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Vanderpoel Memorial Window (1874), Trinity Episcopal Church, Saugerties, NY
A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

It’s been 120 years since Morris’s death. His work remains as vital as ever. It’s fitting that the WMS-US has embarked on a new project to highlight his influence and legacy. The WMS is pursuing an edited collection of essays dedicated to “Teaching Morris.” The WMS-sponsored session at the 2016 MLA convention serves as inspiration for this endeavor. Board member Elizabeth Miller and I are serving as co-editors. This fall our proposal was accepted by Fairleigh Dickinson University Press.

The MLA conference papers illustrated a range of ways in which Morris appears in today’s classrooms. One paper offered insight into how to use Tolkien to plumb the depths of Morris’s utopianism. Another used Morris as an inspiration for creating student digital design projects. The final paper offered lessons on teaching A Dream of John Ball, a text that can be too easily dismissed as propaganda but is a work that illuminates Victorian literary radicalism and Morris’s relation to it. The scholars who shared their insights ranged from newly-minted Ph.Ds to senior faculty. Audience response was extremely positive; we had a lively discussion in which others shared how they bring Morris into their courses.

I personally left the session with new ideas about how to help students more deeply connect with Morris. I teach News from Nowhere (1890) alongside Edward Bellamy’s American utopian novel Looking Backward (1887). Students tend to react much more positively to Bellamy’s utopian society than Morris’s. They have a hard time imagining how Morris’s society would not quickly devolve into chaos and anarchy. The next time I teach the course I will be better able to relate Morris to their lives, using as my starting point the most memorable line from the “Teaching Morris” session, “Without Morris there would be no World of Warcraft.”

In addition to this initiative, the WMS has continued to sponsor member events. In early August, board member Jane Carlin, in conjunction with the Book Club of Washington, organized a tour of the Arts and Crafts Press in Tacoma, Washington. I’ve been a fan of the Arts and Crafts Press for years, and wish I could have joined them for this event. You can check out the press’s work at: the-arts-crafts-press.myshopify.com. As part of the tour, participants even got the chance to pull their own prints. Arts and Crafts Press founders Yoshiko Yamamoto and Bruce Smith are at work on an illustrated edition of Morris’s News from Nowhere. It’s sure to be a gorgeous tribute to Morris.

Clara Finley has continued to be our vice president of social media. Friend us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter (@MorrisSocietyUS), and be sure to keep up with our blog, News from Anywhere (morrissociety.blogspot.com). Florence Boos remains editor of the newsletter. She’s always looking for human interest stories. If you have an idea, let her know. Linda Hughes
has once again organized our sessions for MLA. The 2017 conference will be in Philadelphia. The WMS is sponsoring a panel titled “Craft and Design in Literary Study: The Legacy of William Morris,” and co-sponsoring another, “The Lasting Legacy of Morris and the Art of the Book.” New board member Michael Robertson has organized a session for the 2017 NEMLA (Northeast MLA) conference March 23rd – 26th in Baltimore. The theme is “William Morris and Victorian Radicalism.” We’re looking to broaden our reach with graduate students and early-career professionals. If you know of someone who might be interested in becoming involved in the Morris Society let me know.

Thanks to the rest of the board: Jack Walsdorf, Margaretta Frederick, John Plotz, and Morna O’Neill for all your help this year. It’s been a pleasure serving as president. — Jason Martinek

BLACKWELL’S RARE BOOKS SALE: JACK WALSDORF AND THE KELMSCOTT PRESS

Jason D. Martinek

This summer Blackwell’s Rare Books began selling items from past president Jack Walsdorf’s William Morris collection. Blackwell’s produced a beautiful catalog, featuring on the cover a new wood engraving of Kelmscott Manor. Peter Lawrence designed the engraving just for the catalog. A limited edition of 75 have been produced and are for sale through Blackwell’s.

This is the third time Jack has built and sold a Morris collection. After he sold the first one to the University of Maryland in the 1980s, he began again. He sold items from the second in the 1990s. As he put it in a Colophon Book Shop catalog from 1996: “I’m not done with Morris. I’m just clearing the deck so that I can start over. For, in the end, this book collecting passion is really about the joy of the hunt.” The Blackwell’s catalog represents the fruits of this third collection. And it’s impressive.

It’s fitting that Jack has commissioned Blackwell’s to handle the sale. It was at Blackwell’s in 1966 that Jack bought his first Kelmscott Press book. In the introduction to the catalog, Blackwell’s describes some of the collection’s highlights: “At the heart of the collection are the Kelmscott Press publications, 25 major works, many in original limp vellum with silk ties, with ephemera and secondary material from the press, and an outstanding Morris letter, written in defense of his lecture ‘Art under Plutocracy’.”

Additionally, “There are important and uncommon works, including Doves Press and Elston Press editions; publications celebrating the centenary of Morris’ birth, including one from 1934 with a leaf from ‘The Golden Legend’; modern private press editions, such as the beautiful Woodcraft Press edition of ‘On First Seeing Iceland’; and bibliographies (many with inscribed dedications), including contributions from both Jack and Sir Basil Blackwell himself.” There’s a lot more, too, including a forgery of ‘The Pilgrims of Hope’ by Buxton Forman.

A number of items in the Blackwell’s catalog have sold, but a few items remain available. A consequence of Brexit is an advantageous exchange rate. Perhaps this will be the perfect negotiation tool if you first need to discuss a purchase like this with your partner. Nevertheless, I recommend that you contact Blackwell’s for a copy of the catalog. It will become a collectible in its own right. Blackwell’s can be contacted at the email: rarebooks@Blackwells.co.uk. You can see a digital version of the catalog here: www.blackwell.co.uk/rare-books/catalogues/Kelmscott.pdf

Jack will never be able to pass a rare book shop without entering. Once inside, his instincts are bound to take over and he’ll go on the hunt for lost treasures, and perhaps find one or two. Will he be able to catch and release, as they say in the fishing world, or will the thrill of the hunt get the better of him, leading him to say while at the cash register, “Well, just this one”? Jack told me the answer to this question after reading a draft of this article. He was recently in a book shop in Tacoma, Washington. He did not leave empty-handed.

Jason Martinek is Associate Professor of History at New Jersey City University, and the current president of the William Morris Society, U.S.
THE SAUGERTIES WINDOW: MORRIS AND CO.’S FIRST STAINED-GLASS COMMISSION IN THE UNITED STATES

Florence Boos
with Carol Lipke

In 1874 a fire damaged Trinity Episcopal Church in Saugerties, New York, a town located on the Hudson River north of New York City which was at the time the site of extensive ironworks. The need to rebuild the chancel of the classical Greek revival structure prompted Mrs. Else Vanderpoel, one of the church’s longtime supporters, to donate money for a large window in honor of her late husband, Judge Aaron Vanderpoel (1799-1870). Mrs. Vanderpoel may have even selected the designs herself on her visit to England later that year, when she could have viewed samples of Morris and Co. work at the Firm’s premises. At the time British glasswork was considered superior to any North American efforts, and the glass used for all Morris and Co. designs, made by the London firm of Powell and Co., was especially admired for its jewel-like brilliance and subtle color variations. The Trinity window itself was, and is, stunningly deep and powerful in its coloration, far more detailed than would be needed for distance viewing, and an artistic creation whose interlocking meanings must be internalized and understood slowly over time.

Morris and Co. apparently took special care with the Vanderpoel/Saugerties commission, likely viewing it as a possible first entrance into an important new American market. The window was described as executed “under the personal supervision” of Mr. Morris (Evening Post, 31 March 1875), and although Edward Burne-Jones designed the central panel, all four of the Firm’s central artists, Burne-Jones, Morris, Ford Madox Brown, and Dante G. Rossetti, contributed panel designs. As the Firm’s most elaborate example of stained-glass thus far, the Vanderpoel window was first exhibited in London before its departure for America.

On its arrival in the United States in early 1875, the window was again reassembled and placed on exhibition for several days before traveling north for installation. While in the city it attracted notice for its then-unfamiliar features and its high purchase price ($3000); the New York Herald described it as “one of the costliest works of the kind yet seen in this country” (30 April 1875). Commentators differed in their aesthetic responses, however; whereas the reporter for the New York Herald offered a laconic factual description and noted the “great deal of elaborate work in this chef d’oeuvre,” the writer for the Evening Post found the window of interest as “the latest production of the extreme school to which the poetry of Rossetti seems to belong, and to which the sobriquet of pre-Raphaelite has been given,” and the Arcadian reviewer felt similarly moved to qualified censure:

As usual in works of the pre-Raphaelite manner, they are marked with strong outlines; and extreme simplicity, bordering upon severity, is the pervading quality of the entire design…. It has, in common with the works of [mediaeval painters] much of that grotesque quaintness which, after all, is best exemplified in Japanese art. (10 April 1875)

All three reviewers also alluded to Morris as the author of the Earthly Paradise, an indication that in 1874 his literary reputation added to the prestige of the Firm’s artistic productions.

I am grateful to my hosts in Saugerties: Margaret Yelland, who invited me to visit Saugerties to view the Trinity window; and Michael Phillips, the vicar of Trinity Episcopal Church, who helped with photographing the panels. Even the best obtainable images fail to convey the charm of the window’s small details—the delicate tracery on the shoes and cloaks of the women who stand by the cross; the precise ripples in the water as the graceful young Jesus bows to receive baptism from the sturdier John the Baptist; or the carefully patterned sprigs of bushes and trees which spring from every unoccupied space of the background.

Remarkably, this fine window does not seem to have attracted much critical commentary. Since an important feature of the window is its eight prominent
Latin inscriptions, difficult to read because in medieval fashion the spaces separating words have been omitted, a deciphered version with translation by Sean De Vega of the University of Iowa is reproduced below. In addition, I am citing the list of the panel’s titles and artists provided in Marilyn Ibach’s *William Morris & Company Stained Glass in North America* (William Morris Society, 1983) as well as passages from an unpublished master’s thesis in art history by Catherine Hall Lipke (Harpur College, SUNY Binghampton, n. d.), which merits quotation as the only extended consideration thus far of the window’s symbolism, slight inconsistencies, and overall artistic quality.

**The Panels:**

1874 E window (Vanderpoel Memorial Window)

14 smaller surrounding panels (from top L, clockwise):

Annunciation (BJ); Angel Holding Scroll (WM); Angel Holding Scroll (WM); Nativity (BJ); Angel Holding Scroll (WM); Baptism of Christ (BJ); Angel Holding Scroll (WM); Christ and St. Mary Magdalene in the Garden (BJ); Angel Holding Scroll (WM); Angel Holding Scroll (WM); Agony in the Garden (FMB); Angel Holding Scroll (WM); Adoration of the Magi (BJ); Angel Holding Scroll (WM). [Marilyn Ibach]

**The Inscriptions:**

O VOS OMNES QUI TRANSITIS PER VIAM …
Lamentations 1:12: “O all ye that pass by the way,

ATTENDITE ET VIDETE SI EST DOLOR SICUT DOLOR MEUS “attend and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow.”

OMNES VIDENTES ME DERISERUNT ME Psalm 21:8: “All they that saw me have laughed me to scorn”

FODERUNT MANUS MEAS ET PEDES MEOS Psalm 21:18: “They have pierced my hands and my feet”

ET DEDERUNT IN ESCAM MEAM FEL Psalm 68:22: “And they gave me gall for my food,

ET IN SITI MEA POTAVERUNT ME ACETO Psalm 68:22: “… and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.”
The WIndoWs: [Catherine Lipke]

The subject matter of the window was consistent with traditional practice, which was to tell the story of the Gospels—the Birth, Life, Death and Resurrection of Christ—in the East window. The Gospel scenes represented here were the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Adoration of the Magi, the Baptism, the Agony in the Garden, and Christ appearing to Mary in the Garden, all surrounding the central Crucifixion.

The overall composition is simple and symmetrical in terms of its geometry, but in terms of its content it is more complex and varied. Three separate systems of pictorial narrative are presented simultaneously, adding subtlety and interest to the design. The first is the central subject, a meditation upon the death of Christ. Around it are woven two cycles in counterpoint: the scenes from the life of Christ which unfold from the upper left to upper right corner through the middle left and right panels to the lower left and right corners. Between these are placed the angels whose scrolls form a continuing manuscript which is read beginning in the two central top panels and continuing from left to right between the narrative cycle to the lower central panels…

The central section which shows “Christ on the Cross” is not a description of the event but a meditation upon it. The design is by Burne-Jones and is framed by a narrow band of bead ornament and a wide band of undulating stylized foliage executed in yellow stain on clear quarries which served to isolate this central panel and to admit clear light.

