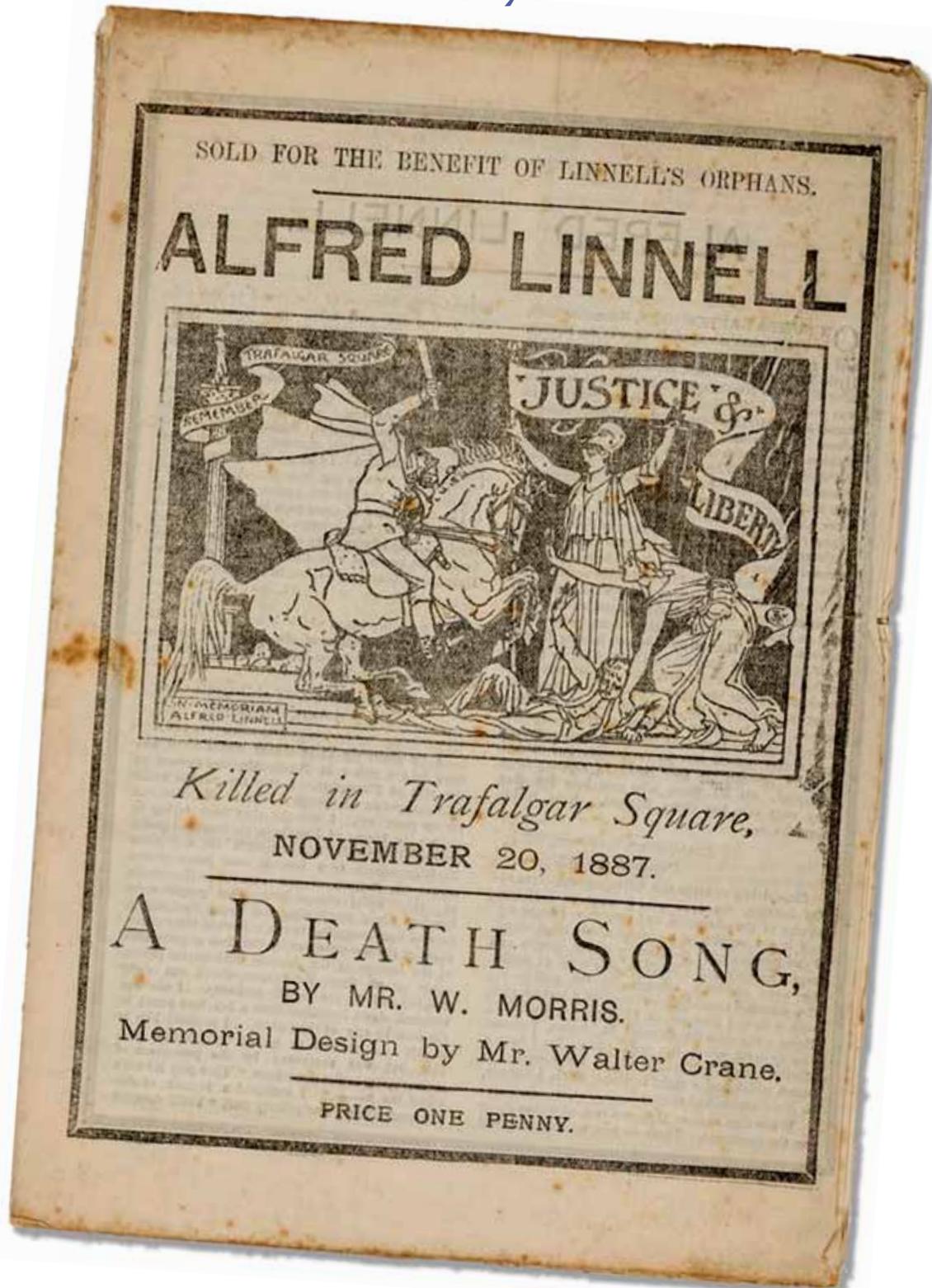


# Useful and Beautiful:

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Winter 2017.2



## REMEMBERING JACK WALSDORF

June 19, 1941 - July 9, 2017

THIS SUMMER MARKED THE PASSING OF JACK WALSDORF, FORMER WILLIAM MORRIS SOCIETY PRESIDENT. WE INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING GLIMPSES INTO JACK'S LIFE TO HONOR AND COMMEMORATE ALL OF THE WONDERFUL THINGS JACK HAS MEANT TO OUR COMMUNITY.

### FROM JACK'S OBITUARY

John "Jack" Joseph Walsdorf, 76, formerly of St. Anna, died on Sunday, July 9, 2017, of a pulmonary embolism in Portland, Oregon.

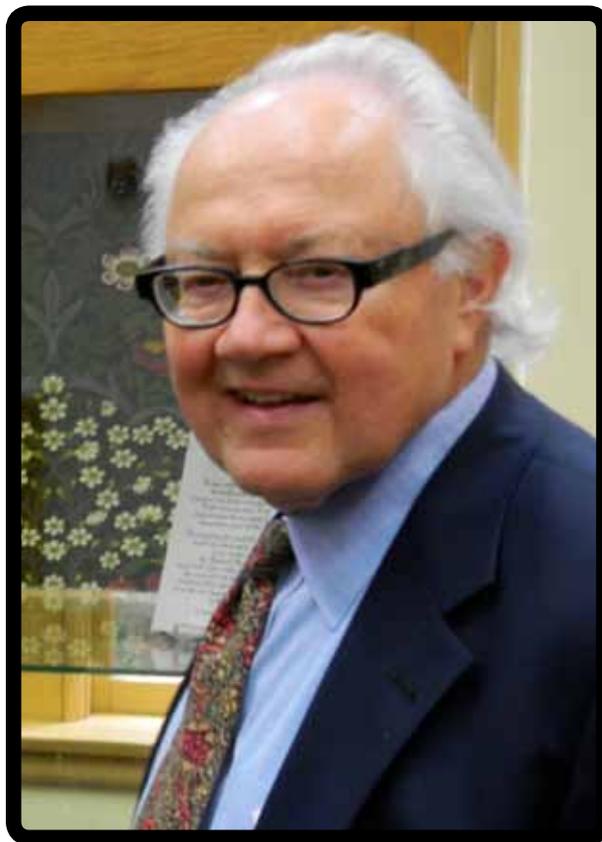
Born on June 19, 1941, the sixth child of Johanna (Wollner) and Dr. I. A. Walsdorf, Jack attended grade school in St. Anna, Wisconsin and graduated from Kiel High School. As a fullback on the football team, he took life-long pride in being named all-conference.

Jack had a passion for reading and his life evolved as a book lover's journey. In 1964 he graduated from Wisconsin State College, Oshkosh and then received his master's degree in Library Science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

He began his career as a Reference Librarian at the Milwaukee Public Library. In 1966, through an exchange program, he went to the city of Oxford, England working as a Lending Librarian. At the end of the exchange Jack got a job working for the bookseller Blackwell's of Oxford. Jack worked for Blackwell's for thirty-one years; his last position was Vice President of Academic Sales in America. In 1989, the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh Alumni Association named him Man of the Year.

After leaving Blackwell's, he worked for another bookseller, Alibris (2003-2006), and traveled far and wide with his "Book Lover's Road Show". He also lectured about collecting books, private presses, and printers, especially William Morris. Jack published a dozen books, as well as articles on both printing and collecting. A lifelong collector, Jack was addicted to the "joy of the hunt" and acquired his own library, which at one time numbered over 7,000 books. In addition to the pleasure of reading, he loved the look and feel of books as well as giving them to friends and acquaintances.

Jack shared his interests with both of his children and his partner of 26 years, Marylou Colver of Lake Oswego, Oregon. He is survived by his daughter Quinn Walsdorf of Albuquerque, New Mexico, and grand-



Jack Walsdorf  
June 19, 1941 - July 9, 2017

daughters Emily and Alison Walsdorf of Portland, Oregon; brother William and sister-in-law Mary Walsdorf of Broomfield, Colorado; and sister Catherine (Molly) Meyer of Green Bay; sister-in-law Ruth Walsdorf of New Holstein; and former spouses Karen Sykes and Bonnie Allen. His parents; son John (JJ) Walsdorf; sister Marian Schmitz; brothers Jim and Tom Walsdorf; and brothers-in-law Tom Meyer and Joe Schmitz preceded him in death.

We will miss his strong opinions as much as his gentle, ribbing humor.

### FROM THE LAKE OSWEGO PRESERVATION SOCIETY

*At the time of his death Jack was serving on the boards of the William Morris Society and the Lake Oswego Preservation Society. Below we include part of the Lake Oswego Preservation Society tribute to Jack; the full text (along with information about the society and some excellent photos of Jack) can be found at <http://lakeoswegopreservation-society.org/board-and-advisors/>*

We are mourning the loss of one of our long-time board members. Jack Walsdorf was also a History

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Submit articles and items of interest to: [us@morrissociety.org](mailto:us@morrissociety.org)

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## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

It’s a bittersweet moment, my last letter to you as president of the William Morris Society. I’ll be stepping off the board knowing the organization is in good hands.

The sudden loss of past president and board member Jack Walsdorf was a major blow. He was a great friend to the William Morris Society and someone I considered a mentor. I want to dedicate this issue of *Useful and Beautiful* in his memory.

In addition to me, Linda Hughes will be stepping off the board. She has been a phenomenal VP of Programming. Our success at MLA over the past several years owes a great deal to her.

Florence Boos has continued to serve at her usual tireless pace as editor of the magazine. Her dedication to the Society is unparalleled. Michael Robertson has done a marvelous job with our blog, *News from Anywhere*. He is always looking for content. If you have any ideas please let him know.

Jane Carlin and Morna O’Neal, who are just completing their first three-year terms on the board, have agreed to another three. They provide much-needed continuity so that major projects like the website upgrade can be completed. They also needed help to ensure the organization maintains its interdisciplinary range.

KellyAnn Fitzpatrick is completing her first year on the board and has proven herself to be an indispensable asset to the Society. In addition to working with Florence on *Useful and Beautiful* she has stepped up to serve on the website task force and elections committee.

We are also fortunate to have Paul Acker. He has planned the Society’s trip to the Morgan Library at MLA 2018 and organized a session around the Morgan’s Pre-Raphaelite materials.

The elections committee is completing its work to add new board members. The prospects for 2018 look great. Thank you for your commitment to the Society. It is your support that allows us to do the work that keeps Morris’s legacy alive and well. It has been a privilege to serve.

Jason Martinek  
[jasondmartinek@gmail.com](mailto:jasondmartinek@gmail.com)

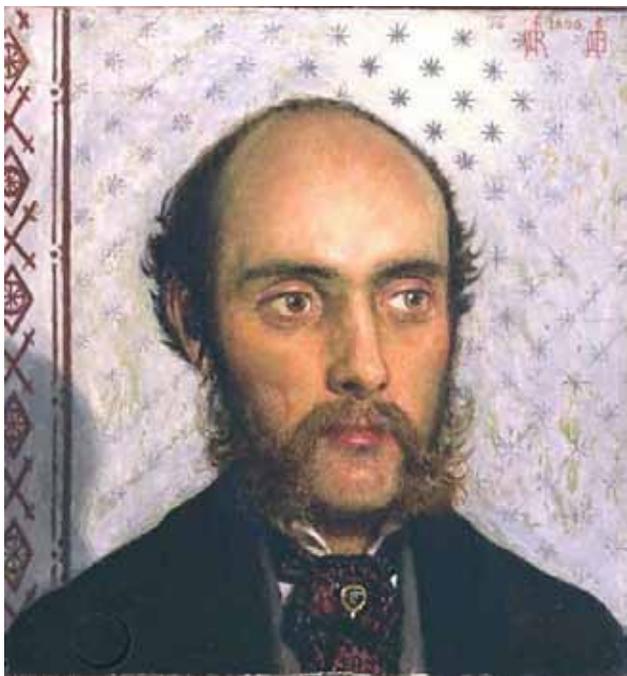


Jason Martinek

## WILLIAM MORRIS SOCIETY WEBSITE

2016 and 2017 issues of the UK *William Morris Society Magazine* are now available on the US William Morris Society website, [www.morrissociety.org/publications/newsletter.html](http://www.morrissociety.org/publications/newsletter.html).

Articles in the most recent issue include “Rediscovering May Morris’s Childhood,” by Rowan Bain, “The Last of the Pre-Raphaelites” (Harry Clarke), by Susan Warlow, “The William Morris Craft Fellowship,” by Lizzy Hippisley-Cox, and “‘Marxian’ and the Death of Morris,” by Stephen Williams.



William Michael Rossetti, by Ford Madox Brown, 1865

## THE PRE-RAPHAELITES AND THE COLBECK COLLECTION

*Florence S. Boos*

Norman Colbeck was a bookseller from London and southern England who was persuaded by the entreaties and friendship of William/“Dick” Fredeman to sell his collection to the University of British Columbia and to relocate there in 1967, where he spent many years in cataloging its contents. Colbeck had lived during a period in which Pre-Raphaelite authors were held in high regard as avant-garde Victorian artists and writers, and he had purchased a part of his collection from the Victorian bookseller H. Buxton Forman, who had in turn acquired the stock of F. S. Ellis, publisher and friend of both Dante Gabriel Rossetti and William Morris. Dick Fredeman was first known for his 1965 comprehensive bibliography, *Pre-Raphaelitism, A Bibliocritical Study*. I can claim to have been influenced by this, for as a graduate student I purchased its to-me relatively expensive self and pored over its new and exciting contents.

As a scholar Fredeman was somewhat atypical—not a literary critic per se, nor yet a biographer or historian—but something in between all these, a man who directed a laser-like focus on every minute detail which could be known about the lives and manuscripts of D. G. Rossetti and the Rossetti family. It might be said that he

lived in order to *be* a Rossetti, a time traveler as it were, and I don’t doubt that the inner workings of the Rossetti family were dearer to him than those of his own. Moreover he possessed a zest, even a lust, for retrieving and expatriating these manuscripts and artifacts—becoming the Lord Elgin of Rossettiana, as it were, as unflatteringly memorialized in A. S. Byatt’s *Possession* in the figure of Mortimer Cropper. It was Fredeman who in the 1960s discovered the Penkill Castle Scott-Boyd manuscripts, now also housed in the University of British Columbia Library Special Collections. These contained W. B. Scott’s gossipy letters from London to his mistress in Scotland which confided details of Rossetti’s affair with Jane Morris. More highmindedly, perhaps, from the same manuscripts Fredeman was able to sort out Rossetti’s mental state and writing habits during the period of his 1869-70 collapse and convalescence at Penkill Castle, and thus date the sequence of composition of his most important work, the 101 sonnet sequence “The House of Life.” For those who cared about Rossetti’s poetry, this sequence became at once more understandable and more poignant.

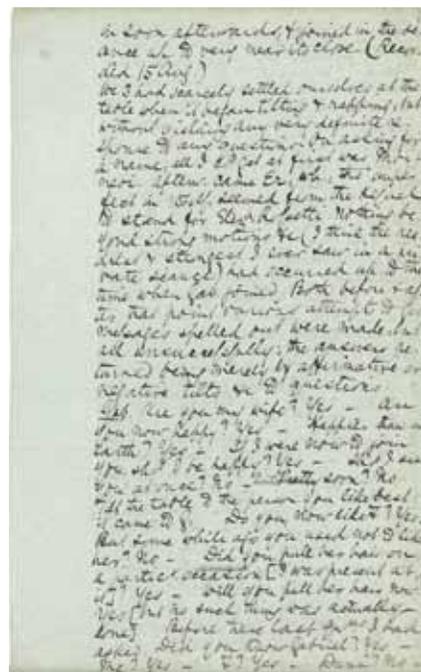
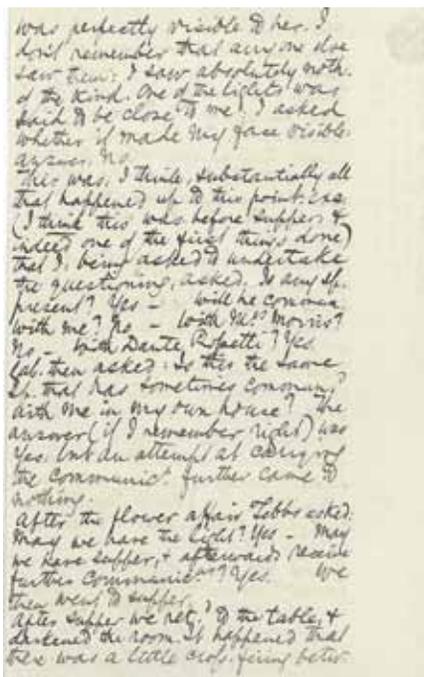
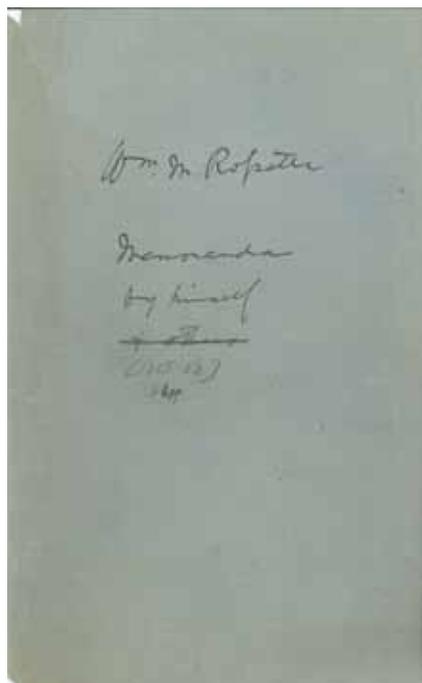
The Colbeck Collection was thus not the first which Fredeman had procured for his home university; in addition to the Penkill Papers, he had obtained from Dante’s brother William Michael’s surviving daughters and their heirs the vast and miscellaneous contents of the Angeli-Dennis Collection of items left behind at William Michael Rossetti’s death. William Rossetti (1829-1919) was in a sense Fredeman’s 19<sup>th</sup> century doppelgänger, an exhaustive recorder, collector, organizer, and preserver, in Rossetti’s case, of the letters, diaries, and memorabilia of his extended Italian family, his immediate English family, including Dante Gabriel and Christina and their writings, and his many associations gained through life as a member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, editor, art and literary critic, friend, and friend of friends. Since the Colbeck Collection’s holdings are especially strong in Pre-Raphaelite, Rossetti, and Morris-related books and manuscripts, the



William Michael Rossetti, photograph, Julia Margaret Cameron, 1865

three collections form a perfect complement. Examining items in one collection in the context of another can illuminate the meanings of individual items and uncover the many personal associations which surrounded each literary or artistic achievement. Even a few examples can remind us of how ramifyingly interconnected was the social world of these Victorian intellectuals. Since in the days before telephone, e-mail, and other evanescent media, they were forced to commit their thoughts to paper, we are fortunate to have a written record of these relationships in their letters, diaries, and on the printed page.

