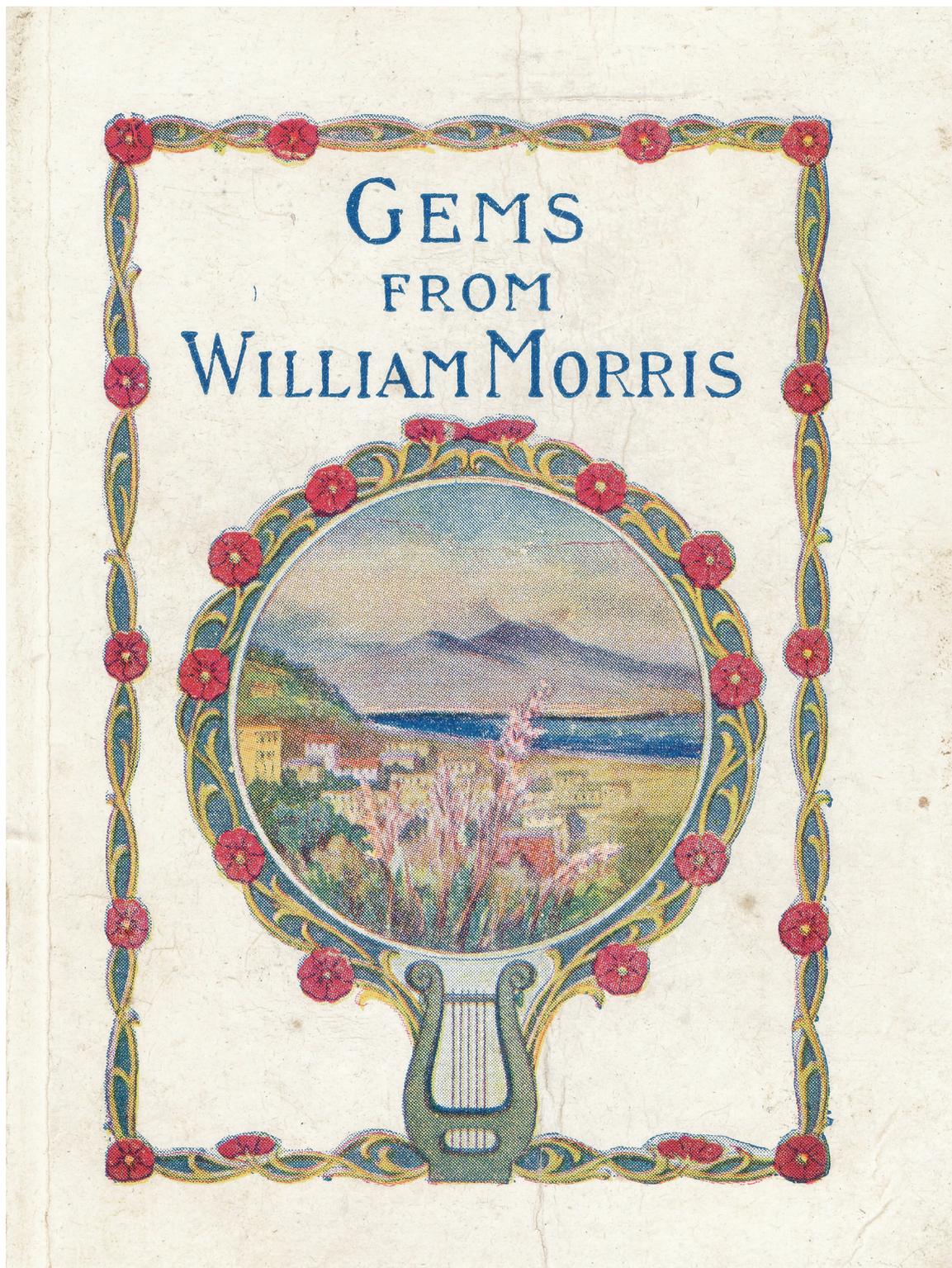


WILLIAM MORRIS SOCIETY IN THE UNITED STATES

# NEWSLETTER

January 2014



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## NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS!

As I write we are on the eve of MLA 2014 in Chicago and our Annual Meeting and off site visits, and I look forward to seeing many of you there. The Annual Meeting will bring a new slate of officers and Committee members, including a new President as I will be stepping down at the end of this term.

Looking back, 2013 has been a productive year for the US Morris Society. Improvements were made in our communications media including the *Newsletter*, website, News from Anywhere blog, Facebook and Twitter sites, largely due to the hard work and nurturing of Florence Boos and Clara Finley. In addition, discussions have begun regarding the creation and placement of educational teaching materials on our website, focusing on various aspects of Morris' life and work. Plans and implementation will continue this year under the guidance of Jason Martinek.

Behind the scenes, the membership database has been completely updated and streamlined to make it easier to keep and update records as well as to capture membership contact information for communication of important late-breaking Morris-related information and events. The benefits of this latter improvement should become apparent throughout 2014.

The Society hosted a series of events this year. In March, Frank Sharp discussed his work with Jan Marsh on *The Collected Letters of Jane Morris* (Boydell Press, 2012) in a talk held at Columbia University's Butler Library. In April Diane Waggoner, Associate Curator at the National Gallery of Art, toured Morris Society members through the exhibition "The Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian Art and Design, 1848-1900." And in December members were given a sneak-peek at Morris' Albion Press which was up for sale at Christie's in New York. This recent event, which included a talk by the long-time owner of the press, Jethro Lieberman, is discussed in detail further on in the *Newsletter*.

I have enjoyed my tenure as President over the last two years, and I thank you whole-heartedly for your support. I look forward to supporting the ongoing growth in the Society from the sidelines!

Margaretta Frederick  
8 December, 2013

# WILLIAM MORRIS AND COLLINS CLEAR TYPE PRESS

Robert Coupe

During his lifetime William Morris made himself known to the public in several ways. The rich patronised his interior decorating firm; the socially active attended his lectures espousing the cause of socialism; the literati read his poetry and fictional writing. His popularity lasted after his death, though it lessened slowly over time. In this article I examine and discuss the response of an early twentieth-century publisher to the demand for Morris's written work.

Collins Clear Type Press focused narrowly in their publications of Morris, altogether ignoring his fiction and writing in which he discussed artistic and political subjects. Instead they limited themselves to certain of his poems. They illustrated the works they published but were content to use pictures created by one principal artist, reproducing his work repeatedly in the many editions they put out. Nevertheless, these books hold interest for two reasons. Firstly, Collins aspired to emulate the private presses in the décor and layout of their Morris editions. (I need scarcely say that this emulation did not extend to the use of hand-made paper or hand-printing.) Collins thus

these editions of Morris at intervals for about thirty years, we have few clues as to the dates on which they did so since Collins, here and elsewhere, did not include publication information in their books and Harper-Collins, the successor of Collins Clear Type Press, does not maintain archival copies of these books (1). In this article I present tentative dates of publication based on examination of copies in my possession and others seen elsewhere.

Evidence for publication dates comes from dated inscriptions, a dated picture, and changes in binding, materials and layout as one edition succeeds another. These changes can lie in details or in a progressive alteration, that is, the loss in successive editions of features which gave added charm to the early printings. We see the phenomenon in some of the Collins titles I shall discuss, but most dramatically in editions of Morris's works put out by other publishers. Dutton published a paraphrase of Morris's translation of *Grettir the Strong* in 1908. This book eventually went to 12 editions, the last in 1966. During the six decades of its run, the book lost the gilt lettering on the cover and the color of the illustrations and suffered

a decrease in their number. The publisher also substituted a poorer quality of paper as time went on. A similar sequence of events occurs in another paraphrase, *Stories from The Earthly Paradise*, which Harrap published in 11 editions between 1906 and 1933. I have described elsewhere the content of the Collins editions (2); since then I have located more editions which I shall discuss in this article as well as those I documented previously.

