dealings, he not



VIOLET JACOB.
(From a photograph.)

only sees that Helen cannot cease caring for her lover because her father is shocked by the latter's irreligion, but he understands and feels with Mr. Challoner. The result is that he gives a really truthful impression of life and holds our interest to the end. We refrain from disclosing the upshot of the narrative, but we may say that if it is a little more artistic than natural it is none the less successful in touching the emotions of the reader.

Mrs. Jacob has written in "The Interloper" an agreeable romance of Scottish life in the early nineteenth century. The hero, who gives the book its title, is the heir to a property which he does not see until he reaches manhood. Then, when he enters the house of his people, it is with one of those sinister secrets in the background with which family history so conveniently serves the purposes of fiction. Gilbert Speid's father is not the man whose name he bears. Obviously this by itself is the sort of thing that is likely to cause the hero of a novel all manner of trouble. But other matters are brought into the tale to make Gilbert's path difficult. There are complications in the house of the woman he loves, complications very different from those from which he suffered, but linked strangely to his own history. Furthermore, the usual rival appears upon the scene, and as usual contrives to make himself most elaborately obnoxious. The book is longer than it ought to be, considering the simplicity of the plot, and, indeed, the author's efforts to give variety to her story by the addition of one incident or another is more painstaking than effective. Yet there is something in the sentiment of "The Interloper" which is pleasing; the atmosphere of the book goes far to carry off the slenderly constructed drama it contains.

The exiled Irishman in Paris has been a favor-

ite hero for novelists, and in Dr. Barry's latest story he has the added virtue of having killed his landlord. If he has taken one life, he has saved another, that of a young Frenchman of the old regime, and a fortunate meeting on the Channel steamer insures him a hearty welcome to Paris, despite the differences of political creeds, and a lucrative engagement as private secretary to an Englishman, a liberal, a friend of Thiers, with a seat in the Chamber of Deputies. The time of the story is just before the days of the Commune. Probability does not hamper Dr. Barry in the construction of his tale. The reader is introduced to a remarkable hashish club, to a modern Cagliostro in the person of a mysterious and wealthy clairvoyant, and to a high born heroine who falls in love with the young exile of Erin because of his remarkable resemblance to her dead husband. She communicates with the shade of the deceased gentleman for his approval of her new infatuation until he complains, "You trouble me; write no more." This evident lack of sympathy confirms her in her choice. Henri, the Irishman, is sworn to the Commune, and Fernando is an aristocrat of the aristocrats. This is a complication. But the hero is equal to it. Just at the right moment he saves the lady, his honor and the situation. Dr. Barry gives us plenty of incident and plenty of plot, although it is sometimes a little difficult to see exactly what relation the one bears to the other. Naturalness he does not aim at, we judge, from the accuracy with which he hits the bull's-eye on the other target. The novel is seemingly an attempt to locate a romance of the seventeenth century in the nineteenth, and the result, while not without interest, is not without incongruity either.

LITERARY NOTES.

Mr. Francis Milton is writing a book on the Paris of the elder Dumas. The subject is an inspiring one, but that very fact makes us anxious. Mr. Milton will have to write very well, indeed, if he is not to fall below the level of his opportunity.

The Zurich publisher, Herr Schabelitz, died the other day. He was the man who never wrote to any one except on a postal card. He used that means of communication when he accepted the celebrated memoirs of Count von Arnheim. "I reserve the right," he wrote on the usual card, "to correct your infernally bad grammar." To a budding historian he sent this message: "You are making the mistake of your life. You do not want to study history. You want to learn how to write."

More news of forthcoming fiction. Mr. Hornung is writing some new stories in the vein of "The Amateur Cracksmen." We are not sure that we are altogether pleased with the information. Raffles ought not to have a successor. Mr. Jerome K. Jerome has written a sequel to "Three Men in a Boat," and "Q." is putting the finishing touches to a new novel called "Shining Ferry." Mr. Charles Marriott is bringing out in "Genevra" a story of a poet who reaches maturity in her art at the cost of her happiness as a woman, the scene of her adventures being a Cornish flower farm.

There is to be a collected edition of the works of the late Sir Leslie Stephen, with introductions by Mr. James Bryce and Mr. Herbert W. Paul. Three of the ten volumes will be given to the "Hours in a Library," four to the author's biographical essays, one to his literary essays, one to "Free Thinking and Plain Speaking" and one to reminiscences. The edition will be entitled "Essays Literary, Critical and Biographical of Sir Leslie Stephen."

Mr. Joseph Conrad has evidently been busying himself of late with modern French fiction. It is not long since we had occasion to allude to an essay of his on Anatole France, and now we learn that he has written a preface for a volume of stories translated out of Maupassant. The collection will include "Yvette" and "Miss Harriet."

Why in the world there should be another book about the late Coventry Patmore, who has already been made the hero of a biography in two stout volumes, we fail to see. But Mr. Edmund Gosse has written it, and it will be published in the autumn. Patmore was a graceful poet, who wrote a few charming things, but it hardly seems necessary to bring him before the public again in even the briefest monograph.

Cheerful is the life of the editor in Spain, if we may judge from an announcement printed this summer in one of the newspapers of the country, "La Lanterna." Here it is in all its sweet simplicity: "During the great heat the 'Lanterna' will suspend publication. It will appear again regularly after the middle of September next."

A vivid glimpse of Sir Richard Burton, the famous Orientalist and traveller, is given in a brief paper contributed to "Chambers's Journal" by a writer who knew him at Trieste. "To meet him," says this friend, "was to be fascinated by his commanding figure, his lionine expression, and, above all, by his wonderful power of conversation. At first sight the keen, fierce glance from beneath the shaggy eyebrows, the resolute mouth and the tawny Eastern complexion almost inspire the stranger with alarm; but this effect quickly disappears on closer acquaintance." We have this picture of him in one of his characteristic moments of passion:

The dinner had been ordered at six. At half-past the hour it was not ready. The waiter was summoned. He made excuse. "Mille tonnerres—ventrebleu!" roared Burton, with a volley of unutterable language which he only could translate. The waiter literally flew before the storm, looking back at the writer with "Mais, mon Dieu, l'Anglais!" The dinner quickly arrived, and with the soup Burton recovered his equanimity, though inveigling against all waiters, and the Triestin in particular.

Students of the Nibelungenlied will be glad to know that an elaborate edition of the work, following the text of Lachmann, is in preparation in Germany. Students of draughtsmanship will rejoice to know that the numerous illustrations are being drawn by Joseph Sattler, one of the cleverest of those German artists who have profited by the example of Dürer.