In what follows I will offer examples of such interconnectedness from three categories: items related to the Rossettis, William Morris, and fin de siècle women poets who were personally close to or influenced by the Rossettis.



William Michael Rossetti, Séance Diary, 1866

WILLIAM MICHAEL ROSSETTI'S SÉANCE DIARY

William Michael Rossetti's séance diary from 1865-68 is surely one of the oddest items in these collections, buried unobtrusively amid his many dated diaries kept from the 1850s onwards.

Both brothers attended these nocturnal sessions, along with, on occasion, Jane Morris and other friends. The diary records their different aims, as the more scientifically inclined William carefully details the physi-

cal circumstances of each evocation of spirits (a tilted table, etc.) and the accuracy of the supposed revenant's responses, apparently in an attempt to verify or refute the medium's claims to otherworldly powers. By contrast Gabriel wished the alleged spirit of his former wife Elizabeth Siddal (who had committed suicide in 1862) to assure him of her continued love and forgiveness.

Gab. Are you my wife? Yes — Are you now happy? Yes — Happier than on earth? Yes — If I were now to join you, shd I be happy? Yes — Shd I see you at once? No — Quite soon? No. Tilt the table to the person you like best: it came to G.

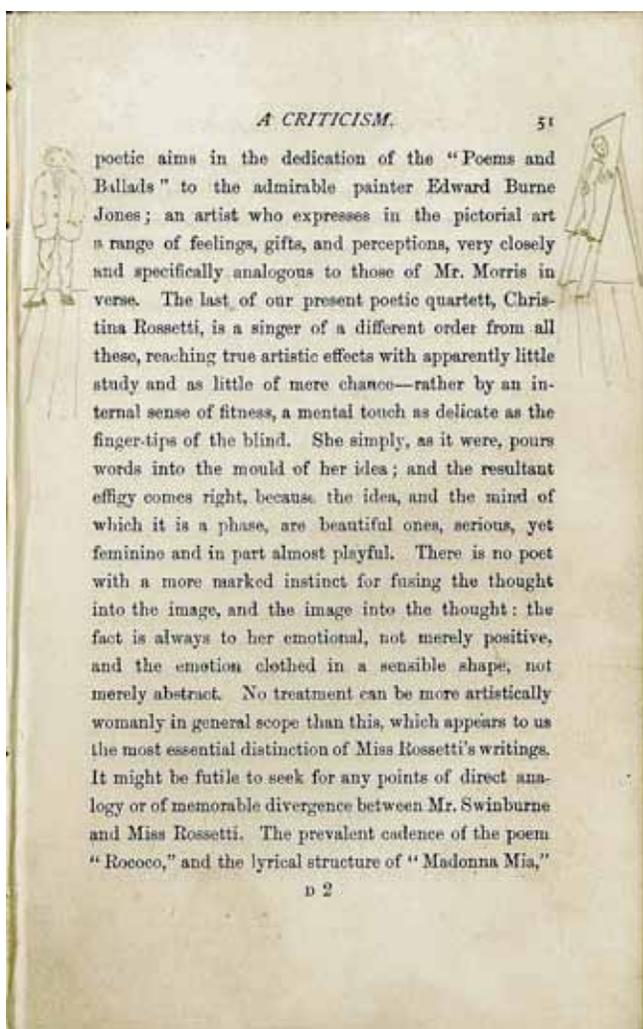
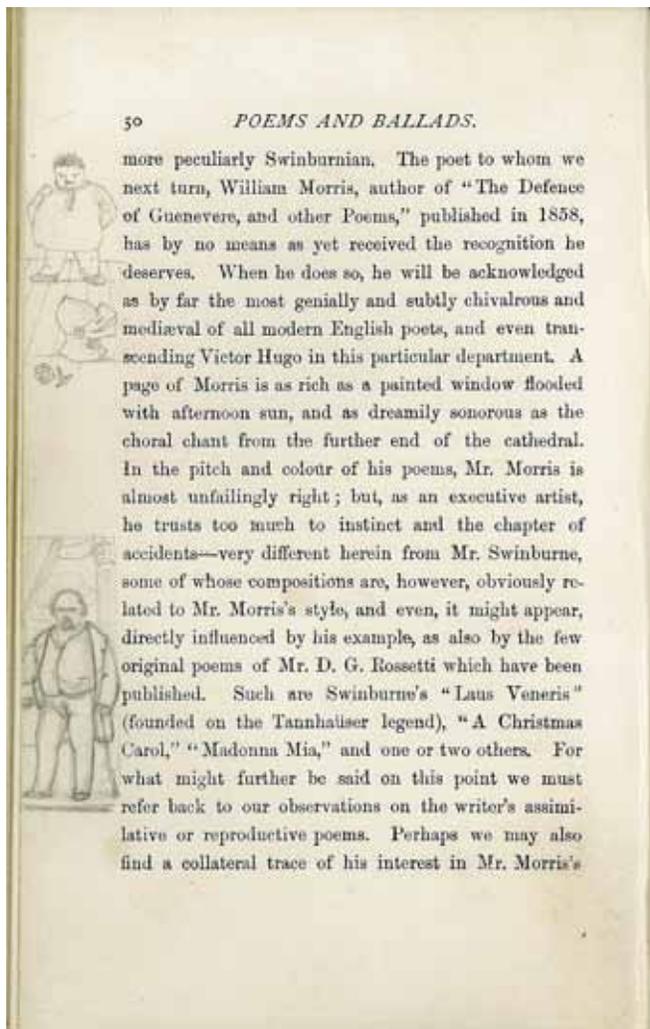
Those familiar with “The Blessed Damozel” will note the similar motif of a bereaved male lover who imagines a reunion with his beloved in heaven.

In after years the loyal William Michael was never willing to acknowledge that all this had been a hoax, but

he did note of Spiritualism, that “any great addiction to its phenomena tends to weaken rather than fortify the mind” (Andrew Stauffer, “Speaking with the Dead,” *Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies* 24, 2015, 41).

ALL ON ONE PAGE: MARGINAL DOODLES OF ROSSETTI, MORRIS AND BURNE JONES

To his credit William Michael was a keen advocate of what at the time were seen as immoral or revolution-



William Michael Rosetti - Swinburne's Poems and Ballads, 1866

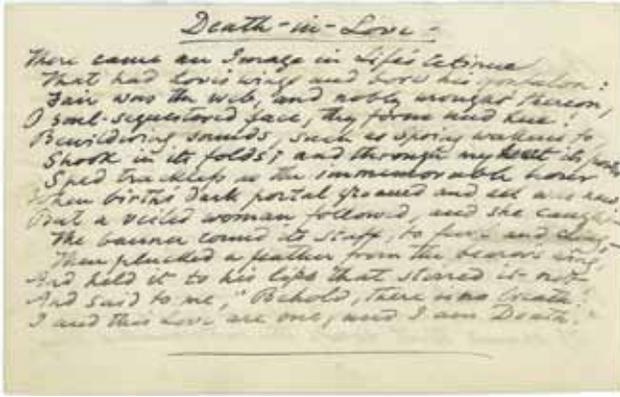
ary works, and it took some courage to write a critical treatise on Algernon Swinburne's heretical and somewhat scandalous 1866 *Poems and Ballads*. Published in the immediate wake of Swinburne's widely condemned poems, William Michael's volume was clearly intended to help a beleaguered friend and member of the wider Pre-Raphaelite circle. Moreover, in this one page opening William Michael additionally manages to praise his brother, his sister, and William Morris—the latter at a time after the latter's first volume, *The Defence of Guenevere*, had been highly criticized by reviewers, and before his 1867 *The Life and Death of Jason* had evoked praise.

Note too the page's clearly recognizable caricatures of Morris and Rossetti, along with the tiny caricature of a thin and diminished Edward Burne-Jones, very dimly traced on the left margin of the right hand page. The Colbeck catalogue does not identify the artist, but the style is recognizably that of Burne-Jones, an early pupil of Dante Rossetti with a lifelong fondness for ex-

actly such comic caricatures. And since we can see on the inside cover, "With the compliments of the author," presumably William had presented it to Edward. This single page testifies to the strong ties between five young men—Algernon, William Michael, Dante, Edward, and William—and one sister, all at the time friends who shared literary and artistic preferences.

TWO ROSSETTI AUTOGRAPHS AND A MYSTERY:

Long before Dick Fredeman made his way to Mrs. Angeli's home in Italy, William Michael had during his lifetime carefully dispersed the bulk of his more famous siblings' artworks and literary manuscripts to English repositories, where they presumably might reinforce the latter's reputations. Thus there are only a few of Dante's poetic manuscripts in the UBC collections, sonnets from the sequence "The House of Life" preserved in the Colbeck Manuscript Archives denuded of their context.

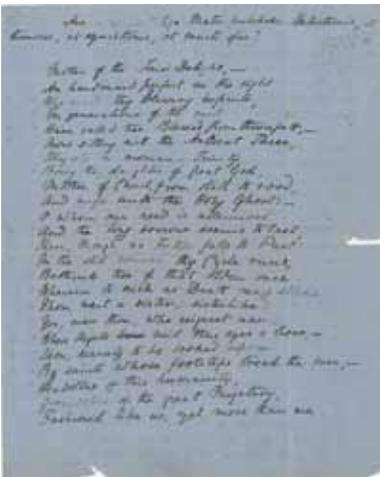


Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *The House of Life*

"Death-in-Love," no. 48

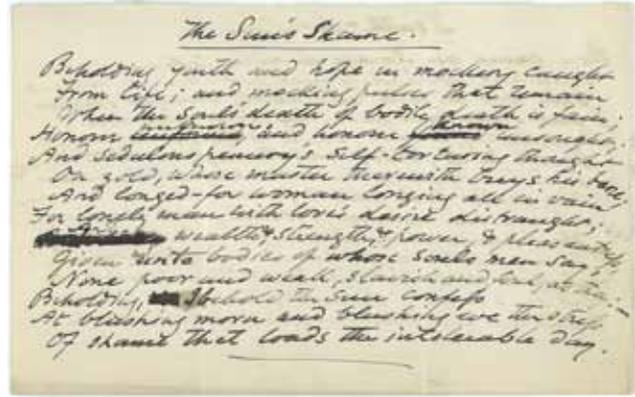
These fair copies of "Death-in-Love" and "The Sun's Shame," nos. 48 and 92 of "The House of Life," were by Fredeman's and others' dating composed in 1869. The former is a fair copy and was most likely prepared for enclosure in a letter. However he revised "The Sun's Shame," as we can see, and later altered it yet further for the published work: its somewhat awkward final lines: "Beholding, I behold the sun confess / At blushing morn and blushing eve the stress / Of shame that loads the intolerable day" are in 1870 transformed into the powerful statement: "Beholding these things, I behold no less / The blushing morn and blushing eve confess / The shame that loads the intolerable day."

Also in the Angeli-Dennis collection, listed only under the discrete title, "unidentified manuscript," 1847, may be found another poem in the youthful Dante Rossetti's hand. One must admit that the literary claims of "Ego Mater Pulchrae Delectionis, et Timoris, et Acquisitionis, et Sancta Opes" are extremely modest, but its topic is one which had appealed to the young painter of "The Girlhood of Mary Virgin," one of Dante's earliest efforts. Could this be a hitherto undiscovered original juvenile poem which even Fredeman had failed to notice? How had the indexer been certain that the poem should be dated 1847, if nothing else was known?



Dante Gabriel Rossetti, "Mater Pulchrae Delectionis"

The Rossetti Archive lists an 1847 poem, "Mater Pulchrae Delectionis,"



"The Sun's Shame," no. 92,

the sole autograph of which is housed at Duke, and which is clearly a cognate effort since several of its lines are similar. Apparently the less polished and still-unpublished Colbeck version, at 146 lines, in contrast to the Duke manuscript's 63 lines, was one of several draft poems prepared the same year for Rossetti's informal collection "Songs of the Art Catholic." Less finished than the Duke version, the Colbeck's "Ego Mater Pulchrae Delectionis" nonetheless resembles in tone Rossetti's "Ave," a celebration of Mary's girlhood included in Rossetti's 1870 *Poems*. This hitherto little-noted youthful poetic draft would thus seem to earn the modest distinction of being one of very few Rossetti drafts newly identified in recent years.

#### A CHRISTINA ROSSETTI MANUSCRIPT:

As mentioned, the literary manuscripts of the Rossettis were presumably sold or carefully distributed during his lifetime by William, always jealous for the reputation of his famous siblings. For this Christina Rossetti autograph we are indebted to a female network; it is found in the day book of Elizabeth Bromley Brown (1819-1846), the first wife of Dante's closest friend, the artist Ford Madox Brown. Along with Elizabeth's own poems, penned in a delicate tiny script now virtually unreadable from the fading of the ink and thus possibly forever lost, is inserted a copy of one of Christina's poems written out by Elizabeth's daughter Lucy Madox Brown (who married William Rossetti in 1874),



Christina Rossetti, "Twilight Night"

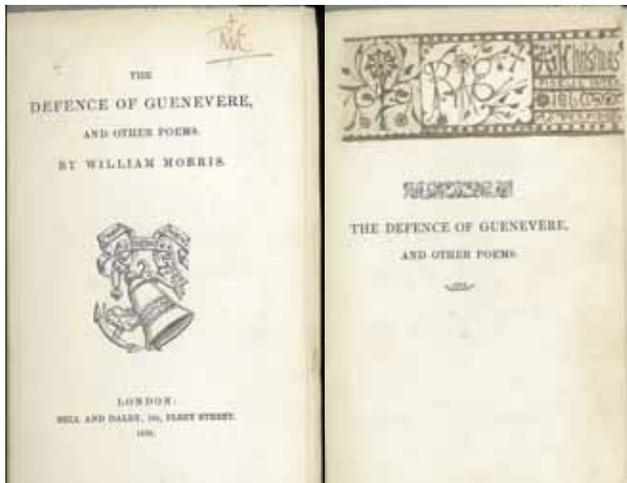
followed by an autograph copy of “Twilight Night” by Christina, presumably written out as a gift by the poet.

Elizabeth died of tuberculosis in 1846 at the age of 27 when Christina was 17, and the poem would seem to be from a later time (it was first published in the *Argosy* in 1866). So more likely the orphaned Lucy may have retained her mother’s day book and poems, and her placement of a poem by her present or future sister-in-law next to the verses of her dead mother was a mark of high respect. Once again this is a fair copy written out as a keepsake, a testimony to the strengthening of sentimental ties through poetry and evidence that those in her personal circle prized Christina’s efforts.

WILLIAM MORRIS’S *DEFENCE OF GUENEVERE*

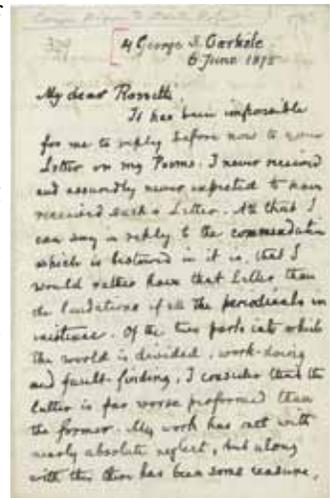
Although *The Defence of Guenevere* is one of Morris’s literary works most admired by 20th and 21st century critics, at the time of its appearance it was severely attacked by reviewers for its medieval themes and what seemed its abrupt style.

It is interesting to see that the owner of this first edition must have thought differently, for he has inscribed his personalized initials with care, both on the flyleaf and within. Since Morris sold few copies of the book, who could this devoted owner be? When I saw the initials R. W. E.—or G.? or B?— I felt surely this must be an error for R. W. D. Richard Watson Dixon was indeed Morris’s friend, a member of the group which issued *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*, a brief co-tenant with Edward Burne-Jones and Morris of an apartment in Red Lion Square, and the author of a detailed memoir of Morris’s Oxford days in which he praised what were in his view the young Morris’s completely new and original early poems.



*Defence of Guenevere*, 1858, title page; design 1860

The inscriber of these initials must have been artistically inclined, and Dixon, like Edward Burne-Jones and Morris, had briefly taken painting lessons from D. G. Rossetti. Moreover the initialer seems religious—note the little crosses—but in a High Church style, current at the time. Among the Oxford Brotherhood Dixon was the first to take orders, and it was he who officiated at the wedding of Jane Burden and William

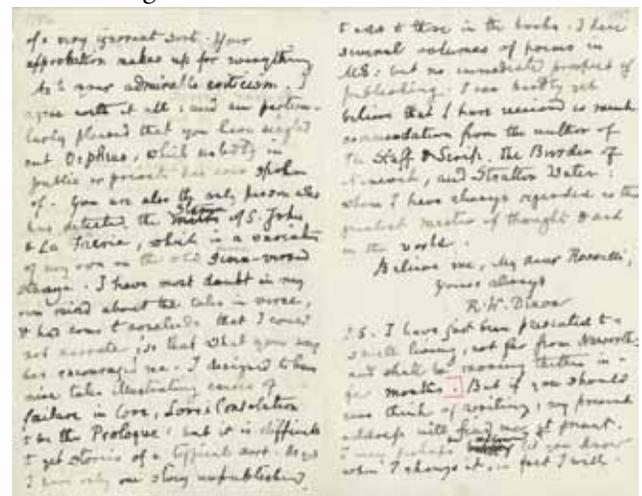


Richard Watson Dixon, letter to Dante Gabriel Rossetti

Morris. So it all fits—except that third initial—and a search through the list of Morris’s reviewers and friends reveals no R. W. E. Could Dixon, like Charles Gabriel Dante Rossetti, have had a third given name?

