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96 Guidelines for Contributors
This is a rather unusual issue of The Journal of William Morris Studies, at least insofar as not one of the five lead articles is principally concerned with Morris. Instead, each contributor meticulously traces some aspect of the life and work of a person, or persons, who figured in Morris’s political or artistic networks, with differing degrees of prominence. It is also an issue in which I am pleased to be able to announce a new addition to the editorial board: David Mabb, who is a long-standing member of the Society, and whose artistic mediations of Morris’s work will already be known to many readers, will bring valuable insight and critical acumen. It is my pleasure to welcome him to the board.

In the lead article for this issue, Sheila Rowbotham recounts Morris’s visit to Bristol during March 1885, where he delivered his lecture on ‘Art and Labour’, and she deftly weaves this episode into an account of subsequent peregrinations in the entangled lives of four radical activists: Miriam Daniell, Helena Born, William Bailie and Helen Tufts. Her narrative moves from Bristol to Manchester, and on to Boston and a communal ranch in California.

Lieske Tibbe discusses Camille Pissarro’s brief residence in London during the Franco-Prussian war, and the more extended stay of his sons Lucien and Georges, with reference to a fascinating detail in his Still Life with a Coffeepot (1900). This painting reveals a surprising debt to Morris, for whose work Pissarro seems otherwise to have harboured a certain measure of disapprobation.

Peter Faulkner offers a detailed study of Henry Halliday Sparling, focusing on the complicated nature of his relationship with and short-lived marriage to May Morris, and on the contribution made by Sparling’s 1924 book The Kelmscott Press and William Morris Master-Craftsman.

Fiona Rose’s careful research into the life of Warington (not Warrington) Taylor revises our understanding of the background of a man whose efforts as business manager of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner and Co. did much to ensure the future success of the Firm. Rose also makes clear that Taylor’s was a life marked by much suffering.

Last but not least, Stephen Williams’s article on Annie Taylor recovers a wealth of detail about a little-known Socialist League activist who played an especially prominent role in the Bloody Sunday demonstration of 13 November 1887.

Sadly, 2018 saw the loss of two much-valued members of the Society. Peter Faulkner’s obituary of Sonia Crutchlow follows this editorial. And as I was working on the proofs for the present issue, I received the distressing news that John Purkis had passed away. John was a very knowledgeable and supportive member of the editorial board, and his input will be
greatly missed. A full obituary will follow in the next issue.

Owen Holland
Editor
Obituary
Sonia Crutchlow (1937-2018)

Peter Faulkner

Voluntary societies like The William Morris Society depend a great deal on the extensive work done for them by volunteers, some of whom may be flamboyant characters, but the majority of whom are quietly industrious people who simply get on with the necessary jobs. Sonia Crutchlow was one of these. Her earlier career as a civil engineer involved highway planning and construction; she became the Society’s office manager during the early 1980s, and in that capacity succeeded in bringing much-needed order into the running of the Society. (The basement at Kelmscott House was first taken over by the Society in 1983, and fully opened as its new headquarters on 11 April 1987; Christine Poulson was appointed to the post of Curator in January 1988). I greatly appreciated Sonia’s work when I was Honorary Secretary of the Society between 1997 and 2006, as I am sure did my predecessor, Derek Baker. Her diverse interests included classical music, yoga, swimming and cycling, as well as gardening: she grew her own vegetables, and enjoyed trips with the Garden History Society, including visits to Italy and Ireland.

Helen Elletson, our valued Curator, was appointed in January 2000 to succeed Christine Poulson, by a committee which included Sonia. Helen records that she worked with Sonia for many years, sharing an office, and that she learnt a great deal from Sonia’s ‘clear vision and determination’. Sonia served at various times on the Collections, Library and Display Committees, in all of which areas her input was substantial and constructive. She managed the Society’s shop, and contributed items from her own practice as needle-worker; Helen remembers having a purse made for her in a Morris material.
The first reference to Sonia in Martin Crick’s *The History of the William Morris Society 1955-2005* – published as the result of a proposal to the committee made by Sonia herself in July 2000 – is in relation to the controversial relationship between the Society and the Kelmscott House Trust. Her name is given as recipient of letters from Nick Salmon and Joseph Mirwitch during early 2001, both deploring the position of the Trust as advanced by its Chair, Hans Brill. In August 2001 three new Trustees were appointed, and Sonia took over from Joan South as Secretary; the Trust was then wound up. Sonia was also involved in the Red House Trust, which was established in March 1998, with Sonia as Chair. It was wound down in June 2003, with its mission accomplished. After retiring from the post of office manager, Sonia became Chair of the House and Garden Committee, showing her usual energetic interest in both aspects of that Committee’s work. She remained on the House and Garden and CLD committees.

In 2014 the Society received a substantial grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to refurbish the Society’s premises, catalogue its collection and develop a learning programme, in partnership with the Emery Walker Trust. Sonia, who had had a good deal to do with the application to the HLF, characteristically played a major part in relation to the capital works as they were carried out, greatly improving the appearance and the value of our premises. She stepped down from CLD in early 2018, her last formal link with volunteering with us.

Sonia’s constructive volunteering was not restricted to The William Morris Society; she was also active at Hampton Court and at Fulham Palace for some twenty-five years, and it is good to know that a garden is to be planted there in her memory. The Society is currently considering making a comparable act of commemoration.
In this article, I am going to trace the lingering influence of William Morris on Miriam Daniell, Helena Born, William Bailie and Helen Tufts. They were not nationally recognised names on the nineteenth-century left, nor were they part of his direct circle. Hence they have been outside the scope of biographies of Morris. Nevertheless, uncovering the impact of a radical thinker and inspirational figure like Morris upon people tucked away beyond the boundaries of a celebrated life can provide some political and cultural indicators about how a critical consciousness of capitalism was transmitted through small journals, meetings, personal correspondence and conversation.

During the mid-1970s when I began writing about Edward Carpenter I came across two rebellious New Women from Bristol who became socialists during the late 1880s, Miriam Daniell and Helena Born. Somewhat later, during the early 2000s, I discovered a stash of love letters at the Tamiment Library in New York from Helena Born to an anarchist in Boston, Massachusetts, called William Bailie. In 2009 I started nosing around trying to find out more. Inevitably it took longer than I expected and involved conducting research in America.

The result was to be my latest book, Rebel Crossings: New Women, Free Lovers, and
Radicals in Britain and the United States (2016). It follows the lives of these British and Irish migrants in the United States, from the nineteenth century into the twentieth.

I. William Morris and Bristol

On 3 March 1885 William Morris spoke on ‘Art and Labour’ in Bristol’s museum on Park Street, Clifton. It was quite an occasion for the artistically inclined members of Bristol’s middle class, but Morris made sure that half the tickets went to the ‘Trades’ Council and other labour groupings, including the recently formed Bristol Socialist Society.

This was a cluster consisting mainly of studious, skilled working-class men and one of their number, Samuel Bale, has left us an account of the meeting. He describes Morris in his ‘dark blue serge jacket […] the lion-like head of hair just beginning to turn grey […] [he] looked into our faces, but his penetrating blue eyes seemed to suggest far-away thoughts’. He seemed ‘fearless’ and full of an inspiring ‘strength’ which he conveyed to the workers in the audience.1 Bale continues:

The two sections of the audience were poles asunder – the literary folk who were curious and perhaps apprehensive, listened attentively and without emotion until the end, then dutifully joined in the applause of thanks; while we workmen, somewhat shy and painfully conscious of the unusual surroundings and our shortcomings soon realized the presence of a champion, forgot ourselves and frequently burst into rounds of applause.2

They heard Morris describe how the worker under present conditions was robbed of all pleasure in daily work and declare the need to ensure that work should be useful and ‘accompanied by pleasure in the doing’, while all irksome work should be done by machines. He declared that the rich not only had wealth, but that they possessed the ‘power of allowing or forbidding the other class, the poor, to earn themselves a livelihood’. The middle-class members of the audience were firmly told that in society at present there were ‘two camps, that of the people and that of their masters’.3 It was up to them to choose which they would support.

After the lecture Morris went to an Exhibition of Women’s Industry in Clifton. Then the following morning he made a point of meeting up with three socialists: a shoe-maker, a clerk and a wire worker. On 11 March he reported to his daughter, May Morris, that the socialists in Bristol were ‘mostly of the S.D.F branch’ and would not break away.4 They were committed to parliamentary action.

Despite not recruiting to the Socialist League, the meeting had raised £4, and Morris had aroused lasting interest in both the working-class socialist contingent and
middle-class Clifton. Hugh Holmes Gore, a young trainee solicitor, got in touch with the Socialist League shortly afterwards. He did not join the League, but instead formed the Clifton and Bristol Christian Socialist group in 1886, acting as the link between the middle-class and working-class socialists in Bristol.5

II. Miriam Daniell, Helena Born and Robert Allan Nicol

One of Gore’s causes was keeping the common footpaths open. A fellow campaigner was another solicitor, Edward Tuckett Daniell, who was in the radical wing of the Liberal Party. In 1881 Daniell had married Miriam Wheeler, the daughter of a prosperous Congregational grocer. Born in 1861, Miriam was several years his junior. She was interested in ideas, had won several prizes in local art competitions and was restless in the middle-class circles in which she and her husband moved. Their marriage was not, it seems, particularly happy.

In 1888 Miriam joined the Bristol Women’s Liberal Association where she formed a close friendship with another young woman, just a year older than herself, Helena Born. Helena had been brought up in the Devon countryside and her father was a farmer’s son. But he began to deal in property and they moved to Clifton. There Helena attended a Unitarian church where she came across Radical Liberalism and women’s suffrage. Despite being excruciatingly shy, after she discovered the Bristol Women’s Liberal Association in 1885 she became a dogged and efficient organiser.

By 1888 she had come to admire Walt Whitman and Henry David Thoreau, and to despise the conspicuous consumption characteristic of the Clifton middle class. Miriam seems to have introduced her to socialist ideas. Regardless of their differing circumstances, both young women felt personally constrained, and discussed their own emancipation on long walks into the countryside. Changing society and changing their own circumstances intertwined. Together they developed an ideal of the simplification of life that was economic, aesthetic and political.

In autumn 1889 several startling, and indeed potentially slanderous, consequences followed a row between Miriam and her husband. Miriam left Edward Tuckett Daniell and went to live with a young socialist Edinburgh University student, Robert Allan Nicol, in St. Phillips, a poor working-class area of Bristol. Helena Born accompanied the couple to give a not entirely convincing cover of respectability.

An American friend of Helena’s called Helen Tufts, who was eventually to marry William Bailie, has left us a description of the trio’s home in St. Phillips:

They set an example of practical simplicity in household matters, showing aesthetic possibilities in color and ingenious and artistic adaptation which were a revelation to their neighbors. With their own hands they tinted the walls of
their rooms and waxed the uncarpeted floors, while from the most commonplace materials they improvised many articles of furniture and decoration, combining both beauty and utility.\textsuperscript{6}

As if this were not bad enough, Miriam, Helena and Robert, along with Hugh Holmes Gore and the Bristol Socialist Society, were also to be swept into the upsurge of New Unionist militancy which erupted in Bristol that autumn. Miriam proved to be a charismatic speaker, and from October 1889 until the summer of 1890 it was to be non-stop agitation and organisation for all of them.

First they supported around 1,700 striking cotton workers, mainly women; then, early in 1890, they tried to unionise tailoresses. In a leaflet for the tailoresses Miriam raised equal pay as one of the demands. Recruitment of the scattered workforce proved difficult, but that May, Robert, as secretary of one of the new unions, the Gasworkers and General Labourers’ Union, introduced equal pay on their programme with the support of Eleanor Marx.

By then, however, Miriam and Robert would have been brooding over a devastating discovery. Proud, defiant Miriam was pregnant. The scandal now could not be evaded. Probably with the encouragement of Edward Carpenter, who Robert visited that summer, they decided to flee to America. Miriam persuaded Helena to accompany her and all three left Britain in August 1890, an apprehensive Helena clutching her copy of Bunyan’s \textit{Pilgrim’s Progress}.

\textbf{III. William Bailie}

During the 1880s William Bailie was experiencing a similar process of radicalisation, though he came from a very different background. William was born into a skilled working-class Protestant family in Belfast in 1866. But his father died when he was young, and the small studious boy was apprenticed at the age of eleven to a wicker worker. He learned about politics from his workmates who were Protestants and Catholics, from reading, from night school, and then from lectures – including one given by the American land reformer, Henry George.

He eventually came across a reading room organised by an enlightened Unitarian, Rev. James Christopher Street. He had already found Edward Gibbon’s \textit{Life of Mahomet} (1859), and in 1884 he read about Buddha and Tolstoy, and perused a pamphlet by William Morris on \textit{Art and Socialism}. This reading helped him to make sense of what he had observed happening in the wicker workshop – the loss of artistry, the misuse of machines, the increased pace of labour. Morris’s assertion that work should be worthwhile and pleasant to do registered with William and remained with him.
But more immediately he had to go looking for work and, aged eighteen, he set off for Britain where he found employment in Manchester. Before long, thanks to an Irish woman who arranged marriages, he was married to a woman from Ireland slightly older than himself. The couple had nothing at all in common, but sober, hard-working William was regarded as a good catch. He had, however, several fatal flaws from his wife Ellen’s point of view – meetings, books and politics.

William was constantly questing for understanding. First he tried the Secularists, and then he discovered the Social Democratic Federation (SDF) in Salford and found a mentor in J. Hunter Watts, who knew William Morris. Towards the end of 1888 Morris, who was on a speaking tour, gave a lecture for his friend Charles Rowley, who ran the Ancoats Settlement in Manchester. Shortly after this William Bailie left the SDF and joined the Socialist League. He threw himself into organising the branch and into outdoor speaking.

Though there were inevitably internal wrangles, the little group were intense idealists from many different lands. A later account by ‘J.B.S.’ describes how they were ‘comrades in life and death, every fibre of our being was devoted to the cause’. Revolution seemed to be just around the corner and the small gang of Marxist theorists, including William, used to set off with confidence to challenge the misleading bourgeois economists who came to speak at Ancoats.

They decided to create a Socialist Club to foster personal fellowship and comradely debate. William invited a range of speakers, the anarchist communist Prince Kropotkin, the New Life socialist Edward Carpenter who sympathised with anarchism, the Fabian Graham Wallas and William Morris.

Contact with Morris was clearly significant: throughout his life William kept the postcard Morris sent him dated 6 November 1889. Morris agreed to speak on ‘The Class Struggle’ and William booked the Secular Hall for him. Morris was also to lecture for Ancoats in the new Islington hall. In his talk on the 1539 Revolt of Ghent he described how citizens resisted paying an oppressive tax. It is interesting to note that Morris was stressing human action, unlike the deterministic approach to Marxism which was characteristic of some sections of the SDF.

By 1889 anarchist communist ideas were gaining supporters in Manchester and William became friendly with two energetic exponents, Alf Barton and Herbert Stockton. The socialists’ outdoor meetings were being increasingly harassed by the police – unlike the meetings of the Salvation Army who were left alone. William joined the anarchist communists’ direct action free speech protests against this discriminatory zeal, and was arrested as a consequence.

At the same time William was also sympathetic to the left-wing Unitarian John Trevor, advising him not to set up a Working Man’s Church but a ‘Labour Church’
as it was important to stand for a principle rather than a particular class.\textsuperscript{10} Both the free speech campaign and the Labour Church were to continue throughout the 1890s, but William, Ellen and their family left Manchester in 1891 for Boston.

\textbf{IV. Boston}

In Boston William encountered Miriam and Robert who were associated with an Individualist group of anarchists and a paper called \textit{Liberty}, edited by Benjamin Tucker. Through Tucker he made a close friend, Archibald Simpson, a printer who worked on Tucker’s publishing projects. Formerly close to the Chicago anarchists, Simpson had become an Individualist anarchist.

Tucker, an inveterate logician, loved converting socialists and anarchist communists to his brand of anarchism and he took William under his wing. Miriam was also a protégé, and clashed with William over an article he wrote in June 1892 which sought to burst the ‘bubble’ of ‘enthusiasm’.\textsuperscript{11} Bristling, Miriam responded with a fervent defence of the ‘creative instinct of Ardor’ in a poem entitled ‘Enthusiasm’.\textsuperscript{12} But Tucker sided with William Bailie and although Miriam’s poems continued to appear in \textit{Liberty}, she was to be sidelined and she withdrew from the Individualist Anarchist circle. In 1893 she, Robert and Helena went to live in a communal ranch in California where Miriam died early in 1894.

\textbf{V. Helena and William}

Helena returned to Boston in 1894 and joined the Walt Whitman Fellowship. In 1895 she met a young woman, Helen Tufts, from an impoverished WASP family, whom she gradually introduced to ideas about women’s emancipation and socialism.

Helena Born and William Bailie were finally to meet through their mutual friend Archibald Simpson. His partner Flora Tilton, along with her sister Josephine, was a high-minded advocate of free love and anarchism who had campaigned for birth control from the 1870s. In April 1898 Flora held a party for Josephine and Helena who were about to head off to a remote farm to live self-sufficiently. William arrived carrying one of his baskets for Josephine. By this time he was separated from his wife Ellen and living in his workshop.

The attraction between William and Helena was instant. Both were lonely and had known little joy. In the brief time before Helena was due to depart they discovered that they had much in common, including William Morris. William had kept all his Morris pamphlets from his Manchester days, blackened by being handed round in the workshop. He sent her a precious copy of one of Morris’s books which he owned – unfortunately no title has been recorded.

Despite being warned against William Bailie because he was married, Helena
met him again and they went on a picnic. They had only just encountered each other, but a deep affinity was awakened. Then Helena was off to the wilds of Epsom, New Hampshire, with Josephine. William meanwhile was left in his workshop no doubt puzzling over a book Helena had loaned him, Alice B. Stockham’s *Karezza: Ethics of Marriage* (1896) which offers advice on sex without orgasm. William, bereft with loss and longing, was even driven to write a poem for his absent love and posted it to Helena in Epsom.

Separation meant that they were compelled to conduct a love affair by letters. We have only a one-sided record because Helena’s letters to William have survived, though most of his to her have not. That April she responded tactfully to his poem: ‘[y]our lines are very sweet – they are dear to me, and I love the spirit in which you wrote them’. Initially Helena adjusted better than William. She set about creating her own little world in the room at the top of Josephine’s house regardless of the wind whistling around the hill outside: ‘I have Morris’ portrait on the wall and Emerson’s and Whitman’s conspicuous’.

Helena was used to working in printing and publishing but the farm work was daunting. She esteemed Josephine but was not as close to her as she was to Helen Tufts who was let into the secret in the summer. William paid several snatched visits and passion intensified. They thought they were loving discreetly but of course Josephine knew what was going on long before Helena confessed that October, just before she was leaving.

Back in Boston William and Helena set up a Pure Food Restaurant and Helen Tufts moved into lodgings with them to provide a cover, just as Helena had done with Robert and Miriam. The Restaurant failed and Helena was forced again to seek work. Her writing during this period dwells bitterly on the sacrifice of yielding time to a system based on competition and profit. Her love for William and the friendships and intellectual stimulation she experienced through her participation in a group called the Walt Whitman Fellowship sustained her spirits.

In 1901 Helena died of cancer, leaving William and Helen Tufts distraught in their grief. Gradually William and Helen formed a free union and were later to marry.

**VI. William Bailie and Helen Tufts**

In the early twentieth century William and Helen became involved with an anarchist paper called *Free Society* but broke away after the assassination of President McKinley because they both were utterly opposed to endorsing violence.

In 1903 William gave a talk for the Walt Whitman Fellowship, offering ‘reminiscences and [an] estimate’ of William Morris. He and Helen were cocooned together in a single room: ‘I hear him springing on the stairs’, she wrote in 1906.
They cooked an omelette but forgot it as they made their way through Morris’s Sigurd, spotting their dinner cold in the pan when they were going to bed.

Having abandoned his hopes for revolution and being too opposed to the state to join the Socialist Party, William kept searching. He began to accept the need for immediate municipal reform, and was denounced by his former anarchist comrades. Then in 1907 he joined the Boston City Club, working with the progressive businessman Edward Filene on plans to improve Boston. William now energetically pursued aspects of Morris’s vision through routes within capitalism. William proposed well-designed homes with gardens, surrounded by green spaces, dreaming of wild wasteland and time for individual thought and creativity.

In 1911 William was much enthused by the visit of Raymond Unwin to Boston, writing an article in the Boston Evening Transcript on Unwin’s ideas for garden cities. In his youth Unwin, like William, had been a member of the revolutionary Socialist League. A sharp-eyed Helen Tufts, now Helen Tufts Bailie, watched the two men together, recording in her diary how William wanted to reminisce about the ‘the old Morris days in Manchester’. But she detected that ‘the cool, practical’ Unwin did not share William’s interest in going over the past. 

Filene’s reformed Boston was not to be and a disappointed William finally focused on running a small business, while Helen joined the respectable establishment, including the grouping that could claim ancestors who had fought the British, the Daughters of the American Revolution.

However the rebel reflexes remained. In 1928, outraged to discover that a blacklist of left and liberal speakers existed in the organisation, she mounted a campaign against it, writing an indignant pamphlet, ‘Our Threatened Heritage’. As a result Helen briefly attained national notoriety. The leadership of the Daughters of the American Revolution emerged victorious; Helen was expelled. A verse in The New York Times caught the irony:

The fate of Mrs Bailie
Is Oh! A very sad one
They’ve put her on the black list
Because she said they had one.

America was in the throes of a red scare. And because William was Helen’s husband, the right-wing press dug out details of William’s past on the socialist and anarchist left, including his admiration for William Morris.

During the 1930s and 40s Helen Tufts Bailie came to support Roosevelt, but she retained a personal affection for the British socialist friends of Helena Born and
maintained her links with some of the American anarchists and their children, including Bertha Johnson. Like Helen Tufts Bailie, Bertha sent some material to the Labadie Collection at the University of Michigan, where the archivist Agnes Inglis was aware of the significance of communication through networks and memories. ‘What an interwoven mesh society and friendship make’, Bertha Johnson reflected to Agnes Inglis in 1941.