Collins published the poems contained in the 1858 edition of *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems*, in whole and in part, and *The Life and Death of Jason* combined as a single book with all the poems in *Guenevere*. Percy Bell Hickling supplied four pictures for

*Guenevere* and a further three for *Jason*. Although it was not published first, I start by discussing the Collins *Jason*, which they issued as number 197 in their series *Illustrated Pocket Classics (IPC)*. I give the *Jason* preference for two reasons. Firstly, it stands apart from Collins's other Morris editions since, in common with the rest of the titles in the series, it lacks significant adornment; Collins

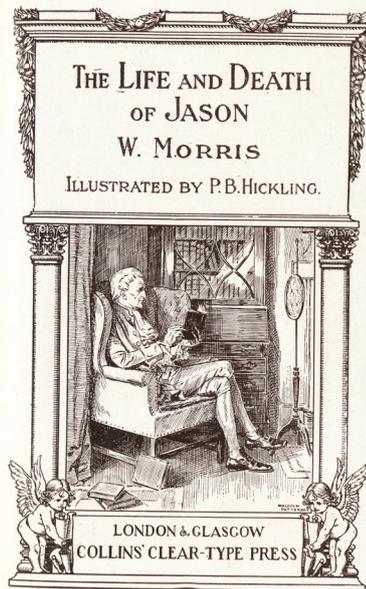


Figure 1

produced books of much visual appeal, with which they presumably hoped to establish themselves in the market for gift books. In the same period that they published their editions of Morris, they also published books with a similar or even identical design devoted to the work of a wide range of poets whose work spanned several centuries. Secondly, while it seems certain that they reissued

intended this book for the serious reader. One senses that the pictures are a distinct afterthought, put in to increase the sales of the book without truly enhancing it. Apart from the pictures, they did not embellish the books in the series in the way they did the *Guenevere* and its train of offprints. Secondly, it provides a clue to the date of publication of the *Guenevere*.

I do not know the date on which Collins started the Illustrated Pocket Classics series. They may have done so even before the end of the 19th century, and certainly by the first decade of the 20th. LeMire (3) gives the date of publication of their *Jason* as May 1912. He cites what seems a reliable source, a contemporary trade publication devoted to listing books newly published each week. The IPC series has a standard format, all the same size, printed on the same thin paper, with identical bindings and layout. They issued each title in one of two bindings, either of red cloth or of maroon leather. The endpapers are glossy maroon in both forms. The leather-bound version has all edges of the signatures in gilt. I have seen some of the titles bound in leather housed in a slip case. It seems probable that the *Jason* would have had this feature too, but I have never seen one such. Some of the cloth-bound titles in the series had a dust-jacket, but here too I have no information whether the *Jason* included this feature. The frontispiece and title page, both printed on glossy paper, are tipped in. The title page includes a vignette by Malcolm Paterson below the name of the author, which Collins used in all the titles in the series. This depicts an elderly man reading in an armchair in a book-lined room, with other books scattered on the floor beside him. (See Fig. 1, page 3)

I have said that Collins used a standard binding in their IPC series. However, this binding does vary over time. In the early years each title has gilt decoration the length of the spine between the name of the author at the top and the publisher at the base. Books in this series contain four pages of advertisements at the back which list IPC titles and give their prices. In copies of *Jason* with this form of decoration the price is 1/- for cloth- and 2/- for leather-bound copies. In a later copy the decoration on the spine consists of a curly pattern in gilt limited to 1.5 cm. below the author's name, the spine below blank except for the publisher's name at the base. The corresponding prices are 2/6d and 5/-. In general, titles with the simpler form of decoration on the spine are more plentiful; the opposite is true for the *Jason*. I suspect that the *Jason* sold slowly enough that copies of the original printing satisfied demand for a long time. I have never seen a copy with an intermediate price, such as 1/6d or 2/- for cloth-bound copies, though such prices exist for other titles in the series. The price of 2/6d dates this copy most likely as post-World War II.

In common with other titles during the early years of the IPC series, Collins fulfilled their claim of "illustrated" in the *Jason* with pictures in monochrome. By contrast the poems from *Guenevere*, which make up the second part of the *Jason* title, are illustrated with pictures in full color. I took this as a clear indication that Collins had already published the *Guenevere* and re-used existing color plates rather than making new plates in monochrome to match the ones prepared specially for *Jason*. I confirmed this supposition on locating copies of *Guenevere* inscribed and dated, one 1911 and another 1912. In the later years of the series Collins did issue titles with color pictures but they did not convert the monochrome illustrations in their *Jason* to color ones in their re-issue of that title.

Collins published *Guenevere* as a title in two separate series, The Cameo Poets (CP) and The Hyperion Books (HB). I shall discuss the latter series later and limit immediate remarks to the various editions in the Cameo Poets series. Collins certainly intended them as gift books, and the purchasers did too. Of my six copies three carry an inscription. In contrast only one of my four copies of *Jason* does, and that by a soldier who probably sought to protect his property in army surroundings by identifying the book as his. (The inscription reads "RAOC [Royal Army Ordinance Corps]..." followed by his service number and name and the date "... July '42".) Of what does the embellishment and decoration of the CP editions consist? The bindings vary, as I shall describe later, and the pictorial endpapers are in full color. Whatever the differences otherwise in the binding, the endpapers in all the editions depict Cupid stepping into a boat pulled by swans. He holds Psyche's hand encouraging her to join him, as she is still kneeling on the shore. (See Fig.2, page 5) These endpapers appear in all the titles in the CP series, but Collins did not use them in Hyperion Books.

Internally, all the imprints of the CP *Guenevere* have an identical layout. Collins printed the frontispiece, title page and Hickling's three other pictures, all in full color on glossy paper, the last at intervals in the text. Hickling provided pictures for "*The Defence of Guenevere*," "*The Sailing of the Sword*," "*Riding Together*," and "*The Gilliflower of Gold*." I refer to these pictures later in the article and shall identify them by the letters DG, SS, RT and GG respectively. The title page includes a vignette of a youth playing a lyre. One can find this same vignette used in at least some of the other titles in the CP series. Collins used red ink sparingly but to good effect, for the title on the half-title page, the capitals of the title on the full-title page (the non-capitalized letters in blue) and for the headings at the top of pages in the text. Effectively, this means the title of the poem appears at the head of each page over which the poem extends. A headpiece in black precedes each poem, a long rectangle across the full breadth of the

page which contains a landscape of a general nature, unrelated to the content of the poem. Collins reproduced ten scenes in these headpieces, distributed seemingly at random, one as many as five times. Each poem starts on a new page, and where this leaves a gap at the end of the preceding poem Collins inserts a tailpiece. Here too we find a range of designs, mainly floral, though other motifs appear, including bees and an anchor. As with the vignette on the title page, Collins employed similar or identical decorative features in other titles in the CP series.

I distinguish four bindings in the CP edition of *Guenevere*. The first two parallel the IPC titles, with cloth- and leather-bound versions in the same colors as seen in the IPC series. Both versions have a gilt decoration on the front cover which encloses the title, and title, author and publisher appear on the spine with more gilt decoration which occupies the rest of its length. I regard these bindings as the earliest ones, partly because of the dated inscriptions referred to earlier and partly because of the similarity of binding with books in the IPC series of a known date of publication. My own cloth-bound copy of this *Guenevere* may be of a later date; it lacks gilt to the edges, unlike my two leather-bound copies which have all edges with gilt. One of the offprints I shall discuss later has pictorial endpapers signed by the artist and dated 1909. This places an earliest possible date of publication for the offprint. It sets no such limit for the CP *Guenevere*. However, I feel it likely that Collins published the offprint and the parent work at or nearly at the same time, most probably 1910 or 1911. I have described and illustrated the third binding elsewhere (2). Here and in other titles of the series Collins used a buckram binding with ornate multi-colored decoration. As we shall see later, Collins put out bindings of decorated buckram as early as the first decade of the twentieth century, and thus may have issued this version at the same time as the two described above. Even if it did not appear until 1912 or '13 I think it likely that it dates from the early period of the CP series.