So the identity of the owner is still uncertain. Letters from R. W. Dixon to Rossetti, however, appear in the Angeli-Dennis Collection, written to send Rossetti a copy of his newly published 1861 *Historical Odes*, and later, to express his gratification at Rossetti’s praise:

All that I can say in reply to the commendation which is bestowed in it is, that I would rather have that letter than the laudations of all the periodicals in existence.... I can hardly yet believe that I have received so much commendation from the author of *The Staff & Script*, *The Burden of Nineveh*, and *Stratton Water*, whom I have always regarded as the greatest master of thought & art in the world.



Richard Watson Dixon, letter to Dante Gabriel Rossetti, ff. 2-3

After Oxford Dixon had moved to northern England and thus seen little of his former associates, and he recounts a later visit with Morris and Burne Jones at Naworth Castle, noting, perhaps regretfully, that all the friends had altered in the meantime.

Morris inscribed copies of his manuscripts and books to his close friend Georgiana Burne-Jones, and after her death her children donated many of these to the library of the Fitzwilliam Museum. This inscribed copy of Morris's prose romance *The Roots of the Mountains* is thus a rarity, and the honeysuckle design fabric cover was an experiment used only for *Roots*. Morris must not have greatly liked the results, for the fabric cover was never used again, though others have found it quite attractive.



#### WILLIAM MORRIS AND ALFRED LINNELL

Morris spent much of the last 12 years of his life, from 1884-96, campaigning on behalf of the newly emergent Socialist movement. A modern commentator, Nicholas Salmon, has claimed that during this period he may have been Britain's most active political propagandist, as leader of the Socialist League from 1885-89 and indefatigable lecturer to audiences in London, the north country, and Scotland (Salmon, ed., Morris, *Political Writings*, xlviii) A constant problem for Socialists of the period was that of repeated attacks by the police, who harassed and arrested their outdoor speakers, fined and imprisoned the latter, and on occasion, clubbed and killed protesters. Morris himself wished the Socialist League to concentrate on persuasion rather than mass protests, but League members also loyally supported meetings called by their more assertive sister-organization, the Socialist Democratic Federation. As a result, on 20 November 1887 Morris and his fellow Socialists of all persuasions were present at the event which would be later named "Bloody Sunday."

The SDF and the Irish National League had called a meeting in Trafalgar Square to protest a recent harsh Coercion Bill against the Irish as well as the government's failure to provide unemployment relief. At the

event the police, supplemented by members of the army, charged on the upwards of 10,000 unarmed protesters, wounding more than 200 and arresting 400. The next week the protesters reconvened to assert the right of assembly, and in the ensuing charge the police, now supplemented by newly hired "special constables," fatally wounded a bystander, Alfred Linnell, a young clerk who may not himself have been engaged in the protest. Thousands gathered for Linnell's funeral, at which Morris spoke, appealing for solidarity, "Let us feel that he is our brother." He also composed a poem to be sung on the occasion:

Here lies the sign that we shall break our prison;  
Amidst the storm he won a prisoner's rest;  
But in the cloudy dawn the sun arisen  
Brings us our day of work to win the best.  
Not one, not one, nor thousands must they slay,  
But one and all if they would dusk the day. (st. 4)

The cover design of this 8 page pamphlet by Walter Crane is often reproduced, but its contents are less well-known, perhaps because few historians have been able to see its interior. The Colbeck Collection's copy makes grim reading: the police had not bothered to assist Linnell as he lay wounded and in pain, the chief of police had forbidden the newspapers to mention the incident, and the hospital had denied to his relatives that he had been admitted. At his death Linnell was hastily buried by officials who claimed that his body had received no injuries from an attack, whereas a later court-mandated autopsy revealed deep bruises. Moreover it seems clear that—even after the attack—under less hostile treatment Linnell would have survived. Unfortunately this 1887 account of police brutality and attempted coverup seems all too familiar.

#### CRIME ALERT! WHITE COLLAR FORGERY!

Mr. Colbeck was an honest and scrupulous man, and his catalogue is the work of a true booklover with good literary knowledge and an excellent capacity to organize masses of detail. Unfortunately, as mentioned earlier, he had purchased some of his collection from H. Buxton Forman on the latter's retirement. Forman was also a British bookseller and William Morris bibliographer, who had served as the accomplice of one of the turn-of-the-century's best known literary forgers, Thomas J. Wise, whose deceptions were first exposed by John Carter and Graham Pollard in their 1934 *An Inquiry into the Nature of Certain Nineteenth Century Pamphlets*. Perhaps because Buxton-Forman was a Mor-

# (ALFRED LINNELL.)

ON SUNDAY AFTERNOON, November 20th, 1887, when the specials were in the Square, and a great indignation meeting was being held in Hyde Park, Alfred Linnell, law-writer, walked down after dinner to Northumberland-avenue to see what was going on in the Square. When he got there he found a considerable crowd had assembled, through whom the mounted police were plunging in the fashion with which London is now so familiar. According to the *Times* of November 21, he, with those among whom he found himself, indignant at the recklessness with which the police were riding over the people, hooted the mounted constables. They resented it in their usual fashion, riding their restive, bean-full horses into the crowd at the same time that the foot police drove the people away. There was a rush as for life, and in the rush Linnell fell. In a moment the police cavalry were upon him, and the charger of one of the constables trampled him as he lay, smashing his thigh bone beneath the horse's hoof. Then they rode on, leaving Linnell writhing on the ground. There was a police ambulance in the Square, but no attempt was made to succour the poor wretch whom they had done to death at the base of Charles Stuart's statue. He lay there for some minutes. In his agony it seemed hours. At last some compassionate bystanders raised him in their arms and carried him as tenderly as they could to Charing-cross Hospital. Of all those who saw him fall that day only one has come forward. Here is his narrative :—

24, Stanley-street, New-cross, S.E.,  
December 9, 1887.

Sir,—I beg to make the following statement :—  
On Sunday, the 20th ult., I went to Trafalgar-square in the afternoon, and very soon I found myself in the middle of a comparatively large crowd. I can positively say that the crowd was orderly, and kept "moving on." While in this state of motion we were suddenly charged by the police—not the mounted constables—who made a sudden rush, with a view, I presume, of clearing the pavement. Being a comparative stranger in London, I cannot *exactly* state where this took place; but I have a distinct recollection that it was at the corner of a street which had a slight incline. Such, I believe, is Northumberland-avenue.

While thus rushing along we noticed a man down on the pavement. Three or four of us succeeded

in turning the direction of the crowd to the side, and picked the poor fellow up. I cannot say whether he was knocked down in the rush or not. There we found him. He was evidently in great pain, his only words being, "I'm a dead man, I'm a dead man." Four of us picked him up and carried him to the Charing-cross Hospital, that being the nearest. At every step we took he groaned piteously, complaining of his thigh. Please bear this in mind—at the present moment I cannot swear positively, although I have every reason to believe, that he was the late Mr. Alfred Linnell. I believe that the injured person was he because (1) he complained of great pain in his thigh, which coincides with the injuries which Mr. Linnell received; (2) I believe him to be the more seriously hurt of the two who were attended at Charing-cross Hospital on that day.—I am, Sir, yours truly,

W. EDWIN DAVIES.

The following letter, which bears directly on the question of the conduct of the police at the time when Alfred Linnell was killed, has been addressed to the sister of the deceased :—

Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and  
Joiners, Bow Branch,  
December 11, 1887.

I do positively declare that undue force was used by the police in Northumberland-avenue on the 20th of November. I saw the patrols make wild charges on the people, both in the road and on the pavement. I thought they were trying to imitate the heroes of Balaclava, six mounted police rushing backwards and forwards to and from Trafalgar-square to a line of foot police drawn across the bottom of the Avenue; the result of this wilful charge being that people were knocked about recklessly, and those that ran in front or were compelled to run in front of these custodians of the law were met by this line of policemen at the bottom of the Avenue, and as the people came up to them these men struck out right and left and hit the people wickedly. I saw one knocked down insensible from a full butt punch in the face by one of the police. I assisted him in a cab. I wanted to go to the hospital with him, but was prevented by the preservers of order, saying at the same time, "'Tis a pity it hasn't killed the b——." I ventured a remark of disapproval, when I was politely told, "You'll damned

soon get served the same if you are not off." I wanted to get this man's number, when I was set upon by half-a-dozen police, the result being that I came away with extreme disgust for such protectors of law and order. I swear that this is the plain, unvarnished truth.

W. GREEN, Secretary

17, Fairfield-road, Bow.

P.S.—I ought to add that these wild charges were enthusiastically applauded by the occupants of the verandahs of one of the hotels.

In one of these "wild charges" there appears to be little doubt Alfred Linnell fell, and when he fell the police rode over him, fracturing his thigh.

Alfred Linnell was no popular hero. He was in no sense an ideal man. He was poor. He had been at one time somewhat unsteady, and after his wife's death he left his two children, a girl of ten and a boy of twelve, to the care of a brother-in-law, who, having four children of his own, was obliged to send the little Linnells to the workhouse school of the Holborn Union at Mitcham. There the boy had recently died. Linnell was in uncertain work, and he had many troubles. Nevertheless, poor wretch though he was, he could not be said to have deserved, even if taken at the worst, capital punishment by slow torture. But that was his fate.

It was the 20th of November, in the afternoon of Sunday, that he was carried groaning in his agony across the turbulent eddying flood of human life that surged around the Square, to the place where he was to die. He gave the name of Reynolds instead of that of Linnell. It was a name by which he used to be known when a boy. A little fellow who had been playing in front of the Hospital went home and told his aunt that he had seen a poor man carried in from the Square with his leg smashed. "Dear me," she said, "to think that even children cannot be about nowadays without seeing such things!" She little knew that the poor man was her own brother. Days passed, and no one went near Linnell but an old companion who had worked with him. He seemed to be getting on all right, and hoped to recover. After nearly a week had passed the son of this visitor meeting his sister casually in the street told her that something had happened to her brother, and that he was lying injured at Charing-cross Hospital. Wild with alarm she hastened there, only to be told that there was no such person in the hospital. She persisted, but the name Reynolds misled them. They were sure he was not in the hospital, although a law writer who was maimed on the 20th of November in the Square might have been close enough for his identification. From Charing Cross she went to seek him at Westminster, and from Westminster to

St. Thomas's. On her way to St. Thomas's a policeman told her that if her brother had been hurt in the Square he must be at Charing-cross. She did not cross the river, but went away relieved, feeling sure that the story about her brother was false. Some days afterwards she met her old informant. "You have been having a game with me," said she; "my brother's not in the hospital." "He is," was the reply; "he is in the Albert Edward Ward, under Sister Ellen." His sister hastened back to the hospital. At first she was again assured that it was a mistake, but she persisted, and at last she and her daughter were admitted to see him.

He lay in bed suffering sorely from his thigh. After the first greeting was over, they asked how the accident occurred. He replied that he was walking up the Avenue to the Square to see what was going on, and that the mounted police rode at them. The crowd ran, he fell, and a mounted constable rode over him as he lay in the street. The horse kicked him, he said, on his leg, making a bad bruise below the knee, and when riding over broke his thigh. The bone was protruding through the skin, and the pain was intense.

He said he was kindly treated by the nurse, and that he was allowed to have lemonade, brandy-and-water, or beer as he pleased, but beer he could not touch. The fracture of the thigh was very severe. After the bone had been set, the thigh had to be opened and a piece of bone taken out.

It was on a Wednesday that they saw him last. He said the doctor had told him he would be well again in a month. He talked kindly to his women-folk. "Come closer, closer to me," he said. "It does me good to feel you beside me," and propping himself as best he could he put one arm round the neck of his sister and the other round that of his niece. He talked a little, and then his voice faltered and broke. "I don't know what I shall do," he said, as the tears filled his eyes. "I am in such pain." "Don't worry," said his sister, soothing him as best she could, "there's a dear; you will soon be well again now."

So they thought that Wednesday afternoon, and when they bade him good-bye no one dreamed that it was for ever. Ada, his niece, promised to come back on Friday. She kept her word; but when she arrived she was too late. It was about five minutes to four on Friday afternoon when he breathed his last. No word was sent to his relatives, no intimation was given his friends. On Wednesday he was expected to recover. On Friday he lay dead. He had died alone. His boy at Harwich, his girl at Mitcham, had never been communicated with. His sister, who lived within a stone's throw, was not sent for. Neither did they take his deposition

ris bibliographer, or because Morris had just died in 1896, several of Wise and Forman's dishonest creations were fraudulent "editions" ascribed to Morris. Here is one, identified by Colbeck:



Such "editions" often offer telltale signs that they might not be as claimed. The choice of materials can seem odd, as in this case. Would Morris have wanted or needed special private printings of disparate and random items from his writings? And why were the sole copies of these putative "editions" those sold by Buxton-Forman? Works published earlier in Morris's career

would have circulated long enough so that someone else surely would have seen them. Thus it was safer to forge copies of something written later which might plausibly have still remained unknown, and Morris's recent death made him an especially convenient victim. And whereas the Rossetti poets had the ever-vigilant William still alive to protect their legacies, Morris's widow Jane and daughter May would have been largely innocent of the book market. It would take further research to prove or disprove the authenticity of some other alleged Morris pamphlets or editions in the Colbeck Collection, but this booklet is not the sole instance in which a small edition struck me as suspicious, though it is the only one which Colbeck recognized as such.

#### MATHILDE BLIND

An important feature of the Colbeck collection is its excellent coverage of women poets, then emerging into prominence in the late Victorian and early modern period—Augusta Webster, Amy Levy, Mary Coleridge, Emily Hickey, Rosamond Marriott Watson, Rosa Newmarch, Ruth Pitter and many others. One of the most substantive of these writers was Mathilde Blind (1841-96), a poet of scientific and feminist themes. Blind was closely associated with the Rossetti circle, especially William Michael and Ford Madox Brown, and her published sonnet sequences reflect the influence of Dante Rossetti's "The House of Life."

Blind was born in Germany and emigrated to England at the age of 11 with her mother Frederike and stepfather, the former German revolutionary Karl Blind. She studied art with Ford Madox Brown, and her letters in the Angeli-Dennis collection to William—whose

edition of Shelley she had reviewed and who reviewed favorably her epic poem on the Highland Clearances, *The Heather on Fire*—are warm and personal. The Colbeck Collection contains a copy of her 1891 *Dramas in Miniature*, presented "to my dear friend Harold Rathbone" with an as-yet unpublished autograph sonnet, "In Memory of the St. Gotthard Pass, August 1891."

Ill health in her later years had prompted Blind's journeys to Italy and Switzerland, site of St. Gotthard's Pass. The sonnet sequence of her 1893 volume, *Songs and Sonnets*, poeticizes a period of loneliness and despair at the world's many injustices, suddenly lightened by witnessing an image of hope: the bursting forth of light over a cloud-shrouded mountain.

So does the face of this scarred mountain height  
Relax its stony frown, while slow uprolled  
Invidious mists are changed to veiling gold.  
Wild peaks still fluctuate between dark and bright,  
But when the sun laughs at them, as of old,  
They kiss high heaven in all embracing light.



Mathilde Blind, portrait, Harold Rathbone, National Portrait Gallery



Mathilde Blind, photograph, c. 1870



Mathilde Blind, *Dramas in Miniature*, Frontispiece, Ford Madox Brown, 1891

But who was Harold Rathbone, her “dear friend”? An artist and member of the literary and philanthropic Liverpool Quaker Rathbone family, Harold (1858-1929) had painted Mathilde’s portrait two years earlier in 1889, when he would have been 31 years of age. The Angeli-Dennis collection contains his letter to William Michael written after the poet’s death, requesting that William prompt the director of the National Gallery to include his portrait of Blind in their collection, and suggesting that William Michael might wish to affirm “the literary genius of our friend.” Presumably the ever-helpful William did so, for although Blind was also painted by both Ford Madox Brown and Lucy Madox Brown, Rathbone’s portrait of Blind in tasteful aesthetic dress remains her official image in the Gallery.

#### MICHAEL FIELD

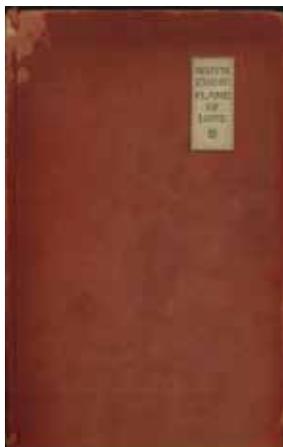
Michael Field was the penname of Katherine Bradley (1846-1914) and Edith Cooper (1862-1913), an aunt-niece lesbian couple who lived and wrote together, issuing more than 30 volumes of poems and poetic dramas from the 1870s until their deaths in 1914 and 1913 respectively. Their poems on paintings show the influ-

ence of Dante Rossetti’s poetic meditations on artworks, their love sonnets exhibit a similar Petrarchan structure to his, and with characteristic boldness, their sonnet “To Christina Rossetti” accuses the earlier poet of cowardice in her rejection of sensual love. The Fields’ unorthodox lifestyle may have contributed to the neglect of their works until the resurgence of feminism in the 1970s returned them explosively to literary notice. Many would now argue that, along with Oscar Wilde, the Fields were the most significant poets of the fin de siècle.

One of their last works, *Whym Chow: Flame of Love* (1914), is distinctive as the sole poetic sequence in English which celebrates love for a dog, in this case, the Fields’ recently deceased chow. The sequence is couched in the languages of courtly love and religion, a fusion of Catholicism and paganism, as the poet appeals to Whym, now deified, to lead the lovers into a heavenly afterlife. Those familiar with nineteenth century elegies will recognize the diction and metaphors of the sequence, and dog lovers may find the poets’ shared canine-worship quite defensible, but few will be surprised that this quite unconventional poem arouses mixed responses. It is however a perennial favorite with my students, two of whom have delivered conference presenta-

tions on the subject. To one of these, in fact, I am indebted for the suggestion that the soft brown leather cover of the volume's limited edition is intended to suggest Whym's golden/russet hair.

The series begins its invocation with an expression of loss and concludes with a prayer that their little friend may mediate for them the waters of eternal life:



Ask and it shall be given thee—  
 Then I ask  
 One little spring may well up in my heart  
 To everlasting life. It is Thy task  
 God of the Waters that impulsive start  
 In Love's domain, to keep perpetual  
 Their care of life, their circling font at brim,  
 Nor to let drowth-delighting waves grow dull,  
 Unbreathed on by the winds from rim to rim.  
 God of the Living Waters, at Thy hand  
 I ask my little Chow's upwelling love  
 In liberal current ever. Thy command  
 Removing cruel thirst now and above.