The figures stand out against a dense, lush background of heavily-laden vines interspersed with bay leaves. These are, of course, symbolic, the grapes alluding to the Last Supper and the wine which represents Christ’s redeeming blood, and the bay leaves indicating the resurrection and victory over sin and death. The iconographic stimulus was, however, just a point of departure, a justification for the employment of the wonderfully rich and varied decorative backdrop. The roundish, almost frilly cinquefoils of the vine-leaves are juxtaposed with the pointed stems of spear-like bay leaves; the convoluting tendrils of the vine intertwine amongst the leaves and the shiny round berries. The vine leaves are painted on blue glass, the bay leaves on green glass, and the grapes on yellow glass. All the segments of glass are heavily shaded around and between the outlines of the leaves, and this shading merges with the lead lines, so that the leads themselves are hardly noticeable. The effect is of continuous or repeated pattern and texture of a textile or tapestry rather than the broken mosaic of stained-glass. The design for the background was almost certainly Morris’s work and seems to have been developed for this window from a similar design called “Vine” which Morris created as a wallpaper the previous year, 1873.
The figures are each from individual cartoons by Burne-Jones. They are simply conceived, with relatively broad indications of drapery folds and a minimum of shading as compared to his more elaborate and minute later style.

The Virgin stands to the left, looking upwards to the right, with her hands clasped at her neck. Her halo is of streaked ruby glass, and she wears a blue hooded cloak lined in purple over a white robe decorated with a simple flower motif in yellow stain. Her expression is sorrowful but composed; although her eyes are raised, they do not watch her Son, but gaze beyond.

St. John stands to the right, his hand pressed to his cheek in a gesture of distress. He frowns and gazes downward. His halo is of clear glass with a geometric design stained into it, and he wears a white cloak lined with blue over a golden-orange robe.

Christ’s body is tinted a deep flesh tone and its surfaces delineated with some refinement, bringing to mind Burne-Jones’s admiration for Signorelli and Michelangelo.

If the expression of the Virgin reveals a stoic faith and St. John’s a pensive sorrow, that of Christ assumes a quiet resignation. For this window does not illustrate the active pain and grief of the Crucifixion; there is neither blood nor agony. It is almost unemotional and passive, removed from the actuality of the scene: its mood is lyrical and meditative.

Each of the various ‘pictures’ of the window is composed with commendable simplicity. This applies to their narrative content as well as to their visual form. They are good illustrations of the Firm’s principle that in stained glass

The drawing and composition have to be much more simple, and yet more carefully studied, than in paintings which have all the assistance of shadows and reflected light to disguise faults and assist the grouping. (The Morris Exhibit at the Foreign Fair, 1883-84, Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1883, 29.)

The Annunciation scene, for instance, is simple, strong and direct because it tells its story with a minimum of elaboration. Its components are a stone bench which serves to define an enclosure, the two protagonists, one holding a leafy branch, the other with an open book, and a vase of lilies. The lines of the composition form a circle which is not merely formal, but is used descriptively. The curves of the Virgin’s pose are inner-directed; her head bows down, her hands are raised and drawn inward, her feet are together beneath her heavy angular drapery. These lines are expressive of her humility and gentleness. The lines of the angel’s pose, on the other hand, are more dynamic, and the flow of force from his wings to his outstretched arm and gesturing hand activates the composition both in the formal and in the narrative spheres.

Other compositions within the Sugerities window have more elaborate and picturesque detail, as does the “Nativity” scene where the angels peeping over the stall holding lighted candles against the star-lit sky form an imaginative and charming background to the pyramidal group in the foreground. Iconographic details, although usually unobtrusive, reveal the thoughtfulness with which the designer has employed traditional details. In this scene the infant tugs at the cloth which has been spread out for him to lie upon; the stalls have rotted away at the left; and holly leaves encircle the small columns which support the roof.

Likewise in the “Adoration of the Magi” the columns are entwined with climbing roses and the costumes, crowns and facial types of the various magi are simply but imaginatively described. In the scene of the “Baptism” the angel in the left background holds a cloak or towel in readiness whilst the one on the right holds Christ’s robe open ready to clothe Him.

The figures in the “Baptism” composition are placed around a relatively empty central space, with two angels in the left background on the river bank and Christ
in the left foreground, and similarly two angels in the right background and John the Baptist in the right foreground. Significantly, all the action takes place along this highly charged central space: the appearance of the hand of God the Father blessing His Son, and the Holy Ghost as a dove in a brilliant burst of light at the top center, above the Baptist’s hand pouring water over Christ’s head.

Ford Madox Brown’s composition of “The Agony in the Garden” is the most dramatic of the scenes in the window. Morris recognized that Madox Brown’s special gifts lay in the dramatic representation of heightened feeling, and therefore often secured for him those scenes for which he was most suited, such as the “Flagellation,” “Christ Carrying the Cross,” and “The Agony in the Garden.” (A. C. Sewter, “A Check-list of Designs for Stained-Glass by Ford Madox Brown,” *JWMS* 1.3 [1963], 19-29). This panel is the only known example of stained glass from his design in the United States, and it is a fine specimen. Aligned along a dynamic diagonal axis, the composition depicts the heads and shoulders of three sleeping apostles, portrayed with considerable realism, across the lower right corner, with Christ kneeling on a rocky escarpment which follows the angle created by the figures and is in turn paralleled by the movement of the angel holding a cup from top right towards lower left.

The figure of the angel appears in a fantastically convoluted and brilliantly stained cloud of light. It is a technical *tour de force* made of fifteen separate small pieces of glass leaded together around the main outlines of the figure. The lines and shading of the cloud, which possibly derived from the conventional Tudor rose, were painted on three pieces of glass which had previously been fired with yellow stain in such a manner that the hue progressed from pale at the inner edges to dark at the outer ones. The resulting image is a visual correspondence to the literary “mixed metaphor”: a fiery, glowing, petalled, flowery cloud.

The corresponding composition at the lower right corner showing “Christ and Mary Magdalene in the Garden” balances the Ford Madox Brown composition with a resolving diagonal running from the lower outer edge through the arms of Mary Magdalene to Christ’s pointing hand at the upper inner edge.

Here again is an example of Burne-Jones’s masterful economy of line. Form and content are equated so that the same gestures which create the diagonal axis of the composition are also expressive of its narrative content. Mary Magdalene has just fallen to her knees, for her hair is still behind her. Her arms, hands, neck and face reach upwards towards Jesus. Jesus, on the other hand, although His head is turned in Mary’s direction, withdraws with the rest of His body, and especially in the swing of His shoulders and arms away from her eager human gesture and upwards towards heaven. The lines of His body perfectly express the meaning of the subject, “Noli Me Tangere.” The Company’s statement that the technique of stained glass required “well-balanced and shapely figures, pure and simple drawing” (*The Morris Exhibit*, 29) could be no better demonstrated than it is here.…

In the Saugerties window it will be observed that the leading follows the principal outlines of a scene, and sometimes even adds to the effect. For example, in the “Baptism” panel the lead line which runs from the point where the Baptist’s staff enters the river to the bottom of the frame is both necessary to the construction, dividing what would otherwise have been a very large and therefore weak piece of glass; and beneficial to the composition, creating the effect of both a shadow and of an orthogonal, with a consequent impression of depth.…

The main reason why the lead lines do not dominate and distract the eye from reading the window is
that the images themselves are executed in a linear style. To use a statement of the Firm:

The strong outlines (should) not appear crude, nor the work within it thin; this implies a certain conventionalism of treatment, and makes the details of a figure so much more an affair of drawing than of painting: because by drawing—that is, by filling the outlines with other lines of proportionate strength—the force of the predominant lines is less unnatural. *(The Morris Exhibit*, 29).

A subsidiary branch of drawing on the glass was the drawing of ornament and texture, often achieved in the draperies by the use of yellow stain for pattern. In the figure compositions the patterns for textures, which include feathers, fur, rock, water, stone and wood, are always subordinated to the linear framework of the design. However, in those panels where the figure compositions do not extend into the background—that is, in all except the “Nativity” and “Adoration of the Magi” and the “Baptism of Christ”—pattern and texture become dominant over line in the background, and all the linear subdivisions, including those of the leads, are camouflaged by the dense painting of the glass. The effect of this is firstly to isolate the figures from their backgrounds, which leads to greater simplicity and legibility; secondly, to achieve a unity or continuity of setting, as for example in the angel panels; and thirdly, to avoid the over-busy effect of small areas of broken colour throughout the window by establishing areas of deeply textured but continuous colour in the backgrounds….

Some minor inconsistencies within the Saugerties window are open to criticism. The same character may figure in different panels with different physiognomy or coloring. For example, the Virgin is blond in the “Annunciation” and “Adoration of the Magi,” but brunette in the “Nativity.” St. Joseph is clean-shaven and short-haired in the “Nativity,” but has long flowing hair and a beard in the “Adoration of the Magi,” and so on.

These inconsistencies are symptomatic of the relegation of responsibilities which was necessary even within Morris and Co.’s relatively small operation. The Saugerties window for example was painted in the Company’s stained-glass workshop from fifteen separate cartoons which had been designed by different artists on different occasions. A typical example of the division of labour which applied to such a window was as follows. One or more artists designed the figure compositions for each black and white cartoon. Morris would add heavier lines indicating the placement of the leads over the artist’s drawing, and often would also indicate a particular decorative background. Morris or Webb would arrange the overall format for an individual commission. Morris would then confer with his glass foreman, George Campfield, over the selections of colors in glass, and would generally supervise the technical aspect of the production. (Ray Watkinson, *William Morris as Designer*, Studio Vista, 1967, 38). It is surprising that inconsistencies were so unobtrusive considering the drawbacks of such division of labor: the occasional sacrifice of co-ordination of detail was a small price to pay. The achievement of an unflagging unity of overall effect was to Morris’s credit. As Ray Watkinson has written, “[Morris] drew the designs together for the actual making. He chose the glass, supervised the painting, [and] passed the widow before firing ….” *(Lipke, 17-18, 20-29, 32)*

Watkinson has described the overall effect of a Morris and Co. stained glass window as one of “magnificence of colour, and the beautiful interplay between large masses and minor patterns,” (38), a harmony impressively achieved in the beautiful Saugerties Crucifixion window.

Florence S. Boos is a past president of the WMS-US and general editor of the William Morris Archive. Her most recent Morris publication is *History and Poetics in the Early Writings of William Morris, 1856-70* (Ohio State, 2015).

**AN INVITATION TO SUBMIT DUNLAP FELLOWSHIP APPLICATIONS**

The Joseph R. Dunlap Memorial Fellowship awarded by the William Morris Society in the United States supports scholarly and creative work about William Morris. The fellowship offers funding up to $1000 for research and other expenses, including travel to conferences and libraries. Projects may deal with any subject—biographical, literary, historical, social, artistic, political, typographical—relating to Morris. The Society also encourages translations of Morris’s works and the production of teaching materials (lesson plans and course materials) suitable for use at the elementary, secondary, college or adult-education level.

Applications are sought particularly from younger members of the Society and from those at the beginning of their careers. Recipients may be from any country and need not have an academic or institutional appointment, nor must recipients hold the Ph.D.

For full details on application, please see [morrissociety.org/fellowship.html](http://morrissociety.org/fellowship.html). The deadline for applications is 15 December 2016, and applications and supporting documents may be sent by e-mail to Professor Linda K. Hughes at L.Hughes@tcu.edu.
In September 2015 I organized a group devoted to William Morris in VKontakte, the Russian equivalent of Facebook. From the start I decided that this would deal not only with Morris, his personality and work in its diversity, but with his circle, epoch, and influence on contemporaries and descendants. Thus the coverage of topics is rather broad, which is quite natural given the versatility of Morris himself.

I used to be very uninvolved in social networks and would not have believed it if anyone had told me I would ever work on an internet project, but a year before starting my William Morris Group, purely by chance I started to publish posts devoted to Morris in the “Pre-Raphaelites” group from time to time, and this turned out to be so interesting to me that it became a stimulus for creating my own group. Starting with this (rephrasing Morris) “little social network adventure,” I was almost certain that I would only occasionally share with all who were interested these or other facts from Morris’s life and work. From the very start, however, this endeavor proved to be so absorbing, and I found out that there were so many things to be shared, that almost from the first day the postings began to appear daily, at least one in the morning and one in the evening, and now there are morning and evening posts on the same day.