The fourth form of the CP *Guenevere* stands apart from the others in two respects. Firstly, it is significantly smaller in height and in breadth, a reduction achieved by

decreasing the size of the margins. Secondly, they used thinner paper similar to that found in the IPC series, so that these copies are only three quarters the thickness of the more expansive larger version. Probably Collins produced this smaller book for those whose financial resources did not equal their aesthetic aspirations. I have two copies, which show minor differences. Both have suede bindings with yapped [overhanging] edges, brown in one copy and red in the other. They have the same medallion on the front cover as is present in the plainly bound larger



Figure 2

the blind-stamped version of the smaller *Guenevere* lacks Hickling's RT illustration. I feel that while the more ornate of the smaller editions could well have a date of publication contemporary with the earliest of the larger versions, the other likely came out two or three years before or after 1920.

I have four copies of the HB edition of *Guenevere*, all of which exhibit differences in the binding. In two the difference lies only in the end-papers, plain maroon in one and mottled brown in the other. These two books have a brown cloth cover with a line drawing in gilt stamped on the upper half of the front. It depicts a man ploughing a field with a team of two horses under huge billowing clouds. (See Fig. 3a., page 6) Collins reproduced Morris's signature diagonally across the bottom right corner of the cover. Title, author and publisher appear on the otherwise plain spine. The top edge is gilt, a feature shared with the other two copies. Internally all copies are identical. As with all the books discussed so far, the series designation appears in black at the top of the half-title page. In the HB series Collins limited illustration. The frontispiece reproduces G F Watts' well-known painting of Morris. A vignette occupies the whole of the title page, a striking line drawing in which a heart-shaped emblem in the upper half encloses the names of author and title. Below

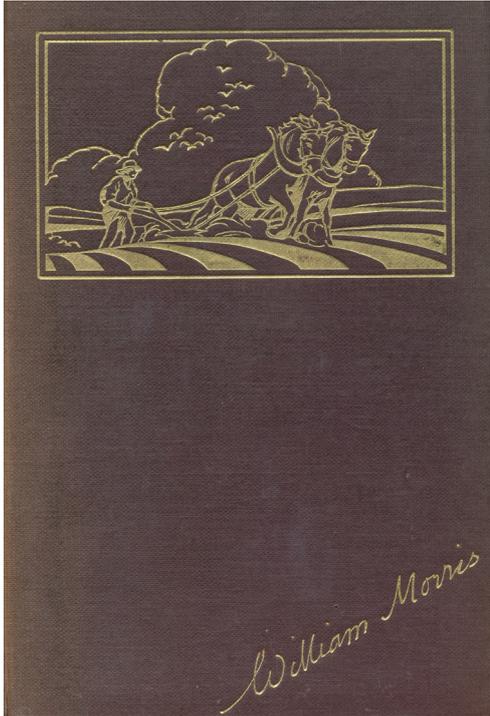


Figure 3A

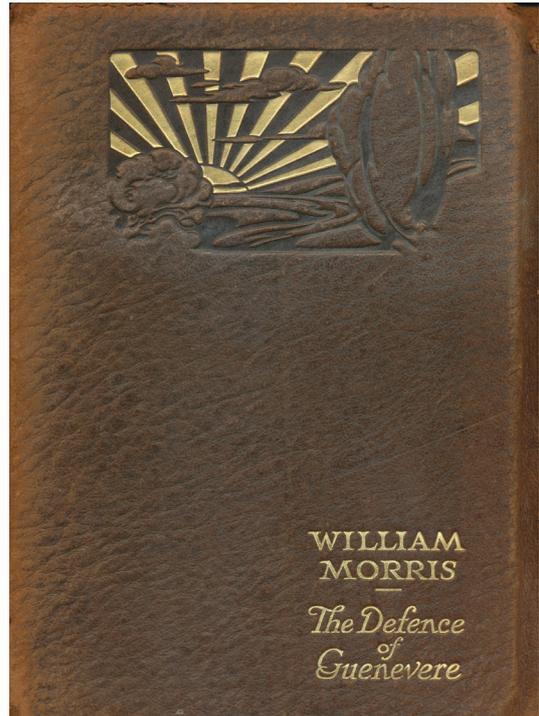


Figure 3B



Figure 9A

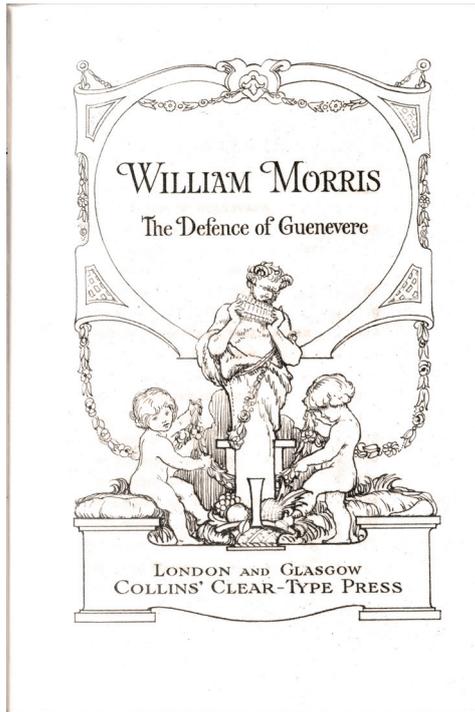


Figure 4

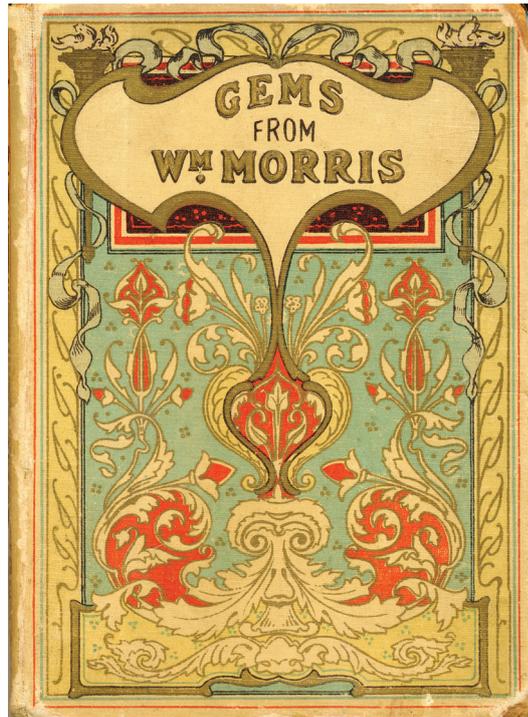


Figure 5



Figure 9B

this two cherubs sit, one on each side of a standing figure holding pan pipes. (See Fig. 4, page 7) Collins use red ink for the title on the half-title page and for all page headings as in the CP edition. However, they omit the head- and tailpieces seen in that series. Nevertheless, Collins did use the same plates to print the HB *Guenevere*. The layout of the text remains identical. As a result the first page of every poem sits well below the level of succeeding pages, the gap accounted for by the missing headpiece. In passing I note that the same gap exists in the IPC edition, though here Collins used new plates since the text is laid out differently, with the lines closer together and the text occupying 71 fewer pages overall.

The two HB copies described in the previous paragraph measure 2 cm taller and 1 cm broader than their CP counterparts due to larger margins around the text. They are also thicker because Collins printed them on a thick matte paper. The third and fourth copies are even bigger by a further half centimeter in height and breadth. The binding consists of flexible leather, black in one and brown in the other, with yapped edges in the latter. The copy in brown also has a coarsely grained surface designed to look like tanned hide but probably produced artificially. The upper part of the front cover carries a picture of a bucolic landscape blind-stamped with a setting sun with shooting rays stamped in gilt in the background. The landscape contains a river and a hill, and vegetation in the foreground. (See Fig. 3b., page 6). A tree on the right differs between the two pictures, resembling a cypress in the copy in brown and a eucalypt in the black-bound copy. Both copies have the title and author in gilt at the bottom of the front cover and, in the black copy only, at the top of the spine. The mottled pattern of the end-papers resembles that seen in one of the other HB copies described in the previous paragraph, their color matching that of the cover, dark grey in the black-bound version and brown in the other. As in the trimmed edges of the cloth-bound versions described first, the binder also trimmed the top edge of the leather-bound copies, to allow of the application of gilt. However, in these leather-bound versions the deckle edges are otherwise untrimmed.