NOTES
2. Ibid.
5. For an account of Gore’s significance in the Bristol socialist movement see Mike Richardson, The Enigma of Hugh Holmes Gore: Bristol’s Nineteenth-Century Christian Socialist Solicitor (Bristol: Radical History Group, 2016).
14. Ibid.
17. Ibid., 11 May 1911, p. 197.
Pissarro’s Curtains: A French View on Morris, Ruskin and Pre-Raphaelitism

Lieske Tibbe

I. Extremes converge

One of the pictures in the catalogue *Hidden Treasures Revealed* (1995) of the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg shows *Still Life with a Coffeepot* by the French painter Camille Pissarro (1830-1903), dated 1900 (see Figure 1). It was part of an exhibition of French – mostly Impressionist – works of art looted by the Russian army from German collections at the end of World War II. Since then, they had been stored at the Hermitage and had never been exhibited publicly, which means they also had not been objects of art history research for half a century, and so a lot of them were practically unknown. The changing political climate of the 1990s rescued them from obscurity.

As for Pissarro’s *Still Life with a Coffeepot*, the Hermitage catalogue focuses on Pissarro’s indebtedness to Cézanne’s still lifes. However, I am concerned with another element of inspiration: the curtain in the background. The catalogue describes it as follows:

The background is very active. No other painting by Pissarro, before or after, shows the decorative fabric used in this work. Such fabrics, some of which were woven in a textile mill in Lyon, were fashionable at the turn of the century due to Japanese influence. Their design harks back to the studies of birds from Hokusai’s *Manga*.¹

With due respect to the fabric industry of the city of Lyon or Japanese woodcutting, it is quite easy to recognise the real identity of the textile: *Bird*, a woollen cloth originally designed by William Morris in 1878 for his own drawing room at Kelmscott House (see Figure 2).² The weaving itself was done by or under the supervision of a French weaver, from Lyons indeed, Mr. Bazin. Morris contracted him to start up
Jacquard handloom weaving at his firm.

Looking at Pissarro’s painting, I was amazed to see together in one picture the artistic principles of Arts and Crafts, and the quite opposite practice of Impressionist painting. Camille Pissarro started his career as a Realist and Impressionist, ‘converted’ to Neo-Impressionism around 1885, but returned to his earlier style during 1890. How and where did these antagonistic tendencies in art collide and meet? In this essay I will try to trace some points of difference and convergence.

II. Conflicting tastes in the Pissarro family

It is necessary to commence this account with some discussion of Pissarro’s family life. Camille Pissarro had many contacts in England: several of his mother’s relatives lived in London, among whom were her four children from her first marriage. One of Camille’s half-sisters had a daughter, Esther Isaacson, who was Camille’s favourite niece and later became his daughter-in-law: she married his second son Georges (1871-1961) but died soon after in childbirth. Esther Isaacson and Camille Pissarro corresponded frequently.

During the Franco-Prussian war in 1870, Pissarro had moved to stay with his relatives in London, not as a political refugee or exile – only later was he to become an anarchist – but because his residence at Louveciennes was invaded by German troops besieging Paris. Claude Monet fled with him, as he did not want to risk mobilisation for the national army. Pissarro, by contrast, wanted to serve, but did not possess French nationality. Monet introduced Pissarro to Paul Durand-Ruel, who had set up a gallery in London and organised shows of French artists – and so Durand-Ruel became Pissarro’s dealer, and remained so for most of his life. Pissarro was not very successful in England and he struggled to sell his paintings. During the summer of 1871 he complained to a friend that he had only met disdain, indifference and coarseness in England, especially in the field of art, where collegial jealousy and commercialism were dominant. He wanted to return home as soon as possible.

There is no firm evidence to suggest that Pissarro had contact with William Morris or any of the Pre-Raphaelites during his stay in London, though there might once have been a chance. On one occasion, Monet and he had lunch with their countryman Alphonse Legros (1837-1911). Pissarro and Legros had known each other since the 1860s, when they were both young and enthusiastic participants in the avant-garde of realist painting. In 1863 Legros, who was a friend of James McNeill Whistler, joined Pissarro in London, where he had a successful academic and social career and made friends with the Rossetti brothers, Ford Madox Brown, Edward Burne-Jones and the Ionides family. During 1870-71 Legros served as a pillar of support for his French colleagues in refuge, always willing to support them and to
introduce them to his British connections. Pissarro, however, did not seize the opportunity, and, as it turns out in his letters, even distrusted Legros. To him Legros had betrayed the sound realist principle of following Nature, to become a weak imitator of old masters. Time and again – up to 1898 – he warned his eldest son Lucien (1863-1944), who took lessons from Legros, against Legros’s academism.

Pissarro’s unfavourable opinion of Britain and British art, in particular Pre-Raphaelitism, seems not to have changed very much over the years, and he afterwards visited London a few times and followed what was going on in the British art scene primarily because of his sons, his second family tie with England. To ensure their artistic careers through training in the decorative arts, Pissarro sent three of them to Britain, probably because of the very good reputation of its art and design education at the time. His above-mentioned sons were Lucien, with whom he corresponded intensively from 1883 onward, Georges, and his third son, Félix (1874-1897), who died of consumption in London at an early age. Lucien specialised in lithography, print-making and book-printing. Much to the annoyance of his father, he became

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*Figure 1: Camille Pissarro, Still Life with a Coffee Pot, oil on canvas, 1900, 21.5 x 25.25 in.; The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg; Photograph ©The State Hermitage Museum. Photo by Vladimir Terebenin*
acquainted with the circle of Emery Walker, Charles Ricketts, Charles Shannon and other participants in the Arts and Crafts Movement, and was influenced by them.

As for Georges, Camille Pissarro wanted him to specialise in woodcarving, sculpting and furniture design. For some time, Georges attended the Guild and School of Handicraft at Toynbee Hall (founded by C.R. Ashbee, a follower of Morris) and was trained in copper braziers. Pissarro praised one of the picture frames which his

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Figure 2: Bird, woven woollen cloth, designed by William Morris in 1878, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London
son made there, but evidently did not trust that the craft would ever earn him a living. As it turned out, Pissarro repeatedly had to sustain his sons during his lifetime. In addition to money, he also provided them with advice on artistic affairs. Time and again he warned them, especially Georges, who collected prints by Walter Crane, against the dangerous influence of Crane whom he regarded as too weak, too Greek, too much inclined towards Lawrence Alma-Tadema. They should not imitate Crane, he urged, but should instead find inspiration in Egyptian, Japanese and gothic art, in late medieval ‘primitive’ painting and, of course, in Nature itself.

In several letters Pissarro’s niece Esther Isaacson made mention of Morris, Ruskin and the Arts and Crafts Movement. The letters reveal that she held them all in high regard, and obviously Pissarro did not want to hurt her feelings by attacking her taste. For instance, when she sent him a picture book by Randolph Caldecott he found it ‘really too beautiful for children’, and wrote that he thought the chromolithographs by Caldecott a little faded, and his drawing somewhat weak, but his vignettes were vigourous, free and lively. However, to Lucien he wrote: ‘beware of Caldecott and Kate Greenaway’. Two years later, when Esther sent a large allegorical print by Walter Crane, The Paris Commune (1887), Pissarro wrote to Lucien: ‘very good, of grand style’. Usually, however, he detested the ‘Graecian’ way Crane rendered women.

In 1887, Esther Isaacson proposed to her uncle a secret plan in favour of Georges. In order to accomplish Georges’s training as a furniture designer, she would try to get him an apprenticeship in the workshops of William Morris:

I shall tell you why. – Morris is an honest man, in his principles as well as his works, and, as far as I can judge (by his writings, his lectures and his decorative designs, furniture etcetera) a gentleman. I should say a serious, competent, good and kind man. I know he works on his furniture, textiles etcetera personally, and I am sure a young man under his direction would be guided by an intelligent and capable teacher, and not only in terms of carpentry.

Pissarro consented, but hesitantly: an apprenticeship at Morris and Co. would be a financial relief to him. To Lucien, however, he confessed a fundamental objection: he suspected Morris and Co. to be in fact a commercial enterprise, and this went against his pride as an independent (and anti-capitalist) artist. He feared that Georges would turn into a commercial entrepreneur, a merchant; he wanted him to become a good artisan and not a dealer. Esther did write to Morris but got no answer, as can be deduced from later correspondence. In 1891, Camille Pissarro himself alluded to a possible training of Georges at Morris’s firm: ‘[c]ouldn’t there be an opportunity
to get him a position at Morris’ or elsewhere where he could practise either sculpture, or embossing, drawing, in short, any craft whatsoever that leads him a little bit to earn his own living”. And Lucien answered his father: ‘I have told Esther about your letter. She thinks Morris will be of no use, because she wrote to him on behalf of Georges […] and did not receive any reply […].’ Camille Pissarro never quite lost his distrust about the ‘commercialism’ of Morris’s enterprise. At the very time he painted Still Life with a Coffeepot he recorded his fear that the sincere modern movement in the arts would devalue itself by commercial imitation ‘in the same way as W. Morris has influenced the English market’.

III. Reception of Pre-Raphaelitism and Morris in France

Most probably Pissarro was not opposed to the Arts and Crafts Movement as such, as a craft represented honest labour. His objections, apart from his dread of commercialisation, were about its ideological Pre-Raphaelite background: content and style were neo-Catholic, mystifying, sentimental and regressive, just like the Symbolism of Gauguin in his own country. It had a political impact too: ‘this neo-catholic movement’, he wrote, ‘corresponds to the reactionary mood of the bourgeoisie, resulting from its fear of anarchist ideas’.

He was not alone in his disapproval, at least not in France. Pre-Raphaelite painting was known there since it had been on show at the Parisian World Fair of 1855, where it found no approval: it was condemned as cool, ascetic, archaic, weird and unintelligible. During the following decades, this verdict gradually softened, and during the 1880s Pre-Raphaelite art even gained public appreciation, favoured by a growing ‘anglomania’. The year 1884 was a turning point: from then on, Pre-Raphaelitism, and in its slipstream the Aesthetic Movement and Arts and Crafts, became immensely popular. In 1895, however, the tide turned again, at least in the eyes of French art critics: appreciation for British painting and arts and crafts declined, and the latter were said to be superficial, modish, commercial, flat and soppy. After 1900, the taste for Pre-Raphaelitism faded away in France. Impressionism had won out.

As for William Morris, what exactly could Pissarro have known about him when he corresponded with his niece in 1887? The answer is: probably not very much. According to H.A. Needham, the first to give a bibliographical survey of French writings on Morris and Ruskin, publishing on Morris did not start in France before 1894, when Jean Lahor’s article ‘William Morris et l’Art décoratif en Angleterre’ appeared in the Revue encyclopédique. Jean Lahor (a pseudonym for Henri Cazalis (1840-1909)) was a many-sided person: beside his profession as a medical doctor, he was active as a littérateur and poet. He visited Morris personally at Hammersmith in
1893. In particular Morris’s ideal of ‘Art for the People’ appealed to him. It corresponded to his own ideals about better conditions of life for the working class and the improvement of its moral standards by means of well-built, neat and hygienic dwellings in pleasant surroundings. Ugly, dirty houses were a breeding-place of bad taste as well as epidemics. He did not believe in ‘Art from the People’. In line with this view, he published Les habitations à bon marché et un art nouveau pour le peuple (1903). Following the example of Morris, he also advocated the foundation of the French Société pour la protection des paysages. Other publications by Lahor deal with healthy food, sound marriage, heredity and family planning, the risks of venereal diseases, tuberculosis and alcoholism.20

Lahor was not a socialist: above all, he was a patriot and his ultimate concern was with the strength of the French race and nation; he characterised the socialism of Morris as vague and dreamy, based on generosity and on pity towards poor and humble workers. His 1894 essay was partly meant to warn the French: some fifty years ago, he said, British people had made great progress in taste, and now they were superior to the French. The British examples were les plus instructifs comme les plus inquiétants. Everywhere in England, in public buildings as well as private homes, architecture, decoration and furnishing were well designed, while in France artists had neglected interior decoration. Decorative arts in France lacked both inspiration and an innovative attitude, and stuck to obsolete styles of the past. In fine printing, for instance, the French might be technically superior in colour-printing, but as for style, French books, magazines and journals could not equal those of the English. He finished with a call to follow their example: joining forces, the French would also be able to create a new art, and emulate, even win over their rivals.21

Camille Pissarro read Lahor’s article and – ignoring all passages on Morris – fulminated against Lahor’s disfavour of French printing:

typical passage in which the author tells in the field of chromolitho we are as good as, and even better than the English […] !! …

The author speaks of Ricketts and in particular of Beardsley, who promises to be a great artist; as for etching: Whistler, Seymour Hayden, and nothing in France! Sapristi this Lahor does not know Degas! […] Finishing with war cries and patriotic exhortations. Surely, they do not understand anything.22

Pissarro was particularly watchful concerning printing and typography, his son’s business. In 1896, he reacted to reviews of an exhibition of fine books at the Galerie de l’Art Nouveau, where some of Lucien’s work was on show. Critics compared English
PISSARRO’S CURTAIN

and French book design, and England was said to hold the foremost place, with ‘the works of William Morris and the Chiswick Press, the publications of M. Ricketts and Mr. Lucien Pissarro’ and others, amongst whom, of course, was Walter Crane. ‘The printed books in the French section present no special novelty either in typography or illustration. With very few exceptions, our publishers seem to have no idea of a decorative scheme for a book, logically conceived and, so to speak, forming part of the book itself.’ This time Camille agreed: ‘William Morris and Ricketts […] are the only ones who show beautiful things; here are only commercial goods’.

The theme of rivalry between the two nations in relation to ‘renewal’ versus ‘conservatism’ in artistic style dominated French publications on the Arts and Crafts Movement. Such rivalry can also been seen in Pissarro’s letters:

I do not doubt the books of Mr. Morris are as beautiful as the Gothic ones, but one should keep in mind the Goths have been inventors and you should not do it better, which is not possible, but differently and in your own way; only much later the results will be recognized. […] From this point of view, you should be suspicious of your friend Ricketts who surely is a charming man, but as it concerns art he seems to me to wander from the goal, which is to return to nature, and one can only do that by way of observing nature with our own modern temperament; invention and imitation are different things.

In France, according to Camille Pissarro, the cream of nineteenth-century artists had shown that way, but it was not the route followed by Ricketts, who opted for ‘prettiness’ and élégance italienne. Lucien, for his part, did not believe the two schools, Impressionism and Pre-Raphaelitism, to be irreconcilable: on the contrary, a mingling together of both might bring forth the new school of art for the future. In some way he realised this intended fusion: in cooperation with his father, he edited the portfolio Les Travaux des Champs (1893). Lucien translated Camille’s drawings into coloured woodcuts suited to his own typography and book design.

‘William Morris just died, of diabetes – it’s a real disaster and what a confusion will it bring – one wonders what will happen with his splendid material in the hands of his followers who don’t understand anything of it!’, Lucien Pissarro reported in October 1896. Father and son exchanged French and English obituary articles and discussed some of these. But there was also hope for Lucien to improve his position, now that the superiority of Morris no longer dominated the art scene. Together with Charles Ricketts, he planned the edition of a small book on typography, in which Morris was to be honoured as the godfather of harmonious book design. When this project faltered, he took up translating and editing one of Morris’s essays, Gothic
Architecture (1889) (l’Architecture gothique). Informed of this plan, Camille immediately arranged the sale of the future book with the Parisian fine book dealer Floury. More hesitant was his reaction when Lucien asked for a loan to fund the edition, but in the end he agreed to advance the full amount. However, this project came to nothing as Morris’s executors did not give their consent for a translation. Eventually, in 1898, Lucien and Ricketts edited the booklet De la typographie et de l’harmonie de la page imprimée: William Morris et son influence sur les arts et métiers, a combination of delicate English book design and robust typography à l’Ergony. Camille Pissarro financed the edition.

IV. The anarchism of Pissarro and Morris

Pissarro, although never involved in political activism, was a convinced anarcho-communist, befriended some leading anarchist thinkers and was an avid reader of Kropotkin’s writings. Anarcho-communists did not practice violent actions (so-called ‘propaganda by deed’), let alone bomb-throwing, but mainly believed in educating and learning as strategies, in which art also could play a role. For them, a new society should be realised and bound together by cooperation, mutual aid and communal property. Anarcho-communists also believed in science and technology as driving forces leading to the new society; they did not idealise harmonious communities of primeval times. In Pissarro’s criticism of ‘regressive’ Pre-Raphaelitism or the ‘gothic’ books of William Morris, political and artistic convictions met.

Nevertheless, certain ideological affinities existed between Pissarro and Morris, and it is puzzling that Camille Pissarro only once, in 1889, referred to the political activities of Morris. In France, the ideological position of Morris was not quite clear. But he had known Kropotkin personally since 1883, when the anarchist leader came to live in exile in London. Many times they spoke on the same platforms at the same demonstrations, like the yearly memorial meetings of the Paris Commune, and they certainly respected each other. Did Pissarro know anything about their connection?

It was Morris’s role in the 1889 Socialist Congress at Paris that caused the few political comments on Morris in Pissarro’s correspondence. Due to ideological and personal controversy in the French Socialist party, which organised the congress, the congress was split up into two congresses: the official congress organised by the pragmatic (Possibiliste) party fraction, and the other by the more programmatic ‘Marxists’. Morris was a delegate of the Socialist League at the ‘Marxist’ congress, for which, in Pissarro’s eyes, Morris ought to have admitted publicly to be wrong. At both assemblies, anarchist factions played a prominent oppositional role; they caused commotion and sometimes they were silenced or thrown out. It seems that Morris was visiting the Rouen cathedral when an Italian anarchist delegate was expelled, and that he could only protest afterward. This caused Pissarro to grouse:
I regret that William Morris did not join those who protested against the assaults towards anarchists to prevent them to proclaim in public their honest convictions! [...] By this, the socialist congress proves to be no more than a bourgeois party [...] somewhat more progressive, but harbouring the same prejudices.35

After that, in 1890, Morris left the Socialist League, which had grown more and more anarchist, and founded the small-scale Hammersmith Socialist Society, which had its headquarters in his own house. Some months after, Lucien Pissarro wrote to his father that he and his wife regularly visited the meetings of the Hammersmith Society and were about to join it. He mentioned the membership of Morris, Walter Crane and Emery Walker.36 Camille Pissarro gave no reaction, so his opinion on the Hammersmith Society is unknown.

V. Anarchist art strategies
Kropotkin may have sympathised with Morris, but in the few passages in his writings devoted to art, he hardly refers to Morris’s proposal to connect art and social ideas by means of the applied arts. In his memoirs he criticised Morris’s ‘hatred of machines’, which in his own eyes were a true force of progress.37

Furthermore, Kropotkin seems to have adhered to the credo of realist art: *constamment vivre avec ses sujets*. He argued in *La conquête du pain* (1892) that the artist ought to share the life of his or her subjects. In living the life of peasants and fishermen, the artist would see through their eyes the splendour and force of nature, and in living the life of factory workers, the artist would come to know their toils and exhaustions, but also their joys, and would experience the force of the machines. Social life itself had to be the inspiration and leading idea of the artist: ‘[o]ne has to immerse oneself in the life of the people in order to have the courage to depict it’.38 In *Paroles d’un révolté* he called on young intellectuals and artists to bid farewell to their bourgeois background and join the ranks of the people. But they should not conform to contemporary art practices by meticulously but mindlessly rendering the trivial, dirty or superficial banalities of life; this would corrupt their art and become unsatisfying in the end.39 For Kropotkin, artists had to create moving stories and appealing pictures to memorialise the titanic struggle of the people against their oppressors; they should pass on to new generations the revolutionary fire of their forerunners, and they should show how ugly daily life had become under the ruling order of society. It could be their vocation to point to the cause of this ugliness and to show alternatives. In this context he mentioned Ruskin and ‘le grand poète socialiste Morris’: they had shown how men’s living environment, their dwellings, streets and
public buildings could become beautiful if leisure and comfort were available for all.\textsuperscript{40}

Reading Kropotkin’s \textit{Paroles d’un révolté} and \textit{La conquête du pain}, Camille Pissarro must have recognised in these passages what he was actually doing: painting neither trivialities nor utopian visions, but ‘the heroism of modern life’.\textsuperscript{41} His Neo-Impressionist landscapes of the 1880s, peopled with peasant women sewing and harvesting, marketing, laundering and picking fruits, glorify rural life as a cooperative and autarkic community, independent of national states or central governments, and far removed from capitalist bourgeois cities. Present-day authors emphasise that Pissarro’s countryside images were idealised rather than truly experienced, but many of his contemporaries respected his intentions.\textsuperscript{42} Most of Pissarro’s landscapes are merely agricultural ones, but in line with Kropotkin’s trust in industrial technology he sometimes added industrial details, or painted landscapes with factories.\textsuperscript{43} His political beliefs were most outspoken in his prints, showing not only peasants and peasants’ fairs, but also tramps, vagabonds and wanderers who, as outcasts of capitalist society, were on their way to a new world. He criticised bourgeois society in an album, \textit{Turpitudes sociales} (1890) – the cover designed by Lucien – showing the evils of capitalist corruption: forced marriages, prostitution, people starving to death, crime driven by need, and so on. Anarchist leader and editor Jean Grave (1854-1939) could count on him when he needed illustrations for his uproarious periodicals.\textsuperscript{44} Even the overviews of city boulevards and squares he made later in his life might be considered as a distanced reflection on modern urban business, and sometimes as a veiled protest against the demolition of old city quarters – though, to be frank, the urgings of his dealer Durand-Ruel to paint these saleable cityscapes was important too.\textsuperscript{45}

