

## A Postscript to Illustrated Editions of the Works of William Morris: A Descriptive Bibliography

*Robert Coupe*

In the preface to my book, reviewed elsewhere in this issue of the *JWMS*, I foresaw the likelihood, now realised, of additional items coming to light which would have been included in the book had I known of them. Should the publisher issue a second edition, these items will receive an entry with a full description. However, uncertainty surrounds the appearance of any such edition. The William Morris Society seems a likely place to find people with a particular interest in the illustrators of Morris so I feel it appropriate, therefore, to supply a list of these extra titles in this issue of the *Journal*.

In the period since publication, the actual number of additional books has become somewhat embarrassing. As far as I know, no one has published an illustrated edition of a work by Morris since my book appeared. The most recent items I shall describe originally came out in 1992, though some were re-issued in the last two or three years; the oldest go back more than a century. As a whole, these books fall into two groups. One consists of books already listed, but issued in a different form by the same publisher, or (presumably under license) by a different one. The second group comprises books which owe nothing to a previous edition. Each title is listed in the order in which it would have appeared in the text had I known of it.

*The Defence of Guenevere*. London and Glasgow: Collins Clear-Type Press. n.d. This seems to be a companion volume to *Gems from William Morris* (see 2.8 on page 47 of my book). It has the same size and pagination, a pictorial front cover, a single frontispiece illustration by P. B. Hickling, one of the four which appear elsewhere in these Collins editions, and the same internal layout. The cover illustration, predominantly in light blue, occupies the lower three-quarters, below the title. It depicts a couple in medieval dress standing in a walled garden with arches in the background and bush roses close by. The man holds an open scroll. In contrast to *Gems*, it contains some longer poems, such as 'The Defence of Guenevere'. The two books do not have any poems in

common.<sup>1</sup>

The next two books fall into the first category and represent a cheaper version of what the publisher had already put out. Though hardback books, they are analogous to the paperback reprints we see today of bestsellers. Both these titles represent a paraphrase of stories from *The Earthly Paradise*.

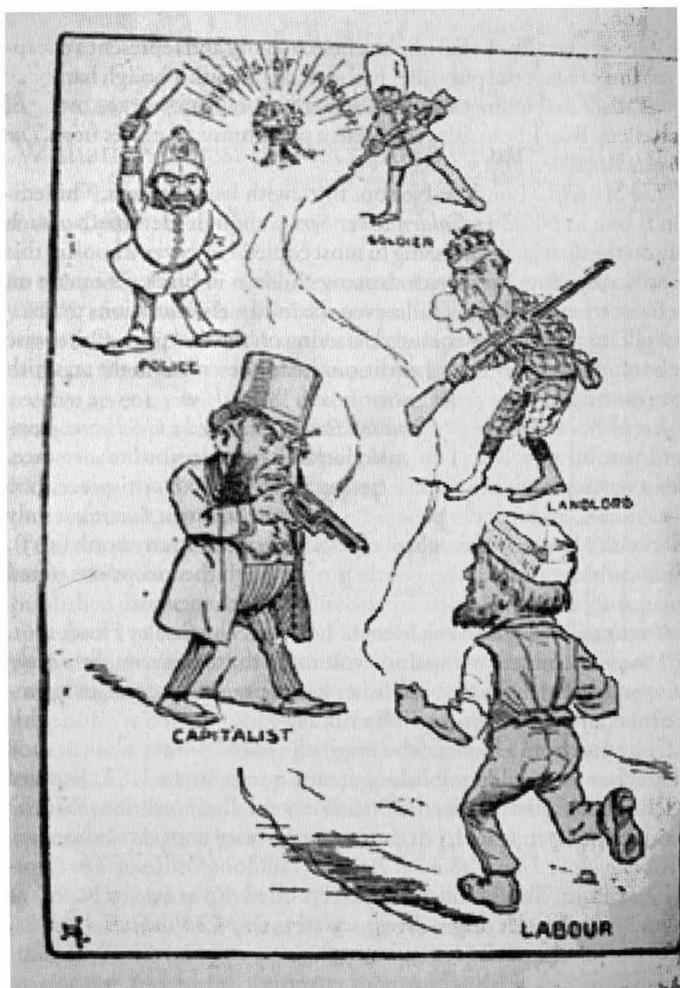
*The Six Gifts*. London: Nelson. 1910, with later reprints. This edition is one in Nelson's *Golden River Series*, though identified as such only on the dust jacket, missing in most copies. However, a book in this series has a yellow frieze with dancing children in black silhouette on the front cover. This book lacks even the minimal concessions to luxury of gilt on the cover or coloured lettering on the title page. Otherwise the book closely resembles the edition already described in the text with the same title (4.10).