I myself became more reconciled to this sequence when I grasped that it was written, perhaps largely by Katherine, when she was herself fatally ill, and as she mourned Edith's approaching death and the demise of their lives and relationship. And in this day of ecological consciousness, after innumerable romantic poems devoted to human-human attachments, it seems fair to acknowledge the appropriateness of a poetic sequence on human-animal love.

As I've tried to show, the Colbeck and its related collections still contain many surprises, some of wider cultural import and others merely interesting, and more such will doubtless be uncovered as the collections are further catalogued or digitized and researchers with different perspectives peruse their contents. It is gratifying that so much Pre-Raphaelite, Victorian, and early twentieth-century British material has traveled 9,000 miles to the western edge of North America, with only the Huntington Library in Southern California housing Pacific Rim collections of equal quality.

Florence S. Boos is the editor of the William Morris Archive and author/editor of several works on Morris.



Katherine Harris Bradley & Edith Emma Cooper



Colophon, Eragny Press,  
*Whym Chow, Flame of Love*, 1914

## A LONG WAY HOME

*Dona Evans*

A tall sugar gum tree grew through the steeply pitched slate Gothic Revival roof that swept down just above my bedroom window in Fieldstone, Riverdale, N.Y. This is the Landmark house, where I was born.

The opening in the roof was surrounded by a lead circle to protect the roof and the tree. How long, I wondered would the circle contain and protect the tree, how long would the house protect and encircle me?

The turreted house on Greystone Avenue is a perfect Arts and Crafts gem built in 1924. Locally known as ‘the tree house,’ it left an indelible impression on my understanding of the past and of my future.

Fieldstone was purchased in 1829 by Joseph Delefield. In 1914 plans were drawn up to develop the area into a private park or ‘Garden enclave’ following the principles of the English Garden City movement. The area was to follow closely the natural topography and as far as possible “its wooded knolls, dells and hillocks.” Architects designing for the estate were required to build in natural materials, especially fieldstone, in the picturesque styles of the medieval, Georgian and English Tudor. The houses were placed in romantic settings among the woods, dells, hills and rocky outcroppings of the area. In 1924, the Delefield Estate was sold to the residents and became the Fieldstone Property Owners Association. In 1938 Fieldstone became a ‘G’ zone to restrict development. Today, Fieldstone still remains a privately owned association of residents.

I became fascinated by the history of this picturesque stone cottage with its irregular steep slate roof and small turret, stained glass windows, oak iron-studded doors, slate floors, and hand forged ironwork. I understood that the house was built in the ‘English style’ but I couldn’t make sense of the architecture, that is, until I moved to London as a teenager.

Gradually I became familiar with William Morris, John Ruskin, Philip Webb and the Arts and Crafts movement. While spending time in Northern France on holiday, I saw for myself the romantic influences so loved by Morris and Webb: the stone, slate and turreted facades. Occasionally, I was lucky enough to stay in a small chateau with a spiral slate staircase enclosed in a turret of the kind so deeply familiar to me.

Eventually, I found myself living on Chiswick Mall. Now my bedroom window looked out at the Thames and onto May Morris’s house in Hammersmith Terrace. Just along the banks of the Thames lay Kelmscott House, where the river flowed to Morris’s



Clouds House, south elevation



Culvert Cottage, Upton, East Knoyle



Culvert Cottage, west facing garden



Greystone Avenue, Fieldstone, Riverdale, New York

beloved Kelmscott Manor, and beyond this to where the M3 motorway leads to Wiltshire. Eventually, the pull to find tall trees, landscape, stone and slate proved too much and I began to look for a new/old horizon.

One Friday as I was settling down to a happy weekend trawling the London Galleries, I tapped in 'houses for sale, Wiltshire'. A new listing, an 18th/19th century stone and brick cottage in East Knoyle appeared. In a flash, I was in the car and on my way. A small sign off the busy A350 informed me that I had reached Upton, Milton and Clouds House.

A tight, deep, dark, ancient lane beckoned me to weave up around hills and combs, past mossy stone walls, thatched houses, stone and brick houses and old barns, all unspoiled and untouched. On my left lay the parkland of a great house where I could only glimpse tall chimneys and a roof line with tile dormers through the dense woodland. A simple notice told me that the great house was Clouds. Continuing upwards under a canopy of trees I saw that I had reached the top of a hill, and before me, in the low orange sun, lay the vast expanse of the Blackmore Vale. Following directions, I turned right along the top of the hill and descended a little into a wooded dell. There a brick and stone cottage came into sight and I knew that I would make an offer on Monday. Not usually one to act on impulse in such matters, I had to ask myself what made me so sure that this was to be my home?

I soon began to understand why this dwelling and landscape gave me such a deep and profound sense of place. My cottage stands on what was once part of the 4200 acres of the Clouds Estate and is still enclosed by the old estate railings.

When Clouds House and estate was purchased by Percy and Madeline Wyndam in 1876, they knew who their architect was to be... Philip Webb accepted the commission very much on his own terms. Webb shared William Morris's view that rural Britain and the beauty of nature could compete with the classical taste. The picturesque farm dwellings and cottages surrounding Clouds were almost as important as the house itself. Webb agreed that the site was 'the most lovely place in England' and vowed to keep as many trees as possible along with salvaged items from the soon to be demolished old house that stood on the site. Webb felt that nature dictated design, and even the Estate offices had to be built around an old walnut tree. Clouds House began to grow out of the landscape under Webb's hand.

Webb held the same almost religious belief as William Morris that England was sacred. This was 'not a vague abstract love, or possessive pride and patriotism, but affection and even worship for the very earth, trees, fields, animals, ploughs, wagons and buildings'.

Clouds House sits with its face to the sun on a south-west facing slope falling away to open parkland, woods and distant hills. The house was designed with entertaining in mind, and the long windows on the first floor gave onto a large balcony where guests might wander out and bring the natural environment into the room.

Clouds House marked both an end and a beginning. While the neighbouring estates of Stourhead and Fonthill were designed in the classical taste, Clouds House and its surroundings looked as if it had grown out of the landscape. The rural dwellings, farms and rough stone walls added texture, meaning and scale in the same way as ruins did in the 18th landscapes. Clouds melted into the woods on the northeast side and Webb chose to make this the entrance. The house itself was built of green sandstone under a red tile and brick roof, a combination of materials common to this area.

In 1911 Percy Wyndham died leaving his estate to his son George. George celebrated England and nature and took seriously his responsibilities as life heir to Clouds. For his tenants and their houses in Milton he set about making improvements.

"He studied every cottage and tree, his plan was not to spoil the village but rebuild every house. 1. People must have good houses. 2. Their houses must be the sort of houses which my neighbours can build. 3. Milton, in 30 years time, must be a Wiltshire village, built of stone and chalk, and more beautiful than it is now, because its owner will have cared to think of every house, and family, and of 'old England' made new: as it was in the days of 'John Ball'" (*The Life and Letters of George Wyndham*).

George died tragically young when he was not yet fifty. Clouds passed to his son Perf, who moved into Clouds in the autumn of 1913 with his wife Diana. England declared war on Germany on August 4th 1914. On the 14th September 1914 Perf was killed at Soissons; he was 26 years old.

The handwriting was on the wall. After the war a million acres of land changed hands as death duties bit. Clouds passed to Perf's cousin Guy Wyndham. Things began to fall apart as death and taxes took their toll. On the 21 July 1936 Dick Wyndham and the trustees

of Perf's estate sold Clouds House and 26 acres of land for £38,330. In 1937 the Clouds House outbuildings and 50 acres of land were sold to the Houghton-Browns for the sum of just £3,300. The Houghton-Browns blew up Webb's tower after several attempts, and the north side of Clouds was demolished to make the house more manageable in size. After the outbreak of WWII the house was requisitioned by the army, and later it became an orphanage and then a clinic.

But, all in all from the church of St Mary's, "Norman in its bones," where Sir Christopher Wren's father tended the Parish of East Knoyle, Milton and Upton, to Upton Bottom the area has remained largely unaltered. Previously in 1891, Philip Webb and Detmar Blow had restored St Mary's 14th century tower. Percy Wyndham's Memorial window remains. This unspoiled corner of England was declared an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949.

The legacy that began with the 'picturesque movement' of the late 18th century, with its reverence for the 'beautiful and sublime,' followed by the romantic period and its associations with nature and the innocence of rural life, was to be adopted by the Pre-Raphaelites who believed that 'nature was truth.' The genius of Morris and Webb was that they took the powerful landowner and put him in the picture, not merely as an observer but as a participant in the celebration of nature, thereby making him responsible.

From this sentiment the 'garden city' and 'garden enclave' movement was born. The ideas made whole by Morris and Webb and the Arts and Craft movement spread to North America, to Fieldstone, Riverdale, and to where this story begins.

Dona Evans is a consultant in interior design. She welcomes guests for bed and breakfast at Culvert Cottage, and can be reached at [donaevans@msn.com](mailto:donaevans@msn.com).

#### A NEW DIGITAL EXHIBITION

**The Influence of Medieval Design on the Arts and Crafts Movement**, curated by Natalie Whitaker, Washington University Library, St. Louis, Missouri. This exhibit showcases select 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century incunabula and items from the Triple Crown and Eric Gill Collections to show the connection between medieval book design and the book design of these fine private presses of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. <https://tinyurl.com/ycusz9gm>

## 'FREE AND HAPPY WORK': DAVID PARR'S DOMESTIC MONUMENT TO WORKING-CLASS ARTISTRY

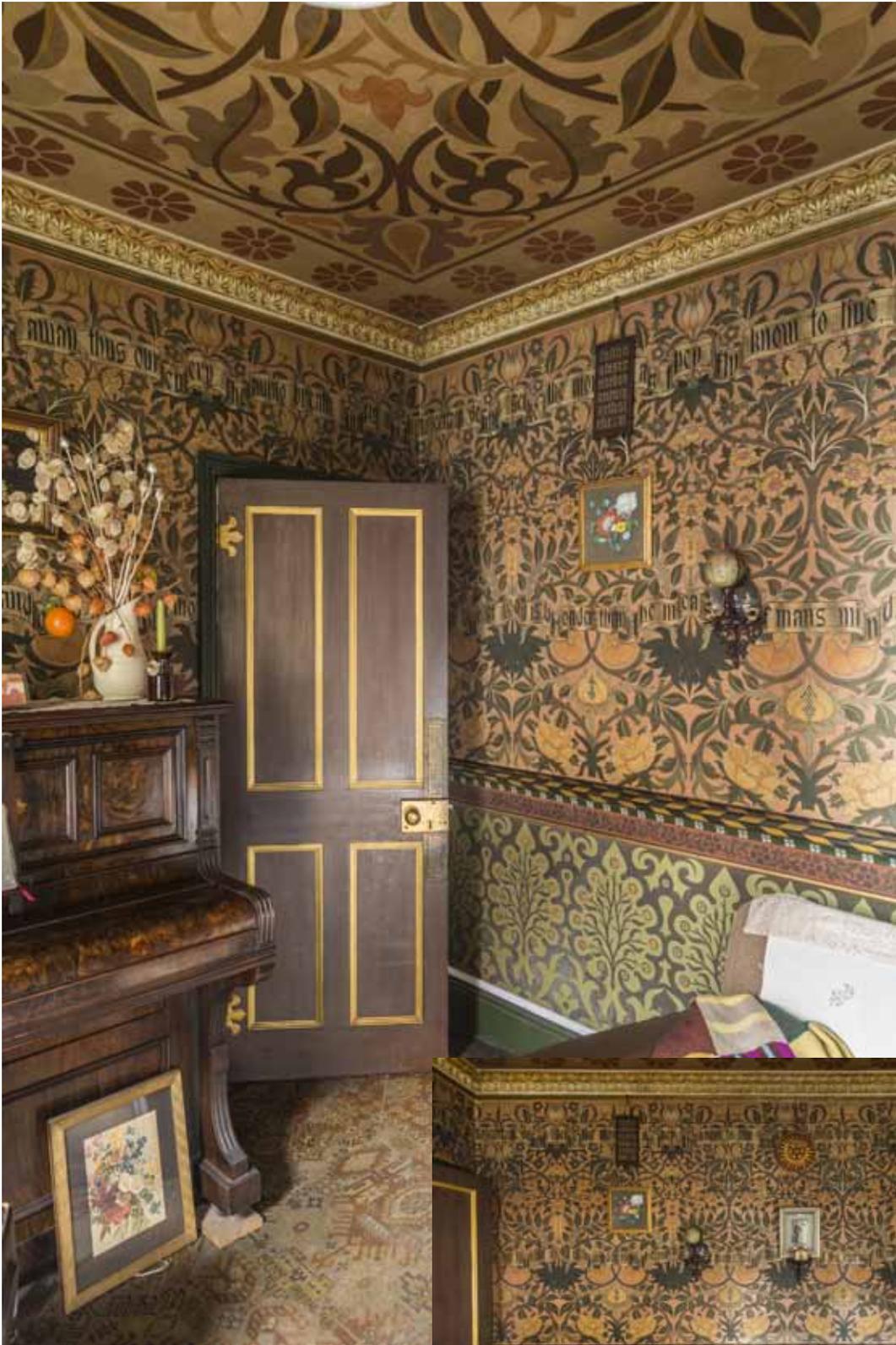
*Elizabeth Carolyn Miller*

In his essay "The Worker's Share of Art," published in his socialist newspaper the *Commonweal* in April 1885, William Morris defined beauty as "the sign of free and happy work." Following John Ruskin, he believed that the aesthetic surface of a creative work could reveal a deeper social totality, and the conditions of labor under which it was produced. The worker's pleasure was, Morris said, the true font of art and beauty:

[T]he chief source of art is man's pleasure in his daily necessary work, which expresses itself and is embodied in that work itself; nothing else can make the common surroundings of life beautiful, and whenever they are beautiful it is a sign that men's work has pleasure in it, however they may suffer otherwise. ("The Worker's Share of Art")

For over a century now, Morris's critics have wondered whether he was able to create such conditions of beauty and pleasure for the workers in his own decorative arts firm. In moving the firm to Merton Abbey in 1881, he hoped to create a guild-like setting for pleasurable collective labor, and yet, as biographer Fiona MacCarthy has discussed, Morris still maintained a tight control over the firm's designs and "there was no serious attempt to bring out the latent creative talent of each workman." While Morris's workers were paid well, and the Abbey was unquestionably an agreeable place to work by nineteenth-century standards, the firm still fell short of Morris's ideal of the craftsman-artist creating beauty through work-pleasure.

A new cultural site in Cambridge, U.K., however, raises the question of whether we ought not to look to Merton Abbey for evidence of working-class craftsmen's pleasure in their labor, but rather to the private lives of the workers apart from their tasks for the firm. While we have precious little material evidence today to document how nineteenth-century working-class artisans felt about their labor, the David Parr House promises to shed light on this topic from the perspective of one of the artist-workers who made their living in Morris's craft circles. The Parr House, at 186 Gwydir Street, Cambridge, is a pocket-sized monument to pleasurable craft labor, a workman's cottage transformed into one man's earthly paradise. It has recently been purchased by a



David Parr House. Kitchen wall design above. Another view of the front room, inset.



group of trustees with the aim of opening it up as a museum in April 2019 after a period of necessary restoration and structural repair. A modest home even by nineteenth-century standards, it was transformed by Parr, who lived there from 1886-1927, into a splendid gallery of decorative painting and patterning – all done in Parr’s off-work hours, for his own pleasure, often by candlelight or lamplight.

David Parr was an employee of the Cambridge firm F. R. Leach & Sons, which specialized in ecclesiastical interiors and took on occasional jobs for Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co., the firm that later became Morris & Co. Because Morris had a tendency to take on more projects than he had time to do,

or perhaps to take too long with the jobs he had underway, he would often farm out work to other decorative arts firms, including F. R. Leach & Sons. Leach himself, to whom Morris reportedly appealed for business advice on how to run a firm, was the son of a Cambridge artist known for painting many of the city’s pub signs. His firm, F. R. Leach & Sons, worked nationally but is especially remembered for several important projects in Cambridge, including the mural on St Clements Church and the chapel ceiling at Jesus College, a job that they took on for Morris’s firm. Prior to this important commission at Jesus, the Leach firm had successfully performed decorative work under Morris’s supervision at All Saints Church, across the road from Jesus College, and Morris was so pleased with their work that he engaged Leach with relative frequency thereafter.

David Parr was, as the census records put it, a “decorative painter” for Leach’s firm, and the influence of the grand interiors he painted during his workdays is visible in his own domestic artistry. Nearly every room of Parr’s house is meticulously painted in ornate, vibrant, and seemingly original patterns, many of which bear a close resemblance to Morris patterns or are modeled on Morris patterns but don’t mimic them exactly. In his notebooks, Parr detailed with precision all of the work that he did on his house, not so much to describe his inspiration or his feelings about the work, but rather



Front of Parr house

to record the dates and details as to what was accomplished and when. We know, thanks to the notebook, that it took him 30 years to complete his marvelous, show-stopping parlor, and the trustees now suspect, reading between the lines, that Parr’s wife, Mary Jane, may have become fed up with the parlor being disturbed all the time during this long period. Clearly, stories within stories are waiting to be uncovered within this house.

The trustees of the house are working now to learn more about David Parr’s life, his family, and what may have motivated him to produce this stately pleasure dome within the private confines of his modest Cambridge cottage. They have learned that

Parr was born to a laborer, and

that he was orphaned young, with his mother dying when he was 5 and his father when he was 8. At age 16, Parr commenced working for Leach’s firm, and he was successful enough within that position to be able to buy his home at 186 Gwydir Street – a home that has a front garden as well as a back garden and was thus rather posh for a working-class cottage of this day. In addition to painting it in best Morrisian fashion, Parr also installed what must have been one of the first indoor W.C.s in the neighborhood (though the sanitary authorities made him re-do some of the drainpipe work to their specifications, all duly recorded in Parr’s notebook); he also built custom cabinetry for the house, and seems to have used materials leftover from some of the Leach jobs, such as stained window glass, to help him achieve his vision for the house.