Two of my four copies contain inscriptions. That in the cloth-bound copy with mottled end-papers includes the date "March 1930" and that in the brown leather-bound copy "June 1929." We saw earlier in the case of their IPC series how Collins published the one title in deluxe and in standard bindings, in leather and cloth respectively. I believe we have the same process at work in these HB editions, and that the dates of the inscriptions are close to that of publication. Of the two copies which lack inscriptions, the one with the plain maroon end-papers harks back to the similar end-papers of the IPC series and may have come out a few years earlier. By contrast the

copy bound in black leather seems more recent, eschewing as it does the yapped edges which are more a feature of an earlier period. In brief I assign a span from about 1920 to 1935 as the period during which these books appeared. In closing this section I should emphasize the elegance of this HB title. It exemplifies the adage that less is more, relying for its effect on layout, simplicity of design, and the appropriate use of colored ink and good materials generally.

In the final sections I consider the five offprints from *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* in which Collins published selections, the number of poems varying from five to 19 from one booklet to another. Collins called two of the five *Gems from William Morris* and *Poems from Morris*. The publisher issued a large number of parallel titles such as *Gems from Shakespeare*, ... from Herrick, ... from Tennyson and *Poems from Keats*, ...from Browning, ...from E. W. Wilcox among others. Collins did not dignify these books with a formal series name, but they do form a homogeneous group. I have not located all the titles but suspect that all the poets included in the CP series appear also in *Gems*... and in *Poems*. In those I have seen Collins reuse the pictures they first included in the corresponding CP title. The titles of the other three Morris offprints derive from Morris's poems and so have no parallel in selections from the work of other poets. They comprise *The Defence of Guenevere*, *The Gilliflower of Gold* and *Songs of Chivalry*.

I have five copies of *Gems from William Morris*, each with different bindings, and some with internal differences as well. Copies of this book come in two distinct sizes. The larger and, I think, the earlier measures 131 x 90 mm against the 101 x 74 mm of the smaller edition. Except as noted below, the two versions of the larger size have identical contents and differ only in their binding. In one we find the form Collins used elsewhere, red suede and plain maroon end-papers. The other has its counterpart in other bindings used by Collins, but displays more bravura, with an ornately decorated cover of paper over boards displaying multi-colored flowers and scrolls on the front and spine. (See Fig. 5, back cover) It has pictorial end-papers which show a flat snow-covered expanse with two dark figures in the foreground. The artist signed and dated this picture, "Charles Pears, 1909." (See Fig. 6, page 9) This edition has all edges in gilt; the one in red suede described above has only the top edge gilt. Collins lavished much care on the layout of these books. They used paper throughout as thick as the covers of modern paperback books and decorated every page with a floral garland in color around the margins. A headpiece similar to those seen in the CP editions but extending only half the width of the page precedes each poem. Some are decorative and some pictorial. Where space permits,

a tailpiece appears at the end of the poem. Unlike those seen in the CP *Guenevere*, these tailpieces have a unity in that all portray a floral motif. The frontispiece, Hickling's GG, and title page, both on glossy paper, are tipped in. The latter carries a vignette in full color. Hickling's SS and RT pictures, facing pages 37 and 44 respectively, adorn the body of the text of the paper-bound version. In the suede-bound copy only the SS picture is present, facing page 36. I could see no sign of the other picture ever having been present, though that remains a possibility. Collins published *Christmas with the Poets* about 1911, a book which resembles the paper-bound version of *Gems* in its binding and in having the same pictorial endpapers. The copy I saw has an inscription dated 1912. I regard the paper-bound *Gems* as published in parallel with this other book, most likely in 1910 or the following year. The edition bound in red suede, with only the top edge gilt and lacking pictorial endpapers and one of the illustrations, probably came later, but, I would guess, before 1920.

Of the three small versions of *Gems* two differ from each other only in some features of their bindings. Collins bound one of them in red suede with yapped edges, plain except for the title stamped vertically in gilt on the spine. The other they bound in white paper, carrying title and a pictorial vignette on the front cover and the title vertically on the spine. (See cover image) The cover of this paper-bound version is cut flush with the signatures. Both have all edges in gilt and both have pictorial endpapers depicting garden scenes. In the paper edition the scenes differ, front and back. The suede bound version has the same scene on both sets of endpapers, the one which appears on the rear endpapers of the paper-bound edition. The frontispiece, Hickling's SS picture, provides the only illustration in these books, a bit surprising when one notes, for example that *Gems from Tennyson*, which parallels them in size and format, has three internal illustrations. The title page of the Morris books has a brightly colored vignette of a purely decorative character, different from that seen in the larger editions. (See Fig. 8, back cover) The text and head- and tailpieces are identical to those in the larger editions. The publisher achieved the smaller size by cropping the margins, removing the peripheral colored garland of the bigger book in the process. I own a copy of the parallel book of poems from Tennyson referred to above. Its suede binding and endpapers, identical to those at the front of the paper-bound *Gems from Morris*, provide a possible clue to the date of publication of these Morris editions. The Tennyson book has an inscription dated 1915. Given the similarity of the suede-bound *Gems* from Morris and Tennyson, I incline to assign the

same date of publication to both, 1914 or '15. Since the suede-bound Morris has the same endpapers as one sees at the rear of the paper-bound version and the Tennyson the same as those at its front, we face the probability that the paper version preceded the others. Perhaps it did. However, the style of the paper binding resembles that of other paper-bound editions from the 1920s, so a date of 1914 for the paper edition remains problematical and tentative. On the other hand Collins did move away from the use of pictorial endpapers by the 1920s, as evidenced by their absence in copies with inscriptions dating from that time. Thus 1914 may be close to the actual date on which the book appeared.

The third small edition of *Gems* shows significant

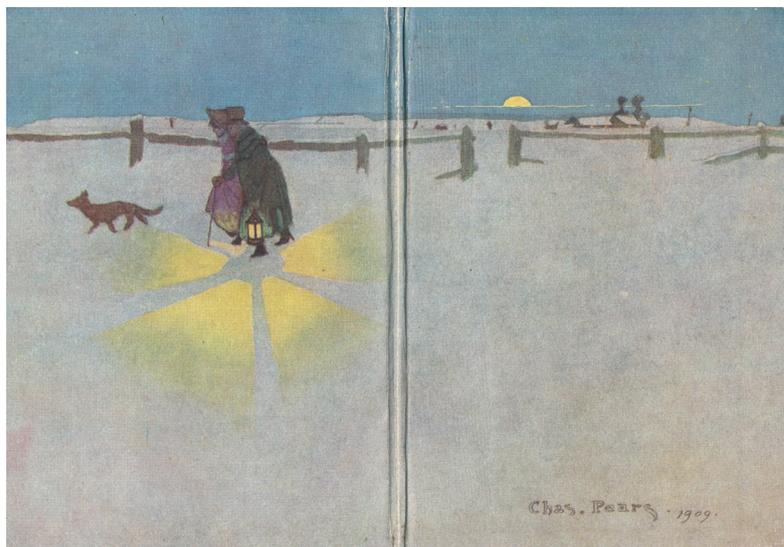


Figure 6

differences from the rest. Collins bound it in brown suede with yapped edges. They decorated the top of the front cover with a rectangular scene, the upper half in gilt and the lower blind-stamped, thus conveying the impression of a sunset scene. It depicts a boy herding cattle, the upper part of their bodies in silhouette on the gilt, the lower part taken up with bushes and the rest of the bodies. Title and author appear blind stamped at the base of the front cover and in gilt on the spine, the covers plain otherwise. The endpapers have the same mottled brown appearance as those of two of the three editions of the *Guenevere* in the HP series. This edition of *Gems* also shares with that of *Guenevere* the same frontispiece portrait of Morris and the characteristics of the vignette on the title page. The vignette consists of a black line drawing of a seated figure clasping a standing cherub who is holding up a mirror to her, possibly a depiction of Venus and Cupid. Otherwise the contents are the same as in the other small editions of *Gems*. The similarity of endpapers, frontispiece and title page to the dated copy of the HP *Guenevere* places the date of publication of this edition of *Gems* at 1930 or

a year or two before or after. *Gems* thus exemplifies the trend, referred to earlier, of the progressive loss of features by which the publisher originally sought to enhance the appeal of a book.