*Stories from The Earthly Paradise Retold in Prose by C S Evans*. London: Arnold. 1915. This book also lacks any pretensions to elegance, with a cover plain except for lettering in black, no frontispiece, two fewer stories, and thinner paper of poorer quality, such that it has only half the thickness of the deluxe edition described in my book (4.13). Evans' introduction, the text of the stories (with the exceptions noted above) and Hechle's pictures are the same in both versions.

*Grettir the Strong* by Allen French. London: The Bodley Head. 1961. This book resembles a companion volume in the same series, *Sons of the Volsungs* (see 8.2) in that the publisher took a pre-existing text and commissioned new illustrations. The Bodley Head must have done this under license from Dutton, who originally published the book in 1908 (see 5.1) but were still republishing it at this time in the USA. Bernard Blatch did line drawings for the British version. In this edition, French's introduction is truncated, but the text of the story remains unchanged.

*Monopoly, or How Labour Is Robbed*. London: Office of *The Commonweal*. 1890. The Socialist League reprinted this article by Morris as a penny pamphlet. It originally appeared in *The Commonweal* in 1888. The cover has the same grade of newsprint paper as the rest of the pamphlet. On the obverse of the front cover is 'the hideous cartoon' to which Buxton Forman alludes in his bibliography [Fig. 1]. The artist identifies himself by his monogram, that used by Arthur Hughes. Hughes and Morris had known each other for more than thirty years. However, this is the only intimation I have that Hughes was active, or even interested, in Socialism.

*Monopoly, or How Labour Is Robbed*. London: Office of 'Freedom'. n.d. (circa 1900). This pamphlet is a reprint of the one of 1890, with the



[Fig. 1]. Arthur Hughes, illustration for *Monopoly, or How Labour is Robbed* (London: Office of The Commonweal, 1890).

same cartoon. However, the cover has an additional picture, an allegorical depiction of a heroic female figure holding aloft a banner with an inspirational message, and with workers crouching at her feet.

*On First Seeing Iceland.* Tonbridge, Kent: Woodcraft Press. 1992. Morris included this poem in *Poems by the Way* under the title 'Iceland First Seen'. Although Morris had scattered most of the poems in this book like dandelion seeds over a wide range of periodicals, I have not located a prior source for this one. Owen Legg operates the Woodcraft Press, a small private press which publishes limited editions. Legg went to Iceland in 1992, and this booklet, of which he printed a hundred copies, commemorates his trip. Legg also did the only illustration, a frontispiece printed in multiple colours from a linocut. It depicts a scene of Iceland from the sea as he imagined it before his visit.

*The Poet's Year: Original and Selected Poems Embodying the Spirit of the Seasons.* Ed. Oscar Fay Adams. Boston: Lothrop. 1890. A forerunner of the coffee table book, this anthology contains a selection of poems celebrating each month, presented in a showy cover with much gilt decoration, glossy paper, and profuse illustration. Not surprisingly, poems by Morris appear in many sections, particularly from the introductory lines eulogising the month which appear in his *Earthly Paradise*. While at least one of Morris's poems appears among the selection for most months, only one has an accompanying illustration [Fig. 2]. Unlike the situation for many of the pictures, the artist of this one did not identify him or herself.

*Guinevere: Poems by Lord Tennyson and W. Morris.* New York: Crowell. n.d. '1900' (University of British Columbia, BC, Canada). The firms of George G. Harrap in London and Thomas Y. Crowell in New York published Morris titles jointly over a period of years, including the present one. I have not seen nor even heard of a version by Crowell comparable to the one in paper boards by Harrap. Crowell's version in suede has minor differences in the wording of the title page, but otherwise is identical to Harrap's internally, as described in my book (see 21.2). Crowell's suede-bound copies do differ significantly from Harrap's in having much more ornate decoration in gilt on the front cover.