After Parr’s death, his granddaughter, Elsie, came to live in the home with her grandmother; she was 12 at the time, and stayed there for the next 85 years, leaving the house just as her grandfather had created it. During this time, Elsie married and had two children. They lived always in the house, but respected Parr’s artistic legacy and left the house mostly intact, with his painted walls ever in view; Elsie’s husband, an avid gardener, made a paradise of his own in the back garden. In 2013, after Elsie’s death, a group of trustees led by Tamsin Wimhurst purchased the house, and they have

since successfully applied for and received two Heritage Lottery Fund grants – one to conserve the house and protect it for future generations, and one to help generate an endowment. Because it is a very small space, and fragile, the Parr House can never accommodate a large enough public to support the museum on admission fees alone, but the endowment will allow the trustees to keep it open for years to come and to engage in public outreach through their website — [davidparrhouse.org](http://davidparrhouse.org) — and through collaboration with the Victoria and Albert Museum and other local and national sites for Arts and Crafts heritage and working-class history.

It would be wrong to conclude from this house, that the typical nineteenth-century, working-class craftsman in the circles of Morris's firm was so enamored of his labors that he wanted to continue performing them at home, without pay, for his own pleasure. Surely David Parr is an exceptional figure, an outsider artist possessed of rare aesthetic ambition and an unusual drive to create. Despite the fact that he was working in the privacy of his own domestic space, with his home as his canvas, a decorative banner painted along the upper border of his parlor walls suggests that Parr's motivations were similar to those of many better-known artists: he wanted to create something beautiful and permanent that would live on after his death. The banner reads,

Swiftly see each moment flies,  
See and learn be timely wise,  
Every moment shortens day,  
Every pulse beats life away,  
Thus our every heaving breath,  
Wafts us on to certain death,  
Seize the moments as they fly,  
Know to live and learn to die.

In the context of Parr's astonishing home, this verse, a popular bit of Victorian rhyme, is transported and elevated from cliché to grandeur. We have precious few records of how working-class artisans felt about their work, or what they gained personally or spiritually from its creation, but the poignant pleasure that Parr took in his own work is quite literally written on the walls of this remarkable house.

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## MORRIS AT MANDERS IN ST. PETERSBURG: "FIVE O'CLOCK" WITH SCULPTOR VICTOR GRACHEV AND OTHERS

*Anna Matyukhina*

If I were asked what is the most important thing I would like to thank Morris for, I should answer, not his wonderful wallpapers and textiles that immediately come to mind on hearing his name, nor his literary works, although I read them with pleasure, nor his thoughts, many of which are close to me, but the people who have entered my life thanks to him. These are the members of the William Morris Society who have become my true friends since 2005 when I first visited Great Britain to participate in the conference "William Morris in the 21st century," and the members of the groups I created in VKontakte ("Уильям Моррис William Morris") and in Facebook ("The William Morris Appreciation Society") and whom I have met, due to



Manders 5'O Clock Devoted to Morris, with birds by Victor Grachev, 14 April 2015



Victor Grachev, "Milky Way," 2011, Kaykino

Morris, under other circumstances. Among these latter is the Saint Petersburg sculptor Victor Grachev.

Founded in Moscow in 1996, the Russian decorative firm Manders has specialized in providing Russians with English-designed artistic products: paints, wallpaper, textiles, decorative stucco and fireplace portals, and ceramic tiles. In 2009 the company opened shops in St. Petersburg, and since September 2014 they have held events called "5 O'Clocks" at their store, "Manders on the Petrograd Side." At these events designers, decorators and journalists are invited for tea accompanied by lectures devoted to British culture, the typical decor of the Victorian era, the great figures of British culture, and so on. Of course, they could not ignore the life and oeuvre of the man who did so much for the interiors—William Morris, whose wallpapers and fabrics are well represented in Manders.

I was invited to contribute to such an event dedicated to Morris's work held April 14th, 2015. The art project manager of the shop, art historian and art critic Natalia Korogodova, opened the evening. A graduate



The church of Michael the Archangel in Begunitsy;  
Victor Grachev, Iconostasis.



Victor Grachev, "Raven," 2012, Kaykino Gallery

of the Saint Petersburg Stieglitz State Academy of Art and Design, Ms. Korogodova had learned about Morris from the collection of scientific essays *Aesthetics of William Morris and the Present* (Moscow, 1987) even before encountering him in her academic curriculum. Since then Natalia has been interested in his work, and she was very glad to have the opportunity to present a lecture about Morris that covered the main stages of his life and activities. Afterwards I supplemented her remarks by acquainting listeners with the William Morris Society and with various examples of the use of Morris' patterns today, both in popular culture and in the works of contemporary artists.

By an unusual coincidence—it was really a surprise for the store's employees, as Natalia told me—on that very day, literally a few hours before the tea party dedicated to William Morris started, a new collection of brochures and wallpapers based on Morris & Co.'s designs had arrived in the store, and were thus offered to the listeners after our speeches.

Another participant in the event was the sculptor Victor Grachev (b. 1977, exh. since 1995). “Manders 5 O’Clocks” are organized so that in addition to the lecture and tea, each features a decorative composition on the theme of the lecture made using materials from the store and examples of art by St. Petersburg artists. On that occasion, following one of Ms. Korogodova’s conceptions, the Morris & Co Strawberry thief wallpapers and fabrics and the sculptor Victor Grachev’s works were combined. In these, Grachev’s “birds” hovering against the background of one of Morris’s most famous patterns, although not originally created specifically for this composition, were for this occasion prepared with Little Greene company colors chosen to match the colors of the Strawberry Thief. And since the event took place during the Easter week, the composition was supplemented by Easter eggs with William Morris ornaments, decorated using a decoupage method by one of the members of the Manders staff.

As for Victor Grachev himself, although there are few other examples of direct connection between his and Morris’s work, nevertheless it is possible to draw certain parallels between this St. Petersburg sculptor and William Morris, and to say that many of the principles of the one and the other are consonant. Victor and his wife Olga built an art manor (also a kind of “a heaven on earth” like Kelmscott Manor). In addition they have organized the “Kaykino Creative Projects” multidisciplinary culture center, dedicated to efforts to study and restore the crafts in the Volosovo district of the Leningrad region, which holds exhibitions and creative seminars aimed at the preservation of traditional “arts and crafts.” Another parallel between Morris and Grachev is their commitment to the protection of ancient buildings and the decoration of churches. Not far from the Grachevs’ manor is the church of Michael the Archangel in Begunitsy, a small stone church, founded in 1736, which was rebuilt and converted into workshops in the 1930s. In 1996 it was returned to the parish and slowly repaired, and Victor Grachev contributed to its restoration, designing a wooden carved iconostasis (wall of icons separating the nave and sanctuary) in a lace-like pattern.

Throughout his life Morris loved both nature and history, and similarly, in his artistic development Victor Grachev began with the creation of historical miniatures, for which knowledge of history is extremely important, and later began to create art inspired by, and designed for, a natural setting. Grachev finds a constant source of inspiration in nature and finds in it the forms



Anna Matyukhina, Natalya Korogodova, Victor Grachev  
14 April 2015

for his works, prompted by natural materials (according to Victor, “The shape dictates the material, but the material in its turn dictates the shape”), and then places his sculptures in a natural environment, in particular on the territory of his estate. It is characteristic that the first exhibition, held in 2016 in the Kaykino Gallery built next to his home, was called “Movement Towards Nature.” According to Victor, the works represented there were “valuable in combining a meaningful live impression and a rich artistic culture... in a constant pursuit to express truth...through the field, forest, and sky...” He describes his vision of the art in his catalogue <https://tinyurl.com/ybym4qlz>.

There are states of inner ascent, when the meaning of forms, colors, and their relationship is seen. Then it is necessary to create, then everything is correct. Such states should be prepared for by studying the art culture, going over and over again in different ways, sharpening the feeling of what is really important.... And it does not matter whose work this is, the ability to see is the Treasure.

Thanks to Natalia Korogodova and Victor Grachev for their contributions to this essay.

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Angela Thirkell, early 1950s

## PRE-RAPHAELITE PAPERS: SHE SAID HE SAID HE SAID

*Mary Faraci*

Familiar to postgraduate researchers and scholars of archival studies is the protection for families and estates of the handling and publication of such collections. In the light of family concerns, the reservations of Jane Morris and her daughter May Morris regarding J.W. Mackail's authority for reporting William Morris's personal letters and conversations count among very real family sentiments and sensibilities. Younger than May Morris by thirty years or so, the granddaughter of Edward Burne-Jones and Lady Burne-Jones, Angela Thirkell, defending Morris against William Gaunt's report in *The Pre-Raphaelite Tragedy*, includes a scornful remark about literary critics by William Morris in the exact words her father used in his *Life of William Morris*. Whereas Angela Thirkell lovingly speaks out in published reviews after May Morris died against attempts to gossip about Mrs. Morris and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and against careless, unfashionable nicknames and other mistakes<sup>1</sup>, repetition of scornful words attributed to William Morris would have justified May's reservations about the Mackail family's use of sources. Follow-

ing the sentiments and sensibilities of William Morris throughout their careers in the academy, dedicated William Morris scholars too might find themselves uncomfortable with the words that found their way into print again.

The Leeds University catalog of Angela Thirkell's papers describes item 12 in Box 8: "Books at random", a review feature in *Books of the Month*, each comprising short reviews of several books" from September 1942 through February 1946. Among the cuttings is Thirkell's May 1942 review of *The Pre-Raphaelite Tragedy* by William Gaunt. She is critical of the work which begins, "This is the true story..." Thirkell points out the "risk" of delaring "truth," but follows with specific questions regarding Gaunt's reporting. Thirkell notes that throughout the book, Gaunt repeats variations of "little Georgiana" to which the granddaughter responds: "solid little Georgiana" is as unlike Lady Burne-Jones, physically and mentally, as anything could be, as more than one of the friends whose help he acknowledges could have told him" (4). Thus far, Angela Thirkell lives up to her lifelong mission of protecting the reputation of the two families. Justifying further her finding of faults with Gaunt as a literary critic, Angela borrows from her father's *Life of William Morris*:

Morris thought poorly of professional literary critics. "To think of a beggar making a living by selling his opinion about other people! And fancy anyone paying him for it!" The best review of a book (and the present reviewer shares Mr. Morris's views) is one that makes people want to read it, not to admire the reviewer's cleverness.

Her father writes of William Morris's opinion in the *Life*: "For professional literary criticism, beyond all, his feeling was something between amusement and contempt. 'To think of a beggar making a living by selling his opinion about other people! He characteristically said: 'and fancy any one paying him for it!' he added, in a climax of scorn" (134). When Angela Thirkell repeats word for word her father's reports of Burne-Jones's recollections of William Morris's words, does she go too far?

Thirkell continues a tradition of "characteristically" representing William Morris according to her father's reporting of Burne-Jones's recollections. In a declaration that Burne-Jones is his trusted source, Mackail opens the Preface of his *Life* with these words:

This biography was undertaken by me at the special request of Sir. Edward Burne-Jones. I will not attempt to

say how much it owes to his guidance and encouragement, nor how much it has lost by their removal. (vii)

We have notes from Jane Morris and May Morris about J. W. Mackail's *Life of William Morris*. Writing to Mr. Blunt, Jane Morris remarks,

I agree with what you say about the book, it has just missed being first-rate—You see Mackail is not an artist in feeling, and therefore cannot be sympathetic while writing the life of such a man—but some parts are admirable done, such as the dissolution of the firm, I was surprised at his having grasped the subject so completely. (Sharp and Marsh 326)

Frank C. Sharp notes below the comments, “The Morrisses were generally disappointed in Mackail’s presentation of WM, and embarrassed at so being.” On 7 July 1900 [May Morris] wrote to Anne Cobden-Sanderson:

My annoyance at your choice of Mr. Mackail to lecture on my Father quite put out of my head something else I meant to say [...] I don’t doubt for a moment Mackail’s capacity to making a neat job of it, but it will not be what it would be in Lethaby’s [architectural theorist] hands...I hope I can depend on you for not letting my dislike of his handling this subject known to Margaret or Lady Burne-Jones. It would be really grief to me to hurt their feelings: I wish I were able to keep my opinions more closely bottled. For Heaven’s sake don’t give me away” (n. 1, 326.)

Jane Morris asks Mr. Cockerell, on June 21, 1898, “Mr. Lee of Messers Smith & Elder wants a sketch of Mr. Morris’s life for the Biographical Dictionary. Will you undertake it? I should like you to do it.” The editors’ note to the letter reads, “SCC [Mr. Cockerell] replied that J. W. Mackail would do a better job, but that if JM [Jane Morris] wanted him to he would do his best” (Sharp and Marsh 313). The delicate balance of respect for the Burne-Joneses and concern for her husband’s reputation became a real problem for Mrs. Morris, but more for May who would live with the reports longer than her mother. For her part, Burne-Jones’s granddaughter and Mackail’s daughter, Angela Thirkell, described as having the “face of a Burne-Jones Madonna, demure and saintly,”<sup>2</sup> writes out of loving regard for the Morrisses in her sharp criticism of two weak literary critics.

Knowing May Morris’s feelings, followers of Thirkell might want to apologize to Morris’s followers for Angela Thirkell’s republishing the scornful remarks--remarks

either meant to be kept private or remarks unverified from their beginnings. Impatience with less great literary critics was not uncommon in the late nineteenth century in England and America. Famously, Oscar Wilde unleashed his criticism of “Judas biographers.”<sup>3</sup> Henry James too in *The Aspern Papers* accuses the “publishing scoundrel” of violating personal space.<sup>4</sup> The reprinting of the remarks by one daughter has seemed to justify another daughter’s concerns about well-meaning friends-of-the-family. Appreciating their responsibility to verify representations of William Morris, scholars finding themselves inside the web of Pre-Raphaelite *af-filia-tions* cannot help but sympathize with the underlying family sensibilities and sentiments of loving daughters.

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1. In her review in 1955 of E. P. Thompson, *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary*, Thirkell warns against gossip about Mrs. Morris, notes the use of nicknames, and corrects the mistake of “the Red House” for “Red House.”

2. The English journalist, Rachel Ferguson, dedicates her 1939 book, *Passionate Kensington*, to her neighbor, Angela Thirkell. Ferguson notes that even when Angela was uttering limericks, she had “the face of a Burne-Jones Madonna, demure and saintly” (129).

3. Oscar Wilde in “The Critic as Artist” declares, “Every great man nowadays has his disciples, and it is always Judas who writes the biography.” He continues, “They are the mere body-snatchers of literature.”

4. Aspern’s protector, Miss Bordereaux, catches the researcher opening the secretary in search of papers: “Ah, you publishing scoundrel.” The name stings as he reflects later: “She called me a publishing scoundrel.”

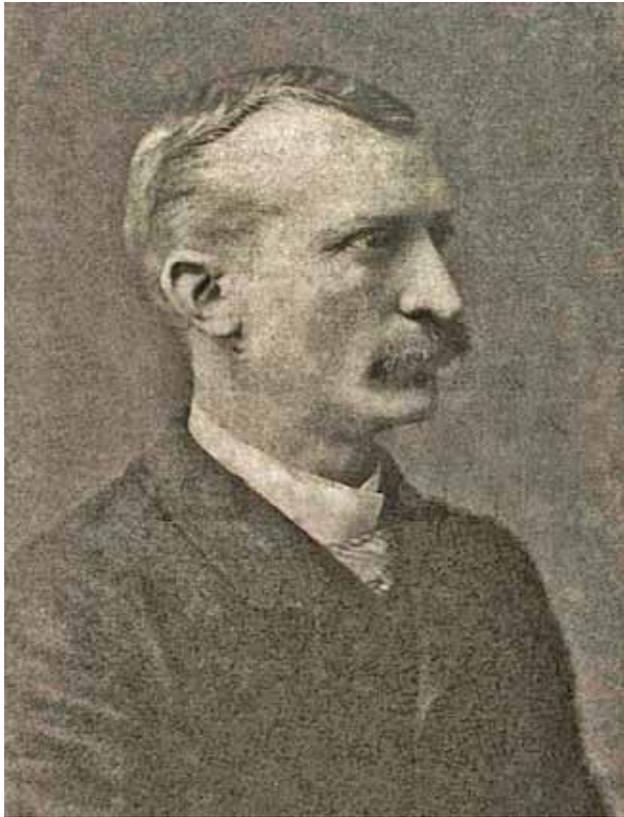
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## JAMES TOCHATTI: A LITTLE-KNOWN MORRIS SOCIALIST COMRADE

*Stephen Williams and Florence Boos*



James Tochatti, 1896

Although William Morris was by all accounts the central and guiding force of the Socialist League (1885-90), he was far from alone, and his decisions took into account those he worked and socialized with in the Hammersmith Branch and elsewhere. To his credit, he valued the opinions of those from many backgrounds and attempted to make the Socialist League a model for egalitarian governance. The re-editing of Morris's *Socialist Diary* (forthcoming) has enabled a more complete account of several of the socialist and anarchist activists with whom he worked quite closely. The following biographical sketch introduces one such lifelong campaigner, the Hammersmith anarchist communist James Tochatti.

A merchant tailor, lecturer on reformist and quasi-scientific topics, and a lifelong campaigner for communist anarchism, James Tochatti (1853-1928) was born in Ballater, Aberdeenshire, the son of a police constable Joseph Tochatti and his wife Jane Cormack. By the mid-

1860s his family were living in Leeds, where his mother was a teacher in the Railway Street Ragged School. James worked briefly as a stationer (1871 census) before becoming a tailor, and moved to Shoreditch, east London sometime in the mid-1870s. There he became active in the National Secular Society and also developed an interest in phrenology and physiognomy; his lecture on 'Our faces, and how we come by them,' was given at the Freethought Institute, Walworth in September 1877 and on several later occasions (*South London Chronicle* 14 September 1877, p. 3). Still in east London at the time of the 1881 census, Tochatti described his occupation as 'memory lecturer and phrenologist.' In 1882 he moved west across London to Hammersmith, where his campaigning to reduce the working hours of shop assistants resulted in arrest on a charge of riotous conduct (*Illustrated Police News*, 7 October 1882, p. 3). He was also active in the Hammersmith Radical Club, where he met members of the Hammersmith SDF, and in January 1885 became a founding member of the Hammersmith branch Socialist League.