The second offprint from the CP *Guenevere* Collins titled *Poems from William Morris*. This designation appears only on the half-title page. Elsewhere, with one exception, on cover, spine and full title page we read *William Morris* only. Collins used two distinct bindings for this book, the first suede with yapped edges similar to those seen in other books described above. The second binding also resembles other Collins titles contemporary with it, decorated paper over boards. I have four copies of this book available for comment, two in each of the bindings. One of those in suede, red in color, has pictorial endpapers, different front and back. (See Figs. 9a and b, pages 6 and 7) I have described them in detail elsewhere (2). Unlike most of the pictorial endpapers seen in titles from this period I have not seen these pictures, portraying a shepherd and his swain, used anywhere else. This copy has an inscription dated 1915. The other copy, bound in purple suede, has lightly marbled endpapers and its inscription is dated 1924. Apart from the endpapers these two copies are identical.

My two paper-bound copies are identical in every respect, with a decorative front cover and spine, the former carrying the author's name in its upper and "Poems" in its lower part. The marbled endpapers resemble those of the suede-bound copy with the later inscription. Both versions have their top edge in gilt. They differ internally in two ways. Collins used much thicker paper for the paper-bound edition, resulting in a four millimeters greater thickness than is present in its suede counterpart. The second difference relates to Hickling's illustrations. All the copies have his SS picture as the frontispiece. However, in the suede-bound edition his RT faces page 65 and his DG page 96; in the paper-bound copies the facing pages are 65 and 80. Collins printed the pictures on glossy paper and tipped them in on thick brown matte inserted between signatures. In passing we note that though these books are of 16mo size the placement of the pictures, at least in the paper-bound edition, implies that it is a small 8vo. Based on the inscriptions and endpapers I assign 1915 or a year or two earlier as the date of publication of the copy with pictorial endpapers. I feel the rest date from about 1920, recognising as with other titles discussed here the likelihood of multiple identical reprints over a period of years.

I know of two versions of the next offprint I shall discuss, *The Defence of Guenevere*. In spite of the title this small book contains only six of the poems which had appeared in the 1858 edition. Both versions have the

same size as the smaller editions of *Gems* and resemble them also in the bindings, suede and paper respectively. Indeed, the suede edition of this *Guenevere* parallels its *Gems* counterpart closely, with pictorial endpapers and a vignette in color on the title page. The endpapers display a cropped version of Pears' 1909 picture and the vignette a standing female figure in full-length drapery. The frontispiece, Hickling's DG picture, constitutes the only textual illustration in the two forms of this offprint. The suede edition has all edges in gilt; the paper-bound version has none. Both editions have headpieces at the start of each poem, and tailpieces where space allows. I have not seen the form of the binding of the paper edition used anywhere else by Collins. It comprises thick plain paper over which they wrapped thin paper in the manner of a dust-jacket. However they glued this cover to the thicker paper beneath along the length of the spine. Over this one of my copies has a glassine wrapper which seems original with the book. The paper cover visible through the glassine wrapper has a picture in color of two standing figures reading a scroll. (See Fig. 10, back cover) This book represents the only time Collins used a pictorial cover for one of their Morris editions except in *The Gilliflower of Gold*. The endpapers are lightly marbled, and lack the pictures seen in so many of these offprints. The vignette on the title page is a line drawing reminiscent of those seen in the HB title and the last edition of *Gems*. I place the suede copy as dating from 1911-15 and the paper one in the 1920s, most likely in the second half of this period.

Like the offprints already discussed, the next one I consider, *Songs of Chivalry*, comes in suede or paper-bound versions. I own two copies of each form of this book. All have identical contents, except for one variation in the placement of an illustration. All have lightly marbled endpapers and no gilt to the edges. The suede copies are identical except that one has a more rigid cover than the other. Both have title and author blind-stamped in the upper front cover and in gilt vertically on the spine. The paper-bound copies have a decorative floral front cover with author and title there and on the spine. One of the paper copies has an inscription dated 1920. Collins tipped in the frontispiece, Hickling's GG picture, and the title page on thick brown matte paper. The latter presents a striking departure from that of other offprints. While still in full color it has decorative garlands enclosing the text rather than any pictorial element. (See Fig. 11, back cover) Collins used the same glossy paper for the textual illustrations, Hickling's three other pictures, as that employed for the frontispiece and title page. (My copy with the flexible suede cover lacks two of the pictures, but internal evidence suggests the copy is defective rather than representing a different edition.) However, the pictures accompanying the text are not tipped in but glued. The

text itself, on heavy paper, has decorative headpieces which differ markedly from those used in other offprints, comparable to the changed form of the title page. Where present the tailpieces remain unchanged. The absence of gilt edges and pictorial endpapers and the change in decorative style of title page and headpieces suggest that *Songs* came out no earlier than 1918, perhaps with nearly identical reprints extending over a decade or more. The difference in binding of my two suede copies could represent one such re-issue.

I have seen only one copy of the last offprint, *The Gilliflower of Gold*. This book has a cover of thick flexible paper with a pictorial front, Hickling's GG picture surrounded by a decorative curly line on a white background. The book lacks free endpapers, the front pastedown facing the half title page and the back the publisher's monogram. The half-title page has a border of a leafy garland, also seen on each page of text. The title page carries a vignette, the same as that seen in the large versions of *Gems*. The only clue to the date of publication comes from the decoration of the book, which places it between 1912 and 1915. For a time Amazon.co.uk displayed a picture which purported to show the cover of another copy of this final offprint. This book had a red front with title and author in gilt across the middle. While the cover looked as though it were made of paper, it could have been suede. I have not verified the existence of this form of *Gilliflower*. If copies do exist in this form the cover alone gives little indication of when Collins published it, any time between 1910 and 1930.

In summary, while I believe the dates of publication I have ascribed to these books are correct to within four or five years, many remain tentative, and examination of additional inscribed copies may advance some dates by a year or two.

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Robert Coupe, a life member of the William Morris Society, is the author of *Illustrated Editions of the Works of William Morris in English* (Second edition, Burnaby, Canada: Lonsdale and Young Publishing, 2011).



## INTERVIEW WITH COLLECTOR JACK WALSDORF

*Clara Finley*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

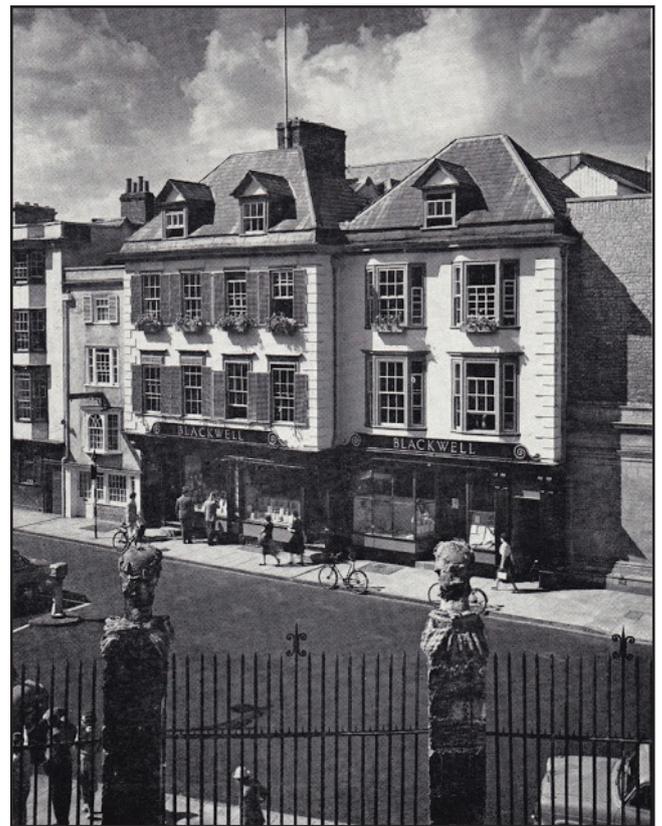
And really, after that introduction, I knew I wanted to find a way to go to England. And I was lucky enough to get a job, on a library exchange position program two years after graduating from U.W. Madison: I got an exchange at the Oxford City Library.