I have divided the posts into several rough groups labeled by hashtags. Unfortunately, the idea of hashtags came to my mind only half a year after the group was organized, and thus only some of the posts have been labeled from the very start. The one devoted to the William Morris Calendar announces the events of Morris’s life which happened on the same day in different years: for example, on September 4 my group members learned that on September 4 1883 Morris, in a letter to Jenny, recorded that he had designed a membership card for the Democratic Federation; in 1886 in a letter to John Prideaux Lightfoot, written from Kelmscott Manor, Morris made his first reference to the Adoration of the Magi tapestry that had been commissioned for Exeter College; and in 1888 the Pall Mall Gazette published an article he had written entitled “Ugly London” (with the link giving them a chance to read it), and in addition Margaret Burne-Jones married J. W. Mackail who was later to write a famous biography of Morris – The Life of William Morris (1899). These posts based on the wonderful William Morris Chronology by Nicholas Salmon (which unfortunately hasn’t been translated and published in Russian) are always illustrated, and I add appropriate links when possible. As I see it, these very posts day by day from #calendar@william__morris are the main distinctive feature of my William Morris Group in comparison to the similar groups in Facebook.

In addition, I closely follow the Facebook news and try to share posts by the William Morris Society, William Morris Gallery, Red House, Kelmscott Manor, etc. on the day they appear on Facebook. I also share appropriate posts by bloggers such as Stephanie Graham Piña from the “Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood” and several others. Sometimes I publish these posts as they are, but other times I add my comments; for instance, when sharing a photograph taken at Kelmscott Manor of a display of apples picked fresh from the orchard, I added the picture of Morris’s 1877 Apple wallpaper. The posts like this dealing with the places connected with Morris or decorated by the Firm are labeled #redhousekelmscottetc@william__morris. The posts devoted to the past and present of William Morris & Co., as well as to the Kelmscott Press and works of art by William Morris can be found at #morrismorrisandco@william__morris while his poetic work as well as the publications dealing with poetry in general are grouped as #poetry@william__morris.

In addition to events from the life of Morris published day by day, I also send out posts devoted to Morris’s contemporaries, predecessors, or descendants in some way connected either with William Morris or the Victorian epoch in general who were born or died on the given day. For example, I have included postings on Keats, whom Morris considered one of his mas-
ters, George MacDonald who lived at Kelmscott House before the Morrices, Aldous Huxley (because of the utopian connections), and so on. In #onthisdag@william__morris there are also posts devoted to the dates of feasts and holidays which provide associations with Morris, the Pre-Raphaelites, and the Victorian period. For example, on December 26 (St. Stephen’s Day) group members learned of the Christmas carol “Good King Wenceslas” and could follow the link to Morris’s ‘Introduction’ to Dr Neale’s Good King Wenceslas which was published in 1895, and on June 1 (International Children’s Day) we saw the caricature by Burne-Jones depicting Morris feeding his daughters in Red House, etc.

The posts devoted to Jane, May and other family members are labeled #janeandfamily@william__morris, and those dealing with Burne-Jones, his works and personal life are marked #burnejones@william__morris. There is also #books@william__morris showing the posts devoted to the books worth reading by the group members. #morrisinspired@william__morris labels one of the most important parts of the site, the posts that feature contemporary works inspired by Morris the world over. These range from Morris kitsch (t-shirts, towels, etc.) to works of art by David Mabb and other contemporary artists. It should be said here that from the very start the group members could add the pictures of their own works inspired by Morris in the special album of the group “William Morris Inspired - Russia”, so such pieces are also uploaded there from time to time. Postings which fit into none of these categories are labeled #ofinterest@william__morris. Of course such a division is rough and imperfect, but it can be useful to participants in finding information on topics of interest to them.

The number of members is constantly growing and at the moment there are more than 600 members. Among them is Alexey Aristov, the translator thanks to whom several Morris prose romances were first published in Russian last year (see his article in this issue) and who continues to translate Morris’s works for future publication.

**OUR POETRY CONTEST**

A group poetry contest was announced timed to William Morris’s birthday, for which members were asked to write a poem inspired by his personality or some of his works. The winner chosen by the vote of the members was announced on March 24 – it proved to be Sophia Mikhaleva, who also illustrated her contest work with a collage created by herself. Here is an excerpt from her poem in her own translation (the version submitted for the contest was in Russian), followed by what she wrote about herself and her response to William Morris.

**WILLIAM MORRIS, THE PILGRIM OF HOPE**

*by Sophia Mikhaleva*

He seems to have followed a thousand lifelines:
Designer, craftsman, polymath of a prodigious scope,
Born out of his due time, thinking beyond the confines
Of his age, dreamer of dreams, and pilgrim of Hope....

In his crusade and holy war against the ugly age
The code of knightly honour he would never sacrifice.
All the world’s a tourney, he’s keen to joust with noble rage
For the defence of Guenevere and for the Earthly Paradise.

‘Beata mea Domina!’ Morris exults in courtly love.
Enthroned deep in his heart, graceful like Iseult the Fair,
Rossetti’s Day Dream, dark Pandora with a poignant stare,
Jane seems to belong somewhere among the clouds above.

In league with Burne-Jones and George Edmund Street,
With the lore of true beauty his heart is replete:
To soar up to the sweep of the high Gothic vault
And raise the Red House as his stronghold, his Camelot.

Arthurian legends come to life on wet plaster.
His creed: ‘Life is short, but fine art persists’.
The tawdry veneer of pomp seems lacklustre
Against the charmed wildwood of tapestry trees.

Acanthus, hawthorn, pomegranate, arrowhead,
Bay, honeysuckle, periwinkle, marigold —
The flowering orchard unfurling under his hand
On hangings and textiles is a joy to behold.

To master the loom and to tame the weaving craft,
To conjure the web of silk, yarn and crewel:
The heir of ancient guilds, he revives the ‘lesser art’
With the thread dyed in rich hues of jewel.

He gives his voice to prolix Northern sagas, grim and fierce,
Word-spinning his Icelandic journals and the Story of the North.
The arcane Norse kennings he's predestined to pierce:
As the last of the Vikings, he steers his ship forth.

The Kelmscott Press, his greatest typographical adventure:
The verse of Geoffrey Chaucer, clad in ornamental borders,
Hailed the 'pocket cathedral', the triumph that captures
The medieval chronicles of scribes in cloistered orders.

The boundless realm of fantasy helps him to beguile
His hours of rest with stories Tolkien will comprehend,
Submerge himself into ‘The Water of the Wondrous Isles’,
And sate his thirst from 'The Well at the World’s End'.

‘The Wood beyond the World’ – is it an immram? It's praised
As the precursor of fantasy with its ornate and sprawling plot,
Its subtle magic on the fringe of real and mythic worlds,
Recounted in archaic prose, wonder and beauty interlaced.

‘The way of the Wender forth over the flood,
For the will of the Sender is blent with the blood’:
The spell must be invoked, and it will swiftly come in sight —
The land of witch-wives and fairies, dwarfs, tyrants and knights.

In 'News from Nowhere', through the eyes of William Guest,
We find a panoramic view of Merrie England,
wholesome and restored
To the Edenic state of unity, the blessed Epoch of Rest,
Freed from coercion, hostility, and quest for reward.

Devote your time to useful labour, cease your dull and hopeless toil,
Join in the chants for Socialists, embrace the Marxist hope for change:
In hopes and fears for art, Morris stopped short of anarchists’ turmoil
To strip the world to its bare bones, so men could start afresh in the New Age.

Revolted by the thoughtless tempering of the restorer,
The heritor of Ruskin, he founds the ‘Anti-Scrape Society’
To save the sacred monuments of the nation’s honour
And cherish master-masons in their infinite variety.

With the humility of medieval craftsmen,
‘Si je puis’ he proclaims after van Eyck:
The paragon of Arts and Crafts, his mind is never barren,
And he excels in every venture he desires to undertake.

Sophia Mikeleva writes: I was fortunate to be born (in 1992) into a family that was intrinsically creative, and where creativity was not perceived as something exceptional, but rather as an indispensable element of the flow of life. Having learned to read at the age of two, I roamed our home library, entrenched by ancient folios, stylized collector’s editions with abundantly ornate borders, intricate initials, and half-faded fine linework illustrations. My great-grandfather was a professional wood carver of an immense skill and imagination; my grandfathers were artists, one of them designing patterns for textile manufacturing, the other choosing the trade of a sculptor and an etcher. This spirit of creativity, combined with the early exposure to classic literature and fine art, enveloped me and became the fount of joy, wisdom, and excitement.

No wonder I was initiated into the mystery of the Brotherhood of Pre-Raphaelites while being very young and exceedingly impressionable, the very name of the artistic movement sounding like an incantation to me. Edward Burne-Jones, John Everett Millais, William Holman Hunt, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, William Morris — I plunged into the whirlwind of works, names, places, and books embodied by the initials "PRB". Morris — designer, artist, poet, translator, artisan, politician, editor, publicist, art critic and art historian — the more of his facets came into view, the deeper I was affected by his paradoxical temper and his manifold interests. While completing my studies at the university I perused treatises on his creative output and was editor-in-chief of the faculty’s online periodical, designed with an extensive use of Morris’ patterns, stained glass, and woodcuts. I was blessed with an exceptional chance to witness the works of the Pre-Raphaelites in the flesh twice, only to seal my commitment to their palette, their visuals, their metaphors, and their artistic creed. After graduating with Honours in English and French at Kaluga State University, I now work as Senior Project Manager in an international educational center, as well as hold the posts of interpreter and literary translator. My leisure pursuit is to administer the largest fan-community of the British band Florence + The Machine, the linchpin of which, the
eccentric Florence Welch, is continuously described as the modern incarnation of the concept of a “Pre-Raphaelite Woman”.

One of Morris’ statements is used as an epigraph for the Russian online community celebrating his life and his art that held this poetry contest: “The true secret of happiness lies in the taking a genuine interest in all the details of daily life.” What an uplifting idea! The sole notion of it inspires me to set the bar higher, to learn, memorize, and master, to create something fair to the eye, to tackle any task with Morris’ contagious zest for work. His artistic integrity, his delight in the medieval past, his uninhibited creativity, his unflagging vigour, his incessant transitions from one pursuit to another with the same level of excellence, his disdain for austerity, his readiness to throw himself into the enjoyment of the smallest subject that happens to come within the range of his interest — Morris is the master of incontestable supremacy and unparalleled humbleness, and it’s an incredible honour for me to be privy to his genius.

**Other Contributors:**

At the moment we are holding another group contest to celebrate our first anniversary: members are asked either to create a textile or wallpaper design inspired by Morris or to write an essay on what they would tell Morris if they had a chance. It’s hard to guess now how active members will be as the contest results will not be announced until November, and thus far only one participant has shared her work. This is a pattern design called “Basil and Shepherd’s Purse” (watercolour processed on psd) by Ekaterina Magnitogortseva, who is also an administrator of several groups in VKontakte including the one devoted to the PRB and another to Ruskin. Her works are already familiar to William Morris group members as in April she shared her embroidery based on Morris’s Honeysuckle Fabric (1876) in the previously mentioned album of the group “William Morris Inspired - Russia.” In this album (vk.com/william__morris?z =album-101439812_220317178) several members shared their works inspired by William Morris, and these members are not only amateurs such as Sophia Mikhaleva and Ekaterina Magnitogortseva but professional artists as well.

Among other notable contributors, Lyubov Kholoimenko, a student in the Art Faculty of The Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia in St. Petersburg, shared several of her textile designs influenced by Morris, including a beautiful reinterpretation of Morris’s Fruit wallpaper. Here are her memories of her first “meeting” with Morris and ideas on his personality: “I first heard the name ‘Morris’ four years ago in the preparatory courses at the Department of Textile Art of The Saint Petersburg Stieglitz State Academy of Art and Design where I studied before entering the university. During the class in textile composition our teacher told us about this British designer and advised us to have a look at his works. Being very interested I went to the bookshop on the same day, and when I saw the works of William Morris in the book by Arthur Clutton-Brock [William Morris: His Work and Influence, 1914] I was just amazed! What a sense of proportion and remarkably subtle color perception! Solemnity and elegance combined in an incredible way with joyful simplicity. I bought that book immediately and became more closely “acquainted” with William Morris, and was deeply impressed by his active lifestyle as well as his tireless interest in everything that has been created by human hands. I have learned a simple idea lying at the heart of his Firm: the person must receive pleasure from work. And William Morris was able to live in accordance with this idea! The love of art, an incredible capacity for work, the love of life, the ability to achieve one’s goal, the pursuit of the sublime and beautiful -- all this and much more in the person of William Morris fascinates and inspires me. Defender of beauty and spirituality, this person offers a great example to us today.”

Because Lyubov Kholoimenko is a future painter her graduate work will not deal with Morris-influenced pattern designs, but the graduate work of another group member Dmitry Naydenko, born in 1981 in Stavropol, is interesting in this respect. After graduating from the Historical Faculty of Stavropol State University, he entered Stavropol Art College in 2007 to study in the department of Artistic Woodwork. Under the influence of books by J. R. R. Tolkien which he read in childhood, Dmitry took an interest in medieval art and literature and eagerly read many Western European epics in Russian translations, including Icelandic sagas, and also gained a fairly complete picture of courtly literature. All these works,
read over the years, influenced him, and in some sense became a source of ideas for his graduate work at the Art College (2010-2011): he created a dressing table with mirror and arm chair with painted decoration based on the medieval Western European miniatures, and this final work as a whole was conceived under the influence of William Morris, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Edward Burne-Jones and Philip Webb.