\textbf{VI. Ruskin and Neo-Impressionist theory}

Whatever he may have thought about Morris, Pissarro explicitly did not think much of Ruskin. To Esther Isaacson he wrote in 1883 that, though he had never read any of Ruskin’s writings, he in general distrusted opinions of literary people on the visual arts. He had been introduced to Ruskin’s ideas by some fellow artists who knew of his theories, but Pissarro was unfavourably disposed towards these doctrines. In Pissarro’s opinion, Ruskin was discredited by his disapproval of Whistler, \textit{un grand artiste}.\textsuperscript{46} The fellow artists in question however – most probably his Neo-Impressionist comrades – willingly referred to Ruskin as a respectable forerunner. For the most part they were anarchists like Camille Pissarro, and Ruskin’s vision of society was anything but anarchist. Despite this, they made use of his ideas on art to explain and legitimise their own artistic principles, especially the group of publications by Ruskin concerning the teaching of drawing, such as the later volumes of \textit{Modern Painters}, \textit{The Elements of Drawing} and \textit{The Laws of Fèsole}, which include meticulous observations on colour.
reflections and gradations. *The Elements of Drawing* opens with the statement: ‘[e]verything that you can see in the world around you, presents itself to your eyes only as an arrangement of patches of different colours variously shaded’. To master the variations in hues Ruskin prescribes exercises in filling up and gradating squares of paper, first by pen and pencil in one colour, then by brushwork in layers of water-colour.47 In subsequent advice to represent colour hues, Ruskin’s formulations often come near to the principles of Neo-Impressionism.48

During the late 1890s Robert de la Sizeranne (1866-1932) published a series of articles (later to be assembled as a book), in which he dealt with Ruskin’s life, character, writings, social engagement and theories of art.49 Remarkable in de la Sizeranne’s discourse are Ruskin’s prescriptions on the handling of colour in painting, with the idea of humility at its core, while respect and adoration are taken as a basic condition for the artist’s approach to Nature. The Ruskinian statement ‘All great Art is Praise’ (‘Tout grand art est adoration’) is repeatedly used by de la Sizeranne. He argued that all lines and colours in nature ought to be studied attentively, for instance, the intense blue and purple shadows of mountainsides or the warm orange heart of wild roses between yellow stamens. Hues of shadow were to be represented as fiercely as the colours of light.50 Colours were not to be darkened by adding black or brown, but by increasing intensity. Nature taught ‘Le culte de la couleur’, and in Ruskin’s view all Nature should be seen as a huge mosaic of different colours, simply to be rendered one by one. Colours should not be mixed at the palette: if a spot of red colour had to be changed into a purple one, then a thin layer of blue should be laid on it. Colours, as de la Sizeranne paraphrased Ruskin, should be placed by petit points or atomes de couleur.51 According to de la Sizeranne, Ruskin had thus formulated the principles of pointillism as early as 1836, and again in 1846 and 1851.52

In his writings de la Sizeranne amply quoted and completely intertwined passages from *Modern Painters*, *Stones of Venice*, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, *The Elements of Drawing*, *Fors Clavigera* and several other works of Ruskin.53 Likewise in 1899 Paul Signac, in his programmatic publication *d’ Eugène Delacroix au Néo-Impressionisme*, made a hardly extricable mix of fragments of Ruskin’s works (mostly from *The Elements of Drawing*) with borrowed citations after Ruskin translated by de la Sizeranne, and passages by de la Sizeranne himself.54

Signac mostly focused on Ruskin’s statements about colour, but he also included some other Ruskinian notions in his quotations, as Ruskin’s *Elements of Drawing* deals with composition, and with the relation of colour and composition.55 Though Ruskin declared it impossible to give rules for composing a good picture, he gave nine ‘simple laws of arrangement’ of lines and forms that could help to understand how the works of great artists were composed. Of these laws, the most influential one in producing
beauty was the ‘Law of Radiation’, the coming together of curving lines in one point: uniting action and enforcing it at the same time. As flowers, leaves and branches of trees were all regulated by systems of curvature, radiation formed an essential part of the beauty of all vegetable forms.\textsuperscript{56} Ruskin also had the idea that all human moral vices and virtues had their counterpart in the art of painting; he found men’s moral level reflected ‘with mathematical exactness’, in conditions of line and colour in their art. The patterns of lines following the Law of Radiation also had their moral analogies:

It typically expresses that healthy human actions should spring radiantly (like rays) from some single heart motive; the most beautiful systems of action taking place from motives not so deep or central, but in some beautiful subordinate connection with the central or life motive.\textsuperscript{57}

Maybe Signac had this in mind, when he painted the 1890 portrait of his close friend (see Figure 3), the art critic Félix Fénéon (1861-1944). It is well known that this picture, subtitled \textit{Against the Enamel of a Background Rhythmic with Angles, Tones and Hues}, was also an allusion to the theories of colours and lines of Charles Henry, partially adopted by Signac and explained and defended by Fénéon in his essays of art criticism. Further, a possible source for the radiating motive was a Japanese print, probably showing the pattern of a \textit{kimono}.\textsuperscript{58} Fénéon was known as a complex, enigmatic personality, but on the whole he seems to have integrated his opposing traits and interests successfully in one persona, and as a friend he is said to have been sensitive and generous.\textsuperscript{59} His character could be interpreted more or less in the sense of Ruskin’s ‘Law of Radiation’.

Camille Pissarro did not like this portrait of the man who was also his friend. He described it to Lucien as “[a] very bizarre portrait of Fénéon, standing upright and holding a lily, and at the background enrolments of colours […] without giving at all a sensation of decorative beauty to the work”.\textsuperscript{60} After his break with Neo-Impressionism during the 1890s, Camille Pissarro violently reacted against its theoretical ‘rigidity’ and the lack of freedom of its technique.

No less significant was his disapproval of Signac’s large decorative painting of 1895, \textit{In Times of Harmony: The Age of Gold is not in the Past, it is in the Future} (see Figure 4), a painted anticipation of the coming ideal society, firmly based on anarcho-communist convictions.\textsuperscript{61} Pissarro, still struggling to get rid of Neo-Impressionism, complained that he found the painting joyful, pleasant and colourful, but exaggerated in its juxtaposition of unmixed complementary colours. He was tired of \textit{divisions systématiques}; even his own works painted in his former manner bored him.\textsuperscript{62} Lucien
Pissarro, to whom this verdict on Signac’s work was sent, agreed. What strikes one most is how both father and son merely commented on the artistic qualities of *In Times of Harmony*, though its political meaning, akin to their own convictions, was well known.

The fact that the theories of Ruskin, the advocate of Pre-Raphaelitism, also suited his former – albeit still anarchist – Neo-Impressionist colleagues once more impeded him from appreciating the Pre-Raphaelites. However, even after his breakaway from Neo-Impressionism, Pissarro persisted in juxtaposing contrasting colours, associating strong contrasts with political opposition to the aesthetic values of the bourgeoisie. Typical in this sense are his comments on an embroidery by his niece Esther Isaacson: he praised the contrast of orange and blue, combined with hues reminiscent of tapestries from the Orient. This contrast was like a clarion call in an orchestra.

As it happens, the blue-orange contrast is exactly what William Morris applied in his *Bird* textile (see Figure 2). The inspiration for this and other textile patterns did not stem from Italy or Greece but from oriental textiles in the South Kensington Museum, studied there by Morris just as Pissarro advised his sons to do. Surely he
approved of this source of inspiration in Morris’s textiles: in a letter of 1890 to Esther he regretted not having had the opportunity to visit the tapestries of William Morris, on show in London.68

VII. Looking through the window
Pissarro did not only paint city boulevards to show his distance from capitalist urban life or to please his dealer. In his later years he suffered from an eye disease, which meant that he was no longer able to paint in the open air. So he rented hotel rooms and apartments with large windows in quick succession, from which he painted the view. Thus his panoramic series came into being: views of the boulevards and squares of Paris, Knocke in Belgium, Rouen, London and other places. In January 1899, he rented for the winter season the apartment at 204 Rue de Rivoli in Paris, right in front of the Tuileries Garden (see Figure 5). Views of the Tuileries, the Louvre and the Arc du Carroussel were to become the subjects of his next series of paintings (see Figure 6).

This apartment was the one to be furnished with Morris’s Bird curtains. Pissarro

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Figure 4: Paul Signac, In Times of Harmony: The Age of Gold is not in the Past, it is in the Future, oil on canvas, 1893-1895, 118 x 157.5 in.; Hôtel de Ville, Montroulez (Photo Wikimedia Commons)
produced a number of pictures showing parts of the interior of this residence; though they are rather sketchy, as Impressionist paintings tend to be, they clearly show the Pissarro family did not furnish its home according to Arts and Crafts principles. They suggest a mix of nineteenth-century French furniture styles.69 Nevertheless, the curtains, rather expensive and hard to acquire from abroad if not ordered through Bing’s Galeries d’Art Nouveau, must have been chosen intentionally, and in spite of Pissarro’s disapproval of the commercial aspects of Arts and Crafts.

In the correspondence between Camille and Lucien Pissarro the purchasing process of this textile can be traced, though some letters are lacking. During March 1899, shortly after settling down at the Rue Rivoli, Pissarro asked Lucien to send him a prospectus (possibly of textiles).70 Most probably a real catalogue of textiles was not available at that time, because it is stated in a somewhat later prospectus that ‘Morris & Company have no pattern books of their silks and woollen fabrics, but full-sized patterns to suit any scheme of colouring will be sent on application’.71 During the summer season the Pissarro family did not use their apartment in Paris. Meanwhile, Lucien and his wife Esther continued their search for textiles on behalf of their parents:

Figure 5: 204 Rue Rivoli, Paris (Photo author)
We just received from Morris’ firm a package of samples of curtain material; we will send you them as a registered parcel post. There are some very nice pieces among them – Esther has searched through the shops, but only at Morris’ she could find some really fine things. […] You will see that, given the quality of fabric and pigments, the price is reasonable, all the more since the textiles are so to speak indestructible.

Lucien asked where the parcel should be sent, and Camille answered from Eragny that it should be sent to the family’s summer residence: ‘[s]end the W. Morris samples to your mother here’. At the customs there must have been some trouble with importing the samples. In a letter to his father of November 1899 Lucien made allusions to it, but these references are not very clear, relating to import duties but also to remarks of customs officers on ‘des tissus de ces horrendes étrangers!!’. And in the same letter: ‘… I received samples of that other firm about which I spoke to Mother in my last letter, but I found them so very ugly that I thought it better not to affront the border control again’.

Figure 6: Camille Pissarro, The Garden of the Tuileries on a Winter Afternoon, Oil on canvas, 1899, 29 x 36.25 in.; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Photo Creative Commons)
On 16 November, Pissarro reported the arrival of the samples. He made his choice immediately and returned the parcel (grumbling about being taxed) with a label attached to the chosen sample specifying the required amount of fabric. The following week, Lucien forwarded the invoice receipt of Morris and Co.; as soon as the bill was paid, the firm would send off the order. He advised his father to pay by cheque. The amount seems to have been FrF 350.

At the end of November, one day before the fabric was to be sent, Lucien Pissarro made mention of some delay: at the Arts and Crafts Exhibition his wife and he had seen a version of Bird looking less harmonious in colour:

Esther has gone to the shop and has found that the material was not quite the same as the sample, and she has asked to send us a new sample in order to compare it with the first – Actually, the blue background of the new specimen is darker and the result is that it’s more harsh – This means the textile is dyed with real indigo and so it will be nearly impossible to obtain twice the same hue, and the first sample is a little bit faded after having circulated many times – Yet I have ordered the fabric since it will fade harmoniously in course of time.

In the end all went well. On 1 December, Camille reported having received a message saying that the curtains had been shipped, and on 16 December he wrote: ‘we received the fabric of W. Morris, which we found admirable and delicious of colouring’. Still Life with a Coffeepot may have been a confirmation. However, the Bird textile did not hang for a long time at 204 Rue de Rivoli. By November 1900 Pissarro rented another Parisian apartment at 28 Place Dauphine – his last, before he died in 1903. We may suppose that the curtains also moved to the new address, but after 1903 they disappear from sight.

In his old age, Pissarro was an acknowledged master and his views of the Tuileries gardens and his still lifes – among them Still Life with a Coffee Pot, priced by Pissarro at FrF 1500 – were bought by his dealer Durand-Ruel. They were on show at the Durand-Ruel galleries in January-February 1901 and at the salon of La Libre Esthétique in Brussels some months later. The exhibition was a success, as Pissarro wrote. Nevertheless, Still Life with a Coffeepot was not sold and stayed in Durand-Ruel’s stock for a long time. It wandered between galleries and exhibitions until 1935 when it was sold to a German collector, Dr. Otto Krebs at Holzdorf. From there it was transported to Russia.

So Still Life with a Coffeepot, however modest it may look, embodies Pissarro’s diverse ideological and artistic convictions. The colourful Arts and Crafts textile, with
juxtapositions of contrasting colours recalling his erstwhile Neo-Impressionist principles, here appears subordinated to the Impressionism of his later years. Maybe Pissarro also thought about his and Morris’s shared revolutionary political convictions, as opposed to the regressive and ‘commercialist’ Pre-Raphaelite ideology. But surely the curtains were a sign of the close ties between Camille Pissarro and his family abroad.

NOTES


8. ‘Ton cadre est vraiment charmant, à bonne heure, voilà un travail bien fait, et le dessin est bien, on sent l’influence des études d’après nature faites à Eragny’. Camille to Georges Pissarro, Eragny, 12 January 1890, in Correspondance CP, II, p. 325, no. 563. In this letter, one also finds a very negative verdict on Crane by Camille Pissarro.


12. ‘Je vais te dire le pour. — Morris est un homme, honnête comme principe et comme travail, et, autant qu’il m’est possible de le juger (ce que je fais par ces écrits, ces conférences et ses dessins, meubles, etc.) un gentleman. Je veux dire un homme sérieux, instruit, bon et aimable. Je sais qu’il travaille lui-même à ses meubles, teintures, etc., et je suis sure qu’un jeune homme placé sous sa direction, serait sous un maître intelligent et habile, et non seulement au point de vue du travail de charpentier’. Esther Isaacson to Camille Pissarro, [London], 26 May 1887, commented and included in letters Camille to Lucien Pissarro, Eragny, 28 May 1887 and 31 May 1887, in Correspondance CP, II, p. 176, no. 430; p. 177, no. 431.


14. ‘N’y aurait-il moyen de le faire entrer soit chez Morris soit ailleurs où il pourrait faire ou de la sculpture, du repoussé, du dessin, enfin, un travail quelconque qui le mène à gagner à peu près sa vie ?’. Camille to Lucien Pissarro, Paris, 10 January 1891, in Correspondance CP, III, pp. 13-14, no. 620.


22. ‘un passage typique où l’auteur dit que nous faisons le chromo aussi bien, et même mieux que les Anglais […] !! … L’auteur parle de Ricketts et surtout Beardsley, qui promet d’être un grand artiste; en fait d’eaux-fortes: Whistler, Seymour Hayden, et en France rien ! sapristi ce Lahor ne connaît pas Degas ! […] Cri de guerre et exhortation patriotique en finissant. Décidément, ils ne comprennent rien.’ Camille to Lucien Pissarro, Eragny, 14 February 1895, in Correspondance CP, IV, pp. 32-33, no. 11111.


25. Prominently, for instance, in Henry Nocq, Tendances nouvelles: Enquêtes sur l’évolution des industries d’art (Paris, 1896), in which Morris and Crane were interviewed personally (pp. 186-91). Morris appears to have been very modest about his own influence.

26. ‘Je ne doute pas que les livres de M. Morris ne soient aussi beaux que les Gothiques mais il faut se rappeler que les Gothiques ont été les inventeurs et il faut que vous faisiez non pas mieux, ce qui n’est pas possible, mais autrement et dans votre voire; on ne s’apercevra des résultats que plus tard. […] A ce point de vue, il faut te méfier de l’ami Ricketts qui certainement est charmant comme homme, mais qui au point de vue art me semble s’éloigner du but, qui est le retour à la nature, et l’on ne fait dans ce sens qu’en observant la nature avec notre propre tempérament moderne; autre chose est d’inventer ou d’imiter.’ Camille to Lucien Pissarro, Rouen, 19 August 1898, in Correspondance CP, IV, p. 504, no. 1574, and Lucien to Camille Pissarro, Kew, October 1896, in Letters LP, p. 508. Lucien also tried to convince his father of the difference between his books and those of Morris and other English artists. His were of the ‘School of Eragny’: ‘[q]uand tu me prèches à propos des gothiques, tu prèches un converti’. Lucien to Camille Pissarro, Epping, November 1896, ibid., pp. 510-11.


28. ‘William Morris vient de mourir, de la diabète – c’est un véritable désastre et quel désarroi cela va causer – on se demande ce qui va arriver, avec le matériel splendide entre les mains des gens de sa queue qui n’y entendent goutte !’. Lucien to Camille Pissarro, Epping, October 1896, in Letters LP, p. 502.


32. See Albert Métin, ‘Les Socialistes anglais: De John Ruskin à William Morris’, La Revue blanche, 6 (1896), 28-33. Here Morris is introduced as a kind of peaceful anarchist, not quite opposed to parliamentarism.


35. ‘Je regrette que W. Morris ne soit pas au nombre de ceux qui ont protesté contre la violence faite aux anarchistes pour les empêcher de dire au grand jour ce qu’ils pensent être la vérité ! […] le congrès socialiste se trouve pour ce fait n’être qu’un parti bourgeois, plus avancé, mais ayant les mêmes préjugés’. Camille Pissarro to Alice Isaacson, Paris, 28 July 1889, in Correspondance CP, II, p. 285, no. 533 (and footnote p. 286); see also Thompson, William Morris, pp. 535-36.


41. Camille Pissarro to Esther Isaacson, Eragny, 12 December 1885, and to Octave Mirbeau, Eragny, 21 April 1892, in Correspondance CP, I, pp. 360-61, no. 300; Correspondance CP, III, p. 217, no. 774.


48. See, for instance, Ruskin’s *The Laws of Fésole*, in Ruskin, *Works*, XV, p. 361. See also, ibid., p. 414: ‘shadows are as full in colour as lights are, every possible shadow being a light to the shadow below it, and every possible light, a shade to the light above it, till you come to the absolute darkness on one side, and to the sun on the other’.


51. Ibid., (1897), pp. 189-94.

52. Ibid., (1897), p. 194.

53. Jean Autret, *Ruskin and the French before Marcel Proust: with the collected fragmentary translations* (Genève: Droz, 1965), pp. 27-128. Autret collected all translated fragments used by De la Sizeranne and other French authors (many of those originally not adequately annotated) and classed them under the sources from which they had been taken.


55. De la Sizeranne also dealt with the ideas of Ruskin about lines, especially his preference for curved lineature, see De la Sizeranne, ‘Religion de la Beauté’, (1897), pp. 182-83, 185-86, 188-89.


57. Ibid., p. 118, 187.


60. ‘Un portrait très bizarre de Fénéon debout, tendant un lys, et comme fond, des entrelacs de couleurs


62. Camille to Lucien Pissarro, Paris, 8 April 1895 and 11 April 1895, in Correspondance CP, IV, pp. 56, no. 1125; p. 61, no. 1127.

63. Lucien to Camille Pissarro, Epping, 10 April 1895, in Letters LP, pp. 417-19.

64. Signac even planned to publish a lithographed version of Au Temps d’Harmonie in Les Temps Nouveaux, an anarchist periodical edited by Jean Grave. Both Camille and Lucien Pissarro contributed several times to Les Temps Nouveaux and other publications of Grave. See Dardel, pp. 34-35.

65. Smith, pp. 125-34.

66. Camille to Georges Pissarro, Eragny, 31 January 1890, in Correspondance CP, II, pp. 331-32, no. 569. One of Pissarro’s theoretical sources of inspiration, M.E. Chevreul’s De la loi du contraste simultané des couleurs et de l’assortiment des objets colorés […] (Paris: Pitois-Levrault, 1839), was the result of experiments to improve the colouring of tapestries of the Manufactures royales de Gobelins and Beauvais.


73. ‘Envoie les échantillons W. Morris à ta mère ici’, Camille to Lucien Pissarro, Eragny, 3 November 1899, in Correspondence CP, V, p. 50, no. 1669.

74. ‘J’ai reçu des échantillons de cette autre maison, dont je parlais à Maman dans ma dernière lettre, mais je les ai trouvé si laid que j’ai cru qu’il valait mieux ne pas affronter la douane une seconde fois’. Lucien to Camille Pissarro, London, n.d. [October/November 1899], in Letters LP, p. 621.

75. Camille to Lucien Pissarro, Paris, 16 November 1899, in Correspondence CP, V, p. 52, no. 1672.

76. ‘C’importe la facture de Morris ausi tôt qu’ils reçoivent l’argent ils expédieront l’étoffe. Le mieux il me semble, pur éviter de changer de l’argent français serait de leur envoyer un cheque.’ Lucien to Camille Pissarro, Bath, 23 November 1899, in Letters LP, p. 624.

77. On 24 November, Camille wrote to Lucien from Paris: ‘[t]a mère m’a envoyé hier une lettre chargée contenant la somme de trois cent cinquante francs pour les rideaux’ (Correspondance CP, V, p. 52, no. 1673). Harvey and Press, pp. 174-75, give a survey of fabrics and wallpapers for sale at Morris and Co.
by 1890; Bird is priced at 0.83 per yard. In the brochure of Morris and Co., Morris chintzes, silks, tapestries, etc, n.d., Bird (in two colour variations) is indicated as: ‘width 54 ins., price 16/6 per yard’, available online: <https://archive.org/details/morrischintzessi00morrisuoft/page/n27> (last accessed 7 October 2018).

78. ‘L’étoffe pour les rideaux sera expédié sans doute demain il y a un petit retard parce que nous avons vu à l’exposition ses Arts & Crafts un morceau de la même étoffe qui ne nous avait pas paru aussi harmonieux. Esther est allé à la boutique et a trouvé que l’étoffe n’était pas tout à fait comme l’échantillon et a demandé qu’on m’envoie un nouveau échantillon pour que je compare avec l’ancien – En effet le fond bleu du nouveau morceau est plus foncé et le résultat est que c’est plus dur – Cela tient que l’étoffe est teinté avec du véritable indigo et qu’il est presque impossible d’obtenir 2 fois la même teinte, et le 1er échantillon est un peu fané ayant beaucoup roulé – J’ai commandé l’étoffe tout de même cela se fanera harmonieusement avec le temps.’ Lucien to Camille Pissarro, London, n.d. [November 1899], in Letters LP, p. 627. For the use of indigo by the Morris firm, see Thompson, Work of William Morris, pp. 113-16.