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

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

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

Then late one winter's evening, just as it was getting dark, there was a knock at the door of my flat, and there stood Professor Tolkien, with the book in hand,



Blackwell's bookshop, Oxford, c. 1950s

returning it not only inscribed, but also with a letter thanking me for my interest, and the stamps I had enclosed to make mailing the book to me all the easier!

*How long did you live in Oxford?*

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

periences meeting her, and publishing *William Morris Artist Writer Socialist* by May Morris at the Shakespeare Head Press in 1936.

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

I also collect other fine American presses. I collect Yellow Barn Press; I have every book from the Yellow Barn Press. I collect Prairie Press of Iowa; I have about 50 books from that press. The Adagio Press, which was located in Harper Woods Michigan, run by a man named Leonard Bahr—an absolutely excellent printer—and I have a large collection of Adagio Press books, but my largest non-Kelmscott press collection is Roycroft and Elbert Hubbard. I probably have somewhere in the region of 100 Roycroft Press books, and many of them the high-end, the ones printed on Japanese vellum, the ones hand-illuminated and signed by the illuminators, and a couple in Kinder bindings, which are also very high quality.

*My Kelmscott Press collection of 26 books is augmented by Kelmscott Press ephemera, but it is almost as scarce—scarcer—than Kelmscott Press books, and if you were to go on a site like Alibris or Abe, you would find many hundreds of Kelmscott Press books listed right now, but you'd probably find five or fewer bits of Kelmscott Press ephemera. You mentioned that your largest non-Morris collection is of Elbert Hubbard, could you tell us a little more about him?*

Yes. Elbert Hubbard and the Roycrofters. Strange, but about 50% of the people who hear me mention Elbert Hubbard, think of that other Hubbard of Scientology fame, or they think of him as the man who wrote one of the largest selling books ever, *A Message to Garcia*. But I came to Hubbard and Roycroft first as a collector of American Arts & Crafts, especially the Roycroft hammered copper pieces. I still have a large collection of copper, wood furniture, and pottery, but now it is especially books, of which I have perhaps 250 books and pamphlets relating to or published by Hubbard and the Roycrofters, which I specialize in.



Sir Basil Blackwell, reading his Kelmscott Chaucer.

As you perhaps know, Hubbard contends that he met William Morris in London at the Kelmscott Press. He also says that he saw pages of the Kelmscott Chaucer being printed during his London visit. I contend that this is one of many made up stories by Hubbard, and wrote about it in my 1999 book *Elbert Hubbard: William Morris's Greatest Imitator*, published by Neil Shaver of the Yellow Barn Press. I might add that my little book, published in an edition of 150 copies, of which 34 copies had laid-in leaves from both Kelmscott and Roycroft books, is now incredibly scarce. There are no copies of either edition for sale on ABE or Alibris right now, and a copy of the regular edition (originally priced at \$69.00) is now on e-Bay for a "buy it now" price of \$235.00.

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

In my answer to that question earlier, I listed the things that I felt were my very best, best items. (To see his previous answer, see the interview at the University of Puget Sound, available online at <http://www.puget-sound.edu/academics/academic-resources/collins-memorial-library/news-events/william-morris-interview/>)

But I will add, that since I was asked that question earlier, I added *The Collected Works of William Morris* in

24 volumes, which is an expensive book printed by Longmans 1910-1915, and it's very costly just to have it shipped to you, at 24 volumes. So it was my big buy of this past year, and I'm very happy to have it, because it's a wonderful collection with introductions by Morris's daughter.

*What might one version of your ideal book look like? Take us through its qualities, from the cover through the illustrations and the type. Then, I'd like to know what team of collaborators you might like to see creating this book.*

Okay, actually we'll leave the binding for last, only because in my structure of what has to happen, you have to start with really good handmade paper, a really good quality paper, the type of quality paper that Morris always looked for. You want a type font that is not too thin, something of the caliber of the Golden type of Morris, or one of Goudy's better typefaces, but it doesn't have to be a Morris Golden type, but it has to be a type that has a real structure and integrity, that when you pick up the book, you can actually see it.

You want a jet black, the very blackest ink you can find. You would like a couple really good illustrators, maybe more than one, maybe one like Barry Moser for full-page illustrations, and John DePol for little vignette type illustrations. If I had my choice of author, living or dead, it would have to be William Morris, just because that's my true love. And I've even picked the title: I would like to see this kind of special, modern edition done of *News from Nowhere*, one of my absolute favorite William Morris books.

The binding: I'd like to see a serviceable, high-end binder, it doesn't have to be vellum, and vellum is really very impractical in lots of cases, but there are really good trade binders. There is one in Minneapolis called *Campell-Logan*: Campbell-Logan by the way do a majority of American private press binding today. Presses all over the United States produce the books, and they ship them to Minneapolis, to Campell-Logan, and they get them bound in different styles, with lots of choices of beautiful, beautiful cloths, and they can do a quarter leather binding, they can do slipcases, they can really make a book look gorgeous. They can add spine labels, they can add title labels on the front cover, they do a really great job.

These are the elements, and they're all available—and actually it's growing, I mean it's growing in the sense that the papermakers are growing, it's growing in the sense that there are a lot of classes being taught on bookmaking in art colleges, and in some community colleges, and on the university level. So the chances of your finding, at a book fair for example—an antiquarian book fair—your chances of finding really beautifully modern-made in the

last 25 years, press books that are really well executed, are very good.

*It sounds like you're saying that there's a future for books as art-objects... would you say that's the case?*

To me, a book is an object to use. And art is an object to really look at and hang on a wall. And you could turn that around and say, isn't a Kelmscott Chaucer too precious to use? ...I don't know! That is a conundrum.

It's a really hard thing to handle, because there was such a range of Kelmscott press books. In its day, and today. In its day, there were modest Kelmscott Press books being sold for shillings, less than one pound. And today, there are still modest Kelmscott press books that you can buy for under 500 dollars, granted that's a lot of money, but you can buy them for under 500 dollars. The artist's book seems to be... it simply to me seems to be... too precious, and maybe too expensive.

I recently saw an artist's book with no printed words except the title page, and it was in a portfolio, and it wasn't even bound! Now, is this a book? Or is it art, to frame and hang on the wall?

*So, if Mrs. Havisham decided to give you a lavish present this year of a rare book, what book would you want it to be?*

I would want it to be William Morris's classic work of fiction, *News from Nowhere*, printed at the Kelmscott Press, on vellum, inscribed by Morris to any one of his friends. It wouldn't have to be Burne-Jones, I would take any of those, and be happy.

*What's one of the most exhilarating collecting experiences you've had?*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Larry McMurtry in one of his books, *Cadillac Jack*, talks about the collectors and how collections are like

clouds. And how if you look at the clouds on a day when you've got bright light and you've got blue sky but you've got the clouds going across, the clouds are there bunched up, and then the wind comes along and it dissipates them and then you look to your right, and they've reformed.

And he compares the collections to those clouds in the sense that, we put the collections together now, we enjoy them, we read them, we organize them, we categorize them, we take care of them. And after we've used them, we need to do something more with them, and that more is to give them to libraries, or to sell them so that other people can build collections. But whatever we do with them, whether we give them away, whether we sell them, after they leave us, invariably, we're going to start over, in some shape or form, to collect again.