Dmitry Naydenko took an interest in William Morris when as a second year student he learned that his favourite painters Rossetti and Burne-Jones were also practitioners of the applied arts and design. He started to study their works using books and the internet. According to Dmitry, “it is Morris’ interest in medieval art that attracts me most of all in him and among the diverse oeuvre by him and his friends it is their painted furniture such as the amazing King René’s Honeymoon Cabinet, the wonderful Ladies and Animals Sideboard, the magnificent Cabinet on a stand depicting the Legend of St. George, and the glorious Cabinet decorated with scenes from ‘The Prioress’s Tale’ reminiscent of medieval frescoes that impress me the most and that I appreciate deeply, both because I like painting and because artist-furniture is my specialty. It’s only natural that I had the temptation to try to do something like that at a level affordable to me, and that’s how the idea of my graduate work in art college came into being.”

Another contributor of Morris-influenced works is Anastasia Matveeva, who was born in 1988 and graduated from the Repine St. Petersburg State Academy Institute of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture in 2015, and who also had experience of work with painted furniture. During her student years she learned of William Morris from lectures at the Academy. She collaborates with several St. Petersburg designers and design firms and receives orders from time to time to paint furniture as well as diverse objects for interiors a la Morris wallpapers. For instance, she painted the air-conditioners so that they do not stand out against the background of the wallpaper and thus do not spoil the interiors. It’s notable that the watering can painted by her as Fruit wallpaper, since it is quite self-sufficient and separated from the rest of the interior, could be regarded as a kind of conceptual work, reminiscent of David Mabb’s pieces.

In conclusion I’d like to tell about Polina Demidova, who has created the largest number of examples of Morris-connected pieces of any of the members of the group. This artist, who was born in Moscow in 1986 into a family of painters and graduated from Moscow State Stroganov Academy of Industrial and Applied Arts, has lived and worked in Geneva, Switzerland since 2008.

During the last five years she has created works in a unique author’s technique connecting collage, drawing and painting. William Morris textile and wallpaper designs became the basis of many of her works, organically combining realism and decorative essence. According to Polina she was struck “meeting this artist for the first time” while seeing the album with paper for decoupage featuring his designs that was to become her “favorite and an endless source of inspiration,” and
at that moment she realized that these could ideally complement almost all of her ideas. She recalls “the first time I saw and bought the album with Morris’s ornaments and a postcard with different fragments in the art shop at the Berlin Art Gallery in 2011. Almost immediately, on my return to Geneva, inspired, I started to work and it seems, still do not stop... “

In recent years, Ms. Demidova has created a remarkable series of allegorical portraits of women on the basis of a collective image of modern actresses and models, but without the pursuit of absolute similarity — the main thing here is the embodiment of the various characters. Most of these female images are inspired by modern culture and the diverse manners of contemporary life. The women present themselves, but there are also vintage images such as “Miss Morning” inspired by the Art Nouveau style of female representation.

Technically, these works are made using layers of different visual textures: colored and transparent tracing paper, fabric ornaments, thematic texts, etc. The use of graph paper for the rendering of the skin is a distinctive feature of Polina Demidova’s artistic style. All faces and details are painted by hand.

In addition to portraits featuring Morris motifs, she created graceful and original works using them, such as “Dragonfly” (2014) and “Tulipomania” (2015), as well as a number of Swiss landscapes.

It should be stressed here that while human figures on a background featuring Morris designs could be seen, for example, in the works by American artist Kehinde Wiley, their inclusion in the landscape (for the rendering of water surface, clouds, etc.), as far as I know has no antecedent and seems to be a very successful artistic innovation by Polina Demidova.

As this outpouring of Morris-influenced works illustrates, a surge of interest in Morris and all things Pre-Raphaelite seems rising in contemporary Russia. Through the VKontakte William Morris Group, I am hoping to encourage this enthusiasm yet further and to enable artists and others to share their Morris-inspired creations.

Anna Matyukhina is a senior curator of the New Acquisitions Department at the Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia. Awarded a Joseph Dunlap Memorial Fellowship in 2006, she has published articles on William Morris and tapestry weaving as well as on Morris-related artworks in Russia.

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ENCOUNTERING MORRIS

Alexei Aristov,
Morris's Russian Translator

When I looked though Morris's biography the first time, I was startled by the complexity of his talent. I had not yet formed my attitude to him then but I was already fascinated by his multiple roles: artist and architect, decorative artist, manufacturer of tapestry and stained glass, wallpaper and tiles, founder of political parties and public figure, but also poet, novelist, publisher and translator from classical Greek and Old Norse. His participation in the original Socialist International as well as his refusal of an Oxford professorship and the poet-laureateship added even more to this fascination. Favorable accounts by Oscar Wilde, Friedrich Engels, John R. R. Tolkien, George B. Shaw and Clive S. Lewis also strengthened my admiration. At first, I imagined him as one of the Pre-Raphaelite group, but then I discovered that this Pre-Raphaelite was also a Marxist. I was surprised by the fact that Morris believed that the only business of socialists is 'the making of Socialists, i.e. convincing people that Socialism is good for them and is possible.' 'We Socialists can do nothing else that is useful,' – in contrast to the more revolutionary approach of Russian socialists at the time. Then I found that being a socialist did not prevent Morris from being also a prosperous entrepreneur who produced luxury goods. At the same time, as a professional designer Morris ornamented the “Socialist League Manifesto” and its official organ, The Commonweal. Embodying the contradictory roles of a rich man and a communist, he studied Karl Marx's works but did not adopt all of his views.

Morris deeply studied Icelandic literature and translated some of its most important texts into English. Oscar Wilde considered his Odyssey the best translation of the time. When I read that, I could not but wonder how William Morris's interest in Old Norse sagas could blend so perfectly with an equal interest in classical antiquity. I would name one specific example of this blend: Morris’s The Earthly Paradise (1868–1870) describes a group of wandering Norsemen who arrived at a city settled by the descendants of ancient Greeks. This diversity made my head go round! Yet when I tried to study Morris's biography more closely, I found in it even more striking details; I learnt about even more diverse talents and came across rich worlds unknown to me before.

It is this diversity that draws attention to William Morris. Most truly the doctor who attended Morris at his deathbed claimed that he had died of “simply being William Morris, and having done more work than most ten men.” [Mackail, 2, 336]

Russian translations of Morris:

The short timeline of Morris's Russian translations is as follows.

The earliest translation – as far as it was possible to find – came out during its author's lifetime. A selection titled A Man Born to be King: a Tale in Verse: An Extract from 'The Earthly Paradise' by William Morris, translated and with an introduction by Dmitriy Min, was published in the Moscow Russian Herald as early as 1869. The first acquaintance with Morris's writings was thus through an elegant aspect of Morris's legacy.

In 1911 in Moscow an edition of A Dream of John Ball, translated, introduced and annotated by the futurist poet Vasily Kamenskiy, appeared and was reprinted the following year. This book acquaints us with Morris's social views and we can suggest that between the two Russian revolutions (1905 and 1917) this was definitely relevant.

In the years of Revolution Morris was not forgotten. News from Nowhere: Utopia came out in print in the very height of the struggle in 1918 in Petrograd (presently Saint Petersburg). Those who fought in the Civil War needed to learn what different thinkers had suggested the future world should be. One can assume that William Morris was able to help many to envision the world that would result from the future conflict. The author's biography was written by A. Balyanskiy, but it is uncertain if he was also the translator.

The utopian novel was reprinted in 1923, at the end of the Civil War, by a publisher situated in Kharkov (presently Kharkiv, Ukraine), although the printing itself was carried out in Simferopol.
A long interval of forty years followed this publication. A new translation of Morris’s utopia came out in 1962, now published under its full original title—News from Nowhere or An Epoch of Rest, and translated by N. I. Sokolova. This edition was carefully prepared by D. Gorfinkel, the copy editor, S. Y. Kagarlitskiy, author of the introduction, and M. Gordyshcheva, who provided the notes. Nowadays this translation is a classic one for everyone who wants to understand William Morris as a writer.

In the year 1973 Morris’s aesthetics caught the interest of the Moscow publishers of the series History of Aesthetics in Records and Documents. The collection compiled by A. A. Amidst with references by R. F. Usmanova bore the name Art and Life: Selected Articles, Lectures, Speeches, Letters.

However it was another couple decades before another work of fiction was translated. The Water of the Wondrous Isles: A Novel, translated and with an introduction by by Svetlana Likhacheva, became Morris’s first fantasy novel translated into Russian. It was published in Moscow in 1996 in a series under a promotional name of Gothic Novel. Likhacheva’s second translation was The Story of the Glittering Plain published in 1998 in the collection Mead of Poetry.

Unfortunately I could not find any sound information about the 2009 Moscow edition of New from Nowhere, Utopia (with an introduction by V. V. Damye, but no translator’s name is listed), published as part of the series Contemplating on Anarchism. I can only suggest that this book is a re-edition of the translation of 1962. The prefatory material claims that this is the ‘second, enlarged’ edition, but offers no information on the ‘first’ one nor about what has been ‘enlarged’ in the new one.

In 2015 this edition of News was republished by the ‘URSS’ publishing house. The same year is notable also for the collection of three prose romances which I translated for the “Eksmo” company in Moscow – The Wood Beyond the World, Child Christopher and Goldilind the Fair, and The Well at the World’s End.

What can one mark in this short timeline? First, the fact that until recently almost every translation was published only once. Only the utopian novel News from Nowhere has received two translations and five editions. Also one can easily notice that in most cases until recently years passed before another edition. What is the reason for the recent renewed interest in Morris’s utopia? Can it be only the students of the international socialist movement who are interested in it? Or does the interest reside in its alternative (non-Soviet) view of the communism-to-be? Or does it appeal to a universal interest in utopias? Generally speaking, in the Soviet Union it was Morris’s social activity that has motivated the reception of his works.

Secondly, one can mark the fact that all Soviet publications (1918–1973) were translations of Morris’s political works. That is why Soviet readers thought of William Morris only as a social and political figure. Morris the romance writer remained unrecognised for a long time.

From the 1990s onwards with increasing frequency in Russia research articles are written on Morrisian topics, post-graduates defend their theses, and little by little the knowledge of this marvellous Englishman passes to ordinary university students. William Morris is entering our life.

I knew nothing about William Morris before I received an offer to translate his romances. Since then I have tried to read almost everything I have found on the subject and I note with satisfaction that there were many ‘points of recognition.’ Thus I ‘recognised’ Tolkien’s tone in Morris’s texts, though this may seem a bit odd as the first lived later and it should be vice versa. Tolkien is already a traditional author in Russia, so I even thought that it would be better to translate Morris’s romances in such a way as to show this common atmosphere, but this needs more serious research.

Another point of recognition is Morris and Co., since it is possible to find not far from my address Morris-design umbrellas, wallpapers and textiles offered for sale.

In addition, a year ago during the festival ‘Imperial Gardens of Russia,’ I had the pleasure of contemplating a nice sample of a garden designed in Morrisian style.

One more thing to add: Russian folk tales traditionally have forest landscapes for a setting. I was born in a steppe region and generally steppe covers a great part of Russia, but even today Russian children are more accustomed to a wooded dreamland – in full concord with William Morris.

William Morris is by no means a museum specimen. As our awareness grows his views become clearer, his hopes – dearer, and his worlds open their gates before new pilgrims to Beauty.

Alexei Aristov’s translation of Morris’s prose romances into Russian were published in 2015 by the Eskmo Press.
EXHIBITION REVIEW

“WOMEN, ART, AND SOCIAL CHANGE: THE NEWCOMB POTTERY ENTERPRISE”

Michael Robertson

The Newcomb Pottery, active in New Orleans from 1895 to 1940, has long been regarded as one of the premier producers of American Arts and Crafts pottery. In addition, from its origins it attracted attention because all of its workers were women. The pottery was a division of Newcomb College, the women's college attached to Tulane University. The exhibition “Women, Art, and Social Change,” co-sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution and the Newcomb Art Gallery at Tulane, brought together more than 125 objects for this traveling tour, which began in New Orleans in 2013 and concluded this October in Nashville.