Tochatti was a frequent outdoor speaker for the branch, served as branch delegate to the 1886 League Conference, and contributed news notes and articles to *Commonweal*. Much in demand as an outdoor speaker and lecturer, Tochatti spent two weeks in East Anglia in early 1887 addressing meetings on nearly twenty occasions. Successful factory gate meetings at Colman's mustard works in Norwich were followed by League meetings at their regular sites, where he often spoke for more than an hour to the hundreds present. A number of formal events in large halls were also organized for Tochatti's visit, including one at the Gordon Hall where he lectured on "Objections to Socialism," the meeting concluding with the singing of Morris's "No Master" and the "Marseillaise." (*Commonweal*, 12 March 1887, p. 83). In November 1888, along with Morris, Cunningham-Graham, David Nicholl, and Sparling, he spoke at a joint Socialist Democratic Federation/Socialist League meeting in Hyde Park held to commemorate the murdered Chicago martyrs and protest the closure of Trafalgar Square to demonstrations (*Lloyds Weekly News*, 18 November 1888, p. 8).

Doubtless boosted by the successful London dock workers strike in the summer of 1889, labourers and hammermen at John Issac Thornycroft's shipbuilding yard in Chiswick, west London struck against low wages in September of that year. Immediately organized into the National Labour Federation trade union, the strikers were guided by John ('Jack') E. Williams, a prominent

Social Democratic Federation member, and Tochatti, who served as union branch president. With the 'unskilled' workers solid in their action, attention turned to ensuring that the craftsmen still at work did not undertake any of the strikers' duties. Williams and Tochatti secured these assurances and the support of craft trade unions who also witnessed some of their own members joining the strike in solidarity. Tochatti appealed to the strikers to remain united in their action, telling them that this was how the power of workers could be demonstrated. He warned against relying on parliamentary means to achieve their ends because it "does not matter whether a Conservative government or a Liberal government was in power, the weekly wages of those he saw around him were the same, so that the only thing for them to do was to combine and organise."

Demonstrating a link with and knowledge of Morris's artistic network, Tochatti appealed to the employer John Thornycroft—whose parents had both been artists, and his brother Hamo, a sculptor, a friend of Morris and a prominent member of the Arts and Crafts movement—to follow his 'artistic instincts' by which 'he should naturally rebel against the brutalization of his workmen by poverty.' (*West London Observer*, 21 September 1889, p. 5). Repeated company attempts to intimidate the strikers failed, as did 'compromise' pay offers. With urgent orders on the company books and the strikers growing in confidence, the company settled the dispute within three weeks, agreeing to the union's demand of a 2 shilling increase in the weekly wage of the lowest paid labourers.

Tochatti continued his activism through the 1890s and beyond. In the early 1890s he served as organizing secretary of the United Shop Assistants' Union and was twice arrested on charges of creating 'disturbance' during protest demonstrations (*West London Observer*, 6 September 1890, p. 3; *Morning Post*, 17 October 1891, p. 2). *The London Times* reported his remarks to an audience of about 1000 at an anarchist meeting held in conjunction with an 1892 Hyde Park May Day demonstration in support of an eight-hour day:

When they saw that the average wage of a working man in this country was 18 shillings per week, and that the average age of the working man 29 years, while the masters live in luxury to the age of 55, surely it was time to fight for their just rights. (Cheers). The eight hours demonstration was a farce. With the machinery of the present age the masters could get as much work out of a man in

eight hours as seven years ago he [sic] got in twelve. He maintained that the workers could obtain an eight hour day at once if they resorted to the simple method of stopping at that time. (Hear, hear). It was no use cringing and asking Parliament to grant this or that boon; the workers had the power in their own hands, and they were fools if they did not use it.' (2 May 1892, p. 7)

By the 1891 census Tochatti was listed as a merchant tailor in Hammersmith, with a shop on Beadon Road, W, described in *Liberty* as "Carmagnole House." As one of the Socialist League's anarchist communist members Tochatti remained in the League after Morris's departure. *Freedom* of the early 1890s indicates that he spoke frequently, and *The Scotsman* reported that he had been physically attacked by thugs when speaking on behalf of anarchism at the 1894 annual May 1st labour demonstration (2 May, p. 7). In the same year he spoke to the Aberdeen Anarchist Communist Group 14 October on 'Human Nature and Anarchism' and on 15 October on 'Economic Conditions and Anarchism' (*Aberdeen Evening Express*, 13 October 1894, p. 3). In 1896 he served as secretary of a group protesting the exclusion of anarchists and 'non-political' delegates from the London International Socialist Workers and Trade Union Congress.

In the 1890s anarchist and socialist debates over tactics, Tochatti favored moderation. *Commonweal* reported that at a meeting held in November 1892 at the South Place Institute to commemorate the deaths of the Chicago anarchists, Tochatti had urged verbal restraint:

Tochatti objected to the wild language. We must not indulge in wild talk about dynamite and pillage (cries of dissent). As for dynamite, he was as ready to use it as any man, when the time came but any talk of its present use was madness. (Oh!) If we want to learn how to preach anarchy let us study the speeches of our Chicago comrades, and learn to explain our noble principles in the same clear and plain fashion. (*Commonweal*, 21 November 1891, p. 150).

Tochatti's enthusiastic defence of the imprisoned anarchist David Nicoll is recorded in the December 1892 *Freedom*, p. 1. Despite his strong support of Nicoll he must have had reservations about some of the public statements of his fellow anarchists, for in January 1894, disturbed by the incendiary tone of *Commonweal*, he began *Liberty*, considered by Quail an unusually open-minded anarchist journal (p. 204). When in late 1893

Tochatti asked Morris for a contribution, Morris replied suggesting that Tochatti repudiate propaganda by violence, and added:

However, I don't for a moment suppose that you agree with such 'propaganda by deed'. But since I don't think so, that is the very reason why I think you should openly say that you don't. (12 December 1893, Kelvin, ed. *Letters of WM*, 4:113, WM Gal, J357)

Tochatti did provide this repudiation, and Morris contributed two essays to *Liberty*, 'Why I Am a Communist' (February 1894) and 'As to Bribing Excellence' (May 1895).

Tochatti published his "Reminiscence of William Morris," in the December 1896 issue of *Liberty* (p. 123), arguing that 'It is a great mistake to suppose that Morris changed his views with regard to parliamentary action. In a comparatively recent lecture at Kelmscott House he expressed his belief that the people were going that way, but he added with emphasis, "Don't make the mistake of thinking this, Socialism.'" He noted that 'Like his friend Walter Crane, he helped all, being too great a man to be sectarian,' and promised more reminiscences and an account of Morris's letters to him on the topic of Socialism. This was the final issue of *Liberty*, however, and these reminiscences did not appear. Some years later Tochatti offered his memories of Morris at a gathering to commemorate Morris's death held at the William Morris Hall, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, at which Walter Crane and Herbert Burrows also spoke, and Cunningham-Graham sent a letter to be read (*West London Observer*, 11 October 1907, p. 6).

Despite *Liberty's* closure in 1896, however, Quail (pp. 273-74) states that in the early 1900s Tochatti was again a frequent speaker, and his tailoring store in Hammersmith became a meeting place for anarchist discussion. In 1909 his premises were searched by the police as part of an attempt to find incriminating evidence against Guy Aldred, who had recently been imprisoned for a year for publishing the anti-imperialist newspaper *Indian Sociologist*; Tochatti complained of "a detective outrage more suited to Russia than England," and London Labour Member of Parliament Will Thorne raised the issue of possible police misconduct on his behalf in the House of Commons (*The Scotsman*, 29 September, 1909, p. 10). The December 1912 *Freedom* announced Tochatti's 'Lantern Lecture' on 'Agriculture' at the Morris Studio, Adie Road, Hammersmith; in 1913 he urged an audience of omnibus workers who had waged a suc-

cessful strike, 'irrespective of the victory which they had won, to press forward and obtain fresh concessions. They were, he said, in a class war' (*West London Observer*, 26 September, 1913, p. 13); and on 12 October 1914, he was reported as lecturing in Bristol on 'The Attitude of Revolutionists towards the War' (*Freedom*, November 1914). John Mahon's *Harry Pollitt*, London 1976, pp. 65-66, describes Pollitt's visits to his shop in 1918 and after, where according to Pollitt's unsympathetic account he had

defended conscientious objectors on socialist grounds, disputing with Tochatti, who alternatively favoured folded arms and shooting the officers. Sometimes they had first-hand news from Russia by someone returning from there.

In 1877 Tochatti married Louisa Susan Kaufman, of German descent, who had a fine singing voice used to perform at benefit events as "the socialist songstress" (*West London Observer*, 5 October, 1889, p. 6). *Commonweal* reported in October 1889 that at a meeting in support of the Thornycroft strikers held on Acton Green and addressed by Tochatti and Williams, "Louisa Tochatti opened proceedings with the revolutionary song 'When the loafers are somewhere down below'" (5 October, 1889, p. 318). [Composed by C. W. Beckett and published as "Song for Socialism" in the 17 March 1888 *Commonweal*, this song continued to be used in labour movement circles into the early twentieth century.]

Louisa appears several times in the Hammersmith SL minutes as present at meetings; on 10 February, 1888 she reported to the branch that at a recent meeting in Parish Hall, Chelsea she had sold 24 *Commonweals*, and she is mentioned in the 7 September 1889 *Commonweal* as collecting money for the London dock strikers. According to Libcom.org, she was also remembered as singing revolutionary songs at open-air meetings in the 1900's. By 1881 the couple had three children; among these was Moncure Douglas Conway Tochatti (Moncure Daniel Conway was a freethinker and minister at the South Place Chapel 1864-65 and 1893-97), who was born in Hammersmith in 1887. Moncure Tochatti, who later changed his surname to Galdino at the request of a friend and benefactor, moved with his family to Dorset, where James himself died in the winter of 1928, only months after Louisa's death in 1927.

James Tochatti's near half century of activity as an anarchist communist straddle the formative years of the British socialist movement. While it is true that many of the ideas held by Tochatti left him on the margins as

the movement gravitated towards labourism, he never faltered in his advocacy of a future communist society that in the words of his comrade William Morris, ‘had no consciousness of being governed.’ That he was able to sustain his position without recourse to sectarianism, rancor, belligerence or menace earned him the respect of many, including Morris.

Stephen Williams worked as an education officer for the National Union of Public Employees (NUPE) and UNISON in the UK between 1979 and 2011. He co-authored the two volumes of official NUPE history and since retirement has written on Morris’s socialism and the Socialist League. Florence Boos is the author of *History and Poetics in the Early Writings of William Morris* (2015). An expanded version of her edition of Morris’s *Socialist Diary* is scheduled for publication in early 2018.

KRISTEN ROSS’S *COMMUNAL LUXURY:  
THE POLITICAL IMAGINARY OF THE  
PARIS COMMUNE.*

London: Verso, 2015. 156 pages.

*Florence S. Boos*

Kristin Ross’s concise but elegantly written treatise, *Communal Luxury*, assesses Morris’s contributions to late nineteenth-century British socialism from a comparative and international perspective. Ross argues that the Paris Commune and three of its nineteenth-century interpreters—Peter Kropotkin, Elisée Reclus, and William Morris—enter “vividly into the figurability of the present” (p. 2), as characterized by modern populist resistance movements such as Occupy and Black Lives Matter. In her meditation on the antecedents and results of this seventy-two-day experiment in worker-controlled government, Ross identifies the actions by which women, educators, and artists refashioned a hierarchical social structure into an internationalist, egalitarian democracy. For readers less acquainted with French than English nineteenth-century history, it is arresting to read of the pioneering efforts of Elizabeth Dmitrieff (organizer for the Women’s Union), Eugène Pottier (educator-advocate of a “polytechnic,” multi-faceted education), and the artist Gustave Courbet (founder of the Federation of Artists, which abolished the distinction between “signed” and “unsigned” [lesser] arts). Morris appears throughout Ross’s account as a British advocate of similarly egalitarian views, formed during a period in which he visited Iceland and translated medieval Scandinavian sagas. She notes that Morris found in Icelandic history an opening of possibilities, a “parable of the days

to come” (p. 75), a quality also reflected in the events of his poetic epic on the Paris Commune, *The Pilgrims of Hope*, with its added “shocking characteristic: it happened in the present” (p. 76). Her account of émigré life in London emphasizes the extent to which solidarity and shared reflection on the Commune’s meanings characterized the uprising’s survivors, whose later theories were born from action rather than the reverse. Similarly Morris believed that the new society, like the Commune, would embody shared life on a human scale: “the secret of happiness lies in the taking of interest in all the details of life, in elevating them by art” (p. 113).

Viewing the sundry factions of 1880s British and émigré socialism in an eclectic light, Ross summarizes, “What they shared was a view of human living that left little or no place for either the state or party politics, the nation or the market” (p. 108). She also defends the lack of programmatic purity that characterized Morris and his associates: “what looks to be theoretical confusion may well be an astute and well-thought-out political strategy” (p. 111). Most important, “fellowship” for Morris meant kinship between persons freed to engage in creative labor, living in harmony with the variety of nature. For those who were influenced by the spirit of the Commune, Ross argues, “Nature’s repair could only come about through the complete dismantling of international commerce and the capitalist system. A systemic problem demanded a systemic solution” (p. 139).

It is refreshing to read a modern commentator who, instead of revisiting the electoralism versus anarchism debates of the 1880s, argues for the relevance of Morris’s program for “making socialists,” the Abensoureaan “education of desire” that must accompany any political change. This seems a message expressly geared to the moment, as many people despair of making immediate changes in entrenched or undemocratic political systems and redouble their efforts at local initiatives and issue-directed coalitions. At times, the comparative method of *Communal Luxury* can slightly flatten the nuances of Morris’s thought in order to posit resemblances with Kropotkin and Elise Reclus, a scientist and geographer, respectively, but in compensation, Ross’s relative disregard of the English political context for Morris’s ideas in favor of more internationalist, theoretical readings emphasizes their internal coherence and intellectual force. *Communal Luxury* deepens our understanding of Britain’s “socialist imaginary” through its suggestive account of its affinities with other European revolutionary movements.

Ross's book has stirred much interest, including a special feature in the *Journal of William Morris Studies* (21, no. 4, 2016), in which three critics offer insights on its perspectives. In "Liberation Ecologies, circa 1871," Elizabeth Carolyn Miller finds Ross's study of the Commune distinctive in considering the communal associations that predated and prepared for the eventual political uprising and for its portrayal of Morris as well attuned to the pragmatic political currents of his day. She identifies the ecological strand of Morris's and Kropotkin's thought, precluded in each case by travel to an allegedly more primitive preindustrial culture (Iceland and Finland, respectively), where both men "learn[ed] from the non-human world [that] that which seemed fixed is, in reality, utterly unstable" (p. 14). In the end, one can view the Commune as anticipatory of recent regional movements for environmental justice and its ideal of "*communal luxury*"—plenitude without excess—as a continuing inspiration today.

In "The Stones in the Garden," Matthew Beaumont ruminates on a metaphor that Morris used in an 1871 letter to his wife: the loose stones at the edge of a lava field are like his "idea of a half-ruined Paris barricade" (Kelvin, ed., Morris, *Collected Letters*, 1, 146). Beaumont notes that Morris's sojourn in Iceland suggested the value of history in prompting hope for the future, but only if wrested from attempts to suppress its revolutionary meanings. Morris's veneration for the Commune embodied his search for an anticipatory "concrete utopia," defined by the Marxist philosopher Ernest Bloch as a "methodical organ for the new" (*JWMS* 21.4, 21). Beaumont further points out that for Morris, an egalitarian society must also be pastoral: that the lava field Morris describes also lay near a garden may suggest the different, possibly contradictory "warm and cold currents" of his later revolutionary imagination.

In "Reclaiming the Commune, Reclaiming William Morris... Again," Michelle Weinroth notes approvingly that Ross's text "gives Communard artisans pride of place: shoemakers, box-makers, fabric designers, porters, etc." Nonetheless, she argues that *Communal Luxury* is also "an utopian romance dressed in the apparel of an unorthodox history of ideas" (p. 24) and offers a Marxist critique of Ross's somewhat anachronistic encomium as avoiding Nowhere's radical elimination of a capitalist marketplace. Responding to the Communards' destruction of the statue of Napoleon in the Place Vendôme, she notes, "It is not an *aesthetic of space*... which must be altered, but a condition of labor" (p. 28); as Morris contended, within a competitive sys-

tem, "luxury" and dearth are now inextricably linked. Weinroth also points to the need to confront the brutal repression that ended the Commune, finding connection between the tragic loss of life and Morris's pained recognition of the necessary delays of history, for "without the defeats of past times we should now have no hope of final victory" ("Why We Celebrate the Commune of Paris," *Commonweal*, 19 March 1887). In the end, the fact that a book on the imaginative legacy of the Paris Commune should evoke such engaged responses speaks well for the intellectual subtlety and courage of the Commune's nineteenth-century advocates, as well as to the anxieties that the spectacle of a suppressed populist uprising evokes in those who advocate for significant social change.

## MLA 2018 IN NEW YORK CITY

**The Modern Language Association Convention** will be held in New York City 4-7 January, 2018. Friday January 5<sup>th</sup> will be a full day, with two sessions at the Sheraton Hotel, followed by a tour of an exhibition of Pre-Raphaelite materials at the Morgan Library and our annual dinner. Free session passes are available for non-MLA members, and if you would like one, please let Jason Martinek know before the convention at [jasondmartinek@gmail.com](mailto:jasondmartinek@gmail.com).