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

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

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

Right (laughing), I bring it together.

*Thank you.*

Clara Finley, the winner of the William Morris Society Award in 2011, sits on the governing committee of the US Morris Society. The full interview can be found on her blog at [www.themorrisian.blogspot.com](http://www.themorrisian.blogspot.com)

## THE PRE-RAPHAELITES IN MOSCOW

*Anna Matyukhina*

On June, 11 2013 the exhibition “The Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian Avant-Garde” opened in the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow. It was organized by the Museum in collaboration with Tate Britain, Alisher Usmanov’s Art, Science and Sport Charity Foundation, and the British Council. Even before the opening it had been talked about as one of the main Russian cultural events of the year.

This exhibition was the third important joint project of the Pushkin Museum and Tate Britain, following the Turner and Blake Exhibitions of 2008 and 2011. Both were the first major exhibitions of these artists in Russia - as was also true for the Pre-Raphaelites: their oeuvre was a kind of terra incognita for average Russian art lovers, since even the museums of Moscow and St. Petersburg lack any of their paintings, and there has been no significant display of Pre-Raphaelite art in Russia until now.

To accompany the exhibition an extensive educational program was developed for visitors of different ages and levels of knowledge. The Pushkin Museum offered a Pre-Raphaelite lecture series, diverse guided tours for adults and children, meetings with the exhibition curator, and an evening showing: “The Pre-Raphaelites: An Evening in the Museum”—the first ever event in the “Late at Tate” style. The British Council also arranged for lectures by British experts outside the Museum walls. In anticipation of the exhibition, the British Council, in collaboration with the All-Russia State Library for Foreign Literature, organized a professional seminar for translators of Pre-Raphaelite poetry that resulted in *The Poetic World of the Pre-Raphaelites. New Translations*, the first Russian anthology presenting the poetry of the Pre-Raphaelites, their predecessors, and their successors in dialogue with visual images (Moscow 2013). The British Council also supported a special edition of *Foreign Literature Magazine* featuring PRB poetry, essays, and prose (No. 5, 2013). All these gave additional opportunities for a Russian audience to become acquainted with the Pre-Raphaelite movement and their artistic and literary heritage.

When “The Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian Avant-Garde” was opened at Tate Britain in 2012 I could only dream of visiting it, since my son was then less than one year old. That is why I was extremely happy to learn that it was to be exhibited in Moscow, and hoped that after the Pushkin Museum exhibition the tour would be on display at the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, as is often customary with important Russian exhibits. Unfortunately, it turned out that both the exhibition and accompanying events were to take place only in Moscow, and I was only able to attend for a single day. So in the beginning of September I took the night train to Moscow and left St. Petersburg, enjoying Indian Summer, to find myself in the capital of my motherland on the rainy early morning of September 13th. I arrived at the Pushkin Museum long before its opening and became one of its first visitors that day, although when I left the Museum six hours later it was girded with a very long queue. Indeed, the Pre-Raphaelite exhibition was to attract so many visitors—280,000 by the end of August—that it was extended for three extra weeks.



The only exhibition event in which I could partake the day I spent in Moscow was “The Magical World of the Pre-Raphaelites,” a creative guided tour for children. The tickets had been sold in advance, but when the guide realized that I was not only her colleague in museum work but also a William Morris Society member, I was permitted to join. When the children were assembled, accompanied by their relatives, the guide asked them if they knew any of the three words forming the exhibition name, “The Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian Avant-Garde.” None of these were familiar to the children, so she said that they would

learn their meaning during the tour, and the group headed to the exhibition halls.

Using as examples several significant works, mostly by Morris, she described in a lively, enthusiastic and accessible manner some features of Victorian England, the artists who founded the Brotherhood and their later associates, their love of the beauty of nature and beautiful objects, and some special features of their style and methods. When the 40 minute excursion was over, the children were invited to join creative workshops and continue discovering the magical world of the Pre-Raphaelites there. In the artist-led workshop they could decorate a house made of paper (so to say, a symbolic Red House) using paints, pencils, photos, newspapers, etc. One of the artists told me that the houses created each day of the workshop were devoted to a particular topic (“women,” “photography,” “books”), and on the day I attended the class the theme was “nature.” Those children who didn’t want to “create” chose a botanical workshop instead where they could learn more about flower symbolism, consider the structure of plants under the microscope and make a “flower clock” (despite the principle of “truth to nature,” it would have been impossible for the flowers depicted by Millais in “Ophelia” to blossom all together, so participants of the workshop were asked to “restore the truth” from a biological viewpoint). It should be stressed here, that not only members of the guided tour group could take part in these activities but every child visiting the exhibition. There was a special game guided tour one could take entering the exhibition; by answering questions while examining the exposition and filling in the crossword, a child could find the meaning of the word “Pre-Raphaelites” and learn a lot about these artists and their works. The last set of questions dealing with the Morris and Burne-Jones tapestry directed children to the workshop to discover the symbolism of plants woven into this masterpiece. While the participants of the artistic workshop drew, painted, cut out, glued, etc. and the rest unraveled mysteries of the plant world in the botanical workshop, I had a chance to speak to some of the children and their relatives. Here is what I heard:

Victoria Lubshina, a financial director, came to the exhibition for the first time with her 8 year old son Alexander and 5 year old daughter Arina. She had not known anything of the Pre-Raphaelites before the guided tour, but was deeply impressed by PRB painting and was eager to come again to look at the exhibition as a whole. Alexander enjoyed the excursion and liked “Ophelia” most of all, while his sister Arina was fond of drawing more than listening, so she preferred the workshop to the tour.

Two friends, Maria and Anastasiya, a chief accountant and her colleague, also learned about the Pre-Rapha-



elites through the exhibition. This was the second time they had visited it and they were amazed at how different the paintings seemed when displayed on a rainy autumn morning rather than a hot sunny day. To their mind, bad weather creates a special emotional mood very favorable for viewing PRB art. On their first visit they were unaccompanied by children, but when they heard of the children’s excursions they decided to come again with Maria’s 7 year old daughter Elena. The girl was impressed by “Ophelia” most of all, as well as by “The Adoration of the Magi” tapestry, as were the adults who accompanied her, who also admired paintings by Hunt and Morris’s “Trellis” wallpaper. As for Morris wallpaper, Maria told me that she would have been glad to use it to decorate a country house had she owned one—in her opinion, such wallpapers needed vast space, and thus she could not use them in her city flat.

As for economist Inna Berbeneva, she was aware of Pre-Raphaelites long before the exhibition, thanks to a Dante Gabriel Rossetti album published several years ago by one of the Moscow publishing houses. She had received it as a present for her birthday and was fascinated by Rossetti’s works, then turned to his poetry and learned about other PRB members. So she had long anticipated the exhibition. She was astonished by the fact that PRB paintings were so full of light—even the best reproductions failed to render this. As for her 9 year old daughter Vera, she also liked PRB paintings since she was fond of

history and literature, and it was “Ophelia” that attracted her most of all since it was “as real as life.”

Finally, Irina Mikhajlovna Larina, medical scientist, attended the guided tour because of her 7 year old grandson Roman. She had known very little of the Pre-Raphaelites before the tour, although she knew art “after Raphael” really well, especially the Impressionists. The PRB works turned out to be a very pleasant surprise for her and she was going to return to the Museum to visit the exhibition again for herself. As for her grandson, he was truly happy to take part in both parts of the tour (the tour and the workshop activities) and told me that “Ferdinand Lured by Ariel” by Millais was his favorite among the exhibited pieces.