The recent exhibition of the work of May Morris at the William Morris Gallery in Walthamstow, October 2017 to January 2018, has been accompanied by the publication of two important books: *May Morris: Arts and Crafts Designer* and *May Morris: Art and Life*. In the former, Jan Marsh offers a short biographical account of May’s life, in which Henry Halliday Sparling (1860-1924) makes a brief appearance as having married May in 1890 after a long engagement, separated from her in 1894, and been divorced from her in 1898. A somewhat fuller account is given in the other book, where Anna Mason argues that in accounts of May’s marriage to Sparling: ‘[t]oo often May has been presented as a victim in this encounter [with Bernard Shaw], beguiled by the charismatic Shaw and driven in despair into the arms of the impecunious and untalented Sparling’. Mason argues that ‘Sparling has received a bad press and it has been assumed that May was simply on the rebound’. The phrase ‘on the rebound’ deprives May of agency in a matter for which she must surely take some of the responsibility. Mason’s view of Sparling is more positive: ‘[w]hilst he [Sparling] did not have the literary talent or charisma of Shaw, Sparling was a committed Socialist and an effective open-air speaker’; May’s letters to friends during the 1880s ‘reveal genuine affection between them’ and she ‘designed the cover for a deluxe second edition’ of his 1887 anthology *Irish Minstrelsy*.

A similar attitude to Mason’s can be felt in Alan Crawford’s recent article ‘Her father’s daughter’, in which he writes of the evening lectures at Kelmscott House in the 1880s: ‘George Bernard Shaw was among the lecturers and in 1885 a flirtatious friendship sprang up between him and May. But the following year she fell in love with a young journalist, Harry Sparling’; Crawford is not afraid to use romantic language about May’s attitude to Sparling. But the relationship was not destined to flourish. As Mason explains: ‘[a]fter a promising start to the marriage, Shaw
reappeared on the scene with his talent for causing trouble’; ‘his romantic relationship with May was rekindled’, and this led to the Sparlings’ separation in 1894 and divorce in 1898.\(^6\) I believe that Mason’s judgement about the ‘bad press’ is valid, as seen even in the writings of distinguished Morris scholars, and in this article I should like to question the negative view of Sparling.

Most of the available information about Sparling concerns the period from 1885 to 1895; our knowledge of Sparling’s earlier and later years remains sketchy. We are not even certain of his place of birth. According to Jan Marsh, he ‘came from the district of Thorp in Essex, where his father was a farmer, but little is known of his career until the 1880s when he was in London, and, like Bernard Shaw, scratching a living from literary journalism and socialist agitation’.\(^7\) Florence Boos gives a quite different location: ‘[t]he Labour Annual for 1895 lists Sparling as educated at Clifden, Connemara, “by historical studies drawn towards Socialism”, and an advocate of total abstinence’, who became involved in the socialist movement in London in 1885.\(^8\) Norman Kelvin simply remarks that he ‘worked in a city office until he became a socialist’.\(^9\) In their edition of The Collected Letters of Jane Morris, Frank Sharp and Jan Marsh state, in relation to a letter of autumn 1885, that Sparling had ‘supported himself as a journalist’ before meeting William Morris.\(^10\) When Sparling met Morris is not known; presumably Sparling attended a socialist meeting at Kelmscott House, and as a result became an enthusiastic disciple of Morris – as he remained until the end of his life. He was soon deeply involved in socialist politics, as in July 1885 J.L. Mahon resigned as secretary of the Socialist League, and Sparling took over the role.\(^11\) Marsh informs us that Sparling told a correspondent in 1887 that, after taking on that responsibility, he ‘spent most days working in the Reading Room of the British Museum, after calling in at the Socialist League office, where he returned in the evening to discharge his duties as secretary’.\(^12\) From here on, Boos’s account is similar to Marsh’s: ‘Sparling was a steady worker at Socialist League propaganda from 1885 to 1891, serving as League Council member 1885-88, secretary July 1885-December 1886, and subeditor under Morris of Commonweal, December 1886-May 1891’.

Marsh quotes Shaw’s later description of Sparling:

> a tall slim immature man with a long thin neck on champagne bottle shoulders and not athletic. He was brave, kind, sincere and intellectual in his tastes and interests. Having apparently complete confidence in himself he had a quite unselfconscious pretentiousness which led his audiences and new acquaintances to expect more from him than he was able to give.\(^13\)

It is impossible to know how accurate the final judgement is. Another verdict quoted
by Marsh described Sparling more negatively as ‘an odd insignificant fellow who hung about on the fringes of adventurous and artistic societies, hoping that some day somebody would take notice of him’. Marsh writes that when May found that Shaw, to whom she was strongly attracted, was only flirting with her and was not going to propose marriage, she turned to Sparling: ‘[f]or all his evident weakness, Sparling at least offered sincere admiration and a clear commitment to the same ideals’. She adds, tendentiously in my view: ‘[l]ike her mother, therefore, May agreed to marry a man she did not love’. She nevertheless quotes Jane as having told Blunt in late 1888 that May was ‘quite absorbed with her love affair’.

Fiona MacCarthy offers a slightly fuller account of Sparling at this time, though not a more favourable one:

[He was] a young Socialist struggling on the fringes of literary London. When not employed in the Farringdon Road offices [of the Socialist League], much of his time was spent in the British Museum Reading Room, on unspecified research. Sparling’s mixture of literary pretensions and class bitterness reminds one of Leonard Bast, the clerk in E.M. Forster’s *Howards End* (1910). Elizabeth Pennell heard him lecturing at Hammersmith ‘like a romantic schoolgirl’. All accounts of him make him sound a little helpless. He attempted to conceal his obvious social disadvantages behind a façade of cocksureness and knowingness.

The comparison to the Edwardian clerk Leonard Bast is not particularly relevant, and it should be observed that Elizabeth Pennell was often over-acerbic in writing about the meetings she and her husband attended at Kelmscott House. For instance, she asserts that ‘as a rule, he [Morris] lost his temper and said nasty things’; one might accept that this happened on occasion, but surely not ‘as a rule’.

As we have seen, Sparling took over from J.L. Mahon to become Secretary of the Socialist League in July 1885, and by the autumn of that year he was also editorial assistant to Morris at *The Commonweal*. In February 1886 we find Morris writing to ‘[m]y dear Sparling’ about ‘Black Monday’, the occasion when 8,000 unemployed Londoners demonstrated in Trafalgar Square, and were addressed by John Burns and Henry Mayers Hyndman. When the crowd marched down Pall Mall and Piccadilly, the windows of several clubs were smashed and some shops were looted. To Sparling, Morris remarks, in an unusually excited tone: ‘[w]e have got to pull at the Collar now, my buck, I can tell you. Last night I recognize as an act of desperation, but we must bring it through.’ Boos adds to this:
[Sparling] was one of the SL speakers arrested on 8 February 1886 for alleged incendiary remarks (‘bread or lead’) at a Hyde Park demonstration. *Commonweal* indicates the he was a frequent speaker at meetings; as sub-editor he wrote numerous if rather wooden notes on current events, and his letters and comments indicate sympathy with Morris's role in League affairs. Although Thompson describes him as ‘an unreliable ally’, he seems to have voted as an anti-parliamentarian.

Soon after this occurs the most dramatic, and perhaps unfortunate, event in Sparling’s life: his engagement to May Morris in January 1887, already alluded to in my opening paragraph. The engagement was to last almost four years, nearly as long as the marriage itself. Our idea of the engagement is necessarily influenced by Bernard Shaw’s much later account of what he termed the Mystic Betrothal between himself and May. According to Shaw, this relationship implied no responsibility on his part to marry May, with whom he flirted – he was, he claims, too poor to offer her the kind of life that Morris’s daughter was entitled to expect. Then, according to Shaw, May became aware that there was no possibility of marriage to him and wrote to him accepting that there would be no proposal, but stating that they could remain ‘friendly comrades’: ‘[l]et us be comrades by all means – I salute you’. But then, according to Shaw, ‘[s]uddenly, to my utter stupefaction, and I suspect to that of Morris also, the beautiful daughter married one of the comrades’. Actually, the marriage did not take place until June 1890; Shaw was characteristically more concerned to tell an exciting story than to get his facts right. For Shaw, May’s behaviour was a betrayal of romance, but he nevertheless recognised some positive qualities in Sparling: ‘he was a convinced Socialist and regular speaker for the Cause, and his character was blameless; so there was nothing to be done but accept the situation’. The biographer of Shaw, Michael Holroyd, gives the following account:

The Mystic Betrothal, which Shaw declared did not interfere with ‘my relations with other women’, had not prevented her starting a relationship with another man. And what a man! Early in April 1886, following a lecture on ‘The Unemployed’, Shaw wrote in his diary: ‘Came back with Sparling, who told me of the love affair between him and May Morris’.

How are we to explain Holroyd’s exclamation: ‘[a]nd what a man!’? Boos brings in some information more favourable to Sparling:

Both William and Jane were unenthusiastic about the marriage, perhaps in
part on prudential grounds. Scheu’s letters to Sparling in the IISH [International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam] express amused sympathy with the latter over Morris’s reported disapproval of the match, assuring Sparling that Morris will surely come round.26

From this it is clear that Andreas Scheu (1844-1927), a fellow member of the Socialist League, had no doubt that Sparling would make a suitable son-in-law for Morris, whatever the Morrises themselves felt at the time.

Charles Harvey and Jon Press write, of the same period: ‘Sparling was an intense young man on the extreme left of the socialist movement, a profound admirer of William Morris and, though highly intelligent, not especially talented’ – a distinction that I do not find easy to understand.27 MacCarthy gives an account of the early relationship of May and Sparling as colleagues in the Farringdon Road offices of the Socialist League: ‘[i]n such surroundings love had blossomed, and by April 1887 May was reporting, “We are among the brightest and most unsubstantial of clouds”’. But, for reasons that are not clear, May found it difficult to tell her parents. MacCarthy records that ‘[s]he wrote to Scheu of the “extreme terror” with which she had informed “first the father and then the mother of our ‘folly’! Such a chicken-hearted creature I found myself to be”’. MacCarthy follows this with the statement that Morris tried to like and help Sparling, ‘[b]ut his comments on “Master Harry” tend to be a little slighting’ – a statement that I am inclined to dispute. ‘Morris evidently felt the tall, thin, immature Sparling, with his unattractive mixture of the pretentious and the ingratiating, was no substitute for Bernard Shaw whom he accepted as on his intellectual level; the sparring partner, almost the adoptive son’. MacCarthy then comments on Jane’s attitude: ‘Janey’s woe at the engagement was patent. Sparling was the son of an Essex farmer, socially not so far above Janey’s own relations. As well as Sparling’s inexperience and charmless Janey’s objection was a basic one of class.’28 This is disputable in its assumption about Jane and class, as well as in attributing such negative characteristics to Sparling.

Many of the unflattering remarks about Sparling refer to his appearance. Janis Londraville records that Lily Yeats wrote in her Scrapbook: ‘[May] had just become engaged against all their [her parents’] wishes to a reporter, a freak to look at, very tall, no chin, and very large spectacles’, and in another Notebook that Sparling was ‘the queerest looking young man, very tall, thin, stooped […]. Her people did not like the engagement.’29 The photographs we have of Sparling hardly support suggestions of his oddity, and reveal what we may now see as deplorable prejudices about the importance of good looks. Sparling may have been tall and worn spectacles, but there is nothing odd about that. There are two photographs showing him and
May with two others; both of these are included by MacCarthy in her book, and I use the descriptions of them from her text. The first: ‘May on an outing with Henry Halliday Sparling […]. Also in the party are Gustav Steffen, the Swedish sociologist and economist […] and his wife Anna, regular attenders of the Socialist lectures at Kelmscott House.’ The second shows ‘May, her fiancé Henry Halliday Sparling, Emery Walker and Bernard Shaw in rehearsal for a Socialist League entertainment’. I see nothing strange about Sparling’s appearance in either of these. The same is true of two larger groups in which Sparling appears, in a photograph of the Hammersmith Branch of the Socialist League in the gardens of Kelmscott House, and in a Kelmscott Press group photograph of the early 1890s. In a much later photograph, taken by George Charles Beresford in 1919, now in the National Portrait Gallery, Sparling appears as an ordinary-looking man, with spectacles and a moustache – not unusual at the time. Should the remark recorded by James Leatham, which he quotes to show Morris’s sense of humour, be accepted as applicable to Sparling? If so, how should we respond to it? It runs: ‘I once heard him [Morris] describe a young Socialist agitator, remarkable for audacity and instability, as having “less chin and more cheek than any man in the movement”. It so happened that the subject of this quip was really deficient in the feature usually associated with determination of character.’ The person who was the object of this quip is not named.

Marsh offers this comment on the engagement of May and Sparling:

It appears that May’s parents were not delighted by her engagement. Jane in particular seems to have opposed it: partly on the grounds that the young people had insufficient income […] but probably partly also because she knew that Sparling was not May’s first choice.

Jane was also aware that her friend Rosalind Howard’s daughter Mary was engaged to the brilliant academic Gilbert Murray, while Margaret Burne-Jones had recently married the successful scholar J.W. Mackail: ‘in this company May’s choice of life companion looked decidedly inferior’. When in May 1886 The Commmoneweal became a weekly, edited by Morris, he was later joined by Sparling as sub-editor. MacCarthy presents him as less gifted than his predecessor, Edward Aveling, while making a disputable judgement about Morris’s attitude to the family:

Aveling relinquished the deputy editorship, to be replaced by Sparling, the son-in-law-to-be. Morris had an almost mystic belief in the extended family; in his stories his sons-in-law are always promising. But Aveling, whatever his
personal faults, was a professional polemicist, a skilled and confident performer of powerful intellect. Sparling was not of the same caliber [...] Commonweal was now too much of a family affair.34

On 5 June 1886 occurs the first mention of Sparling in May’s correspondence; she was opposed to those in the Socialist League who wanted to provoke the police to arrest them; she persuaded Sparling ‘to keep out of the business tonight [...] instead of joining in the “fun”’.35 A letter from Morris to Watts-Dunton in December thanks him for promising to help ‘my future son-in-law Sparling’ to get ‘some literary work’, but it is not clear whether he did so.36

The engagement continued throughout 1887. In January there is one of the few letters from Morris to Sparling himself, concerning material for The Commonweal; it seems hurried but shows Morris’s continuing interest in the publication (some details are elucidated by Kelvin):

Dallas no very feeble
Glazier’s poetry (?) not up to mark
Kitz might go in as a letter though I dont much care for the controversy.
Yet the S.D.F. are rather hard to bear.
Ask Kitz if he wants his name to it.
Shore no great harm no great good, stick it in if you please
Bax promises article for next week. I can give you a column between Bismark & Caucus.37

On 7 February Morris told Jenny: ‘Master Harry gave a good lecture last night but the audience was but small’. The intriguing title of the lecture was ‘The Evolution of Cannibalism’ but, disappointingly, no account of it seems to exist. Soon after, Morris told Jenny that, as May was away, he was seeing ‘not much of Master Harry’, but Harry had told Morris about some possible jobs he was seeking, including ‘editing 2 books of collections of some sort’.38 Morris’s lengthy diary entry for 12 February concludes: ‘Friday I went in the evening to finish the debate begun last week [at the Chiswick Club], on the class war: the room full. Sparling made a good speech; I didn’t: the meeting having got very conversational by that time.’ On 23 February Morris recorded: ‘Sparling went down on Monday night to Reading to try to found a branch [...] but it was a dead failure’.39 On 25 February Morris told Jenny that Sparling was editing Defoe’s Captain Singleton for ‘the very minute sum of £5’, remarking that he must take whatever work he could get. The book was published in the Camelot Series by Walter Scott Publishing in London as The Life, Adventures, and Piracies of the famous
Captain Singleton, and is evidence of Sparling’s industry; he was clearly trying to make a literary career for himself. At the end of March Balfour, the Secretary of State for Ireland, put forward his Irish Coercion Bill, which provoked many protests. At one of these, in Hyde Park on 11 April, Sparling was one of the speakers, along with Shaw and Eleanor Marx.

On a personal note, we find Morris telling Jenny on 14 April 1887 that ‘May has gone with Sparling to exhibit that young man to your granny’. Emma’s response was positive: ‘I thought the young gentleman very young [...] he seems good natured and gentle’, while noting that ‘May will be the ruling spirit’. On 14 April Morris wrote to Bruce-Glasier in Glasgow about possible delegates for the Third Annual Conference of the Socialist League, saying: ‘better not me: Sparling or Webb would do. I think this is important.’ This is confirmed in a letter of Morris to Bruce-Glasier on 27 May, in which Morris expresses his concern over the matter. In the League, Morris was trying to form a centre group between the parliamentarians and the anarchists, and in June, Morris told Bruce-Glasier that things had gone reasonably well at the Annual Conference, while the editor’s note gives the names of members elected to Council, including that of Sparling. In June Morris wrote a formal recommendation for Sparling to James Bryce, MP, from Kelmscott House:

My dear Bryce/ A friend of mine is a candidate for the librarianship of the National Liberal Club. His name is H.H. Sparling: he has some literary attainments, and a really good knowledge of books, and is an enthusiastic person about them. He is a man of high principle and very industrious and painstaking, and (if that be a qualification for a librarian’s post) remarkably good-tempered. It may be against him that he was secretary to the Socialist League for a year and a half; it ought not to be, as the position was a difficult one, & he did very well in it. I must add that owing to his having filled the office I know a good deal of him as I used to see him every day nearly, & still see a good deal of him.

Boos suggests that this shows that ‘Morris must have felt some goodwill toward his future son-in-law’. Unless we are to accuse Morris of gross hypocrisy, the recommendation must surely show considerable confidence in Sparling’s abilities.

Shaw’s biographer Michael Holroyd expresses the view that in the spring of 1887 ‘Pakenham Beatty revealed the truth when he told Shaw: “You envy Sparling – you wish you were the happy man”’, adding that ‘[t]he insignificance of Sparling amounted almost to an invitation to Shaw to supplant him’. This does not strike me as a fair comment. Holroyd quotes Shaw on his ‘stupefaction’ about the engagement,
and tells us that ‘[h]e continued seeing the Sparlings, singing, playing the piano with May sometimes past midnight, as if nothing had happened’. Jane viewed the affair with some impatience, writing to Rosalind Howard in June 1887:

May’s love affair has not progressed since you saw the lovers. They are as much in love as ever, & no nearer marriage as far as one can see. May rightly insists on employment being found by her fiancé before she marries, and I strongly uphold her.

A few weeks later Jane wrote again to Rosalind about May:

May is away at Kelmscott Manor alone learning cooking and how to live on a few shillings a week. She is bent on marrying without waiting till her future husband gets employment. I have said and done all I can to dissuade her but she is a fool and persists.

The situation would take some time to resolve itself.

In another direction, on 13 October the Socialist League staged Morris’s only dramatic work, _The Tables Turned; or, Nupkins Awakened_ in the hall in Farringdon Road. In the list of dramatis personae, in which the actors are identified, May plays Mary Pinch, ‘a labourer’s wife, accused of theft’, and Sparling plays Jack Freeman, ‘a Socialist, accused of conspiracy, sedition, and obstruction of the highway’. MacCarthy refers to ‘the leading role of Jack Freeman, the fiery Socialist’, and the part would surely not have been given to a man lacking presence and self-confidence. The fact that the ‘Socialist interlude’ was to be performed on some twelve occasions in the coming months must have brought May and Sparling often together. Political affairs turned fatally more serious later during the year, with the occurrence on 13 November of the violent events of what came to be known as Bloody Sunday. Sparling wrote about it in _The Commonweal_ in what Thompson calls ‘a fairly inoffensive parable’, but in a letter to Morris, Shaw criticised the article as likely to lead to Sparling’s imprisonment, which would serve no useful purpose.

The year 1888 saw the continuation of the engagement. May and Sparling attended French classes at Kelmscott House with Mme. Cécile Desroches, who had fled France after the failed European revolutions of 1848, and Sparling continued his political activities, often paired with May. In February, when the Irish politician Alexander Blain was released from prison, the League celebrated with tea-drinking. Morris told Jenny: ‘May & Harry both did their part in serving’, before ‘May & Harry & I came away about 10 and we went & had supper at the Solferino & so home to
bed’. On 23 February, Morris told Jenny that all three of them had been busy at a large meeting concerned with Irish affairs, and that ‘it was a very successful meeting, & went off much better than I expected. May & Harry and I went back home with the Radfords getting home pretty late.’ The Radfords, Dollie (1858-1920) and Ernest (1857-1919), were admirers of Morris active in the Socialist League. Relations between Morris, May and Sparling seem to have been harmonious, and in April, Sparling took part with others in an open debate on socialism. The Fourth Annual Conference of the Socialist League took place in May. At the conference, the anarchists consolidated their influence within the League; the parliamentarians refused to stand for office and Sparling was re-elected to the Council with Philip Webb and Morris among others. On 16 August, Morris wrote to May, remarking that he was sorry to have missed ‘Shaw and his insults to the country[side] in general and Kelmscott in particular’; he tells May to ‘[g]ive my love to Harry’, before mentioning that Harry need not worry about The Commonweal because ‘[w]e have plenty of copy’.55 Kelvin comments that it is to be presumed that Shaw had been spending time with May and Sparling at the Manor. On 1 September Jane told Watts-Dunton, writing from the Manor in a tone I cannot find enthusiastic: ‘Mr. Sparling has been here all this week, I fancy he will stay next too’.56 Writing to Jenny on 14 September, Morris tells her about an outing he has had ‘with your mother’ through several villages including Alvescott: ‘we picked up Harry at the station’. In a letter to May on 26 October, Morris remarked: ‘I suppose Harry has told you how beautifully I kept my temper last Monday’; the reference was no doubt to a Council meeting.57

It was in November 1888 that Emery Walker gave the lecture at the Arts and Crafts Exhibition referred to by Sparling in 1924 as ‘the first certain date in the history of the Kelmscott Press’.58 This has become the generally accepted view. Harvey and Press argue that Sparling may have overstated its importance but William Peterson, in his lecture ‘Virtual Partner’ in 2015, agrees with Sparling, commenting that although ‘really there was nothing substantively new to Morris in Walker’s lecture, yet it seems to have struck him with the force of an almost supernatural revelation’.59 Peterson attributes this to the fact that Walker illustrated his lecture with slides shown on the magic lantern showing considerably enlarged forms.