### "THE PRE-RAPHAELITES AND THE MORGAN LIBRARY"

Organized by Paul Acker, is scheduled for **1:45-3:00 p. m.** in the Sutton Place Room at the Sheraton. The topics and speakers are:

- "Utopia under Construction: News from Nowhere in the Pierpont Morgan Library," Meaghan Freeman, Manhattanville College
- "Finders, Eyes, and Sympathy': The Kelmscott Chaucer Platinotypes," Heather Bozant Witcher, St. Louis University
- "The Pierpont Morgan Library as Pre-Raphaelite Archive," Paul L. Acker, St. Louis University

### "OBJECTIFYING MORRIS"

The official William Morris Society session will be held **3:30-4:45** in the Bowery Room, Sheraton. The speakers will be:

- "Materially Relational: William Morris and the Hybrid Literary Object," Rachel A. Ernst, Boston College
- "William Morris's Interior Design Creations and His Love of Mythology," Corinna Margarete Illingworth, independent scholar

- “Where Have All the Manuscripts Gone? Morris’s Autographs in Diaspora,” Florence S. Boos, University of Iowa  
Respondent: Andrew Wood, University of California

**5-6 p. m.** Viewing of an Exhibition of Pre-Raphaelite Materials at the Morgan Library, prepared by the curators for the William Morris Society

**7-9 p. m.** On Friday evening we plan a group dinner at Johns of 12<sup>th</sup> Street. All are welcome to join! If you plan to attend, please let Jason Martinek know by January 1, 2018.

## UPCOMING ARTS AND CRAFTS TOURS

Arts and Crafts Tours ([www.artsandcraftstours.com](http://www.artsandcraftstours.com)) is offering three tours in 2018: William Morris and Friends in the Cotswolds, 12-20 May; Houses and Gardens in the Borders and Lake District [including Naworth Castle], 16-24 June; and the Bloomsbury Group, 22-30 September. For 2019, Arts and Crafts Tours are planning a Private Press tour to Scotland and Ireland.



## FRENCH EDITION OF THE GLITTERING PLAIN

Francis Guévremont has completed the first French translation of Morris’s 1891 *The Glittering Plain*, now published by David Meulemans at the Aux forges de vulcain. This 240 page volume can be obtained for 19 Euros plus postage from [www.auxforgesdevulcain.fr](http://www.auxforgesdevulcain.fr), or email [virginie.migeotte@gmail.com](mailto:virginie.migeotte@gmail.com) or [ilham.ennaciri@gmail.com](mailto:ilham.ennaciri@gmail.com). Next on the publisher’s list will be *The House of the Wolfings*.



Katrin Jakobsdottir centre, with current and former Society chairs Marin Stott and Ruth Levitas in a pub in Reykjavik.

## MORRISIAN ELECTED AS ICELANDIC PRIME MINISTER.

*Martin Stott*

Iceland elected a new Prime Minister in November 2017. She is Katrin Jakobsdottir leader of Vinstri Graen (RedGreen). She served as Minister for Education, Science and Culture in the Green Left Government of 2009-13 and has taught at the University of Iceland where she is a specialist in Scandi crime literature. She is also an enthusiastic Morrisian and gave a lecture to the Society tour in 2013.

In the lecture, entitled *Good afternoon Mr Morris* she demonstrated an extraordinary knowledge both of Morris’s range of contributions to society, culture and politics, but also to their continuing impacts in Iceland. She structured her talk after the time travel of *News from Nowhere*, around the idea of Morris’s reappearance in present day Iceland ‘our demented age’, where he joins her and her two brothers in a discussion over dinner.

The themes of their ‘discussion’ ranged over what she considered to be likely to be Morris’s chief interests on his return; the survival of the Icelandic way of life including the way Icelandic embroidery has influenced modern Icelandic design; the preservation of historic houses and the pressures of redevelopment; Morris’s views on how to build new businesses based on beauty and quality; the importance of the local as opposed to the mass-produced; the difficulties faced by socialism, particularly ‘the fragmentation that seems to be a constant of the political left wing, exactly as he experienced in the late nineteenth century’; democracy and the role of the media including social media and the experience of direct democracy in Iceland’s recent history; the chasm between the power of big corporations and the working class; the integration in perspective between ‘domestic beautification’ and the class struggle and equality; sustainability and the intrinsic value of wilderness, and finally his likely views on ‘*Game of Thrones*’.

A feminist, socialist, peace activist and climate change campaigner, she leads a coalition of centre right parties who mainly represent fishing and farming interests and are strongly Eurosceptic.

## KEEPING THE NAME ALIVE

*Hilary Freeman*

Kristin Gudjonsson, guide for one of the UK William Morris Society's Iceland trips, gave me the idea for this poem when he complimented us at our final dinner together: "This is great what you are doing – You are keeping the name of William Morris alive."

When we talk of William Morris  
*Keeping the name alive*  
He's the Lion in the Forest  
*Keeping the name alive*  
Praise his Peacock and the Dragon  
*Keeping the name alive*  
Think of Beauty, Use and Pattern  
*Keeping the name alive*  
Tulips stitched on calico  
Fingers stained with indigo  
Hammersmith and Walthamstow  
*Keeping the name alive*

See him painting Janey Burden  
*Keeping the name alive*  
Printing wallpaper at Merton  
*Keeping the name alive*  
Weaving tapestries of Arthur  
*Keeping the name alive*  
Gilding glass for Christ and Martha  
*Keeping the name alive*  
Angel hands enfold a Star  
Jewelled robes for Balthazar  
Wise men guided from afar  
*Keeping the name alive*

See him seated at Webb's table  
*Keeping the name alive*  
Writing fantasy and fable  
*Keeping the name alive*  
How he weighs life's light and shadow  
*Keeping the name alive*  
Taking joy from field and meadow  
*Keeping the name alive*  
The Hesperides  
Fruit upon the trees  
Stolen strawberries  
*Keeping the name alive*  
See him write of Gudrun's lovers  
*Keeping the name alive*

Of Skarp-Hedin and his brothers  
*Keeping the name alive*  
See him stand by Flosi's river  
*Keeping the name alive*

Feeling sad and glad together  
*Keeping the name alive*  
And at Holyfell  
When he climbed the hill  
Was his wish fulfilled?  
*Keeping the name alive*

Let us take the road to Lechlade  
*Keeping the name alive*  
Let us make the journeys he made  
*Keeping the name alive*  
Let us share our arts together  
*Keeping the name alive*  
Help to change the world forever  
*Keeping the name alive*  
Work and sacrifice  
Sing Love will suffice  
Earthly Paradise  
*Keeping the name alive*

Hilary Freeman was born in London and has been writing poetry since childhood. She is now working on "In the Footsteps of William Morris," inspired by recent visits to Iceland with the UK Morris Society.



*William Morris's Socialist Diary*

edited by Florence Boos

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Forthcoming March 2018

(continued from page 2)

Hero, a lifetime member of the Society, a strong supporter, and a friend. Jack, a long-time William Morris collector and scholar, was interested, as was Morris, in the issues of preservation and was inspired by the Morris quote "... these old buildings do not belong to us only ... they have belonged to our forefathers, and they will belong to our descendants unless we play them false. They are not in any sense our property, to do as we like with. We are only trustees for those that come after us. So I say nothing but absolute necessity can excuse the destruction of these buildings; and I say, further, that such a necessity has never yet existed in our time."

*The following are excerpts from our January 2015 Newsletter. The first piece, from Jack's "A Letter from the President," captures both Jack's enthusiasm for the 2014 Morris Symposium at Illinois Wesleyan University and the sense of camaraderie Jack seemed to inspire wherever he went. The report that follows details the generous contributions of materials, knowledge, and time that Jack and Florence Boos made to the event.*

FROM JACK'S  
"A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT"

I have just returned from a trip, along with Florence Boos, former President of the William Morris Society,



Jack Walsdorf and Florence Boos  
at the Illinois Wesleyan Symposium, 2014

Jack Walsdorf, 1959  
Yearbook photo



to a wonderful campus located in central Illinois. We were lucky enough to be invited to give a number of lectures and participate in classes at Illinois Wesleyan University, located in Bloomington, Illinois. The title of our presentations was "Boundless Spirit: William Morris for the 21st Century." The nearly dozen classes included "World of Ideas"; "Utopianism & Its Critics"; and a general presentation on the highlights of some 60 Morris related items (including 12 Kelmscott books) on display at the Ames Library, a wonderful example of recent architecture which, although more than 10 years old, looks new and modern and functional. [Jack

then refers readers to the report below.]

FROM THE REPORT ON "WILLIAM MORRIS EXHIBITION  
AND SYMPOSIUM AT ILLINOIS WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY"

As part of an Andrew E. Mellon Foundation grant to private colleges for the enrichment of the humanities curriculum, Jack Walsdorf and Florence Boos participated in a three day symposium at Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington, Illinois 22-24 October. Sixty-three items from Jack's private collection were displayed in the rotunda of the university's Ames library, and in addition he brought additional Kelmscott Press and other Morris items for students to examine in their classes.

Florence and Jack were guest speakers in seven classes, which centered on Morris's relationship to modernism, Marxism, censorship, utopia, medieval architecture, environmentalism, and the arts and crafts movement from 1870-1920. The final event of the symposium, held in the courtroom of the McLean County Museum of History, was an "Antiques Road Show"-style appraisal of nineteenth-century books, at which Jack Walsdorf informally assessed volumes which audience members brought from their collections. Attendance was good, and all present seemed gratified to have learned more about how to select and appraise older books.

After eleven presentations in three days (in addition to many pleasant social events), Jack and Florence were quite exhausted. Nonetheless they were gratified to hope that—as Mark Samuels Lasner wryly commented to Florence—the number of undergraduates at Illinois Wesleyan University who have heard of Morris may be greater than that at any comparable institution....



A Conversation with  
Jack Walsdorf

FROM "THE MORRISIAN INTERVIEW SERIES, #2:  
JOHN J. WALSDORF"

*The following are excerpts from Clara Finley's 2013 interview with Jack, which appeared in our January 2014 Newsletter. The sections we have chosen highlight Jack's passion for and knowledge of collecting, his love of beautiful books, and the supportive patience of his long-time partner Marylou. The full interview is available at <http://themorrisian.blogspot.com/2013/04/the-morrisian-interview-series-2-john-j.html>*

John J. Walsdorf, the talented Portland-based collector and author, has been collecting William Morris and Kelmscott Press related books and ephemera for almost fifty years, while also working on other collections. He is currently the Vice President of the William Morris Society, and serves on the board of the Lake Oswego Preservation Society.

Among his many publications are a complete bibliography of the work of author Julian Symons; a book on the American printer Elbert Hubbard; and a memoir about his experiences, entitled "On Collecting William Morris," which was brought out in a fittingly beautiful, limited edition volume by The Printery. Happily, there are also records of all his impressive Morris collections, even those which have been sold. The first collection can be found in his 1983 book *William Morris in Private Press and Limited Editions: A Descriptive Bibliography of Books by and About William Morris*; the second lives on in his 1994 volume, *William Morris and the Kelmscott Press*; and two years later, the third was preserved in *Kelmscott Press: William Morris & His Circle*.

I met up with him this January at the Modern Language Association conference in Boston, and it was on a cold, sunny day that we convened to the marble-floored lobby of the Fairmont Hotel. There, perched on some Queen Anne furniture in a corner dominated by a big, jungly potted plant, we began our wide-ranging chat, touching on Morris, the future of the book, and the surprises that can hide in bookstores (or even in your own collection, if it's large enough).

*Your collecting career can be broken into distinct stages—might you be able to talk us through that progression a bit? How did it start?*

Well, first of all, I would say that I am a life-long collector. When I was really young, 6-12, I was serious about stamp collecting, and I still have those collections. In high school, I didn't do any formal collecting, but I did a tremendous amount of reading.

When I did my undergraduate work—and I was an English major—I started collecting books, but reading copies only. Especially American and English literature: I really liked Maugham, Hardy, Dreiser, Hemingway, and F. Scott Fitzgerald. But it was in graduate school at the University of Wisconsin in Madison where I really got into collecting, and I started collecting fine press books and fine printing on a very, very modest budget.

I would haunt the local used bookstores, especially one in downtown Madison called Paul's Book Store, and I would go in there and I would just spend my time looking for beautifully printed books and interesting books. It was also at graduate school that a professor of mine at the school of library science, Rachel K. Shenck, introduced me to Kelmscott Press books. She actually owned two Kelmscott Press books, and she brought them to the class, and she passed them around. And she let us handle and look at them, and I simply fell in love with the printing of the Kelmscott Press books.

And really, after that introduction, I knew I wanted to find a way to go to England. And I was lucky enough to get a job, on a library exchange position program two years after graduating from U.W. Madison: I got an exchange at the Oxford City Library.

*It must have been wonderful to work in the library of such a literary city.*

Yes: the wonder of Oxford was not just the buildings, nor the bookshops, nor the city of Oxford itself, but also the people. Which leads me to my most famous encounter, and for the truth in the saying: "Nothing ventured, nothing gained."

One of the patrons at the City Library was J.R.R. Tolkien, and one day I remarked to some of my colleagues at the library that I was going to send him a copy of *The Hobbit* to inscribe. They thought that that was simply an unbelievable idea, the thought of sending him a copy of my book to inscribe was unheard of, at least to them. Nevertheless I did it, and a number of weeks passed, without the return of my book.



Book signing with Marylou

Then late one winter's evening, just as it was getting dark, there was a knock at the door of my flat, and there stood Professor Tolkien, with the book in hand, returning it not only inscribed, but also with a letter thanking me for my interest, and the stamps I had enclosed to make mailing the book to me all the easier!

*How long did you live in Oxford?*

I only lived in Oxford 15 months, far too short a time, as I really felt at home and I fell in love with the city. Well, after the library position, I was hired by Blackwell's, a job and various positions that lasted 31 years. I became friends with Sir Basil Blackwell, and that friendship led us to share stories about Morris and Kelmscott, and of course he did most of the sharing, telling me stories about May Morris and his experiences meeting her, and publishing *William Morris Artist Writer Socialist* by May Morris at the Shakespeare Head Press in 1936.

Sir Basil Blackwell also showed me his personal copy of the Kelmscott Chaucer that he had on a stand in his library, and that copy is now owned by his son, Julian Blackwell. And it really was at that time, when I worked in Oxford, that I became an avid collector of Kelmscott Press. I still collected other presses, some really nice fine presses, Doves and Golden Cockerel, but primarily I fell under the influence of both Sir Basil Blackwell and William Morris. I started collecting Kelmscott Press books, and Kelmscott ephemera, and that collecting has gone on for now... almost fifty years, and during that time I've built a number of collections, some of which I had to sell for financial reasons. Now I'm on my fourth Kelmscott Press collection, and I currently own 26 Kelmscott Press books.



Jack and Kay Kramer, Printery

*You partially answered this earlier, but why, more generally, do you collect Morris?*

I would say, in answer to this question, that "the book beautiful" pleases me. The book, almost as an art object, pleases me a great deal. The black ink, the quality of the paper, the illustrations, and the content, were all important to William Morris, are all important in the production of Kelmscott Press books, and I simply feel that it's a very pleasant experience to be able to own and handle Kelmscott Press books.

*You mentioned already that you collect other categories of books... do you think that there are any unifying themes common to all of these presses you collect, Morris books and the non-Morris books alike?*

Well, I would answer it in two ways. If I look at what I have and what I collect beyond the presses I mentioned, I also collect signed modern first editions, of which I have probably a thousand, I collect signed and unsigned biblio-mysteries, I have a very large collection—two bays—of variant editions of *A Christmas Carol* by Dickens, I have an overly large collection of books about books ... in short I feel I have too many books, and that's one of the problems with my type of collecting. I'm not focused, I don't stick to a unified theme, and if I did, I would have a far, far better Morris/Kelmscott Press collection.

But I'm the type of book hunter that likes to hunt, and likes to buy books. And even in the largest bookshops, I can go in and generally—I mean I'm talking about bookshops the size of Powell's, which is three floors and one city block—I can go in Powell's every month and go the art section, and go to the "books about books" section, and go to the "William Morris's

poetry” section, and go to the “William Morris’s literature” section, and I can only find a few books I want. I need to feed my addiction as a book hunter, though, so I will find other books, because I already have many of the titles I see. I think I’m doing a public good: I’m helping Powell’s stay open and I’m buying their inventory, but I’m also not specializing, and I wish I had the willpower to only specialize... but I just love buying books.

*You’ve been asked this before, but perhaps your answer changes over time—can you highlight three favorite items from your collection as it stands today?*

In my answer to that question earlier, I listed the things that I felt were my very best, best items. (To see his previous answer, see the interview at the University of Puget Sound, available online at <https://tinyurl.com/y8skzcyg>)

But I will add, that since I was asked that question earlier, I added *The Collected Works of William Morris* in 24 volumes, which is an expensive book printed by Longmans 1910-1915, and it’s very costly just to have it shipped to you, at 24 volumes. So it was my big buy of this past year, and I’m very happy to have it, because it’s a wonderful collection with introductions by Morris’s daughter.

*What’s one of the most frustrating collecting experiences you’ve ever had? What’s one of the most exhilarating?*

First, the most frustrating. The most frustrating, and it happened time and again, is: you receive a dealer’s catalogue but you unfortunately live on the west coast, so that catalogue that was mailed, in the old days by mail, snail mail, that catalogue was received by the entire east coast and the entire Midwest and the entire rocky mountain area days before they came to me.

One Saturday morning, I was lounging on my couch in Portland Oregon—actually waiting for the mail—and I was reading. And I heard the mail truck pull up and I heard the mail truck pull away, and I went out and I found a dealer’s catalogue. I went to the English literature section, and there was this wonderful signed trade edition, three volumes, of *The Earthly Paradise*, priced for under \$100.

So I leaped, remember it’s Saturday—I leaped to my feet, and I called the number thinking well it’s...11:30, 12:30, 1:30... it’s 2:30 in New York, I wonder if they even work on Saturday afternoon at 2:30, but they answered the phone. And I said “This is Jack Walsdorf from Portland Oregon, I just got the catalogue and I want to check on an item.” And within less than 30

seconds, the same voice came back and said, “Sorry sir, that one’s sold.” Now, that is the height of disappointment, and it is doubly the height of disappointment because within 10 years I was able to buy that very same book—that inscribed copy—I was able to buy that same three-volume set for something like \$700. So that was my disappointing one.

Oh, I’ll tell you a wonderful good find story. This happened two years ago. My partner and I were in Southern Oregon on vacation. And we were in the McKenzie River Valley, beautiful area, and we were in a riverside cabin, it was lovely, but there ain’t going to be any bookstores around here. So I asked, “Where’s the nearest bookstore,” and they said “Well, you go back to where you came from, Eugene, or you go the other direction towards eastern Oregon to a place called Sisters, Oregon and there’s a bookshop there.”