The objects in the exhibition are uniformly stunning. Best-in-show may be the lamp that, in the installation at the Princeton University Art Museum in summer 2016, greeted visitors as they entered the galleries. The lamp’s base, in shades of yellow and green, features a repeated motif of cat’s claw flowers, while the cunningly designed shade, an irregular swirling outline of magnolia flowers, allows light to escape through the fine metal mesh on which the brass flowers are laid. The lamp embodies the best features of Newcomb Pottery wares: superb execution of sophisticated Arts and Crafts designs that almost always make use of Southern motifs, both flora (pecan branches, crepe myrtle, forests’ worth of Southern pines and live oaks) and fauna (dragonflies, bullfrogs, blue crabs).

A wall-sized photographic blowup in the first gallery showed the Newcomb craftswomen at work. In their sensible shirtwaists, they could be versions of Philippa, the female artisan in William Morris’s utopian novel News from Nowhere. The Newcomb Pottery enterprise had strong Morrisian dimensions. The insistence on hand-crafted products, the decorative motifs derived from natural forms, even the typeface used in printed materials—all have their origins in the work of Morris & Co. and the Kelmscott Press.

Post-Civil War New Orleans was, in general, desperately poor, and the opportunities for women artists—or women workers of any sort—were few. Pottery director Ellsworth Woodward, a graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design, had considerable ambitions for the enterprise: he wanted to promote regional pride, create distinguished art objects, and provide artistic, educational, and economic opportunities for women. “I am hopeful,” he said in 1901, “that we can here provide a livelihood for that large number of women who have artistic tastes, and who do not find the schoolroom or the stenographer’s desk or the [retail] counter altogether congenial.”

As the excellent accompanying catalogue by David Conradsen et al., The Arts and Crafts of Newcomb Pottery, reveals, only the ambition to create beautiful artworks was fully realized. Over its forty-five year history, the pottery employed less than one hundred women, most of them part-time, and it was not able to provide any of the artisans a stable, decently paid career. Director Woodward lured the Charleston artist Sabina Wells
to Newcomb with promises of artistic freedom and handsome earnings. After she arrived, she wrote home in a letter, “I am much dissatisfied with the narrow style of design, but could stand it if I were paid for doing so, but without pay and without any prospects, I am almost in a state of open rebellion. I am supposed to be one of their clever designers & I will make this month $40.00 & last month $30.00 & that at a pottery where the theoretic pay is $100.00 per month!”

Wells’s letter lays bare some of the tensions at the heart of the Newcomb Pottery enterprise. Newcomb was supposed to provide women a means of artistic expression of women, but it actually demanded a “narrow style of design” focused on stereotypically Southern motifs in order to satisfy marketplace demands. It promised economic independence for women, but as an acute catalogue essay by Adrienne Spinozzi reveals, Newcomb consistently underpriced its wares in comparison to other art potteries, as if embarrassed to claim too much on behalf of genteel Southern women.

The enterprise also exemplified tensions surrounding gender in fin-de-siècle America. Newcomb boasted of women’s abilities in the decoration of pottery, but it did not advertise the fact that all its pots and vases were actually thrown by men. That gendered division of labor persisted until the enterprise was disbanded in 1940, with the exception of the jewelry and metalworking departments, which were added in the early twentieth century. The women in those fields both fabricated and decorated the products. A fascinating wall-sized photograph of the metalwork shop shows a young woman wielding an industrial-strength torch, her expression suggesting pride in her seizure of Promethean powers.

Two additional, fundamental tensions existed within Newcomb Pottery throughout its existence. The first was between the Pottery’s ambitions and its actual achievements. The enterprise was in part a utopian social experiment, a collective for women artists intended to challenge, in Morrisian fashion, the shoddy products of the industrial era. In reality, it was never more than a small regional workshop that produced a limited number of objects for affluent collectors. The second tension was central to the entire Arts and Crafts movement, from the establishment of Morris’s firm in 1861 to the closure of Newcomb Pottery in 1940. As Jackson Lears argues in his analysis of the Arts and Crafts movement in No Place of Grace, the craft revival was in part a form of antimodern protest, but it also accommodated itself to the demands of the capitalist marketplace and to existing hierarchies of class and gender.

Less than a triumph, far more than a failure—in its achievements and shortcomings the Newcomb Pottery enterprise exemplifies the inevitable tensions in the work of William Morris and his artistic heirs.

Michael Robertson is professor of English at The College of New Jersey. His group biography of William Morris and three contemporaries, “The Last Utopians,” is forthcoming from Princeton University Press.

MORRIS AT THE M.L.A. CONVENTION
This year the U. S. Morris Society will hold two sessions at the Modern Language Convention in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 5-8 January 2017. We will be able to provide free guest passes to attend the sessions, which will be held in the Pennsylvania Convention Center January 6 & 7. For passes, please write Professor Linda Hughes at L.Hughes@tcu.edu. All are invited to our lunch at the Dandelion restaurant directly after the January 7th session, after which we will visit the Free Public Library of Philadelphia. The sessions are as follows:

Craft and Design in Literary Study: The Legacy of William Morris
- Balázs Keresztes, “The Ecology of Pleasure: Craft and Design in the Work of Ruskin and Morris,” Westfalische Wilhelms-Universität, Münster and Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest
- Lindsay Wells, “A Thoughtful Sequence: Text as Tapestry in William Morris’s News From Nowhere,” University of Wisconsin-Madison
- Sara Dunton, “H.D. and William Morris: ‘There was comfort in the table,’” University of New Brunswick
- Respondent (5 min.) Meghan A. Freeman, Manhattanville College

Beautiful and Useful: The Lasting Legacy of William Morris and the Art of the Book
Special Session Co-sponsored by the Book History, Print Cultures, Lexicography Forum and the William Morris Society
- Brandiann Molby, “Pocket Cathedrals and Private Presses: Decorated Books as Architecture and the Medieval Inheritance of William Morris’ Arts and Crafts Aesthetic,” Loyola University, Chicago
- Anna Wager, “Enlargements: Technology and William Morris’s Typefaces,” University of Washington, Seattle
- Rebecca N. Mitchell, “Reading Celia Levetus,” University of Birmingham (UK)
- Chair and Respondent: Jane Carlin, University of Puget Sound Library

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- Rebecca N. Mitchell, “Reading Celia Levetus,” University of Birmingham (UK)
- Chair and Respondent: Jane Carlin, University of Puget Sound Library
These poems sprang out of a visit to the Burne-Jones Centenary Exhibition. I had loved his art (and that of Rossetti and Morris) since childhood. But my knowledge of his life and work was limited. Attending the exhibition was like walking into a treasure-cave, and I might have come away with only a blissful impression of glorious colour and shape, had it not been for one picture which unlocked a deeper meaning. Rounding a corner, I came face to face with a portrait of a beautiful woman dressed in sea-green. There was something extraordinarily touching about it that stopped me in my tracks. I had never seen it before, and I wondered why it had not been placed together with the other portraits, which included his wife, family and friends. I went back to read the caption and found that Burne-Jones, the family man who had married his childhood sweetheart, also had a Greek mistress! The conflict in this situation, and the artist’s own heart, moved me very much. It was not possible to look at Maria Zambaco and not feel a spark of love for her. But I already admired his wife, Georgiana - her heart-shaped face, truthful grey eyes, and dignity and integrity in all she did. How does a man choose between two such women?

I came away with an armful of books and a voracious desire to know more. Next morning Maria’s sonnet came to me. The next night I awoke with the Georgiana sonnet running through my mind. And I thought that was all it would be, except, the more I read, the more intrigued by Burne-Jones’s personality I became, especially after I acquired a copy of Georgiana’s Memorials. In Edward Burne-Jones I found someone whose world-view was very akin to mine; an imagination coloured by reading Walter Scott as a child and Malory in one’s teens; a love of mythology, history and design moulded by visits to the British Museum with an aunt. Indeed, his first home in London, at 17 Red Lion Square, was four doors down from that of my aunt who took me to the Museum.

I set out on a pilgrimage to Burne-Jones, visiting churches from the Cathedral in Birmingham to tiny St Margaret’s in Rottingdean, which he gifted with one of his most beautiful windows, after his daughter, Margaret, was married there. The trail took me from stately homes to the Print Room of the Victoria and Albert Museum, where I was privileged to handle some of his sketch-books, and ultimately to Rome, for his magnificent mosaics at St Paul’s-Within-The-Walls. The poems grew out of the journey. Burne-Jones also loved beautiful words, and trying to find ones worthy to reflect his
sense of colour and wonder at existence has been like
dipping into a marvellous jewel-box.

One exciting thing I discovered about Burne-Jones’s
works is that the deeper you get into them, the more they
cease to be graceful figures in a landscape of imagined
antiquity and more to be real people, with a definite
autobiographical thread running through. His friend,
Frances Horner, commented in *Time Remembered* that:

“Few wives have written so good a life of their famous
husbands as Lady Burne-Jones has written of him. He
said himself one day: ‘Lives of men who dream are not
lives to tell, are they? My life is what I long for and love
and regret and desire.’ And that is the life which long
familiarity and loving comradeship, though they tell
the truest story, may not entirely bring to the surface. It
needs another dreamer to do that…. But failing that
book of dreams, those with eyes to see may read much
in his pictures…”

What I have tried to do in these poems is to read
the pictures.

**Rottingdean Church**

A tiny woman, tired, no longer young
Until you saw her cool and timeless eyes,
Grey as the rain over a mountain lake,
Full of that luminosity that shines
Before a rainbow filters through the cloud;
Sunlight and shadowing interblended,
Tribute to a love that never ended.

She knelt with such a tender reverence
As if it were some great King buried there –
One slender hand reached out to stroke the stone.
Perhaps it was his face she saw and not
The bleak finality of dust and bone…

From underneath her coat she drew a book
Engraved with guardian angels on each page;
A hand so exquisite and full of love
Such as in this dark world could not be made
But fallen surely from the heavenly realm…

From off the gilded leaves she lifted up
A little clustered group of faded flowers;
Three heartsease pansies, bravely purple still,
Their yellow withered to a dull, dry gold.

Perhaps he gave them to her on some day
Of reconciliation, and she held

Them to her heart in gratitude for long;
But now she placed them on the grave and turned
Quietly away. A while I remained,
And when her form had vanished from my sight
I bent to catch the name of her true knight –
The legend on the carving read BURNE-JONES.

**The Golden Piano**

This little home; no furnishings,
Except a table decked to greet the friends;
And one small piano
The kind aunt sends
To welcome Georgiana
On the day these two lives blend.
His fingers aching to stretch out and touch;
To draw enchantment round
In golden strands,
And garland it
With all the gifts of love
Until it sings out underneath his hands…

I, Cecilia, bless this bond;
The music and the art,
The brave and gentle heart,
The eyes turned to each other
And Beyond…

So, start the dance of life together,
And Heaven, let the trumpet sound!
My daughter, try the instrument
And fill the house with merriment
Till joy rings all around!

Then strike the keys
And in true faith play on,
Not just in moments of hearts ease
But when all light is gone…
On chartless seas
Amid the sirens' song
Play stronger! And My Voice
Shall surely guide him home.

**GREEN SUMMER**

The sun warms new sap springing in each tree,
White birds fly up into the canopy,
The craftsman draws the tangle of the wood,
The poet praises Summer at its flood…
The sisters work their silk embroidery;
You turn the pages, reading Malory.
Whilst Jane presides over our holiday
Like Guenevere at gathering of the May.
And I drink in the quiet and serene
Sweetness of youth, its hope so fresh and green;
The patterning of friendship through the scene
Uniting us in one midsummer dream…
I love them all, so very tenderly,
But you with special, deep intensity.

**PERSEUS AND ANDROMEDA**

When I first drew your gentleness,
Upon your breast a nest of doves
Against the amber velvet pressed,
I reached to clasp joy and success,
So gratified, I should have guessed
The gods are jealous of such loves…
Never dreaming, come tomorrow,
We should have our share of sorrow.

Yet when my questing spirit flew,
Wrestling monsters and the Deep,
Dragged down by the undertow
Of dark waves rousing from their sleep,
You were the centre calm and true,
The rock round which the maelstrom beat;
Your hope borne up each day anew
Binding its wings about my feet.

Though on the salt strand, silently,
Your heart remained, enchained, alone,
It faced with mirrored honesty
That fear which turns the soul to stone;
Still seeking only good in me,
The warrior in armour bright…
The city rising from the foam,
Cathedral windows all alight.

And afterwards, though tempest-tossed
Through ardent friendships won and lost,
Sundering ways with willow strowed,
We shored each other's spirits up.
I came to meet you on the road,
Anxious until you came in sight…
Yours was the hand which filled my cup,
The voice which read by candlelight.

**THE BEGUILING OF MERLIN**

**MARIA**

Something’s exchanged
In one swift gaze
Where beings intertwine…
Is the compassion in his face
Or the power that runs through him
My design?
Edward

The hand falls short,
The charcoal breaks in two;
I tremble at her sight…
Were Helen half as beautiful
Troy would have fallen
In one night…

Maria

And when he speaks

With such deep tenderness,
I am captured by his voice…
It seems to ring
Through all my emptiness:
I have no choice.