In December, Sparling wrote a preface to a pamphlet called Men and Machinery, whose subtitle reads ‘Suggestive facts and figures urging national control of national powers of production’.60 Thompson quotes a passage from near the end of the pamphlet:

A million of starving people, with another million on the verge of starvation, represent a potential of destructive force to measure which no dynamometer
has yet been made, but which will, if suddenly liberated, assuredly and absolutely destroy every vestige of nineteenth-century civilization so-called; will destroy it more completely than time has destroyed the traces of the society of Nineveh, of Babylon, Greece and Rome, or even Mexico.

Thompson believes that the passage indicates that ‘there were men within the Socialist movement as well as without who could not shake off the bourgeois caricature of the proletarian revolution’.61 To me it suggests Sparling’s urgent commitment. For Jane, the year ended gloomily. On 28 December she told Blunt: ‘[w]e have passed the least festive Xmas time I ever remember; Jenny is still at Malvern gaining health and as May is quite absorbed in her love affair, I thought we would not have any gaieties – a few very old friends called on Xmas: Day and that was all’.62 In contrast, Morris’s letter to Jenny on 30 December is positive: the annual tea-party of the branch had been a success; ‘May and Harry had spent a long time in decorating the room, and it really looked very pretty. The green boughs looked so nice against the whitewashed walls, which are very clean now.’63

The engagement continued into 1889. On 12 February Jane wrote to Blunt: ‘May is not married yet, but I suppose the dreadful ceremony will have to take place before long. I don’t mind confessing that I hate parting with her.’64 In fact, the wedding was not to take place until more than a year later. Sparling continued his political activities, speaking with others at a celebration of the Paris Commune in March.65 According to Thompson, the Fifth Annual Conference proved to be ‘a meek and mild affair’, and the Morris group was reduced in numbers to ‘himself, Philip Webb, Sparling (an unreliable ally), and Sam Bullock and H.B. Tarleton of the Hammersmith Branch’.66 Thompson gives no explanation of his dismissive description of Sparling, who continued to be a sub-editor of The Commonweal, now with David Nicoll. Sparling’s interest in contemporary drama is shown in his ‘Notes on News’ in The Commonweal for 13 July 1889:

Two announcements which were made last week are among the cheering ‘straws’ that show which way the social ‘wind’ is blowing; Ibsen’s ‘Pillars of Society’, literally translated by Mr. Wm. Archer, is to be performed at the Gaiety Theatre on Tuesday July 16th […] and a play by Mr. Henry Arthur Jones called ‘The Middleman’, will be put on the stage in the autum n by Mr. E.S. Willard at the Shaftesbury. It is said to be a study of contemporary life on similar lines to the same writer’s striking production ‘Wealth’, now running at the Haymarket. Not world-shaking events in themselves, but how much they mean!67
He was evidently pleased by this evidence of radical topics being tackled on the stage. The years 1889-90 are the dates given in *May Morris: Arts and Crafts Designer* for the attractive cot quilt *The Homestead and the Forest* designed by May. According to the book, the ‘delightful quilt’ was the result of ‘[a] collaboration between mother and daughter in the months leading up to May’s wedding’, and ‘was probably intended for a child of her own. It remained in May’s possession until the end of her life.’

This suggests that relations between Jane and May were good at the time, and is also poignant in reminding us that May was never to have children. We can only speculate as to why this was the case and whether the marriage would have fared better if there had been children. Marsh suggests that it might have done so:

> It is as if May, who sought a normal marital relationship of mutual affection and physical passion, resulting no doubt in the children she would have liked to mother, represented a threat to Shaw, whereas Charlotte [Payne Townsend] offered a strange but successful deliverance. The Shaws’ marriage, it may be noted, was lifelong.

It was also childless.

In May 1890 the anarcho-communists triumphed at the Sixth Annual Conference of the League, attended by only fourteen delegates. Morris and Sparling were forced to resign from the editorship of *The Commonweal* to be replaced by Kitz and Nicholl. Morris’s relations with May and Sparling remained friendly; in June he wrote about a celebration at the International Working Men’s Club: ‘I have given the tickets to Sparling and May: May says it will be all right about the Hammersmith choir’. But private affairs were about to develop dramatically – the long-awaited wedding was to take place. On 13 June 1890, Jane wrote to Blunt: ‘I heard from May that she wished to be married this week instead of next – it has all been like a bad dream, but it must end sometime like all dreams – the wedding will be tomorrow (Saturday) and then May with her husband go to Kelmscott Manor for about a fortnight, during which period I hope to gain spirits and see my friends with something like cheerfulness. Will you be in town next week? If so please come.’ Jenny attended the wedding with her father, writing later to Sydney Cockerell: ‘I have never forgotten […] our having to wait some time in a dismal little cell, where dearest father and I were witnesses’. The couple were presented with a set of Scott’s novels and ‘a charming bookplate designed and printed by the comrades of the Socialist Society as a wedding gift, with the message “From the Branch to its Flower”’. Marsh concludes gloomily that ‘[t]his seems to have been the single touch of romanticism in the whole affair’. MacCarthy gives a factual account:
In June 1890 May and Harry Sparling had finally been married, still to Janey’s lamentations, at Fulham Register Office. It was Jenny who signed the register as a witness with her father and wrote later of the lugubrious proceedings, entailing a long wait in ‘a dismal little cell’. At the time of the marriage Sparling was given paid employment by Morris, as secretary of the Kelmscott Press. A photograph of the Press includes May as well as Sparling, in a family group around Morris as proprietor.76

Philip Henderson’s comment includes another reference to Sparling’s appearance: ‘May’s marriage to the tall, thin, bird-like Halliday Sparling, one of the most ardent members of the Socialist League, was not of very long duration’.77

The couple’s honeymoon took place at Kelmscott Manor. On 20 June Morris wrote to May from Hammersmith about the visit he was about to pay to the Manor; on the Sunday he would fish, ‘and you could stand on the bank & chaff me’. Kelvin notes that Morris does not send his greetings to May’s husband.78 Not long after the marriage, in early 1891 Morris was working energetically on his last major undertaking, the Kelmscott Press, and the fact that he appointed Sparling as its paid secretary is evidence of confidence in him. The Sparlings went to live at 8 Hammersmith Terrace. Soon after, they invited Bernard Shaw, who claimed to be uncomfortable and unwell at home, to come and stay with them. Shaw later wrote his account of what happened; romance reasserted itself when he was invited to stay with the couple, in what he calls *a ménage à trois*. He comments: ‘[i]t was probably the happiest passage in our three lives’. However, it could not last; Shaw had either to consummate the Mystic Betrothal or vanish. He came to feel embarrassed by the part he was playing: ‘[t]o begin with, the legal husband was a friend whose conduct towards me had always been irreproachable. To be welcomed in his house and then steal his wife was revolting to my sense of honour and socially inexcusable […]. So I did not argue about it. I vanished.’79 It is evident that Shaw did not want to take on responsibility for the situation.

In June 1891 Sparling showed the breadth of his historical interests by publishing ‘The Mariners of England before the Armada’ in *The English Illustrated Magazine*.80 On 4 August, Morris was greatly entertained by a letter from James Joynes, as his reply showed: ‘I laughed so much at your letter to my business-man, that I had not strength enough to carry out my original intention of writing to you in character’. Kelvin suggests that this may be a reference to Sparling’s post at the Press, but offers no view of the reason for Morris’s amusement. On 23 September, Morris told Jenny: ‘I am going to give a dinner party on Friday to Ellis, Phillis and Cuthbert [children of Ellis] and Harry’.81 On a personal level, Jane told Blunt in October:
May has just called and I must say looks happier than formerly; so I will hope that she is happy in her own peculiar way. I heard this morning of another curious marriage [...]. It [young people’s attitude to marriage] is all a mystery I shall never seek to unravel in future.\(^{82}\)

In December Morris stayed with Jenny in Tunbridge Wells. May and Sparling came for Christmas and Jane wrote: ‘they both looked almost robust before they went away’.\(^{83}\)

Thompson saw the Kelmscott Press, in which Morris was becoming heavily and increasingly involved, as a relaxation from his political concerns.\(^{84}\) He quotes Sparling, who wrote in 1924 that for Morris the Press was ‘a personal experiment to see what could be done at his own expense in the way of producing a decent book’.\(^{85}\) Thompson evidently valued the account given by Sparling about his time at the Press, as, in a discussion of Morris’s ‘remarkable intellectual and imaginative fertility’, he quotes Sparling’s description of Morris at work in his study.\(^{86}\) The photograph at the start of the book, entitled simply ‘William Morris’, shows Morris at work in his study, and is by Sparling, with Walker as his technical assistant.\(^{87}\) At the Press, Morris had confidence enough in Sparling to appoint him to prepare reprints of three works by William Caxton. *The Recuyell of the Historys of Troye* by Raoul Lefèvre appeared on 24 November 1892, to be followed by Caxton’s translation of *The History of Reynard the Foxe* on 25 January 1893 and *The History of Godefray of Bolyone and of the Conquest of Jerusalem* by Guilelmus, Archbishop of Tyre, on 24 May 1893. Sparling recalled: ‘Caxton’s translation had a two-fold attraction for him: first and foremost as interesting story-books, and secondly as examples of strong and living, though rather formless, English; modern English in the making’. In addition, Sparling seems also to have been asked to edit an edition of Lord Berners’ translation of Froissart’s *Chronicles*, although the book was never produced. Sparling observed that ‘Froissart stood alongside Chaucer in the very front rank of his [Morris’s] cherished friends, and the Kelmscott Press *Froissart*, had it been completed as planned, would have challenged comparison – primacy, it may be – as a printed book with the *Chaucer* itself’.\(^{88}\)

Morris’s letters in 1892 indicate continuing closeness to the Sparlings. On 27 July he wrote to Jenny: ‘Walker couldn’t come to dinner yesterday, so I dined with the Ellises; May & Harry came through the door of communication [from next door] as we sat by the river after dinner. May seemed better I thought. They (the Sparlings) are coming to dinner tonight along with Walker.’ On 15 August, Morris told Jenny: ‘I lectured last night (in our place) & May & Harry were with me at supper; I thought May looking much better.’ On 29 August Morris wrote lyrically to Jenny: ‘[d]earest darling Child/ [...] Yesterday [...] I dined with May & Harry; and after dinner we
sat out a doors & watched the tide going up & the boats going about’. On 5 September Morris told Jenny: ‘yesterday I went to Uncle Ned’s in the morning & saw Crom; I then dined with May & Harry in company with Walker and Murray. Went to the Lecture in the evening where a Yankee spoke, and gave an amusing lecture concerning his native country to which he was nowise complimentary.’ From these letters and Shaw’s Diaries we get the impression of a very lively and sociable group associated with Hammersmith, including Morris, the Sparlings, Emery Walker, Philip Webb and others, as well as Shaw, working harmoniously for the socialist cause. But the developing closeness between Shaw and May undermined this harmony in 1892.

In his comments on the events included in the third volume of The Collected Letters of William Morris, dealing with the relevant period, Kelvin remarks that, strikingly, they contain no references at all to the engagement or the marriage: he concludes that ‘the probability is Morris committed to paper few or no words concerning May’s relations with Sparling and Shaw’. He feels that Morris would have found it difficult to ‘openly sympathise with Sparling, a somewhat hapless, devoted follower of himself, who had not been regarded with enthusiasm as a prospective son-in-law by either of May’s parents’. ‘Hapless’ – once again Sparling attracts a dismissive adjective. In his Introduction to the final volume of the Collected Letters, covering the years 1893-96, Kelvin finds the total absence of letters to May and of any material relating to her separation from Sparling even more difficult to account for. As a result, he thinks it ‘impossible to conjecture what Morris’s feelings were about the breakup […]. One cannot even know his thoughts about the role of his friend Bernard Shaw – for friend Shaw had become.’ Kelvin makes no direct reference to Sparling, who seems to have received no letters from Morris at the time.

At the end of 1892 a party went down to Kelmscott Manor for Christmas. In December Jane wrote to Blunt rather amusingly about the arrangements for this:

Jenny writes me herself that she feels well and is extremely happy at spending a Xmas at Kelmscott Manor, she has never been there in mid-winter before, so the novelty may have something to do with the great pleasure, several friends are gone down to make a jovial party. I hope I shall not hear of any deaths from cold, as no preparations were made for a winter stay.

Shaw recorded the visit in some detail, noting that ‘[t]he party at Kelmscott consisted of the Sparlings, myself, Morris, Jennie and Mary De Morgan’. On 22 December he recorded that ‘Sparling and I went for a walk before dinner’, while the routine was that ‘Sparling and I work all day in the green room’ and that after supper at half past seven ‘we all go up to the tapestry room and play at “20 Questions”’. On 24
December: ‘[f]rost harder than before […]. Took a walk with Sparling before dinner.’ Three days later Morris wrote to Joynes mentioning Shaw’s pride in having kept his bedroom window open despite the cold. May’s much later account of the Christmas gathering, in 1936, makes no reference at all to her husband: ‘[f]ather and myself were spending Christmas with Shaw and one or two other friends. It was perfect winter weather, with the snow-laden trees glittering against a blue sky.’

According to Holroyd, when Shaw’s rooms in Fitzroy Square were being redecorated in late 1892, Shaw found the atmosphere there repulsive and moved in with the Sparlings, staying until January 1893. Holroyd notes perceptively that ‘Shaw left [Hammersmith Terrace] less convincingly than Sparling. For, having gone, he often returned to Hammersmith, trying out his work, admiring her embroidery, reading poetry and playing all the evening with May.’ But in May 1893 Sparling put an end to the situation by leaving. Hesketh Pearson tells us:

Sparling […] thought Shaw had betrayed him. He told Holbrook Jackson (from whom I had it) that after completely captivating his wife Shaw had suddenly disappeared, leaving behind him a desolated female who might have been an iceberg as far as her future relations with her husband went.

Jane was distressed by the separation, as she told Blunt soon after it had taken place: ‘I have been in a heart-broken condition. May’s married life has come to an end, and although we always expected some catastrophe or other in that direction, the blow is no less heavy now it has come.’ Jane wrote again two days later, giving the facts of the situation without judgement:

May’s position is this, she has been seeing a good deal of a former lover, and made her husband’s life a burden to him, he refuses to bear it any longer – she is still abroad, but when she comes back they will go different ways.

Morris seems to have made no comment on the matter, and, as we have seen, remained on friendly terms with Shaw.

In June the bookseller Bernard Quaritch seems to have thought that Sparling had left the Kelmscott Press, and Morris wrote to correct him: ‘[y]ou are mistaken in supposing that there is any change in Mr. Sparling’s position in regard to the Kelmscott Press’. Kelvin can offer no explanation for Quaritch’s assumption; Sparling was to stay at the Press for a further year. In August May and Shaw attended the International Socialist Workers’ Conference in Zurich. According to Marsh, ‘Sparling apparently believed that Shaw and May had slept together’.

There are
numerous references to both Sparling and May in Shaw’s *Diaries* during the 1890s, but they are uniformly brief and factual. The last referring to Sparling is for 12 January 1894: ‘Fabian Semi-Public Meeting H.H. Sparling on “The Persistence of Classes under Collectivism”’. Shaw offers no opinion of the lecture, which seems not to have been published.

On the breakup of the marriage, Marsh’s view is that ‘one can only feel sympathy for May who, realising all too late that she had made a mistake in marrying Sparling, hoped to return to Shaw, her real and only love’. Is there no room for sympathy with the rejected husband? Pearson quotes Shaw’s view, which is actually more generous:

> Of the particulars of the rupture I know nothing; but in the upshot he [Sparling] fled to the Continent, and eventually submitted chivalrously to being divorced as the guilty party, though the alternative was technically arranged for him. If I recollect aright, he married again, this time I hope more suitably, and lived as happily as he might until his death, which came sooner than an actuary would have predicted […]. The beautiful one abolished him root and branch, resuming her famous maiden name, and, for all I could prove, abolished me too.

Thus in June Sparling went to live in Paris, while May stayed at 8 Hammersmith Terrace. Sparling clearly could not remain at the Kelmscott Press, and so Morris had to replace him; he was fortunate in being able to appoint Sydney Cockerell to do so in July.

Later in life, May made no mention of her short-lived marriage, and erased her signature as May Sparling from the Kelmscott Manor visitors’ book for 1892, 1893 and 1895, afterwards signing as May Morris. Interestingly and rather surprisingly, Morris’s diary for 18 August 1895 records: ‘H[arry] and M[ay] & Steele to dinner and Balcarres showed him the books’. Morris was considering buying a twelfth-century book and took the advice of the bibliophile Earl of Balcarres on the matter. Why Sparling and May should have been among the guests I am not sure; it would suggest that their separation was not acrimonious, of which there is some other evidence. A little later a photograph of the staff and friends of the Kelmscott Press, taken on 13 September 1895, includes Sparling, who was no longer working at the Press but was evidently still appreciated. In 1896 he returned from France to attend Morris’s funeral, staying with the family at Kelmscott Manor. Marsh explains:

> Harry Sparling returned to England for Morris’s last days and funeral – a mark of his respect – and stayed for over a month, spent mostly at
Hammersmith Terrace. This suggests no reconciliation – May doubtless moved back to Kelmscott House to support and assist her mother – although it is evident that there was no ferocious animosity as a result of the separation; indeed, it appears that Sparling was staying at Kelmscott Manor in the period immediately before Morris’s death, and perhaps helped with the funeral arrangements. At the end of October he left the country, returning to Paris.106

Ironically, it is at the time of this generous piece of behaviour by Sparling that we encounter the blackest mark on his record: he was believed to have taken some unbound copies of the Kelmscott Press Chaucer and Sigurd the Volsung to Paris, and ‘he was later accused of stealing and selling’ them. The trustees did not resort to prosecution, and so perhaps the dishonesty was on a small scale. According to Marsh, ‘[h]e denied the charge rather unconvincingly, and the matter was not pursued. “I agree with you that whatever Sparling had has been turned into cash long since”, wrote F.S. Ellis to Cockerell the following year’. Meanwhile, a Trust had been established for the Morris estate; in Marsh’s view, ‘it protected Jenny […] and protected May from any claim on her money by her husband’ – although there is no evidence that he wished to pursue any such claim. Marsh quotes Cockerell’s critical view of May as having ‘a dissatisfied attitude on life which interfered greatly with her happiness’, claiming that Sparling represented ‘a tiresome husband and a comfortable grievance’, which helped to justify her dissatisfaction. Marsh attributes this reflection to Cockerell’s ‘extremely buttoned-up personality’, asserting that May had ‘genuine difficulties and disappointments’.107

On returning from her visit with her mother to Blunt on his Egyptian estate in early 1897, May began divorce proceedings. Marsh notes: ‘[i]t was arranged with Sparling that she should present as the “deserted” wife, since to be the “guilty” party in a divorce action at the time was social death for a woman, even in progressive circles’.108 In February 1898 the divorce took place. Sparling continued to be politically active. According to Boos, ‘[a]s late as April 1892 Sparling was listed in Freedom as lecturing for the Hammersmith Socialist Society, but he became a Fabian in the same year, and as Fabian delegate to a socialist Unemployed Organisation Committee argued against “irresponsible” relief to the unemployed’. The 1895 Labour Annual described him as ‘now chiefly occupied with historical development of the Socialist movement’, and in the 1897 Labour Annual he was still listed in the directory of ‘Social Reform Lecturers’. In 1912 he published a lecture to the Organisation Society on ‘Needs and Ideals’, and in 1914 contributed an essay to the thirtieth-year commemorative issue of Justice, in which he advocated more study of applications of science at SDF branch meetings.109 Accounts of his last years are no clearer than
those of his early life. H.W. Lee in *Social Democracy in Britain* (1935) states that Sparling ‘died in Pasadena, California, a few years ago’, while Kelvin writes: ‘[i]n the late nineties, he [Sparling] returned to office work, this time in a Paris financial house. On retiring, he went to California, then returned to France shortly before his death.’\footnote{110} Hesketh Pearson assures us that ‘Sparling's second marriage, to a Scotswoman, was an extremely happy one’, though Sparling ‘never forgave Shaw for making it possible’.\footnote{111} The marriage certificate shows Elsie Agnes Stuart to have been born in Camberwell in 1877 and to have married Sparling in Brixton in February 1905; Sparling’s profession is given as journalist.\footnote{112}

Wherever he was at the end of his life, Sparling was able to write his book *The Kelmscott Press and William Morris Master-Craftsman*, his major contribution to Morris studies; it was published in 1924, the year of his death. The University of Reading have kindly made available to me the letters that Sparling wrote to Macmillan’s from two addresses in London between 15 February and 5 April 1924, and a final letter from France dated 2 August.\footnote{113} The London letters mostly concern the relationship with the Trustees and the financial side of the arrangement between Sparling and Macmillan’s; after some delay, they agreed on 2 April on a half-profit arrangement. The letter of 2 April expresses Sparling’s optimistic belief that the book will sell well, is likely to ‘overgo the 1400 of the first impression’ in England, and to do even better in the United States. On 11 March Sparling enclosed a revised version of the text, and insisted on the originality of his work:

I trust you will find that it is not merely improved but that it is less open than before to the charge that [it] is ‘founded upon’ the writings of Mr Cockerell or anyone else./ Even as it previously stood, it was wholly founded upon my own recollections of the Press and of William Morris as my friend and Master. What I took from Mr Cockerell were precise dates and definite figures for which memory was not an assured guide.

Sparling then tells how his experience at the Press until 1894 as ‘secretary, proof-reader, editor and general “handym an”’ gave him the knowledge on which the book is based. The last letter, from Angouleme (Charente) in France on 2 August, sadly reveals his failing health, but is enthusiastic about the illustrations:

Mr Emery Walker has been kind enough to send me duplicates of the illustrations submitted by him to you. With these I am sincerely delighted, and think that the photogravure of William Morris at his work table, the facsimiles of manuscripts written by him, as well as the exceedingly well-executed
reproductions of his designs, will very greatly increase the immediate demand for and the permanent sale of my book.

Instead of concluding with Sparling’s dignified signature, this letter is uniquely signed in a less impressive hand with the added initials EAS.