So I talked my partner into giving up our cabin for the day, and giving up the porch that is on the river’s edge and the rippling water, because we really needed to go to a used bookstore. So we went to Sisters, Oregon, and fortunately for her, standing side-by-side, was an antique mall, so Marylou went into the antique mall; I went into the bookstore.

I have a routine. I go in and I say, “Where do you have biblio-mysteries? Where do you have mysteries? Where do you have press books? Where do you have *Christmas Carol*?” and I list all the things I collect.

And I’m all done, and I walk up to the front desk, and I say to the man, “do you know William Morris, the English Arts & Crafts guy?” and he says “Yeah,” and I said “Do you have any Kelmscott Press books?” And he said, “Oh as a matter of fact I just bought one in this past week, I have it right here, I hadn’t priced it yet. I looked it up on the Internet and it was \$2300, but if you want to buy it right now, I’ll sell it to you for \$1800 dollars.” And I said well, can I see it, and he said, “Sure,” and he hands me Morris’s *Guenevere*, and I said, “You know, the only problem is I don’t have a checkbook with me and I don’t have 1800 dollars with me” and he says, “Oh, I’ll take a credit card!”

Now, the funny thing is, that was a great feeling, OK, and totally unexpected out there in the high desert as they call it. But the funny thing is, in all that time in Portland, some 38 years, with that great Powell’s bookstore, I’ve never bought a Kelmscott Press book from Powell’s and I go to central Oregon and I find one. I guess the moral of the story is, you just never know where you might find a Kelmscott lurking.

*And it's also to abandon your riverside roost, the comforts—*

Right, right. It's worth it!

I'd like to end by asking you what are the overarching reasons, if any, for your own collecting work? Do you feel that collecting is an important service to society?

Oh, really good question. The reasons for collecting, you know, are so many. For me it's just simply a passion for books. Ever since I was young I have truly read everything put before me. I was one of those people who read all four sides, and top and bottom, of the cereal box, and I devoured the sports page when I was young. And I simply have such a passion for what you can take from books of all kinds. The joy you can get from reading a book at a certain time, on vacation, how a book will take you to that place after you've been there.

One of the neatest experiences I've had is when I went to Spain: went to Granada and the Alhambra and returned home and read the Washington Irving story about the Alhambra. And it's nice to think: I've been there, I've seen it with my own eyes, and now I can read how a great writer—more than 100 years earlier—has described those arches, and the mosaic, and the beauty of it. And I just think that the passion for books is a passion for all that books can give you. All the knowledge, all the entertainment, and all the pleasure of the stories.

*You had a second part to that question...*

*About collecting being a service to society.*

That's really a good question. Larry McMurtry in one of his books, *Cadillac Jack*, talks about the collectors and how collections are like clouds. And how if you look at the clouds on a day when you've got bright light and you've got blue sky but you've got the clouds going across, the clouds are there bunched up, and then the wind comes along and it dissipates them and then you look to your right, and they've reformed.

And he compares the collections to those clouds in the sense that, we put the collections together now, we enjoy them, we read them, we organize them, we categorize them, we take care of them. And after we've used them, we need to do something more with them, and that more is to give them to libraries, or to sell them so that other people can build collections. But whatever we do with them, whether we give them away, whether we

sell them, after they leave us, invariably, we're going to start over, in some shape or form, to collect again.

Now, I like to think about when I've had books with me, what I've done with them. I've generally used them to write books. An example, a non-Morris example: for years and years I was an avid reader of a major English mystery writer, Julian Symons. At one point I owned over 1200 individual items related to this one writer, in all his forms of writing: mysteries, biographies, short stories, etc. I co-wrote a bibliography on Julian Symons that was published by Oak Knoll. After I was done with the collecting and done with the writing, I was lucky enough to have the opportunity to sell these books through a dealer to Indiana University in Bloomington, the Lilly Library.

Now, I like to think I spent many, many thousands of dollars putting this collection together, and many years of hunting, which is all fine, and many hours of reading and writing. And now my book is published and those books could just sit in my home and I wouldn't do much more with them, or by having them go to a university like Indiana University Bloomington, having them at the Lilly Library, there are going to be people much more scholarly than me, there are going to be people who find the Julian Symons's collection, and somebody is going to say, "We have that collection, and it's accessible to anybody." It's a really good feeling to be able to pass it on.

*And it wouldn't exist if you hadn't consolidated it in that way.*

That's exactly true. It wouldn't exist in that body of work, in that mass. I found things that the best library didn't find—magazines and limited edition booklets, and things that were very ephemeral and very personal, I mean hundreds of letters from Julian to me. Now they are accessible, and that's the beauty. They're in one place, open to the public, and that's the beauty.

*So as a collector, you fight entropy: you stop everything from scattering.*

Right (laughing), I bring it together.

*Thank you.*

Clara Finley is a former Vice President of the US William Morris Society. She maintains the WMS-US Facebook page and Twitter feeds, writes a blog, [themorrisian.blogspot.com](http://themorrisian.blogspot.com) and is preparing a biography of William Morris.

View of the University of Puget Sound Collins Memorial Library exhibit “William Morris & the Art of the Book” featuring Jack Walsdorf’s private library



## ‘THE FUN IS IN THE HUNT’: JOHN J. WALSDORF ON COLLECTING WILLIAM MORRIS (AND MORE)

*Sara Atwood*

Not long after I moved from Arizona to Portland, Oregon in 2015, I heard about a Portland-based collector of William Morris books and ephemera, John J. (Jack) Walsdorf. Jack is a past President of the William Morris Society of North America and now serves on its Board. He has been collecting Morris for more than fifty years and has sold four major collections of Morris material, one of which went to the University of Maryland. The most recent sale was to Blackwell’s of Oxford (2016), which has produced a handsome catalogue, *William Morris & The Kelmscott Press*. Jack is also an author whose publications include *Julian Symons: a bibliography* (1996), *Printers on Morris* (1978), *Elbert Hubbard: William Morris’s Greatest Imitator* (1999), *The Yellow Barn Press: a history and bibliography* (2001), and *On Collecting William Morris* (2006). He has also published records of his collections in *William Morris in Private Press and Limited Editions: A Descriptive Bibliography of Books by and About William Morris* (1983), *William Morris and the Kelmscott Press* (1994) and *Kelmscott Press: William Morris & His Circle* (1996).

I was able to contact Jack through the William Morris Society, and after a brief email correspondence he kindly invited my family to his home in North Portland to see his Morris collection (and some of his other impressive collections as well). We were warmly welcomed and spent a lovely evening looking at some of the many remarkable items Jack owns. I was reminded of the remark made by an early visitor to Ruskin’s St. George’s Museum; here indeed was “much treasure in a little room”—or in this case, rooms. I was awed by the extent of Jack’s collections. While his primary interest is Mor-

ris, he also collects (among other things) books issued in box cases, editions of *A Christmas Carol*, book dealers’ catalogues, as well as fine press books by Yellow Barn Press, Prairie Press of Iowa, and Adagio Press. Jack also owns a significant collection of Roycroft publications and objects. A small upstairs room contains his trove of Elbert Hubbard books. Jack was drawn to Roycroft and Hubbard as a collector of American Arts & Crafts, particularly Roycroft hammered copper pieces. He has a large collection of copper, wood furniture, and pottery, as well as perhaps 250 books and pamphlets published by or relating to Hubbard and the Roycrofters. Indeed throughout Jack’s house there are shelves upon shelves of books—nearly 6,000 of them. Over the years, Jack has commissioned several pieces of artwork that complement his collecting interests, including Morris quotes rendered in beautiful calligraphy. We admired these as we made our way to the room where Jack had set out items from his Morris collection for us to view.

Alas, scheduling conflicts on my part meant that our visit took place two weeks *after* a Blackwell’s representative had arrived to pack up the 88 Morris books and items destined for catalogue sale. Imagine my chagrin when I discovered what I’d missed: 25 major Kelmscott Press publications, many of them “in limp vellum with silk ties, with ephemera and secondary material from the press, and an outstanding Morris letter, written in defence of his lecture ‘Art under Plutocracy’... important and uncommon Morris works, including Doves Press and Elston Press editions; publications celebrating the centenary of Morris’ birth” as well as modern private press editions and other marvelous things. Included amongst the Kelmscott Press volumes were Ruskin’s *The Nature of Gothic*, Morris’s *The Defence of Guenevere, Poems by the Way* and *The Wood Beyond the World*, and Rossetti’s *Hand and Soul*. All this and more I was not to see—and yet there were still so many treasures left to show us. On a large table in an upper room, Jack had thoughtfully laid out some of these, such as: an autograph Morris letter, single leaves from Kelmscott Press publications, private press editions of Morris, and much more. Suddenly the hours left in the evening seemed far too few and passing all too quickly. While my husband, declaring an interest, retired to the Hubbard room, I stayed to take in the richness of the Morris material, eventually making my way to an adjoining book room to explore Jack’s collection of books about Morris, the Pre-Raphaelites, book collecting and more. Throughout our visit, we enjoyed delightful conversation with Jack, who told us the stories of the various items he’d shown us, as well as the story of his collecting life.

Born and raised in Wisconsin, Jack was a talented athlete during his school days. He excelled at (American) football in particular and was the star of his school team (he remains a football fan today and we spent a bit of time discussing the NFL). Jack says he wasn't much of a scholar at this stage—a situation exacerbated by poor eyesight that went unrecognized by his teachers—and was instead focused on sport and the possibility of playing football at college. As an undergraduate at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, he went out for the football team, but quickly realized that talented though he was, he wasn't suited to college-level play. Having begun to focus more seriously on school—and realizing that he was rather good at it—he graduated with a degree in English literature. He went on to earn an M.A. in Library Science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. While at Madison, he took a course called “The History of Books and Printing,” taught by Rachel K. Schenk, which proved a decisive experience. As Jack tells it, “Miss Schenk owned one of the early, smaller Kelmscott Press books, which she brought to class and passed around. It was Miss Schenk who first opened my eyes to the world of Morris and fine private press books.”

Following graduate school, Jack spent two years working as a reference librarian in the Milwaukee, Wisconsin library system. He then moved to the UK, where he had been appointed as an exchange librarian to the City Library of Oxford. Whilst there he also worked as a reference librarian. ‘One of my most memorable patrons,’ Jack remembers, ‘was J.R.R. Tolkien, who used the city library regularly as he would come in to pick up a book for his wife. Mr. Tolkien was a kind man, who inscribed a copy of *The Hobbit* for my wife and wrote me a letter to go along with the book.’

Jack was only resident in Oxford for 15 months, but when his library position ended he was hired by Blackwell's, a job he held for 31 years (Jack's position was based in the U.S.). Jack became friends with Basil Blackwell, who shared stories with him about meeting May Morris and publishing her book *William Morris, Artist, Writer, Socialist* at the Shakespeare Head Press in 1936.

In a 2013 interview for the blog *The Morrisian*, Jack described the delightful surprises that sometimes happen to those who own thousands of books. Pulling a book off the shelf one day, he recalled, ‘I found a letter from Jane Morris—in the back of a Morris book.’ We should all be so lucky! Another time he rediscovered a number of Sydney Cockerell letters he had purchased years previously and stuck in the back of a book relating to Cockerell.

Talking with Jack, his knowledge, expertise, and experience are immediately apparent. So is the immense pleasure that he takes in collecting. With regard to the four major sales of his Morris collection during the past 50 years, Jack told me that although some people ‘might think it is sad to sell something which one spends 10 or more years building up, for me the fun is in the hunt. I love book hunting, and I don't think I will ever stop. All in all, I expect I have bought well over 7,000 books relating to Morris, and still have a library of perhaps 500+ books on Morris and I will never stop collecting.’

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Sara Atwood teaches English literature at Portland State University and Portland Community College. Her publications on Victorian topics include *Ruskin's Educational Ideals* (2011).



Photos from the University of Puget Sound Collins Memorial Library exhibit “William Morris & the Art of the Book” featuring Jack Walsdorf's private library





Andre Chaves: The Clinker Press

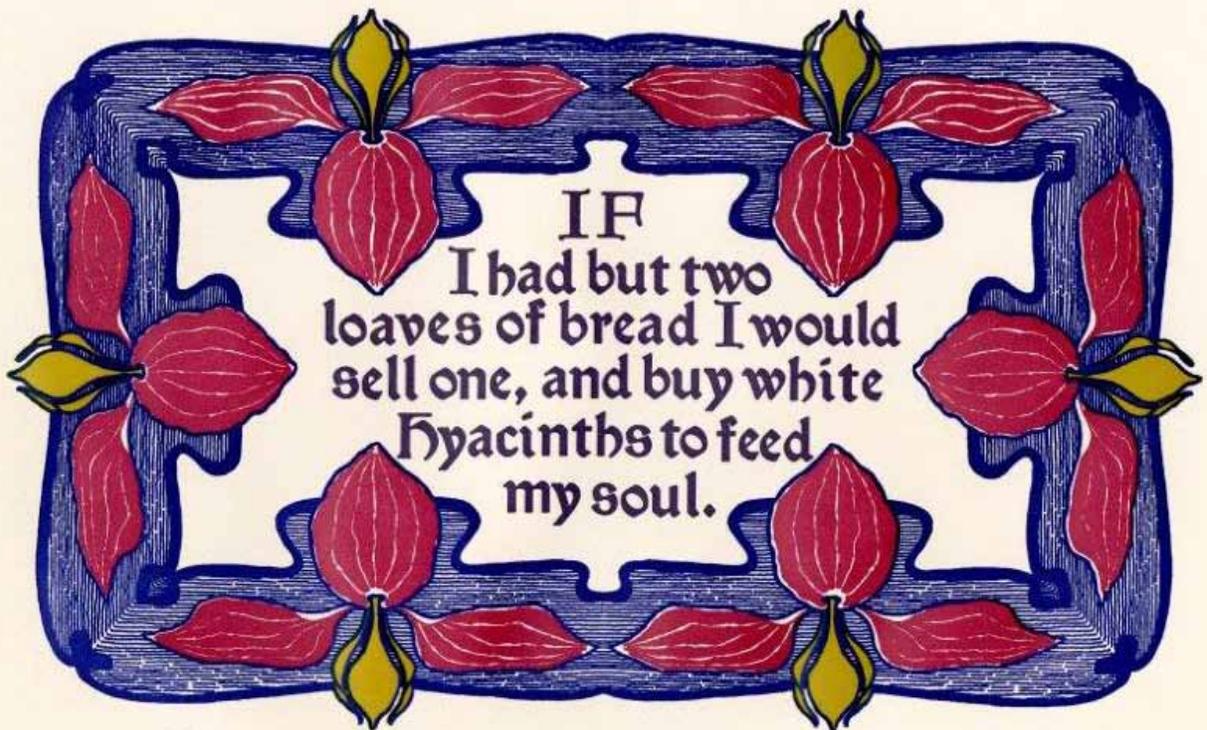
Andre Chaves was a personal friend of Jack Walsdorf and responsible for printing the beautiful broadside reproduced below. The Clinker Press is a private letterpress studio inspired by the Arts & Crafts movement. The name of the Press is explained by Andre: “The name was derived not only from the clinker brick of the garage but also because clinker also implies something not very important and keeps things in perspective. I often remind visitors that printing is a trade and a craft; it is true that one may print artistically but the process is still ink and pressure.” (from Clinker Press: <http://www.clinkerpress.com>)

Andre drew from Jack’s love of the Roycrofters for inspiration when designing the broadside in Jack’s memory:

I have known Jack for many years but our friendship became closer upon our decision to move to Portland 2 1/2 years ago. Being involved with Arts and Crafts for 30 years it was easy to find many things in common with Jack. The William Morris association is well known but the other connection is with the Roycroft community in East Aurora, New York, where my wife and I graduated and where she was born. Jack’s collection included many Roycroft items and he spoke on several occasions at Roycroft functions.

This quotation, attributed to an ancient Persian prophet and adapted by Elbert Hubbard, is well known and I have taken only one small liberty with it. As a long time book collector and Morris admirer, Jack was truly a soul mate. I believe the last book he bought was incited by me. It was a small booklet on typewriters at the recent book show in Portland. The booklet cost \$10.00 but as a good book collector he got the seller to let him have it for \$5.00.

(Personal correspondence, Andre Chaves to Jane Carlin)



A quote from Elbert Hubbard, printed for Jack Walsdorf, from his many friends.  
Andre Chaves, The Clinker Press.

# THE LAST WORD: USEFUL AND BEAUTIFUL IN CONTEXT

*In honor of our recent name change, we reprint selections from Morris's "The Beauty of Life" which explain his conception of the "useful and beautiful."*

**B**ut some, I know, think that the attainment of . . . comforts is what makes the difference between civilisation and uncivilisation, that they are the essence of civilisation. Is it so indeed? Farewell my hope then!--I had thought that civilisation meant the attainment of peace and order and freedom, of goodwill between man and man, of the love of truth and the hatred of injustice, and by consequence the attainment of the good life which these things breed, a life free from craven fear, but full of incident: that was what I thought it meant, not more stuffed chairs and more cushions, and more carpets and gas, and more dainty meat and drink--and therewithal more and sharper differences between class and class. . . .

**B**elieve me, if we want art to begin at home, as it must, we must clear our houses of troublesome superfluities that are for ever in our way: conventional comforts that are no real comforts, and do but make work for servants and doctors: if you want a golden rule that will fit everybody, this is it:

‘HAVE NOTHING IN YOUR HOUSES THAT YOU  
DO NOT KNOW TO BE USEFUL OR BELIEVE TO BE  
BEAUTIFUL.’

... [W]hat I want to do ... is to put definitely before you a cause for which to strive.

**T**hat cause is the Democracy of Art, the ennobling of daily and common work, which will one day put hope and pleasure in the place of fear and pain, as the forces which move men to labour and keep the world a-going. ... [S]urely since we are servants of a Cause, hope must be ever with us, and sometimes perhaps it will so quicken our vision that it will outrun the slow lapse of time, and show us the victorious days when millions of those who now sit in darkness will be enlightened by an

ART MADE BY THE PEOPLE AND FOR THE PEOPLE,  
A JOY TO THE MAKER AND THE USER.

“The Beauty of Life,”  
lecture to the Birmingham Society of Arts, 1880