Edward

And as her hair
Winds blossoms through my mind,
There too the thorns invade…
Caught between blissfulness
And vows that bind,
I am betrayed!

The Wine of Circe

He who drinks of Circe’s wine,
Honey-ripened on the vine,
And meets the Goddess’ eyes divine –
He’ll never return to Ithaca.

Adrift upon the reckless sea,
Heart embracing eagerly
Its terror and its ecstasy –
He’ll never return to Ithaca.

See the ivory shuttle fly,
Weaving splendour into the tapestry!
Wise Penelope will cry –
He’ll never return to Ithaca.

The good ship anchored in the bay,
Tangled in her arms he lay,
Dreaming that Greece had won the day –
He’ll never return to Ithaca.

For only Virtue’s herb can quell,
Gift of the Gods, this binding spell…
Unless he pass the Gates of Hell –
He’ll never return to Ithaca.

Chant d’Amour

The Song says Love is gladness, Love is pain:
And all man’s life is torn between the twain…
My Lady, and her goodness as she sings;
My Muse, who bears me up upon her wings…
What cruelty is this? That her sweet grace,
Though crowned with laurel, wears a stranger’s face?
I have but loved the once, and have been true
Until this hour to all I saw in you:
Virtue and truth, the worship in your eyes,
Your childlike faith; the days you nearly died –
Calling you back from those dark, distant lands –
Our son, whom I delivered with these hands;
Our little daughter, treasured beyond all…
I, who once knew Love’s sweets, now taste the gall.
For She Herself, the Goddess of Desire,
Like some strange bird, has nestled at my fire.
Touching her glorious hair, her yearning face,
All that I am is lost in that embrace
Of unremitting Beauty. Hands so pale
Tear back the curtain, show beyond the veil
One glimpse of heav’n; what that new life might be:
Realms to explore in wandering ecstasy;
Light never dreamed of, colours human eyes
Cannot presume to bear; cool mountains rise
Tinted with jade against deep cobalt skies,
Star-clear reflections in the river sing;
The tree in bloom: white petals burgeoning…
She tells me I could stay with her and die!
Never to leave the stillness and the joy.
One moment there we struggle on the brink,
Then I am drawn back by the stronger link
Into this troubled world, seeing no choice;
Tugged by the anxious calling of your voice
Imploring me, for sake of all that’s gone,
Demanding still the works I have not done.
Strongest of all, that pain, which cannot part
My children’s fingers, clutched around my heart.

**MARIA TO EDWARD, 1869**

I know you love me, and you know as well,
The pain in your face shows your heart breaking;
A torch-bearer to light my way to Hell,
Some mythic, wounded King of your making,
Warns me I am banned from the holy well
And the sacred stories your kind hands tell.
No more to hold you in the star-filled night
And hear you laugh with longing and delight?
Nor taste upon your lips the sweet, cool wine,
Bathed in the brightness of your eyes on mine?
So! Let darkness take me, and the river!
Take up the hammer, shattering the stone!
But must I drink this poison all alone?

**LOVE AMONG THE RUINS**

**GEORGE**

Love among the ruins may bud again,
Should God grant long life,
I think there is enough
To serve and last,
To graft and build upon the past.

**EDWARD**

Love among the ruins was purity –
Something of myself that’s lost forever…

**GEORGE**

Love is a new maturity
Transforming grief to something better…

**GEORGE AND EDWARD**

Compassion for humanity…
The tenderness that understands
The pain of need.

**MARIA**

Love among the ruins may yet console
When the midnight anguish comes upon me.
You gave me of your inmost soul
And no-one else can take that from me!
Yet Love’s a burning, sweet desire…

**GEORGE**

Love is the sacramental fire
That joins and makes us whole!

**MARIA**

Love among the ruins is not enough!
No poet’s word could comfort
If we part!

**GEORGE**

Love will uphold the faithful heart!

**MARIA**

Yet if Love fail?

**GEORGE**

Yet if Love fail?

**EDWARD**

Yet if Love fail
We still may serve, through Art!
THE WEDDING OF PSYCHE

Sometimes in dreams I seem to live
A sad recurring theme:
I see fair women, one by one
Pass by me.
The first whose light was smouldered out
Before I’d truly seen.
The others, who my hands had drawn
Out of the Vision, into fields of green.

And yet as they pass on before
And never once look back,
I find but one sad face
In all their mourning.
The one I loved so fiercely
But was doomed no more to have,
Departed in blue distances
Beyond the seas and past re-calling.

As step by sandalled step
They move without a sound
And cast the flowers of love
Before them on the ground;
The petals crushed and torn
Bleed like an open wound…

Once you were my bride,
A child so radiant and pure
That everyone who met your eyes
Was brightened.
You filled our lives with hope
Through all the pains we must endure,
Attempting with your music
To heal the sorrows and enlighten.

Yet now I see you following
That melancholy train;
Decked in bravest colours
Against the cold.
Placing the bow upon the string
And trying to smile again;
As if the one you loved the best
Had never dealt the cruellest blow.

And as you walk away
I am bound to follow on,
Beseeching that you stay
And share with me your song;
Lest, like the rest
I too shall vanish and be gone.

ANGEL WINDOW

Torn through tormenting dreams last night
There came an Angel with a lyre…
Her robes were amethyst and crimson,
Molten nebula of fire;
And her wings, which dipped and ruffled
In the rushing of her flight
Were dappled like a pheasant,
Burning eyes of amber bright.

And as she trod upon the waters
Parting darkness from the light,
The Sea blossomed forth with hyacinths,
Colouring the waves
Beneath her perfect feet.
And then she sang!
And O! the glory of that sound!
She cried, “Be comforted!
That woman is not drowned
But lives, and the Most Holy One forgives
And is kinder than you can discover…
Then follow me… Learn what it truly is
To be a Lover…”

DAYS OF CREATION

Sing! For the Light,
For the Light is shining…
Rising out of the dark,
Refining…
The ocean cave,
The shell-encrusted sands;
All things held safe
In tenderest of hands…

These are the Days of Creation
Limned in platinum and gold;
When the Sun’s rays are mirrored
In the waters of the soul…
These are the Days of Creation,
When the deep gems of the mine
Are cut and faceted
Until they glow divine…

See! On the branch
All the buds are breaking…
Stretching out,
In the warmth awaking;
Their patterns etching
Splendour on the sky,
To greet the Loved One
As He passes by…
These are the Days of Creation
When the lilies of the field
Outshine great Solomon
In robes of light revealed…
These are the Days of Creation
When the rose within the heart
Will bloom and sing forth
Through the Nightingale’s art…

Hear! How the wings,
How the wings are beating!
Through flight heaven
And earth are meeting…
The human soul.
Enkindled, soars above,
As Truth unfolds,
The best in him is Love…

These are the Days of Creation
When the works the craftsman wrought
Are received as prayer
Within the highest Temple Court…
These are the Days of Creation
When the vintage is outpoured,
And the whole Revelation
Sings the Glory of its Lord!

**King Cophetua**

The palace echoes, gold
on gold,
Its burnished strange-
ness thrones
The velvets and embroi-
deries
Of subtle, sumptuous
tones…
All this is but a picture-
frame,
A shrine, to house the
silent maid
Who stares out bravely,
unafraid
In face of grief and pain.

What else, then, may
Cophetua do
To prove his worth,
keep his word true,

But spurn his treasure for her sake;
Beggar himself, to keep the faith?
For that I love her still,
Heart torn in two and shamed…
What words may fail to tell
Will cry to God in paint!

**Rudyard Kipling’s Christmas**

We were the children gazing down
From the topmost gallery,
(Dressed in scarlet and warmly lined
With a toast-and-dripping tea)
On the merry folk who are now enshrined
As Morris and Company!

Our Beloved Uncle Edward
Sketched everyone in the room,
Transforming them by magic
Into angels for a tomb,
The Knights of the Round Table –
Or a scurrilous cartoon!

There were canvases round the studio
And canvases down the hall…
And when we tiptoed to bed
Their eyes would follow along the wall:
Dead people from Uncle Topsy’s rhymes
Or his monster-tales tall…

Aunt Georgie would play carols,
The house all filled with light;
But trying to blow the bellows
We lost the rhythm quite
And the lofty organ faded out
In a little squeak of fright!

But she was nothing daunted
And took it in good part;
She passed round sticky toffee
And sat us by the hearth,
Reading entrancing stories
Of brave Queen Shahrezad.

Their memory is with me still,
Sir Edward, wry and wise,
His laughter, deep and beautiful,
Aunt Georgie’s thoughtful eyes…
Filling this lonely child’s heart full:
A glimpse of Paradise.
**The Star of Bethlehem**

The green scents of a summer country,  
The light not of this world;  
The plumage of the angel's glory  
Like quetzal's wings unfurled;  
The story far too beautiful  
Not to have been true -  
That Love has visited this Earth  
And made all things anew.

The fire of creative essence,  
The child of the soul;  
The calming in the breath of incense,  
The quest that is pure gold;  
The reverence for true loveliness,  
The love of family;  
The Sacred Name worked in fine silk –  
Gifts that were wrought for Thee.

A life that was not blameless,  
A heart not always wise;  
Yet turned towards Thy Greatness  
With rapture in his eyes…  
May he be counted not the least  
Of those who travelled far  
Seeking the rising in the East  
Of this most wondrous Star.

**Briar Rose**

Daughter of my love,  
I weave a spell around you,  
So in a hundred years  
They'll see your face as fair  
As I see it now: red-gold hair  
Spun-silk around your brow,  
Pastel lights on lids gently closed.  
Those eyes I kissed were speedwell blue,  
Shot with mischief through and through  
And sharp as the briar-rose.

Arbour of enchantment  
Which sweet children filled with song,  
I would spring down the steps  
To join them in their laughing.  
Where flowers clung in curtains  
To the flint-jewelled walls;  
Round windows watching emerald lawns,  
I would see their white feet dancing…  
Now on the grass a cold rain falls  
And winter is advancing.

Harbour of my home,  
Amid your streets the strangers pass…  
Hush! For my loved-ones  
Lie asleep within the garden.  
The beauty of their singing  
And their striving past;  
The only angels left are glass  
And stare down in cool pardon  
On one who turns aside to ask  
Where I laid down the burden.

**Lancelot at the Chapel**

The door closes, I cannot reach the Light;  
I feel lost, disheartened and alone…  
As a child I longed to be a Knight,  
Ride out to defend the right  
And kneel before the great King's throne.

Have I now achieved my youthful dream  
To find disappointment at the end?  
My faithful wife, my dearest friend,  
With best intent cannot pretend:  
See my decision to accept  
This honour as a flaw in me.  
In their fight to help humanity  
They would sacrifice all they are worth…  
They hoped for such support from me –
All I fear is how much they can be hurt.
I have watched friend William growing old;
Seen disillusion etched on Georgie’s face
As despite their hopes and vision bold,
The world becomes a poorer place…

Yet it comforts me, that unsuspected,
Somewhere out of reach of furthest sight,
Some hidden movement brings great change;
I know, but cannot give it name,
Nor see clearly with this faulty heart…
All I can do is constantly proclaim
That God is manifest within this world
With all the force and ardour of my Art!

THE GOLDEN STAIRS

We are the Verses of the Merciful!
We are the Trumpets of the Kingdom!
We are the Words of the Law,
The Heralds of the Dawn…

We are the Voice of Inspiration,
We are the water turned to wine;
We are the waves on the shore,
The Door to the Divine…

And as you paint the heavenly maidens,
They descend in shout and song,
Till all the Earth with praise is laden,
Reverberating like a drum.

This is the Mansion of
Eternity,
This is the Chariot of
Love;
This is Jacob’s Ladder
Rising to realms above.

And should you seek, o
steadfast pilgrim,
To climb these Golden
Stairs,
Then you may paint
what We are
revealing
For seventy-thousand
years…

We are the Verses of the
Merciful!
We are the Trumpets of
the Kingdom!
We are the Words of the Law,
The Heralds of the Dawn…

We are the lights on the horizon,
Ablaze within the Sacred Tree;
We are the New Day rising –
Come! Seek our mystery!

GEORGIANA TO EDWARD, 1898

Falling asleep in my arms, so many
Nights in all a lifetime’s loving; only
This last precious hour I give way to tears.
Trusting me in this, as in all good things,
To bear the loneliness tomorrow brings,
A future without you here to hold me.
As for words, dear friend, I have not any
To soothe away the anguish of the years;
Except your loyalty has moved me much,
The grace and delicacy of your touch
Brought joy, your noble work enlarged my life.
Don’t fear the pain! For surely it will pass;
That world you dreamed of will be yours at last…
You make me very proud to be your wife.