_The Kelmscott Press and William Morris Master-Craftsman_ was published by Macmillans in 1924, and reissued by William Dawson and Sons in 1975. In an epilogue to the first edition, the medievalist and friend of Sparling, Robert Steele (1860-1944), tells us that Sparling died ‘suddenly and painlessly’ while ‘putting the last touches to the work’, which was then seen through the press by Steele. The book is a credit to both men. Steele asserts that Sparling had long wanted to produce a work expressing his admiring memories of Morris, and that ‘it was a crowning pleasure to him that he should at last have been able to give them to the public in a form not unworthy of their subject’. This suggests that the book had been written recently, which is confirmed by the opening words of Chapter VI, ‘The Master-Printer’: ‘[N]ow that nearly thirty years have gone by since the Kelmscott Press ended its work and passed into history’. This may well come as a surprise to readers who would, I think, assume from the way that it is written that the writing had taken place soon after the Press closed, perhaps based on notes taken while Sparling had been working at the Press. However, Steele asserts that ‘the records of conversations with William Morris are not […] founded on notes taken at the time’, although he goes on to assert their authenticity: the book is ‘accurate and complete, and the spirit and honesty with which it is written is some measure of the effect produced on everyone who came into contact with William Morris’.

It is certainly remarkable that Sparling fails to tell the reader that he left the Press in 1895; the impression given is that he was working there throughout the time covered. We can only assume that Cockerell kept him well supplied with information after he had taken over from Sparling at the Press.

In the Epilogue, Steele declares himself pleased that Sparling had been able to arrange with the Trustees to include the four items that make up its Appendix, ‘A Note on his Aims in Founding the Kelmscott Press. By William Morris’, ‘A Short Description of the Kelmscott Press. By S.C. Cockerell’, ‘An Annotated List of the Books printed at the press. By S.C. Cockerell’, and ‘Various Lists, Leaflets and Announcements printed at the Kelmscott Press’. These certainly add to the value of the book. Sparling’s Preface tells us not only of the work that he accomplished while working at the Press, but shows his diligence in having consulted, in addition to the Trustees and Sydney Cockerell, Robert Steele, C.T. Jacobi, Frank Colebrook, Messrs. Joseph Batchelor and Sons in relation to the paper used at the Press, and W.J. Turney and Co. in relation to the vellum. It is because of Sparling’s conscientiousness about
these details that the book is so often quoted by later scholars as an accurate source of information about the Press. Sparling concludes his preface by stating that he is pleased by the coincidence that he has written this preface on the ninetieth anniversary of Morris’s birth at Walthamstow: ‘Prosit omen!’. It was not long after writing these words that Sparling died.

The book consists of eight chapters; it is organised chronologically, clearly written, and well illustrated in black and white. Each chapter combines factual information with lively reminiscences of the Master. In the first chapter, ‘The Idea Takes Form’, Sparling recalls how the idea of ‘Americanized’ spelling had once appealed to him, but that when he expressed his enthusiasm Morris accused him of ‘damnable pedantry’, ‘unforgivable ignorance’ and ‘incurable stupidity and blindness’. But Morris also explained on one occasion that ‘when a fellow damns your eyes, it only means, after all, that he disagrees with you for the moment’. In Sparling’s account, also in the first chapter, Morris did not like the idea of an artist waiting for inspiration, commenting:

Waiting for inspiration, rushing things in reliance upon inspiration, and all the rest of it, are a lazy man’s habits. Get the bones of the work well into your head, and the tools well into your hand, and get on with your job, and the inspiration will come to you – if you’re worth a tinker’s damn as an artist, that is!

The second chapter, ‘Printing in 1888’, is largely historical, and quotes Lethaby on the importance of ‘pen-written characters’. It ends with the interesting observation that in an article in 1883 the publisher Kegan Paul had remarked how good it would be if ‘some master of decorative art, like Mr William Morris, would take up printing’.

Chapter III concerns ‘Morris in 1888’, in which Sparling maintains that what Morris most enjoyed was work for its own sake. Thus we hear that Thackeray Turner of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings once found Morris ‘spotting’ the background of a design with dots, and asked why he did not get an assistant to do that. Morris replied: ‘[d]o you think that I am such a fool, after having had the grind of doing the design, as to let another man have the fun of putting in the dots?’. We also learn that Morris could not stand sentimentality in any form: ‘[a] “twittering female”, who thought she was pleasing him by professing to be “raised above the sordid cares” of her household by her absorption in music, provoked the rejoinder that “there is more art in a well-cooked and well-served dinner than in a dozen oratorios”; and an ecclesiastic who unctuously declared that he followed a saintly
example in being all things to all men, was told that what he really meant was readiness to be anything to any man. We are amusingly told in the same chapter that Morris was well aware of the distinction between fact and fiction, and was annoyed by a letter from ‘a fool of a German’ asking for the historical sources for *The House of the Wolfings*: ‘[d]oesn’t the fool realize […] that it’s a romance, a work of fiction – that it’s all LIES! Hasn’t the pedantic ass ever heard of creative imagination, or known an artist of any kind?’.

Chapter V is entitled ‘Preparation’, and in it Sparling argues that Morris was extremely thorough in getting himself ready to print, involving himself well beforehand in detailed negotiations about fonts, paper, vellum and ink. In Chapter VI, we encounter ‘The Master Printer’. Sparling quotes the pressman W.H. Hooper recalling the start of the Press:

> When the type came in from the founders, he [Morris] was very anxious to help lay it in the cases; but not having served his time in the business, more often than not put the type into the wrong box. It was very amusing to hear him saying to himself: “There, bother it, in the wrong box again!” But he was perfectly good-humoured, and presently ran off and came back, bustling up the path – in my mind’s eye I can see him now – without a hat, and with a bottle of wine under each arm, with which to drink the health of the Kelmscott Press.

Sparling offers comments on the books by Caxton produced at the Press. Two – the *Golden Legend* and the *Order of Chivalry* – were edited by F.S. Ellis and ‘were, as nearly as might be, textual and literal reproductions of Caxton’s editions’. The three other books – the *Historyes of Troye*, *Reynard the Foxe* and *Godefrey of Bolyne* – were edited by Sparling and ‘differently treated, as Morris wished them to be regarded as Kelmscott Press editions, and therefore to be amended where this was desirable. Caxton’s text was to be taken as a basis, but not looked upon as archaeologically sacrosanct.’

We are told that one of the presses was taken to the New Gallery for the Arts and Crafts Exhibition in October-November 1893, at which copies of Morris’s essay *Gothic Architecture* were ‘printed in public, under the eyes of an interested and constantly renewed crowd, whose presence imposed a severe strain upon the pressman Collins’s Celtic modesty’. Sparling is keen to bring the scene to life.

Chapter VII, ‘Books Printed’, offers a thorough chronological account of the work of the Press, which of course included many of Morris’s own books. In relation to *The Earthly Paradise* Sparling draws attention to a scholarly book about the poem by Dr. Julius Riegel entitled *Die Quellen von William Morris’s Dichtung “The Earthly Paradise”*. 
According to Sparling, it was a book that not only pleased and amused Morris but ‘taught him a great deal about his stories that he had not known before’.121 There is an entertaining reminiscence of Morris and his poem *Love is Enough*:

> On one occasion […] he electrified those present by snatching down the volume from his bookshelves, rapping upon it with a paper-knife, pointing to its title, and exclaiming: “There’s a lie for you, though ’twas I that told it! Love isn’t enough in itself; love and work - yes! Work and love, that’s the life of a man! Why, a fellow can’t even love decently unless he’s got work to do, and pulls his weight in the boat!”122

In the same chapter Sparling gives a lively if uncheckable account of the origins of *A Dream of John Ball*, which began publication in *The Commonweal* in November 1886:

> A serial story, to steady the circulation of the *Commonweal*, was badly needed, and Morris asked one of his helpers to write one, suggesting Wat Tyler’s rebellion as a fitting theme. Puzzled and offended by a refusal on the ground of a lack of the epic faculty, he thundered out: “Epic faculty be hanged for a yarn! Confound it, man, you’ve *only* got to tell a *story*!” Whether his vexation acted as stimulus or no, the idea remained but a few days in the “backshop” before he turned up at the *Commonweal* office, one Wednesday morning, with a first instalment which was at once rushed into type. The rest of the story was written from week to week (1886-1887) as required […]. In spite of, or because of, its propagandist motive […] no other of Morris’s tales invests its dream-theme with such home-like verisimilitude. And the speech made by John Ball at the village cross is not only an outspoken proclamation of Morris’s personal creed but one of the finest pieces of English prose that have ever been written.123

I find this story plausible, and I am certainly in agreement with Sparling about the quality of John Ball’s speech.

The final chapter, ‘Achievement’, offers less in the way of entertainment or information, and more in the way of argument. In it, Sparling criticises Charles Ricketts and other ‘would-be modernists’ for thinking that in typography, the letter, having to be cast in metal, owes no allegiance to handwriting. Sparling makes high claims for the Press in its own terms, but also argues that there are things that the conscientious commercial printer can do even under present conditions: he will pay attention to the spread of two pages rather than the single page, he will do away with
headlines, which are ugly and unneeded, and he will draw his publishers’ attention to the need for balance between letterpress and illustrations. Sparling is pleased that ‘set after set’ of the Press’s books ‘is finding a safe and accessible refuge in a library which is not a collector’s book-museum, or the private playground of a cataloguer, but a veritable home of learning, opened hospitably to the student’. This reader would like to believe that this is often the case, as it certainly is at Kelmscott House. Sparling argues convincingly that Kelmscott Press books do not provide ‘a model to be slavishly imitated’ but rather ‘a finger-post indicating the direction in which an advance may be made’. The eloquent final paragraph will be quoted later in my conclusion.

The book was given a mixed review in the *Times Literary Supplement* in January 1925 by R.W. Chapman. Chapman begins with the assertion that ‘[a]s a picture of Morris the Printer this book makes a vivid impression’. However, he then takes a critical line: ‘[b]ut apart from its biographical interest, most students of typography will find this a profoundly depressing book’ because it exhibits ‘the pathos of dead enthusiasms’. Sparling wrote as an uncritical disciple with no opinions of his own. He merely reasserts Morris’s views about printing, not seeing that ‘in many things Morris was wrong – wrong as an antiquary, wrong as a practitioner’. The design of the book shows how mistaken many of Morris’s practices were. These include the omission of headlines and of leading, and the provision of ‘very little space between words’. Chapman finds the effect ‘almost intolerably flat and monotonous’ – not at all my experience. Chapman admits that Sparling’s experience at the Press enabled him to write ‘with great authority on its history’ and that ‘he spared no pains in verifying his facts, so that ‘[a]s a bibliographical record, his book will be of real and permanent value’, which is enhanced by its inclusion of ‘an elaborate appendix’. The review thus shows an appreciation of Sparling’s scholarly contribution, while its comments on the points of typographical design criticise Morris (and Sparling) from the perspective of 1924, not necessarily shared by us in 2018.

An early unfavourable comment on the book is in a letter from Emery Walker to N. L. McMinn on 13 February 1928: ‘[Cockerell’s Note] gives the best account of his [Morris’s] activities as a printer. A book by H. H. Sparling on the Kelmscott Press […] has a reprint of the account; the book otherwise is not of much value.’ This judgement is surprising as Walker helped Sparling with the book, both in the proof-reading and the selection of the illustrations; he must have been disappointed with the result. Marsh calls *The Kelmscott Press and William Morris Master-Craftsman* ‘a dullish book, of interest mainly to Morris scholars, containing a few good anecdotes about William Morris and nothing about May’. This seems to me unreasonably negative – would we expect material about May? Gary Aho in *William Morris: A Reference Guide* gives some details about the book, stating that Sparling’s contact with Morris means
that ‘this study has significant details and important insights into WM’s achievements at the Kelmscott Press – and also some exaggerations: “as science must reckon with Darwin, so must art with Morris”’. Rather similarly, in his *Bibliography of the Kelmscott Press*, William Peterson offers an account of the sources he has used, citing Sydney Cockerell as the chief source. He then writes:

Another history of the Press with special authority is *The Kelmscott Press and William Morris Master-Craftsman* (1924) by Halliday Sparling, who was (briefly) Morris’s son-in-law and the first Secretary of the Press. Though ampler than Cockerell’s treatment, Sparling’s book does not carry the same intellectual weight and is weakened by the author’s eagerness to demonstrate that he is ‘an eager and adoring disciple’ of Morris (as he phrases it in his preface).

It was Sparling’s misfortune now to be contrasted with the scholarly and accurate Sydney Cockerell, as earlier he had been contrasted with the witty and vivacious Shaw. But do we have to consider Sparling’s admiration for Morris a limitation? Boos calls the book ‘an adulatory memoir’, adding that ‘the years with Morris may have been the best of his life, and if much of its commentary is derivative, Sparling’s own personal memories are lively and interesting’. As indeed they are. The derivativeness of the ‘commentary’ presumably refers to the earlier account by Cockerell, but whatever its source this information surely strengthens the overall effect of the book.

Writing on the Kelmscott Press in Linda Parry’s 1996 book *William Morris*, published in association with the exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum, John Dreyfus has similar reservations:

For help in various matters, Morris turned to his son-in-law, Henry Halliday Sparling, and gave him the title Secretary of the Kelmscott Press. Sparling was detested by his mother-in-law and not much liked by Sydney Cockerell who later took over his post and referred to Sparling as ‘a rather second-rate Socialist’. Morris and Sparling had been co-editors on *Commonweal*. Sparling edited three long Kelmscott editions published in 1892-3, but then resigned his position in July 1894 after his marriage to May Morris had collapsed. Cockerell became a far more effective Secretary and a much closer friend to Morris. He was a deft administrator […] He also helped to improve the accuracy of its texts.

On the accuracy of the texts, Peterson notes that these have been criticised, but this has been because scholars have found that they ‘fall short of the more exacting
modern editorial standards’ rather than for failures of proof-reading for which Sparling might have been responsible.\textsuperscript{132}

I shall conclude by quoting the final paragraph of Sparling’s book:

When the world has tired of its Moloch-worship, of enthroning the machine as its god and ruler, of accepting a mechanicalized commercialism as its philosophy of life, of sacrificing the natural beauty of the earth to its greed, of wasting the accumulated riches due to the creative powers of Man in the past, and frustrating all that these powers might effect in the present, it will turn to William Morris as to its prophet and guide. In him it will find a wise teacher, whose knowledge was rooted in experience and verified by practice, a man who wrought out his ideals in every walk and relation of life, leaving an unparalleled example of high endeavour and noble achievement, and yet was at no point remote from the ordinary man. For the ordinary man, indeed, if he but seek to do good work within the limits of his own craft, understanding that through his work alone can he realize himself at his highest, and that if his work be done in fellowship, not only is his work ennobled but he himself along with it, there is no recorded life which affords the encouragement and inspiration to be found in that of William Morris.\textsuperscript{133}

These are not the words of a helpless or hapless person.

\textbf{NOTES}


3. \textit{Ibid.}, p. 33. Mason may have taken the phrase ‘on the rebound’ from an article by Jan Marsh in which Marsh defended Jane’s unsympathetic attitude to May’s marriage on the grounds that ‘Jane knew that May did not love her prospective husband, Harry Sparling, whom she seems to have picked up on the rebound from Bernard Shaw’. See Jan Marsh, ‘The Defence of Janey’, \textit{JWMS}, 7: 3 (Autumn 1987), 18-22 (20). But it had been used already in 1966 by Stanley Weintraub as editor of \textit{Bernard Shaw: The Diaries 1885-1897}, 2 vols (University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1986), II, p. 904: ‘May’s marriage, contracted only on the rebound from Shaw’s declared aversion to matrimony, was now being eroded by his continuing presence’. Note for 7 February 1893. (Afterwards Weintraub).

4. Hulse, p. 34.


6. Hulse, p. 35.


Boos’s edition of Morris’s Socialist Diary first appeared in History Workshop Journal in 1982, and was published as a book by the Journeyman Press in 1985. The account of Sparling remains largely the same in the second edition except in what becomes a second paragraph, where reference is made to Scheu’s 1886 letter to Sparling, to Morris’s letter of recommendation for Sparling (7 June 1887) and to Jane’s letter to Rosalind Howard (31 June 1887).


15. Ibid., pp. 210, 214.


23. Ibid., p. xxix.

24. Ibid.


26. Boos, p. 161. In an email message from Florence Boos to the present author, dated 22 February 2018, Boos stated that ‘Sparling’s letters struck me as those of a competent and sincere, if not especially gifted, man’. This accords with my own impression of Sparling.


34. MacCarthy, pp. 553-54.

37. Ibid., pp. 604-5.
38. Ibid., pp. 613, 618.
39. Boos, pp. 74, 82.
41. Ibid., p. 634.
42. Ibid., p. 643.
44. Kelvin, II, pp. 640, 660, 664.
45. Ibid., pp. 665-66.
47. Holroyd, p. 226.
49. Ibid., p. 154.
53. Thompson, p. 500.
54. Hulse, p. 34.
55. Kelvin, II, pp. 744, 748, 768, 786, 796.
60. H. Halliday Sparling, *Men and Machinery* (printed and published by the author and sold by the Socialist League, December 1888).
61. Thompson, p. 292.
64. Sharp and Marsh, p. 179.
65. Kelvin, III, p. 46.
66. Thompson, p. 523.
68. Mason, p. 118.
70. Thompson, p. 566.
71. Kelvin, III, p. 163.
73. Quoted in Marsh, pp. 215-16.
74. The portrait bookplate by Walter Crane is reproduced in MacCarthy on p. 621.
75. Marsh, p. 216.
76. MacCarthy, p. 620.
79. AWS, II, pp. xxx-xxxi.
82. Sharp and Marsh, pp. 210-11.
83. Ibid., p. 226.
84. Thompson, p. 583.
86. Ibid., p. 37.
87. Photograph ‘William Morris’, frontispiece to Sparling, The Kelmscott Press. On 21 November 2017 I received the following message from Clare Freestone at the National Portrait Gallery: ‘Terence remembers the negatives as different from Emery Walker’s and probably passed to Walker to copy for reproduction […] so I think we can say that Sparling took the photographs, not as an assistant to Walker’.
90. Ibid., p. xxix.
91. Ibid., IV, p. xxi.
92. Sharp and Marsh, p. 238.
94. Kelvin, IV, pp. 485-86.
95. AWS, II, p. 601.
96. Holroyd, p. 228.
100. Marsh, p. 227.
102. Marsh, p. 228.
103. Pearson, p. 98.
105. Kelvin, IV, p. 304.
107. Ibid., pp. 236, 238-40, 236.
108. Ibid., pp. 236-37.
111. Pearson, p. 98.
112. The marriage was solemnised at the church of St. John the Evangelist, Brixton, London, on 21 February 1905.
113. Correspondence between Sparling and Macmillan’s in 1924, kindly made available to me by Tim Jerrome of the Museum of English Rural Life and Special Collections of the University of Reading. Individual letters are identified by their dates.
115. Ibid., p. vi.
116. Ibid., pp. 6, 10, 23, 29.
brings out the parallels and the differences between the two great printers. He discusses the five books published by both Caxton and Morris, quoting freely from Sparling’s account; he clearly feels no doubt as to its accuracy.


Ibid., p. 97.

Ibid., p. 100.

Ibid., pp. 103-4.


I am grateful to William Peterson for letting me know of this judgement in an email of 17 April 2018.

Marsh, p. 283.


Boos, p. 162.


Peterson, p. xxvi.

Sparling, p. 131.
Warington Taylor was business manager of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner and Co. – also known as the Firm – from 1865 until his untimely death from tuberculosis in 1870 at the age of thirty-four. This article seeks to correct several inaccuracies relating to the received information about Taylor regarding his name and background, to shed a clearer light on how he came to be engaged by the Firm and to provide a more complete and accurate account of his life than has previously been published. Further, it seeks to revise the notion that he retired from the Firm to Hastings due to ill health as early as 1866 and from then on merely managed the business from a distance as a manager in name only.¹

In the first volume of his Life of William Morris, published in 1899, J. W. Mackail introduces Taylor as ‘Mr. George Warrington Taylor, business manager of Morris & Company from 1865 until his illness and death at the beginning of 1870’, and notes that:

it was mainly due [to him] that the business became organized and prosperous. Mr Taylor was a Catholic, of good family, who had been educated at Eton and was afterwards for some time in the army; but he had been unfortunate in his affairs and was then almost penniless […]. In 1865 he was earning a scanty livelihood as a check taker at the Opera House in the Haymarket and gladly accepted a post under the firm. He was a man of great ability and sweetness of character, incapable of taking care of his own affairs, but shrewd and careful in the management of other people’s business […] a man who was not only a master of figures, but an expert in business methods.²

Mackail makes a couple of factual errors in this statement, starting with Taylor’s first name which we will learn was not George. Several subsequent biographers and
writers of books relating to Morris have repeated this mistake. Successive writers have also repeated Mackail’s second error regarding the nature of Taylor’s occupation at the theatre: he was not a check taker (usher) nor, as has been written, was he employed in the box office, as a cloakroom attendant or as a ticket collector. Neither was Taylor the son of a Devonshire squire, as Philip Henderson erroneously claimed. As a more complete account of Taylor’s life is given in this article each of these inaccuracies will be corrected. To start with his name: Mackail refers to him as George Warrington Taylor but no primary source material names Taylor as George: he signed his letters ‘W.T.’ or ‘Warington Taylor’, his baptismal record lists him as Warrington (spelled with two ‘r’s) Taylor, the entrance register at Eton documents him as Warington (with a single ‘r’) Taylor as does his army record. His marriage and death certificates record him as Alphonse Warington Taylor (see Figure 1). It is likely that Mackail either made a typographical error or confused Taylor with the two other Georges who were part of the Firm at the time: George Campfield, foreman of the Firm, and George Wardle, who joined shortly after the move to Queen Square as a draughtsman, bookkeeper and general utility man.

Thus, Taylor was not George: he was Warington with one r, at least in his professional life. However, his first name is stated as Alphonse on his marriage and death certificates and gravestone. Returning to Mackail, Taylor is described as a Catholic. He was not a Catholic by birth. Taylor was baptised into the Church of England on 15 November 1835 at St. John the Baptist Church in Croydon. Sometime between his departure from the army in 1856 and his marriage in the Roman Catholic Church of the Oratory, Kensington, on 21 August 1861, Taylor converted to Catholicism. It is likely that Taylor chose the name Alphonse as a Roman Catholic confirmation name. Usually the confirmation name is used as a middle name, but Taylor chose to place Alphonse as a forename. There are two Catholic saints with the name Alphonsus: St. Alphonsus Rodriguez (1533-1617) and St. Alphonsus de Liguori (1696-1787).