Three other anthologies remain, each put out twice, by different publishers. One can think of them as a group, since the one artist illustrated all of them. Furthermore, all have an identical format, with the same size, pagination and layout generally. Indeed, this group contains even more books adhering to the standard pattern of these three, but the other titles contain no poems by Morris. The artist, Gordon Benningfield, collaborated with a team of two others, who selected poems



[Fig. 2]. Illustration accompanying 'A Night in June' (an extract from 'Ogier the Dane') in *The Poet's Year*, ed. Oscar Fay Adams (Boston: Lothrop, 1890).

to match his artwork and who designed the layout. Benningfield's pictures appear in the full colour of the original watercolour or oil painting; the books also feature a few monochrome line drawings.

*Poems of the Countryside*. London: Viking Penguin. 1987, with later reprints.

*Poems of the Countryside*. Devizes, Wiltshire, England: Selectabook. n.d., circa 2000.

All three of the Selectabook reprints show the differences from the earlier edition seen in this book. Unlike the plain beige buckram cover of the Viking edition, the front cover of the reprint reproduces the picture on the dust jacket. The jacket itself is the same for both. Internally, the two books are identical, except for the name of the publisher and the statement of copyright, which in the later edition refers to 'the estate of Gordon Benningfield'. The artist died in 1998.

*Green and Pleasant Land: Poetry of the English Countryside*. London: Viking Penguin. 1989.

*Green and Pleasant Land: Poetry of the English Countryside*. Devizes, Wiltshire, England. n.d., possibly before 1998, since the copyright refers to Benningfield himself.

*Poems of the Seasons*. London: Viking Penguin. 1992.

*Poems of the Seasons*. Devizes, Wiltshire, England: Selectabook. n.d., circa 2000. As with the first Selectabook in this group, the copyright refers to Benningfield's estate.

All three of these books achieve an excellent synthesis of text and illustration, for which the anthologist can probably claim the credit. Benningfield painted the pictures over a period of years before the publication dates, so it seems unlikely that he did so with a particular poem in mind. He was a painter of great technical skill, though certainly not an artistic innovator; his style has a distinctly nineteenth-century representational feel. *Poems of the Countryside* contains three extracts from poems by Morris, although I found them unnecessarily short. They sit in the middle of the page with inches of empty paper all around. In the case of the last two, such a judgement is one of personal preference. However, the truncation of the first 'Fair Weather and Foul' seems gratuitous. The anthologist included only the two opening stanzas, which originally appeared in *Scribner's Magazine* in 1870 as a poem with nine stanzas. Like most of the illustrations, the accompanying picture occupies the full facing page. It portrays a peaceful scene of sheep grazing in a gently rolling countryside, with a receding stormy sky in the background being replaced by a tranquil sunset. The technique suggests that the original is a watercolour. The other two both come from *The*

*Earthly Paradise*, from the sections eulogising August and February. The picture illustrating the first, full of Summer gold, shows a pair of horses helping to harvest a partly cut field of wheat. By contrast, the monochrome illustration for February, apparently a pencil sketch in the original, emphasises the bleak, pallid characteristics of Winter.

Each of the other two books contains only one poem by Morris. *Green and Pleasant Land* carries 'Summer Dawn' in full. The accompanying picture is the most striking of all those illustrating a poem by Morris in this series, with a level of abstraction and luminosity reminiscent of Turner's later work. Pink suffuses the whole, and only the vaguest outlines suggest the Dorset landscape which the artist takes as his subject. With this picture Benningfield briefly dips his toe into the artistic waters of the twentieth century. *Poems of the Seasons* contains 'Autumn', this time occupying a half page, with a conventional rendering of black bryony on a background of autumn brown the other half.

Finally, this *Journal* reviewed in its Summer 2003 issue a book by Peter Trippi, *J. W. Waterhouse* (London: Phaidon, 2002). Trippi has made accessible a lot of information about the artist John W Waterhouse, which was not easily available when I published my own book (see 21.7 and 21.8).

NOTES

- 1 I am indebted to Rosie Miles for bringing this title to my attention, and for providing the information on which I base the description.