ANGEL CHORUS

This is the Song that stills the flame!
The three young nobles without blame
In the heat of the crucible felt no pain,
Beheld God’s glory, lived again…

We took it up, and wove and spun
And gave it to you, much-loved son,
Interpreter in shade and light
And majesty of colours bright…

Alizarin crimson, rose,
Violet and blue-green glows,
Lavender shot through with gold,
Thus your tale of days is told.

After labours, rest now calls,
The feathers droop, the last rose falls;
The dulcimer’s sweet note enthrals
As all the worlds stand still.

So we take beneath our wings
One whose gifts would dazzle kings,
Yet, like the shepherds, humbly brings
A heart brimmed with goodwill.

Faith that was in the furnace tried,
Now may your hopes be satisfied;
Fire in the night, no more denied,
Here all your loves find purified
And all wounds kindly healed.

This then, is that Avalon
You yearned for, sleepless, in the dawn,
Or glimpsed in a wondrous book, long gone,
The brave adventure, friendship’s home…

Enter therein, in peace, secure!
But before you touch the sacred shore
Glance once back through the open door
And cry in wonder: “Joy forevermore!”

Quotations referred to in the poems

Green Summer
“I love you all more than life and George in some intense way that can never be expressed in words.”
From a letter to Georgie’s sister Louie Macdonald, August 1856, Edward Burne-Jones by Penelope Fitzgerald, p. 53.

Perseus and Andromeda
“There we finally put away childish things and had our share of sorrow.”

Love Among The Ruins
“I know one thing, and that is that there is love enough between Edward and myself to last out a long life if it is given us…”
Georgie, in a letter to Rosalind Howard, 1869, Edward Burne-Jones, by Penelope Fitzgerald, p. 121.

Rudyard Kipling’s Christmas
“Best of all, immeasurably, was the beloved Aunt herself reading us The Pirate or The Arabian Nights of evenings, when one lay out on the big sofas sucking toffee…”
“Often the Uncle, who had a ‘golden voice’, would assist in our evening play, though mostly he worked at black and white in the middle of our riots.”
“At bedtime one hastened along the passages, where unfinished cartoons lay against the walls. The Uncle often painted in their eyes first, leaving the rest in charcoal – a most effective presentation. Hence our speed to our own top-landing, where we could hang over the stairs and listen to the loveliest sound in the world – deep-voiced men laughing together over dinner.”
“It was a jumble of delights and emotions culminating in being allowed to blow the big organ in the studio for the beloved Aunt, while the Uncle worked, or Uncle Topsy came in full of some business of picture-frames or stained glass or general denunciations. Then it was hard to keep the little lead weight on its string below the chalk mark, and if the organ rang out in squeals the beloved Aunt would be sorry. Never, never angry!”
“Uncle Topsy… came in and said he would tell us a story. We settled ourselves… and he, gravely as ever, climbed onto our big rocking-horse. There, slowly surging back and forth while the poor beast creaked, he told us a tale full of fascinating horrors…”
**Lancelot at the Chapel**

“They talk, and talk and talk... and none of them knows – not one, and all the time great hidden movements are going on that will change the world, unnoticed, unsuspected, out of reach of the furthest sight...”


**The Golden Stairs**

“His listener...said: ‘How I wish people did not get old. How I wish they could live new lives.’ ‘Yes’, said Edward, ‘I should like to paint and paint for seventeen thousand years.’ And then he added, aloud, but speaking slowly as if to himself:

‘Why seventeen? Why not seventy thousand years?’”


**Georgiana to Edward, 1898**

“I want in gratitude to tell you that your work makes life larger and more beautiful to me...”


**Angel Chorus**

“Enter therein, in peace, secure...”

This quotation from *The Qur'an*, 15:46, appears in tiling over the staircase at the home of Lord Leighton, friend of Burne-Jones.

Hilary Freeman was born in London and has been writing poetry since childhood. “Days of Creation” is her first collection, and she is now working on a new sequence, “In the Footsteps of William Morris,” inspired by recent visits to Iceland with the UK Morris Society.

A lovely facsimile of *The William Morris Manuscript of the Odes of Horace* is offered to WMS members by ISD Press of Bristol, CT at a discount price of $225 (promotional code 707-16) until 28 February 2017.

For up to date information on 23-26 March Baltimore NEMLA panel, “William Morris and Radical Victorianism,” please write Michael Robertson at mrroberts@tcnj.edu and view details at www.morris-society.org.

**REVIEWS**

**JOHN PLOTZ, TIME AND THE TAPESTRY**


*Clara Finley*

Even taken alone, the premise of John Plotz’s children’s book *Time and the Tapestry* is enough to excite fans of William Morris: two children, Jen and Ed, live with their grandmother, Georgie, who once worked as a tapestry weaver at Morris’s Merton Abbey factory. Georgie is an ardent collector of Arts & Crafts work, but her prized possession is an unfinished tapestry woven by Morris himself. When the family runs out of money, and the provenance of the tapestry cannot be proven, the children go on a time-travelling adventure to visit the source: William Morris, and all the places dear to him.

But the excitingly Morris-centric premise is only a foretaste of the delights offered by *Time and the Tapestry*. Plotz’s cleverly-structured plot educates as it entertains, all within a beautiful atmosphere created by his painterly descriptions—and in the end, the book delivers an emotionally subtle and very important message about art. All of this, together with Phyllis Saroff’s rich, playful illustrations, make this book just as rewarding to a general audience as it is to longtime Morris fans.

Plotz frames all the action that takes place in Victorian England around a poem that had been ceremoniously entrusted to Georgie, along with the tapestry, when she was a girl. The poem, a eerily beautiful patchwork of many Morris poems, is a credit to the tradition of grown-up poetry in children’s books (*The Hobbit* being another notable example), and is introduced in a scene which can fairly be described as a rollicking good piece of gothic theater. The children are at home with Georgie, next to the tapestry, and a summer thunderstorm has begun. Their pet blackbird Mead is flying about wildly while Georgie declaims her verses, louder and louder, over the sound of thunder and rain (in the book, the verse is intercut with descriptions and dialogue, but it appears here uninterrupted):

I am the Ancient Apple-Queen.  
For evermore a hope unseen,  
Betwixt the blossom and the bough.  
A gourd and a pilgrim shell, roses dun,  
A ship with shields before the sun.
A man drew near,
With painted shield and gold-wrought spear.
Good was his horse and grand his gear.
Through the cold garden boughs we went
Where the tumbling roses shed their scent.
Therefore Venus well may we
Praise the green ridges of the sea.
A fork-tongued dragon fresh and fell
Behold I have loved faithfully and well.
Beside dark hills whose heath-bloom feeds no bee,
All birds sing in the town of the tree.
In the white-flowered hawthorn brake
Love be merry for my sake.
And Thames runs chill
‘Twixt mead and hill.

With those final lines ringing in the air, Jen and Ed are transported through the tapestry into 19th century England, thus beginning the adventure proper. They learn from their newly enlarged and griffin-like pet, Mead, that they have to fetch one object for each part of their Granny’s poem in order to solve the mystery of the unfinished tapestry, and save the family from ruin. This works very well as a structuring theme, as the story leaps gracefully through time and place between each object, giving readers a simplified story of Morris’s life in a few carefully chosen snapshots.

Each new time and place introduces or enlarges upon one of Morris’s passions, and introduces a new character from his life. Readers see him riding a pony as a child, studying at Oxford with Edward Burne-Jones, working at Street’s architectural firm with Philip Webb, painting the murals at the Oxford Union with Dante Gabriel Rossetti, decorating Red House with his new wife Jane, visiting Iceland with Charles Faulkner, and finally, surrounded by family and friends at Kelmscott Manor near the end of his life.

These snapshots deliver plenty of information about William Morris’s life and work, often in the form of passionate soliloquies delivered by Morris himself, as the children spy on him from under a table or behind a curtain. The information is never too heavy-handed, as Plotz intermingles the educational material with plenty of light moments and adventurome action.

In any book that draws inspiration from real people and events, there is not enough time and space to explain each character fully. Plotz did a good service to his high-paced children’s narrative by presenting each person as a caricature, but he sketched his caricatures carefully. Morris is portrayed as fully living up to his wild and clumsy nickname of ‘Topsy’—he always seems to be shouting, waving his arms about, or lecturing his friends on one of the topics dear to his heart—but he is never reduced to silliness. Morris’s thoughts on art, beauty, and labor come across forcefully.

Most other characters are given the same level of respect, even those that are often misunderstood in mainstream nonfiction treatments, like Jane Morris. Happily, Jane is not portrayed here as a gloomy, sensual queen lifted from the face of a Rossetti painting. Instead, she is portrayed as her letters, and testimonials from her friends, have revealed her to be: quick to laugh, and sparkling—despite any sadness. As for Rossetti, he is portrayed as an imposing, nay-saying figure. It is an unfortunate truth that all good stories need antagonists, and Rossetti does fit the role quite well, given the well-known difficulties in his relationship with Morris, and his scandalous love for Jane.

All of this adventure and historical information would not have as much emotional impact, if it weren’t for the quality of the writing itself. The atmospheric quality of Plotz’s descriptions make the book a definitive whole, which is to be enjoyed immersively (and preferably in just a few sittings). In Iceland for example, Jen notices that the air smells “like that spongy, bouncy turf, even a little like the ocean. I remembered a trip we’d once taken up the coast of Maine, where gray and black spears of rock dropped suddenly into the Atlantic.”

In Plotz’s hands, these moody English and Icelandic landscapes become almost another character of the book, so dominating are their presences. And this is only appropriate—to Morris, places were imbued with such historical awareness of the people who came before, that it led him to love them almost as one loves a person.

All throughout, as we learn about Morris and his peers, we learn more about the children too, which leads us to the biggest lesson of the book, and to its emotional crown: the blooming of Jen’s confidence, and the revelation of her artistic calling. She begins as a normal pre-teen,
socially anxious and struggling with a schism between her and her best friend at school. But as the story progresses, she goes from wishing she could just be a normal girl who played field hockey and didn’t worry about the glaring “Lost Spots” (capitals are hers) in an old tapestry, to a vigorous, self-possessed little artist on a quest—or rather, she becomes a little artist with a Geas’ as Morris so weightily calls it.

With the theme of the gaelic Geas, Plotz hints that some magical obligation to finish the tapestry had been passed down from Morris to Jen. This theme charges the whole narrative with a mystical urgency that’s perfectly complementary to Morris’s own views on the ancient, popular thread that runs through art. In Morris’s view, ancient buildings and ancient works of art and decoration belong rightfully to the public, and shouldn’t be subject to the whims of individual ownership. In short, all people should be able to look at such art, to touch it, to be inspired by it, and to use the living memory of that art in their own art.

Jen comes to understand this through self-reflection. At first, she feels possessive of the tapestry when she realizes that she has a Geas upon her to finish it. Her first impulse is to keep it to herself, to keep it in her grandmother’s living room where she alone can look at it, forever. But soon, her heart opens up to the joy of shared art. She realizes that if she loves the art so much, the best place for it to be is a museum, where it can nourish the hearts and minds of so many others. She wants others to feel the same way that the tapestry can nourish the hearts and minds of so many others. She realizes that she has a complementary to Morris’s own views on the ancient, popular thread that runs through art. In Morris’s view, ancient buildings and ancient works of art and decoration belong rightfully to the public, and shouldn’t be subject to the whims of individual ownership. In short, all people should be able to look at such art, to touch it, to be inspired by it, and to use the living memory of that art in their own art.

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From the beautiful descriptions and illustrations, to the Morrisonian in-jokes and emotionally sophisticated character development, this is a volume worth sharing with budding little artisans—if you can resist hoarding it away in your own library. But as Jen would say, if you love it, you should share it.

Clara Finley is a Vice President of the US William Morris Society. She maintains the WMS-US Facebook page and Twitter feeds, writes a blog, themorrisionian.blogspot.com, and is preparing a biography of William Morris.
sort of aeolian harp, effortlessly producing his verses. Relying on her deep knowledge of the more than fifty early poems included in the online *Morris Archive*, Boos traces Morris’s poetic development and argues for the importance of the early work, which has been written off as trivial.

Another myth is that Morris’s career can be neatly divided into the periods before and after his quasi-religious “conversion” to socialism in 1883. In a fine chapter on the early essays, Boos shows how the central themes of Morris’s later writing on art and socialism are all foreshadowed in the early prose: the importance of pleasure in labor, the need for simplicity, the role of craft and architecture as repositories of memory and history, and the conviction that people need to live in harmony with the transcendent beauty of nature.