Mackail described Taylor as coming ‘of good family’, and Philip Henderson expanded on this observation in a later publication to include the claim that Taylor was ‘the son of a Devonshire squire’. This notion may have come from a letter William De Morgan wrote to Sydney Cockerell recalling, via Edward Burne-Jones, that Taylor was ‘the son of a country squire with acres’. Taylor was actually from a dynasty of wealthy Surrey gunpowder mill owners. Born on 25 August 1835 in Ewell, Surrey, he was the second son of Frederick and Frances Mary Taylor. His parents were both from affluent families: his father, Frederick, was the second son of William Taylor of Worcester Park, Surrey, and a twin along with his brother Barrington. Warington Taylor’s mother, Frances Mary, was the only child of Daniel Richard
Figure 1: Carte-de-visite (calling card) of Warington Taylor, 1860s, by Mayer Brothers © National Portrait Gallery, London
Warrington of Waddon, Croydon. It was his mother’s maiden name that gave Taylor his forename, although the forename was spelled with only one ‘r’, as shown above.

The Taylor family owned gunpowder mills in the area of Tolworth, Surrey, from 1720 to 1854. Taylor’s great grandfather, ship chandler and Putney gentleman William Taylor (Senior), purchased the lease of the Tolworth Gunpowder Mill in 1720 and built a new gunpowder works, known as Malden or Worcester Park Mill, on either side of the Hogsmill River. His gunpowder works must have been very successful as in 1750 William Taylor Senior was able to purchase the freehold for much of Nonsuch Park in which the gunpowder works were located, including the site of the mill. In 1774, at the age of twenty-one, William Taylor Junior (Warrington Taylor’s grandfather) took over the running of the mills, and in 1797 built a mansion on the land ‘under the superintendence of Mr Nash’ with around 400 acres.

After the death of his father, Frederick (Warrington Taylor’s father) took over the running of the mills until they closed in 1854 following an explosion. During the 1840s Frederick was a member of several management committees for newly formed independent railways across the country. It is unclear exactly when the Taylor family sold Worcester Park House, but in 1862 it was bought by the architect Sir James Pennethorne. Worcester Park House then gradually slid into decline until in 1948 the house burnt down. The name of Taylor survived in the area until recently in Taylor’s Shrubbery, a large wood in Kingston Road, Ewell, situated on either side of the Salisbury Road.

Taylor’s mother, Frances Mary Warrington, was the only child of Surrey magistrate and landowner, Daniel Richard Warrington. In 1798 Warrington was appointed a trustee of the Henry Smith Charities’ Deptford Estate, a trust for the benefit of the poor people of Croydon and in 1836 was President of the West Surrey Conservatives’ Association. Taylor’s maternal grandfather was a significant landowner in the Croydon area and Warrington Road in Croydon is named after him. Daniel Richard Warrington owned what was known during the nineteenth century as the Waddon Estate, an area now comprising part of Epsom Road, Warrington Road and Borough Hill. A Tithe Map of 1838 shows that land in the Epsom Road area of Waddon and Croydon was owned by, amongst others, the Archbishops of Canterbury and the Warrington family.

Taylor joined his older brother at Eton College in 1848 where the archives show his father and grandfather as former pupils. Taylor was only at Eton for two years and in 1850 he was sent to school in Germany. His time there left a lasting impression on him: as an adult he wrote enthusiastically to his friend the architect Edward Robson about the free thinkers of nineteenth-century Germany. Taylor also urged Robson to listen to musical recordings of the German composer Richard
Wagner (1813-83), who was not well known in England at this time.\textsuperscript{21}

After Germany, Taylor spent time in France at Dieppe as a pupil of the liberal Protestant Minister Rev. Jean Auguste Reville who ‘took young Englishmen into his house’.\textsuperscript{22} M. Reville was the father of Albert Reville (1826-1906), a pastor and distinguished Protestant theologian. This stage of Taylor’s education was perhaps a prelude to entrance into the Church of England. It was common in Victorian England for second sons of the landed gentry either to take Holy Orders or to join the army, with first-born sons destined to manage the family’s estate. Indeed, Taylor’s uncle (his father’s younger twin) Barrington Taylor, was curate of St. Giles, Ashtead, for forty-six years and chaplain to the inmates of the Epsom Workhouse from 1840-66.\textsuperscript{23} Taylor, however, chose to join the army.

His service in the military was short: he joined the 29th Regiment of Foot as Ensign, by purchase, on 20 January 1854 and was permitted to retire from service by the sale of his commission on 3 October 1856.\textsuperscript{24} The 29th (Worcestershire) Regiment of Foot was, from 1694 to 1881, an infantry regiment of the British Army serving in Burma and India. Taylor had two years of peace-time service as the regiment was between campaigns. On 23 June 1855 he was made a Lieutenant without purchase, an arrangement which would have secured him a profit.\textsuperscript{25} In March 1856, he was teaching troops at the School of Musketry at Hythe in the use and practice of the Enfield Rifle before their embarkation for foreign service.\textsuperscript{26} However, something about the army did not agree with Taylor and whilst based at the Chatham Garrison in October 1856 he resigned from service. Reasons for early release usually involved illness or lack of suitability for regimental life. From his letters in later life to Edward Robson and Philip Webb we know that Taylor was well read, fluent in French and German, and interested in architecture, theology, philosophy, music and the arts: it is likely that the narrow constraints of army life did not suit Taylor.

Upon leaving the army at twenty-one, Taylor was flush with money of his own from the sale of his commission and released from the constraints of battalion life. May Morris wrote that Taylor ‘got through his own fortune roaming about the world and enjoying himself’.\textsuperscript{27} We know from a letter that Taylor wrote to Philip Webb that he spent time in Hungary and Wallachia.\textsuperscript{28} How long he spent abroad is unknown. He does not appear in the records for the 1861 census taken on 7 April. He was back in England to marry twenty-one-year-old Fanny Florence Stent on 21 August 1861 in Kensington. Fanny came from humble origins: she was the eldest child of Henry Stent, a builder, and his wife Fanny. The Stents lived in Frome, Somerset, and had ten children. In a letter to Webb, Taylor described Fanny as ‘a woman of exquisite beauty with a heart full of love’.\textsuperscript{29}

The Taylors settled in London where in the early part of the 1860s Taylor started
to admire the work of the ‘Red Lion People’, as he called the partners of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner and Co. – the company’s headquarters being in Red Lion Square, Bloomsbury. Writing to Robson in 1862 or 1863 he noted that ‘the beauty of Red Lion woodwork is that you cannot say it has any style – it is original, it has its own style, it is in fact Victorian, it is individual’. Around this time Taylor began to make acquaintance with members of the Morris circle. A large ebonised wooden bookcase in the William Burges Collection at the Higgins Museum, Bedford, led Taylor to Rossetti, and then to Morris. Attributed to William Burges, the bookcase’s upper doors are gilded and painted with a processional frieze of figures personifying the signs of the zodiac. The figure for Capricorn shows a fool (or jester) riding a goat. In his book William Burges and the High Victorian Dream, J. Mordaunt Crook gives a fascinating account of the possible history of the bookcase suggesting that it had been owned by Taylor. Late in 1862 Taylor makes a brief appearance in Burges’s diary. A reference to ‘Taylor’s bookcase’ appears in the diary in January 1863, and at the same time Burges includes in his notebooks a sketch for a processional frieze, based on the German legend of a tailor riding a goat. Mordaunt Crook states that this may have been a preliminary draft for Taylor’s bookcase and suggests that Dante Gabriel Rossetti was the artist responsible for the painted panels on Taylor’s bookcase. Evidence comes from two quarters. Firstly, Taylor wrote a letter to Robson in which he states: ‘Rossetti has done my panels […]. The panels are superb.’ Secondly, the sixth figure from the left on these panels bears a striking resemblance to Rossetti. Evidence shows that Taylor and Morris knew each other as early as the latter part of 1862. In an undated letter to Robson, Taylor writes that the Firm ‘are getting out some wallpapers, flowers growing all over trellis work, naturally and birds in bushes, so jolly and no conventionalism’ – this was the Trellis wallpaper designed by Morris in November 1862 and printed by Jeffrey and Co. in 1864. In the same letter Taylor writes about a visit to Red House: ‘I went down to his place yesterday with the wife and I carried the baby five miles from Woolwich. Morris said he disliked flowers treated geometrically stiffly in patterns.’ Red House is about five miles as the crow flies from Woolwich and Taylor’s daughter – the above-mentioned babe-in-arms – was born on 7 May 1862.

At some time during this period Taylor became employed by Her Majesty’s Theatre, not as a check taker as erroneously recorded by Mackail, but as the theatre’s bookkeeper. Evidence for this comes from several quarters, most directly in a 1905 letter from Edward Robson to Georgiana Burne-Jones stating that Taylor was the bookkeeper at Her Majesty’s Theatre in the Haymarket. Other evidence comes in the form of a letter from Dante Gabriel Rossetti to William Allingham dated 5 July 1864 where Rossetti refers to ‘my friend Taylor of HM Theatre’. Rossetti, unable to
make use of Taylor’s two reserved pit tickets for a performance by the Italian soprano Mirella Freni, offers them to Allingham. Rossetti reassures Allingham that there is no ‘awkwardness about it, as my plan with him, at his own request, has always been to send friends if I wished, instead of going myself’. It would seem unlikely that an usher at the theatre would have the benefit of regular reserved tickets. In a letter from Webb to Rossetti, dated 4 March 1865, discussing Taylor’s proposed engagement by the Firm, Webb states: ‘his salary should not be allowed to be a penny less than he is receiving at present’. The business manager’s salary at Morris, Marshall, Faulkner and Co. would surely exceed that of a theatre usher. And finally, in a letter to Webb written during the late 1860s, Taylor refers to James Henry Mapleson, manager of Her Majesty’s theatre from 1862 to 1867, stating: ‘I once did the sauce thing for him’ – ‘sauce’ being slang for money.

In early 1865 Taylor was in dire straits. He had lost his job at the theatre and, as Mackail diplomatically writes, ‘he had been unfortunate in his affairs’. I do not think this refers only to his unemployment. As mentioned earlier, Mackail also described Taylor as ‘incapable of taking care of his own affairs, but shrewd and careful in the management of other people’s business’. May Morris notes that Taylor, after returning from his travels around the world, ‘inherited money a second time and dispersed that also’. It seems likely that during the years after his marriage and before his engagement at the Firm, in his enthusiasm for the arts and for beautiful furnishings, Taylor spent beyond his means. This, coupled with the loss of his job, was the misfortune in his affairs referred to by Mackail. In letters to Robson he writes about a large sideboard he wants Robson to design and a round table for ‘tea and muffins in plain waxed wood’. He also writes about his heavy coloured desk designed by Seddon. Commissioning such pieces of furniture would have been expensive and beyond the salary of a bookkeeper. From Robson we learn that Taylor had ‘quarrelled irretrievably with his father’, and so there was no safety net from his family. Robson makes no mention of what the quarrel was about but later, when Taylor’s wife left him, he wrote to Webb that he had ‘sacrificed all for’ her: his father did not approve of his bride.

In a 1905 letter to Georgiana Burne-Jones, Robson sheds light on how Taylor became engaged by the Firm. Robson moved to Liverpool in 1864 to become the city’s architect and surveyor and whilst visiting London during the early months of 1865:

I met AWT walking like an absent-minded beggar in Piccadilly. He had lost his position at the theatre and was in direst want, his wife at home starving. Doing what I could, as to temporary help, I wrote him from Liverpool asking him to come to me as Secretary. Just then I was trying to get some of Morris’s
glass and decoration for St George’s Hall and Morris came to me. On hearing what I proposed, [he] exclaimed decisively, ‘That won’t do. We cannot let Taylor go out of London.’ And it ended with the firm engaging him.44

Taylor was astonished by Morris’s offer and the generosity and kindness of Robson. He wrote to Robson:

The Red Lion Square affair takes me utterly by surprise. It appears that for some time they have had serious thoughts about me […] I think I must be able to throw regularity and business habits into their affairs, as also the deep interest I take in the firm would give me an earnest activity in them […] you know how utterly taken aback I am about this and you my dear good friend – best of friends – there are chances of my doing good service to the firm.45

Thus, Taylor’s engagement with the Firm no longer seems such an unlikely recruitment: he had professional skills and experience as a bookkeeper, he was known to Morris and other partners of the Firm as a man of culture and taste who deeply admired the work at Red Lion Square and, following Charles Faulkner’s departure into academia, he was in the right place at the right time.46 He was appointed on 3 March 1865 at a salary of £120 per annum and, as he wrote, he was very grateful for the chance of ‘doing good service to the firm’.47 Sadly, tragedy struck within a few months of Taylor joining the Firm. His only child, the three-year-old Maud, described as ‘much loved’, died on 6 May 1865.48 Her death certificate gives the cause of death as whooping cough. Death was a frequent visitor to the Victorian household: during the second and third decades of the nineteenth century nearly one infant in three in England failed to reach the age of five.49

Despite this painful event, Taylor took up his appointment at Morris, Marshall, Faulkner and Co. with as much enthusiasm as he could muster under the circumstances. Georgiana Burne-Jones recalled:

Within a few weeks of his appointment the rumour spread amongst us that he was keeping the accounts of the firm like a dragon, attending to the orders of customers, and actually getting Morris to work at one thing at a time.50

Taylor’s letters to Philip Webb regarding what he felt was wrong in the way the Firm was being run between 1866 and 1869 have often been discussed, and it is not the purpose of this article to recapitulate such discussions.51 In summary, Taylor felt that Morris was not charging enough for the work undertaken, that some of the partners
were behaving in an unprofessional manner, that deadlines were not adhered to and that there was insufficient capital investment. May Morris wrote of Taylor’s endeavours to introduce a more businesslike approach to the workings of the Firm: ‘there was perhaps an amateurish element in the conduct of the business of the firm in those days, and it was due to Mr. Taylor’s keen comprehension of the situation and the ability with which he pulled things together and put them on a firmer footing that the enterprise did not come to an abrupt finish’. According to John Bruce Glasier, Morris himself admitted that until Taylor came along he ‘never understood whether the business was paying its way or not’. During the mid-1860s Morris was not yet the accomplished businessman he was to become over the course of the next two decades. When Taylor joined the Firm Morris had a cushion of private wealth, through the shares his family owned in the Devon Great Consols mine, which gave him the freedom to pursue a Life of Art. In 1865 his annual income from these shares was £682 but by 1870 it had fallen to £187, giving him an impetus during the 1870s to make the business pay, and in early 1874 he would begin negotiations to reconstitute the business under his sole ownership. Sydney Cockerell recalled that Taylor’s well-intentioned advice about improving the workings of the Firm was gratefully accepted: ‘Morris and Webb always spoke gratefully and affectionately of Warington Taylor’. George Wardle remembered that in 1866 ‘certainly things were improving and always went forward afterwards’.

Fiona MacCarthy has described Taylor as a visionary. It was Taylor who as far back as 1862-63 saw the trend for functionality with lighter furniture: ‘what about moveable furniture – light Sir – something you can pull about with one hand’, as he put it in a letter to Robson. He admired the simple light-weight rush-bottomed Sussex chairs he saw at Morris, Marshall, Faulkner and Co.: ‘the old Sussex back chair, the common chair of Red Lion Square is essentially gentlemanly […] it possesses poetry of simplicity’. Until the mid-1860s, the furniture produced by Morris, Marshall, Faulkner and Co. had been dominated by the type Morris favoured: large, weighty, painted pieces inspired by the medieval period which, due to their massive size and price, were beyond the means of all but the well-to-do. As MacCarthy noted, it was Taylor’s achievement partially to readress the balance. The ebonised Sussex chair, first marketed in 1865, was within reach of those with a more modest income and would remain in production until the early twentieth century and, as Mackail noted, ‘of all the specific minor improvements in common household objects due to Morris, the rush-bottomed Sussex chair takes the first place’. It was also Taylor who was instrumental in what was to become known as The Morris Chair. This reclining chair was a furniture staple of the Firm until it closed its doors in 1940. Taylor found the prototype for the Morris Chair in the
workshop of an old carpenter, Ephraim Colman, in Herstmonceux, Sussex. He
sketched the chair and sent it to Webb who modified the design slightly. The Morris
Chair would go on to become immensely popular; indeed, it would become an icon
of the Arts and Crafts Movement and was copied by Liberty, Heal’s, and by Frank
Lloyd Wright and Gustav Stickley in the United States. Michael Hall notes that
Taylor, through a series of letters he had published in Building News in early 1865,
foresaw the way in which the Gothic revival was to evolve over the next decade and
beyond in a return to Englishness.

Taylor’s death certificate states he was diagnosed with pulmonary tuberculosis
sometime in 1865. It seems likely that the received idea that Taylor retired to Hastings
in 1866 and was business manager of the Firm in name only is, in fact, inaccurate.
Evidence shows that he was a regular physical presence at Morris, Marshall, Faulkner
and Co. for at least the next two years. Indeed, Taylor first convalesced at Hastings
in November 1866 but for at least the next eighteen months he spent only the winter
period recuperating on the south coast, and the rest of the time he was in London
engaged at first hand with the business. In a letter to Robson dated 27 October 1866
he writes: ‘I am off to Hastings at the end of this week – wife and self will remain
there during the winter’. It was common practice during the nineteenth century for
those suffering with tuberculosis to escape the often-lethal combination of London
smog – fog mixed with pollution – during the winter months, provided they had the
means to do so. It appears that Taylor was back in London by May 1867 as a letter
to Webb, written on 17 May, is addressed from the Firm’s address in Queen Square.
He was still in London on 12 October 1867, as another letter is addressed from his
lodgings at 190 Euston Road, and he is mentioned in William Allingham’s diary entry
for 16 October 1867, in which Allingham records that Taylor would not go away that
winter. Taylor also wrote a letter to Webb at the end of June 1868 from the Euston
Road address. In July 1868, he wrote to Webb from Bognor but was back in London
during October 1868 putting in time at the Firm when a terrifying incident occurred.
Taylor described the incident, a pulmonary haemorrhage, in a letter to Webb:

After leaving the offices today whilst walking for the bus I was seized with fits
of coughing and apparently broke a stomach blood vessel – threw up blood
copiously from stomach. Feeling of choking, it seems I better not come to
London any more nor leave home unattended. I was rather frightened. The
feeling of dying in the streets is rather a violent shock – let Morris know this
in a quiet way.

From the address given on his subsequent letters to Webb, Taylor remained in London
from November 1868 until his death in February 1870.

Further evidence that Taylor was a presence at the Firm after 1866 can be found through a great misfortune that occurred in Taylor’s marriage. On 30 June 1868 he wrote a frank letter to Webb explaining that his wife had been unfaithful to him with other lovers, and that she had left him.\textsuperscript{68} He reflected that ‘it was my fault I neglected her for my work I thought she would understand me – she did not poor silly child’.\textsuperscript{69} However, a few weeks later Fanny returned to Taylor.

Tuberculosis was an especially cruel disease if one was the chief breadwinner in the family, as was Taylor: as one’s condition declined, it became harder and harder to earn a living even as one’s expenses increased. It was necessary to find the money required to purchase medicines and to pay doctors’ fees, as well as to cover all the usual day-to-day living expenses. As his body wasted away, the image of degeneration haunted Taylor. He wrote to Webb as follows: ‘I have seen so much of down-the-road life, when a man begins to descend in the world he must have unusual moral in his backbone to keep him straight’. He referred to men in advertising sandwich boards: ‘sandwiches are often decayed gents. I did a good deal in the descending line myself.’ Taylor knew that the spectre of the workhouse was at his door. Were it not for the integrity and kindness of his employers and the fact that his father had reinstated his allowance, Taylor knew he might easily have ended his days in the workhouse. He wrote to Webb in a letter dated November 1868, after his family had given him an allowance of £150 per year:

I cannot help thinking how happy events have been that this illness did not happen before, for I must have died in the workhouse – my father’s affairs coming round just in time. He has been exceedingly kind to me and the shop have been to me as perfect angels of goodness.

To Webb, Taylor wrote: ‘I am afraid. Afraid at night – the violent coughing – the sickness every night now’ and ‘my most distinct desire is to end life decently’.\textsuperscript{70} In his last letter to Robson, dated October 1869, Taylor still had hope, but the direction of his hope had changed:

Many thanks for your kind note. As to myself I am one day very ill, the next a little easier – go from bed to sofa – it is long lingering, a sore trial to patience and perseverance. Sympathy my own friend is valuable and right good when subjected to will and duty. I hope and hope for the release of the soul from matter and for peace, rest – the peace I yearn for and fear for but hope – the one thing that holds one – hope.\textsuperscript{71}
Taylor died, aged thirty-four, on 12 February 1870 at his home in Turnham Green. According to probate records he left ‘effects under £6,000’. His funeral and other expenses of £89 19s were paid by the Firm and personally by Philip Webb. Webb designed Taylor’s gravestone made of Portland stone. Six months and one day after Taylor died Fanny married again to a Walter Wieland, described as a gentleman on their marriage certificate. Sydney Cockerell noted a conversation about Fanny with William Rossetti in 1915, writing cryptically that she ‘came to a miserable and shameful end ten or twelve years after Warington Taylor’s death’. Cockerell’s allusion to Fanny’s ‘shameful end’ can perhaps be explained with reference to the 1881 census where she is recorded as living in a cottage in Millbrook, Hampshire, with a gardener from Hammersmith, nine years her junior. The ‘miserable’ part is likely solved via Fanny’s death certificate: she died on 9 August 1885, aged forty-four, the cause of death listed as cirrhosis of the liver certified twelve years.

NOTES
15. Jackson.
21. Ibid., XXIII 12.
22. Ibid., XXIII 27.
23. 'The Epsom Workhouse', Epsom & Ewell History Explorer, available online: <http://www.epsomandewellhistoryexplorer.org.uk/WorkhouseEpsom.html> [last accessed 17 August 2018].
29. WT to PW, dated 26 July 1868, NAL, MSL/1958/691/59/77.
30. BJP, XXIII 14.
33. BJP, XXIII 7.
34. BJP, XXIII 4.
35. BJP, XXIII 1.
37. PW to Dante Gabriel Rossetti (DGR), 4 March 1865, UBC Angeli-Dennis Collection.
40. CW, V, p. xix.
41. BJP, XXIII 3A; BJP, XXIII 4.
42. Ibid., XXIII 6.
43. Ibid., XXIII 1.
44. Ibid., XXIII 1.
45. Ibid., XXIII 20.
52. CW, V, p. xx.
57. MacCarthy, p. 209.
58. BJP, XXIII 7.
59. Ibid., XXIII 19.
60. Burdick, pp. 69-70.
62. Mackail, II, p. 44.
66. BJP, XXIII 29.
67. W T to PW, October 1868, NAL, MSL/1958/691.
68. W T to PW, 30 June 1868, NAL, MSL/1958/691.
69. W T to PW, undated, NAL, MSL/1958/691/52/70.
70. W T to PW, May 1868, NAL, MSL/1958/691.
71. BJP, XXIII 33.
72. Lethaby, p. 60.
74. Cockerell, p. 9.
Among the tasks facing editors of the correspondence and diaries of notable individuals whose papers merit publication, few can be as unenviable as identifying minor characters whose lives are not well known and who only make fleeting appearances. Editorial efforts to provide accurate and comprehensive references often run aground as sources dry up and one must make decisions about the value of spending a disproportionate number of hours digging in the archives to clear up seemingly minor details.

This is certainly the case when researching the lives of many branch activists of the Socialist League whose names crop up in newspaper reports – such activists are listed as speaking at meetings and leading demonstrations, and as correspondents. It is often difficult to piece together more than a flimsy biographical outline of the individuals involved. Even when they are referred to in autobiographies, biographies and correspondence of the leading League figures, it is usually only in passing with no indication given of the particularities – political stance, speaking style, physical description – of those concerned. E.P. Thompson’s study of Morris offers more than most in this regard and Florence Boos’s exemplary set of ‘Biographical Notes’, included as a guide to William Morris’s *Socialist Diary*, is the best we have, but there is still much that can be done. Further biographical studies would tell us a good deal about the social class basis of the League’s membership, the nature of local political work undertaken and the affiliations of those involved in the years following the demise of the League, all subjects about which we know surprisingly little. Of particular interest to readers of this *Journal* would be evidence of how former League members carried forward the ideas and example of Morris in the years after his death. Such studies would not necessarily be comprehensive in all cases, the source material sometimes being so thin that firm conclusions cannot be made, as with the subject of this essay.
Figure 1: This illustration accompanies Hubert Bland’s article in the Sunday Chronicle of 14 July 1895. We have no way of knowing how close a likeness it is to the real Annie Taylor as no photograph of her has been found. Courtesy of the British Library.
Both Norman Kelvin and Stanley Weintraub encountered the problem of identity when they almost simultaneously published, respectively, William Morris’s *Collected Letters* and Bernard Shaw’s *Diaries* for the 1880s, and tried to single out the socialist activist Annie Taylor, known to both Morris and Shaw.\(^{3}\) Weintraub, in particular, suffered agonies noting that during the 1880s Shaw knew ‘four Mrs. Taylor’s’, but hopelessly confused them and, at one point, referring to one of Shaw’s meetings on 12 July 1885, noted that ‘Mrs. Clementia Taylor of Westbourne Park, London, was a Socialist League member was later a participant in the “Bloody Sunday” demonstration in Trafalgar Square’.\(^{4}\) In fact, Clementia Taylor was a long-term radical, women’s rights advocate and one-time Kensington resident who had for a number of years lived in Brighton, but she was never a Socialist League member. The Mrs. Taylor whom Shaw actually met was Annie Taylor who lived in rooms at 9 Griddleton Road, St. Peter’s Park, a district made up of well-to-do houses north of Harrow Road in west London.

One of the earliest recruits to the Fabian Society when she joined in October 1884, Annie Taylor was a regular at their weekly discussion meetings where she came to know Fabian pioneers Hubert Bland, Frank Podmore, Edward Pease and, of course, Shaw, who had been admitted during the previous month.\(^{5}\) In February 1885 Taylor joined the Socialist League and was attached to the Bloomsbury Branch when it was established in March.\(^{6}\) It was on her travels to and from the League’s office in Farringdon that she was often accompanied by Shaw who, although not a member of the League, was a regular attendee and speaker at its public meetings. Shaw’s short diary entries record a number of journeys and conversations with Annie Taylor but he does not provide any colour to these brief sketches.

As a member of the League’s Hall Committee that organised lectures and concerts at the headquarters, it is likely Taylor contributed significantly to its arrangements of social events where she was a frequent performer as pianist and singer, on one occasion in September 1885 dueting with May Morris.\(^{7}\) An open-air speaker for the League in the period of its free speech fights, Taylor, along with David Nicol and James Allman, had her name taken by the police at a Harrow Road pitch in August 1886, earning Morris’s ire because he believed it to be ‘very stupid of them, as we agreed not to be there at the present’.\(^{8}\) Taylor was present again at Harrow Road the following week when League speakers from the Marylebone, Bloomsbury and North London branches attempted a marathon display from the platform in defiance of police interference. Reporting on this for *Commonweal*, Fred Henderson wrote that after Thomas Wardle’s hour-long speech: ‘Mrs. Taylor followed with a telling contribution for some time’.\(^{9}\)

Following a short period in the Clerkenwell branch of the League where she acted
as secretary in the summer of 1887, Taylor rejoined her Bloomsbury comrades following a move to 94 Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square. From there Taylor was caught up in the agitation opposing the decision of Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Sir Charles Warren, to close Trafalgar Square to public meetings, and she became a noted participant in the events that became known as ‘Bloody Sunday’. With an estimated six thousand people who gathered at Clerkenwell Green at two o’clock on Sunday 13 November 1887, Taylor listened to speeches from a representative of the Home Rule Union and the Green’s own Patriotic Club condemning the imprisonment of Irish MP William O’Brien and ‘other Irish patriots’. Morris, Shaw, Edward Aveling and Annie Besant also spoke, challenging the closure of the Square to public meetings and asserting the right to free speech. The reporter for the *Daily News* intimated that Taylor also spoke from the wagon but this is not confirmed in other accounts.¹⁰

At quarter past three the Clerkenwell procession, one of several approaching the Square from the various quarters of London, set off along Clerkenwell Road. Led by members of the local radical clubs who were instrumental in calling the protest, the demonstrators continued along Theobald’s Road, crossed New Oxford Street, Shaftesbury Avenue and into the streets of Seven Dials. As the front of the procession reached Long Acre they were met by a strong contingent of policemen who forbade any further progress towards the Square. When it became obvious that the protestors would not disassemble, the policemen charged the procession swinging batons and truncheons. Morris observed that the police attack at this point was premeditated, as it was ‘clearly the best place for it’. He continued:

> The divergence of the streets would confuse any procession which had lost its rallying point; the side streets and the width of the thoroughfare at this spot gave a good opportunity for a flank charge, and at our rear was [the] open space of Shaftesbury Avenue to allow a charge in that quarter to finish up after the attack on the front and the flank.¹¹

Annie Taylor and her Socialist League comrades were marching near the front of the procession as her fellow Bloomsbury branch member William Bartlett described in a note published in the *Pall Mall Gazette* the following evening:

> I was one of the standard bearers, and was marching in company with a lady, Mrs. Annie Taylor, and some others who, like myself, were members of the Socialist League, in the front ranks of the procession, and was at the top of Great St. Andrew Street, when an attack of the most brutal character was
made by the police upon some part of the procession a few yards to the rear of us. We halted to allow the disorganised body to reform, when some constables came up and made an unprovoked and dastardly assault upon us who were in front. The lady just mentioned, who was carrying a standard, was struck down first, by a ruffianly constable whose number I have taken. I held out my banner in front of the policeman who had knocked her down and I exclaimed ‘you cowardly ruffian,’ whereupon another constable gave me a terrific blow upon the head with his truncheon, which felled me to the ground and caused a terrible scalp wound upon my head, which bled profusely.12

The presence of Annie Taylor and the treatment meted out to her by the police attracted some comment: Annie Besant, writing in her own publication *Our Corner*, noted how Mrs. Taylor had been struck on the side of her head; Walter Sichel, editor of *Time*, noted her participation and described her as the ‘Charlotte Corday of the insurrection’; and Shaw, in typically caustic tone, remarked to Morris how ‘[t]he police charged us the moment they saw Mrs. Taylor. But you should have seen that high hearted host run.’13

It is almost certain Taylor supported Bloomsbury comrades Eleanor Marx Aveling and Edward Aveling in their call at a delegate meeting at the Patriotic Club the Wednesday after ‘Bloody Sunday’ that they return to the Square the following Sunday. This, however, was defeated because the majority of delegates sent from the radical clubs believed this to be foolhardy and instead supported a protest in Hyde Park.

A more militant stance was taken by the Law and Liberty League, formed in the immediate aftermath of ‘Bloody Sunday’, to represent demonstrators appearing in court, support their families and campaign for the lifting of the banning order. Along with fellow Bloomsbury Leaguers Lena Wardle, her son Thomas, Sarah Gostling and Bartlett, Taylor played a full part in supporting attempts to establish local committees, known as Vigilance Circles, to mobilise a physical and ideological challenge to the Metropolitan Police.14 And when, during the summer of 1888, the Law and Liberty League endorsed the tactic devised by MP William Saunders, of ‘conversazione’ or ‘promenade meetings’ in the Square on Saturday afternoons, Taylor was there. This ingenious method of protest involved individuals moving around the Square and at four o’clock gathering together in small groups to vote on prepared resolutions, such as that put on 30 June that ‘the government of London, by proclamation, without the sanction of law, is an outrage upon liberty and a gross breach of trust on the part of the government’. As the clock of St. Martin’s in the Fields Church struck on the quarter of an hour further resolutions were read including opposition to British rule
in Ireland, a denunciation of class privilege and support for MPs speaking out against the ban on meetings in the Square.

Sir Charles Warren was disturbed by these gatherings and during July he pressed the Home Secretary to bring charges of incitement to riot against three MPs participating in the protests, Robert Cunninghame Graham, William Saunders and Charles Conybeare; for good measure, Warren added Rev. Stewart Headlam’s name to his list. Aware that Warren was spoiling for a fight – ‘the forbearance of the public has hitherto been stronger than the aggravation of the police’ – the Law and Liberty League issued clear guidance to those attending the ‘conversazione’ events: ‘[v]isitors to the Square should join not the largest group which they might see but the smallest. The police have no legal right to remove persons who are not obstructing traffic, or committing some other legal offence, and no person who is wise will afford the police grounds for attack.’ In spite of this, skirmishes did occur when the police attempted to break up the informal gatherings and arrests were made. One such incident occurred on 30 June when Antonio Borgia, a Patriotic Club member and Vigilance Circle coordinator for Clerkenwell, alleged assault by a police constable on his person and, with the support of MP Charles Conybeare, took out a prosecution against the named officer. When the case was held at Bow Street Magistrates’ Court in July both William Bartlett and Annie Taylor testified to the manhandling of Borgia.

Figure 2: An illustration from The Graphic: An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper of 19 November 1887 identifying ‘Mrs. Taylor, a socialist woman leader’ seeking to keep aloft the red banner in a struggle with a policeman. The caption reveals that ‘Mrs. Taylor was carried away in a fainting condition.’ Courtesy of the British Library.
Unsurprisingly, the case was dismissed.\textsuperscript{17} Taylor, meanwhile, maintained her presence in the Square and was keen to tell Bartlett at the end of July that although she could not make the next protest she hoped he would do his best ‘not to allow any excitement to take place in the Square till I come back as it would grieve me to the heart’s core to be out of it’.\textsuperscript{18}

Taylor’s enthusiasm for the struggle, physical bravery and willingness to speak in the open air for the League meant she received invitations and we find her on the platform with Morris in Victoria Park in June 1888 and then a month later at Walham Green for the Hammersmith branch.\textsuperscript{19} She also spoke regularly for her own Bloomsbury League branch and then the Bloomsbury Socialist Society when it seceded after the League’s fourth conference in May 1888. Although a supporter of the decision to break away from the League and establish an independent socialist society in Bloomsbury where she remained active until at least the summer of 1893, Taylor continued to offer her speaking and musical talents for League activities and made a notable appearance alongside Morris at the concert and ball at the Farringdon Road hall in June 1889.\textsuperscript{20}

In common with her Bloomsbury Socialist Society comrade Eleanor Marx Aveling, Taylor was inspired by the wave of struggles by ‘unskilled’ workers during 1888 and 1889, and in the first months of 1890 she was instrumental in establishing a new trade union for women workers, the Women’s Union, of which she became general secretary. Now living in two rooms at 2 Harrington Street, Regent’s Park, Taylor travelled daily across London to the Women’s Union city office in Aldersgate Street. By March the union was able to announce its arrival with a statement that it would work to ‘forward the interests of female workers in all trades. The alarming indifference shown towards the wrongs of our sex by the labour representatives of the legislature has compelled us to at last stand upon our defence. We have been too long the downtrodden of the world, therefore we ask all those who would see the sunny side of life to join us.’\textsuperscript{21}

Working with Edith Lupton and Gertrude Guillaume-Schack, both experienced campaigners and members of the Socialist League on its anarchist wing, Taylor helped to organise four hundred women envelope makers employed by the firm Fenner and Appleton of Clerkenwell, and at the end of April 1890 to bring them out on strike against wage cuts, the introduction of juvenile labour and insanitary working conditions. Hundreds of the women strikers participated in the Hyde Park gathering on 1 May organised by the National Federation of all Trades and Industries, and then the ‘monster’ demonstration on 5 May initiated by the Gas Workers’ Union and the Bloomsbury Socialist Society. At the second demonstration Taylor spoke for the Women’s Union from platform five, supporting the demand for the statutory eight-
hour working day as an incursion into the capitalist system which ‘was nothing but white slavery, and was a disgrace to Christianity, humanity and freedom’. Taylor made successive appearances on the platform at May Day demonstrations until 1893.

During the strike the envelope makers experienced some heavy handling by the police as they picketed the works and collected money on Clerkenwell Green. Lupton believed these to be deliberate acts of intimidation which she aired in the press and encouraged sympathetic MPs to do likewise in Parliament. The rough treatment probably strengthened the determination of the strikers who within two weeks had forced Fenner and Appleton to concede all the union’s demands. For the next three years the union attempted to broaden its membership base beyond the envelope makers with little success and by 1894 it had ceased to operate.

The passing of the Women’s Union coincided with the disappearance of Annie Taylor from reported socialist and trade union activity in London. Hubert Bland, who had known Taylor since 1884, wrote of her in one part of a series of articles for the *Sunday Chronicle* based on his memories of the early socialist movement. Bland avoided mentioning her name but Annie Taylor’s identity is unmistakable from his reference to the events of ‘Bloody Sunday’. According to Bland’s biographer, he was an ‘amusing, sharp-eyed, and pithy commentator of his times’, qualities well displayed in the paragraph on Annie Taylor which is worth quoting in full because it provides a vivid physical description of the woman of whom no known photograph survives. Bland wrote:

I remember very well one lady who was quite a feature of the meetings of the Socialist League and the Fabian society. I think I had better suppress her name, but she was just the last sort of person one would expect to meet in a movement of a quasi-political character. Her age was an unsolved problem: for, while her dress and manner said twenty-five at most, her features said twenty years more at least. She had quite an inordinate affection for face powder, with which she plastered her skin as thickly as does a clown at a circus. She was always gorgeously arrayed in silks, in furs, jewelled rings and broaches. Indeed, she gave the impression of an Indian idol, so thickly were gems of all sorts hung about her person. But the most wonderful thing of all was her boots, which on the muddiest of days were patent leather, and fitted like a glove – a tight glove. She was strong, too, in the matter of stockings, generally bright of hue with embroidered clocks. These she exhibited with praiseworthy impartiality. She was mostly attended by a cavalier of about half her age, a towzled-haired, slouchy young man, whose means of subsistence were a mystery to his nearest and dearest. The lady’s husband was said to be in India.
This particular lady was a devoted adherent of revolutionary socialism. She distinguished herself a heroine on ‘Bloody Sunday’, when democratic London assaulted Trafalgar Square. At the head of the procession she carried a red flag, and fought a hand-to-hand contest with the mounted police for its possession. But alas, for the chivalry in uniformed officialdom. It is said the modern Joan of Arc was rolled over in the mud, and the cherished emblem of revolt was torn from her reluctant clutches. But she fought to the last gasp, and for one delirious and dramatic moment her pink silk stockings were the oriflame of war. The towzled-haired young man, I believe, had business elsewhere on the fateful day. 26

Bland, a notorious libertine, who his daughter said was ‘absolutely irresistible to women he paid court to, not only before the event of capture but after’, was clearly interested in Annie Taylor’s physical appearance and apparel as well as her revolutionary socialism, and one detects a certain frisson in the writing. 27 The passage is also interesting because it provides the firmest documentary lead in tracing Annie Taylor’s life before and after her London socialist years.

Bland’s reference to Taylor’s husband being in India makes it likely, although not absolutely certain, that Annie Taylor was Anne Cordelia Taylor (nee Philipps) who had married James Best Taylor, a captain in the Madras Staff Corps. Born in Edinburgh in November 1843, Anne Cordelia Philipps was the daughter of John and Ann Philipps. By 1850 Anne Cordelia’s father had become Commissioner to the Earl of Moray and was living in the large St. Colme House on the Earl’s estate. Anne Cordelia first met James in 1869 in Scotland and in March 1870 they were married in Marylebone, London. A few months later the couple moved to Madras where James resumed his army career. Between 1870 and 1878 the couple had five children, but only four survived beyond infancy. In 1878 Anne Cordelia returned to Scotland because of ill health, first to Dunfries, then Portobello and finally Edinburgh where a family house in Saxe-Coburg Place was taken for her and the four children. James travelled to Edinburgh on leave, arriving in March 1883 to discover that for some time Anne Cordelia had been having an affair with a twenty-six year-old tram driver, William Fyfe, and that together they had had a child, born in November 1882. Following this disclosure, Anne Cordelia left the family home to live with Fyfe and soon after the couple moved to Sunderland. It is likely the son, almost certainly named William like his father, lived with the Fyfe family in Duddingston, Edinburgh. James immediately sued for divorce on grounds of adultery, bringing the matter to public attention.

The divorce dragged through the Edinburgh courts in the summer of 1883 and
appeared to be reaching a conclusion in October when unexpectedly reconciliation was agreed and the case withdrawn from the legal system. No clear details are available of the settlement between the two parties but we know Anne Cordelia was in receipt of £102 per annum under the contract of marriage and it is possible she received more. While not wealthy, Anne Cordelia was for the rest of her life able to live without paid work and to describe herself as ‘living on her own means’.

Following the settlement James returned to India where he was promoted to the rank of colonel before retiring and settling in England with his children. He died in 1917. Anne Cordelia disappeared from public record for the decade after the settlement. However, in 1884 Mrs. Anne C. Taylor emerged in London and became active in the early socialist movement. Soon Mrs. Anne C. Taylor became more commonly known as Annie Taylor.

Anne Cordelia did not make an appearance in the 1891 Census, while an Annie Taylor, socialist, did. She is listed as residing at 2 Harrington Street, Regent’s Park, and ‘living on her own means’. If these women are one and the same, she continued the habit of misreporting her years begun in the 1881 Edinburgh census, telling the 1891 census enumerator that she was thirty-five years old and had been born in Hampshire. If we take Bland’s approximation of Annie Taylor’s age as credible, a birth date of 1856 seems unlikely and it is possible she was also covering her tracks by disguising Scottish origins. We will probably never be certain. Anne Cordelia resurfaced in 1900 living on a private income in Boston, Massachusetts, giving her age as forty-seven years, when, if she was Annie Taylor, she was most probably fifty-six years old. She returned to England in or around 1902 where, at her demise in Lyme Regis in October 1912, her death certificate recorded her age as sixty-two years, when she was really sixty-nine years old.

Doubtless readers will detect the irony in leaving Annie Taylor’s identity uncertain in an essay that began with a gentle rebuke for those who have been confused by the proliferation of ‘Mrs. Taylors’ in the orbits of William Morris and Bernard Shaw. Conclusive evidence to support the contention that Annie Taylor, depicted famously in a contemporary illustration bravely fighting to retain her grip on the red flag on ‘Bloody Sunday’, and Anne Cordelia Taylor, wife of an Indian Army officer, of independent means, and leading an independent life following her affair with a tram driver many years her junior, were one and the same person is tantalisingly absent. The best we can say is that it is likely on the basis of the evidence available.

Nevertheless, we can be sure that Annie Taylor of the Fabian Society, the Socialist League, the Bloomsbury Socialist Society and the Women’s Union laboured for nearly a decade in the socialist movement of London where she made her mark and was noticed. Bernard Shaw’s description of Annie Taylor as a ‘high hearted host’,
somehow belittles the idealism and comradeship that socialists from all class backgrounds held to in the heady days of the movement’s revival during the 1880s. That she shared this idealism is undeniable and was well expressed in her sign-off in letters to friend William Bartlett: ‘Yours in the Cause, Annie Taylor’.29

NOTES
6. Archive of the Socialist League, International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam, 166.
7. The Archive of the Socialist League includes many handbills advertising social events featuring ‘Mrs. Taylor’, ‘Mrs. A.C. Taylor’ and ‘Annie Taylor.’
9. ‘Branch Reports,’ Commonweal, 2: 34 (4 September 1886), 183.
18. Annie Taylor to W.W. Bartlett, 26 July 1888, University of Sussex Special Collections, W.W. Bartlett Collection, Correspondence, 23.
21. ‘To the Women Workers of all Trades’, Pall Mall Gazette, 7 March 1890, p. 6; ‘A New Women’s Union’, The People’s Press, 22 March 1890, p. 8.
24. ‘Cards, Chromos & c’, *The Stationery Trades Journal*, 20 May 1890, p. 278.
28. This account is based on the file in the National Archive of Scotland, CS46/1883/12/14/1, *the Scottish Law Reporter* (Edinburgh: John Baxter, 1883-84), XXI, pp. 18-20, and reports from Edinburgh and Sunderland newspapers.
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