Boos’s two chapters on the *Defence of Guenevere* are particularly valuable. The first explores the book’s Victorian sources: Tennyson, Browning, and Rossetti, of course, but also “Owen Meredith” (the pen-name of Robert Bulwer-Lytton) and Edgar Allan Poe. The second chapter is a powerful analysis of the poems’ heroines. As Boos notes, some critics believe that the *Defence* stylizes and projects onto its female protagonists “some of the more destructive conventions of Victorian patriarchy” (195). Against this view, she argues that Morris defends female passion and sexuality. She focuses on how the *Defence* poems reveal the confining effect of the polarity of normative gender roles and on the rhetorical resistance of Morris’s women characters. Boos’s sensitive and suggestive close readings of the poems reveal an androgynous capacity within their creator, an ability to interweave the virtues of courage and the love of beauty, which he embodies in his female characters. Men too, Boos acknowledges, are victimized in Morris’s poetry, but, she argues, “the suffering of the women was often more vivid, and more urgently demanded redress” (220).

The extensive discussion of the *Defence* includes a list of eight different interpretations of Morris’s Guenevere that have been advanced by critics over the past quarter century, the majority of them hostile to the character. Boos then offers her own convincing analysis, which highlights the poem’s sexual politics—its critique of “arranged marriages, sexual double standards, [and] repressive social hierarchies” (221)—and locates the text within the contemporary debates that preceded passage of the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857, which permitted men but not women to sue for divorce on grounds of adultery.

Boos’s title suggests that the book’s range extends to 1870, the year that saw the publication of the final volume of *The Earthly Paradise*. However, Boos has already written extensively on that work in *The Design of William Morris’s “The Earthly Paradise”* (1991). *History and Poetics* effectively ends in 1867, with the publication of *The Life and Death of Jason*. She devotes her last chapter to the nine years between the *Defence* and *Jason*, exploring unpublished manuscripts that reveal how the youthful Morris developed into the accomplished poet of *The Earthly Paradise*. She shows how his shift from poetry of battle and physical combat to narratives of travel and search enabled the focus on endurance, consolation, and the complexity of human emotions that characterized Morris’s mature life and work.

*History and Poetics* combines close reading and careful scholarship with the sort of wise summative statements possible only to a mature scholar who has devoted her career to the study of Morris, his contemporaries, and their times. Boos casually tosses off insights that brilliantly capture essential truths about her subject, such as her reference to his “temperamental egalitarianism and empathy with admirable lost causes” (194) and her characterization of him as “an ardent master-mason in the great cathedral of nature and secular humanism” (129). The book concludes with Morris, following the publication of *The Earthly Paradise*, “turn[ing] his hand and energies to the lyrics and poetic narratives of his last three decades” (286). Does the author’s look to the 1870s and beyond promise a sequel to this study? It is a consummation devoutly to be wished.

**WMS Media help wanted:** In the wake of the departure to England of our Vice-President for Public Relations, Clara Finley, the U. S. Morris Society seeks one or more persons to help with our Facebook, blog, and other forms of outreach. If interested, please write jasondmartinek@gmail.com.
The most significant essay collection on Morris's work to appear in some years, *To Build a Shadowy Isle of Bliss: William Morris’s Radicalism and the Embodiment of Dreams*, edited by Michelle Weinroth and Paul Leduc Browne, is the product of a symposium and workshop convened by the co-editors in Montreal and Ottawa in 2010 and 2011. Seeking to reappraise Morris's radicalism “in terms of a number of overlapping discourses,” among them Victorian Studies, utopian studies, and print culture, the editors seek to demonstrate that the multiple strands of Morris’s work embody issues both “universal and current.” Weinroth’s introduction explains that *William Morris’s Radicalism and the Embodiment of Dreams* explores the dialectical opposition between Morris’s aesthetic achievements and his radical politics, “an unstable and transformative tension” which recreates the past through representing “an alternate commonwealth.”

In accord with these aims, most of the volume’s twelve essays explore creative manifestations of these apparent anomalies and tensions, and I will here review the eight essays devoted to Morris’s literary works.

In “Illuminating Divergences: Morris, Burne-Jones, and the Two *Aeneids*,” (56-84), Miles Tittle examines the collaborative edition of this imperial epic, translated and partly illuminated by Morris with illustrations by Edward Burne-Jones. Tittle notes that the artistic preferences of the two men had diverged by the time of this enterprise; whereas Morris strove to emphasize the tale’s ambivalent tone and the pain unleashed by disruption and war, the classical harmonies of Burne-Jones’s drawings embody a more celebratory view of Aeneas’s mission. He postulates that Morris turned from illumination to translation in order to resume greater control of the text, and that his translation seeks to return the epic to its multiply-sourced folk origins and imbue it with “his own misgivings about the hegemonic roots of the warrior hero.” The chapter’s strikingly handsome images, many available for the first time, confirm Tittle’s claims for the divergent approaches of the two collaborators as well as manifest Burne-Jones’s subtlety in evoking tonalities of form and color.

Yuri Cowan’s “Translation, Collaboration, and Re-ception: Editing Caxton for the Kelmscott Press,” (149-72) redresses the scant attention previously paid to the content of the books published at the Kelmscott Press, as opposed to considerations of design, clarity, technique, and so forth. Cowan views Morris’s reprinting of works translated and published by Caxton, the first English printer, in the context of Morris’s conviction that all forms of decorative art are collaborative ventures, and moreover, that attempts to remediate past works must preserve some of their essential features of “strangeness” or “otherness.” He identifies Morris’s criteria for the selection of texts as the desire to provide lively and significant works of the past in accessible form to his late-Victorian readers. A merit of Cowan’s approach is that it reconciles Morris’s more general views on society and popular literature with his intentions in issuing Kelmscott Press books.

In “Morris’s Road to *Nowhere*: New Pathways in Political Persuasion” (172-194), Michelle Weinroth explores Morris’s utopia as the culmination of his many years of experimentation in the arts of persuasion. Tracing its antecedents in classical pastoral, Weinroth considers *News from Nowhere* as an expression of the “poli-
tics of disengagement,” a place “for thinking through the fundamental principles of a humane social world.” Avoiding melodrama and triumphalism, News instead offers representations of asymmetry and deferral, and differs from static and prescriptive utopias in confronting “the problem of how we might deliver news about that which we do not know.”

In “News from Nowhere Two: Principles of a Sequel” (218-240), Tony Pinkney offers a blend of creative and critical response to Morris’s famous work. He suggests that, 125 years after its publication, Morris’s utopia should be updated for our own time, and such a sequel should “contain built-in principles of change and development” in accord with twentieth-century utopian theory. To this end, he maintains, it should consider some of the alternate narrative possibilities alluded to in the text—among these the suggestion that Morris’s utopia itself may be threatened either by outside forces or the complacency of its citizens. Pinkney then constructs an alternative plot in which Ellen and Old Hammond return from idyllic seclusion to lead an army of resistance against a counterrevolution, mounting “a fight for justice at every twist and turn of the river.” Fantasy turns serious, however, as the reader recognizes the uncanny resemblance of some of Pinkney’s constructions to political events of recent decades.

In “The Politics of Antiquarian Poetics,” David Latham explores the significance of Morris’s belief that social relations were intertwined with language itself, and his resultant attempts to change what he saw as degraded linguistic forms into an alternative language appropriate for encouraging community and fellowship. Latham explores Morris’s early poetry as a celebration of artistic vision, set poignantly in a medieval world “so newly fallen from the communal ideal of society”; the poetry of his middle period as an attempt to broaden contemporary views of mythology; and his socialist writings as models for inquiry which encouraged reader involvement. He usefully identifies several poetic features of Morris’s late prose romances which enabled him to develop “the prose poem as a new genre of art,” and concludes that more than any of the other Pre-Raphaelites, Morris articulated fundamental reasons for their pre-Renaissance, pro-medievalist position in “a radical commitment to revolutionizing a hierarchical social order… based on the authoritarian ideology of classical and biblical mythologies.”

In “Radical Tales: Rethinking the Politics of William Morris’s Last Romances,” (85-105), Phillipa Bennett presents a holistic view of the relationship of Morris’s late prose romances to his political endeavors. She asserts that rather than directly presenting socialist societies or principles, Morris sought in his romances to explore the challenges of political activism and to define “the values that underpinned his personal engagement with, and commitment to, the socialist movement.” Bennett suggests that he chose the romance genre because of its openness to the “contemplation of possibilities” and its embeddedness in a rich and potentially liberatory tradition of storytelling. Her readings of several late romances identify recurrent patterns: the need for commitment under hardship, the wisdom to desire “better, more, and otherwise,” and the necessity of hope.

In “Telling Time: Song’s Rhythms in Morris’s Late Work,” (106-123), Elizabeth Helsinger provides the first sustained account of the prosody of Morris’s brief socialist lyrics, especially the “Chants for Socialists.” Explaining the effects of rhythm, designed to move singers “to desire a common weal,” she posits that these songs encourage commitment and activism while simultaneously promoting “reflection on the excitements of the rhythmic power they arouse.” Helsinger then considers the effect of song in Morris’s prose works, exploring the effects of a historical rhyming password in A Dream of John Ball and observing that the interspersed lyrics or “song-speech” of the late prose romances “occupy the place of subjective interiority.” Finally, she discusses the use of charms and riddles, which reflect Morris’s hope that “when the mastery of men is renounced, the mastery of nature that such lyric forms compel might be harnessed for the commonweal.”

In “William Morris’s ‘Lesser Arts’ and ‘The Commercial War,’” (35-55), I consider the creative tensions within Morris’s representations of struggle, violence, and the solace of creative memorialization. Noting that even his earliest poems and prose romances convey revulsion and sorrow at the consequences of violence, I examine his increasingly overt opposition to what he saw as the social violence of “commercial war,” his many attacks on British imperialism in later life, and his stated abhorrence of even socialist-instigated violence. Although his later romance protagonists still engage in quasi-allegorical struggles, they also attempt to disengage when possible, and to transmute the conflicts around them into stories, songs, and other artistic expressions of reconciliation and peace.

In all, the essays in To Build a Shadowy Isle of Bliss: William Morris’s Radicalism and the Embodiment of Dreams belie the self-deprecation of its title (no “shadowy isle”) and confirm the unity, complexity, and enduring relevance of Morris’s socially transformative aesthetics.
By the time this paper is published, the country will be in the thick of the elections; indeed it may be possible to get some idea by that time as to their possible result, but it must be admitted that before the first few come off, any prophesy on this can be little more than mere guessing.

...Meantime something may be learnt from all the late speech-making and maundering. ... And first it must surely strike a Socialist (or indeed anybody else) how strong the tendency is, in our representative system, towards personal government.

What hopes, for example, were hung on Mr Gladstone's appearance! How he was not only to undo the harm done by Mr Chamberlain's impatience (save the mark) but also to give spirit and meaning to the whole Liberal attack. There was the man; we were all to wait for him: then we should see!

Well, now the oracle has spoken what has it said? Commonplace and twaddle enough; that we expect as a matter of necessity, just as the ancients expected the verse of the Delphic oracle. [Morris criticizes Gladstone for temporizing on Home Rule and precluding any discussion of disestablishment, that is, denationalizing the Anglican church].

...Worthy people of England, that are so proud of your Representative Government, take note once more how the Parliamentary Machine has been once again used, as it always will be, to sweep aside inconvenient questions. To check all aspirations towards progress; never to pass any law, however much desired by everybody, till the whole country has grown sick and tired of the subject; and then only to pass half of it, so that it becomes worse than useless — that is, it seems, the business of your Representative Parliament that governs you. When will you learn to do your own business yourselves?

Source: “On the Eve of the Elections,” Commonweal, Vol I, No. 11, December 1885, 101. The UK general election, held between 24 November and 18 December 1885, returned Gladstone and the Liberals without a majority but with the greatest number of seats. These divisions prompted another general election the following July in which the Liberals were decisively defeated.

“FROM FLOWER TO FLOWER” EXHIBITION OF MORRIS-INFLUENCED DESIGNS BY ITALIAN ARTIST PIETRO CARDO

These 95 designs painted as a tribute to William Morris were exhibited at the Casa Sartori Museum of Castel d’Arno (Man- tova), from 6 March to 10th April, 2016. For a catalogue or more information, please write info@pietrocardone.it.

FRENCH MORRIS TRANSLATION

The press Les Forges de Vulcain announces that a new 600 page French translation of Morris’s *Well at the World’s End* is scheduled to appear in bookstores 10 November 2016: *William Morris La Source au bout du monde Le grand Roman picaresque de l’âge Victorien*, designed as a tribute to the Kelmscott Press edition of 1896 developed, illustrated, composed and printed by William Morris. This is a lovely book, well worth its price of 28 euros.

To purchase, please contact Sylvie Chabroux, sylvie@chabroux.com, 06 64 25 48 42, 01 44 07 47 62; and for libraries, Virginie Migeotte virginie.migeotte@gmail.co.