After talking to Mrs Larina and Roman I left the group, regretting that my son was too small to join it, and returned to the halls to examine the exposition myself. My first glance fell on a picture—which for a split second I thought that I’d never seen among reproductions of PRB painting. But this was truly “pre”-Raphaelite and reminded me of Botticelli; when I came nearer it proved to be “The Virgin and Child” by Sandro Botticelli from the Pushkin Museum collection. It seemed an excellent choice to put this at the exposition entrance, since not all the visitors had an understanding of the peculiarities of the early Renaissance style, without which it would be hard to grasp essence of PRB art. So Botticelli’s image was a sort of tuning fork that attuned visitors to the proper interpretation.

I took a close look at each of the exhibition items, reading detailed annotations and just enjoying being there. The exposition consists of 86 pieces mainly from the Tate, so the Moscow version of the “Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian Avant-Garde” is significantly smaller than the original one displayed in London. Interviewed by the British Council before its opening, Anna Poznanskaya, the Pushkin Museum curator of the exhibition, said: “In cases when an exhibition travels a lot, its structure often differs. The largest scale exhibition was in the Tate: provincial museums try not to part with Pre-Raphaelite paintings as the most attractive part of their collections.



They could not refuse London, but did not let their items go abroad unless necessary. American collectors, in contrast to Russian ones, collected the Pre-Raphaelites, and thus the main focus of the Washington exhibition was to show their own masterpieces in the context of other Pre-Raphaelite works...By contrast the Russian viewer needs to become acquainted with the Pre-Raphaelite movement for the first time, and thus the most famous reference pieces were selected for the Moscow exposition.” Four exhibition halls were never empty - the flow of visitors never ceased. In answer to the question of which section of the exposition was the most popular among visitors, the curator replied that each of them was self-sufficient, but “Images of the Past” turned out to be the main attraction, since the paintings based on Shakespeare’s subjects were put on display there. William Shakespeare’s works are well known and loved in Russia, so the audience could understand the methods of the Pre-Raphaelites and their attitude towards literary heritage. Moreover, it was in this section that one of the most famous PRB works, “Ophelia” by John Everett Millais, was exhibited. The section “Beauty” also evoked a lot of interest. One could see the Pre-Raphaelites’ new interpretation of images of women there and the origin of aestheticism so popular in modern culture.

It happened that in moving from one PRB piece to another I constantly found myself near a middle-aged gentleman telling his young teenage son details of the items they passed.

When we stopped in front of Morris and Co. tapestry, I could not repress my curiosity and asked him about his occupation and views on the exhibition. I had no doubt that he was a historian or philologist (since the average Russian would not have such deep knowledge of the PRB) but he turned out to work in industry and art history was just his hobby. He had come to the exhibition to interest his son, but “it seemed that didn’t succeed, unfortunately....”

At this point I returned to the entrance of the exhibition and started reading the comments left by visitors in the Museum comments book. I knew some of them, thanks to the exhibition website, since a “best comment competition” had been announced at the start of the exhibition, and thus one could read “a comment of the week” from time to time. For instance, I had already read the opinion of N.P. Mirskaya:

The exhibition turned out to be a discovery for me, but not a thrill. I walked around it thrice. It is possible to examine each picture hour by hour, admiring details and artistic skill, and entertaining oneself by guessing which of the subsequent artists “come out” from which piece, since it’s clear now how the Pre-Raphaelites influenced the whole subsequent art. But ... I remember well how stunned I was visiting the Turner exhibition; I believe this deep feeling is to stay with me forever. It’s not the case this time. I would not like to live with any of these pieces (well, except that the “Adoration of the Magi” tapestry could decorate my living room!). According to the previous comments, there are no like-minded persons among other visitors.... So this exhibition is necessary, and therefore we owe deep gratitude to Irina Alexandrovna [Museum director and eminent cultural presence]. But if only they could exhibit Turner again!”

I also didn’t find visitors “like-minded” to Ms. Mirskaya among those who left their comments in the book - most of the comments were of an enthusiastic and laudatory character. For example, one woman wrote: “I’m delighted, stunned, surprised and just happy that I was able to see such an exhibition—everything is new for me. I’ve never been to England, and although I visit museums and exhibitions often, I am seeing these artists for the first time. I like everything very, very much! Many thanks to the exhibition organizers!” and another one noted: “It’s wonderful! If it was Avant-Garde in Victorian England, it’s classic nowadays, that is to say value at all times and for the whole world. Thank you!” Both young and old enjoyed the exhibition; a ten year old girl remarked: “I’ve visited the exhibition of the Pre-Raphaelites for the second time today - I did like it. Each picture comes to life when you are looking at it,” and a 76-year old gentleman echoed her: “It’s the second time I’ve visited the exhibition of the Pre-Raphaelites, but the effect on me is as if it were the first time. This is typical when it comes to masterpieces. Looking at one painting could substitute for the impression of watching an entire performance at the theatre.”

There were three comments that impressed me most of all, two of which were also considered the best by the Jury. The first of the winning comments struck the eye immediately, as it was an acrostic, in which the first letter of each line spells out “Pre-Raphaelites.” The second winner, Victoria Kalinina, wrote the following:

Once, running down Gower street from the British Museum to Euston station on an early February morning, I stopped in front of one of the buildings to read a memorial plaque. It read: “In this house the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was founded in 1848.” What kind of Brotherhood was “the Pre-Raphaelite

Brotherhood”? I asked myself. On the train I looked at the internet and realized that I had met my new love, or better to say, three new passions at once: John Everett Millais, William Holman Hunt and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Of course, I had been already aware of “Ophelia,” but this artistic movement as a whole was absolutely new for me.

On my return to London several days later, I headed to Tate Britain first of all. On the way to the museum I came across the monument to J.E. Millais waiting for me and found out that the surrounding territory housed buildings named “Millais House”, “Ruskin House,” etc., the surnames I already knew so well.

Maybe it’s wrong, but sometimes I do not have the patience to walk through a gallery, examining each wall and reading every inscription. I need to be caught by something, so that I rush to see this “something,” and yes, at that very moment I’m really ready to see it. I’ll come to see something else next time - when “something else” becomes a new center of my own universe.

The strangest thing was that when on my fifth circuit around the Tate I hurried to the guards to ask, “Where are the Pre-Raphaelites?” I was told that they would return to the Gallery after the American and Muscovite exhibitions. “Moscow, in Russia?” I asked timidly, and got a positive answer. Truly, if Mohammed will not come to the mountain...

Having fortified myself with loads of books from the museum shop, I spent that evening in a café, becoming more closely acquainted with Rossetti. The fact that almost all his models and beloveds looked so alike impressed me most of all—the artist and poet had his own type.

When the exhibition arrived in Moscow, I was one of the first visitors here. The thing that stunned me the most was Ophelia’s hands. She seemed incredible all over...but her arms! Those huge fingers as if made of porcelain - they keep coming back to my mind! Already then I realized that I would return here over and over again, both for myself and to share this magic with my friends.

This is my regular and I guess far from being the last visit to my favorite Pre-Raphaelites, and I’ve decided to tell you the whole story to make it clear how much I put into one simple word, THANKS!

The third comment attracted my attention due to its eccentricity: “I knew almost nothing about the Pre-Raphaelites before the exhibition. So it could be said that it was a blind date! I used to be a serious girl and flirting

wasn't my style, but I was so intrigued by the beautiful "Pre-Raphaelites." Then Julia Savuleva described how she found her enchanter, the way he revealed his nature and character, and what he showed to her during their meeting. To sum it up: "Everything which happened later was like in the mist - a kaleidoscope of bright images, my emotions, his power. Our first rendezvous was great. I would not be ashamed to let him meet my parents!"

Perhaps I would have continued reading in the Museum comments book, but a lady approached to leave her comment. We fell into talk. A housekeeper at the moment, she used to be a footwear designer, so had learned of the Pre-Raphaelites long ago while studying. Of course, it was a brief overview - only one lecture within a history of art course, but it was enough for her to get a general idea of this movement and the peculiarities of PRB style, as well as of William Morris's impact on design of the 20th century. The exhibition revived her memories and awakened the desire to learn more of the Pre-Raphaelites. As for the selection she liked most of all, it happened to be the "Love Leading the Pilgrim through the Briars" embroidery from the "Romance of the Rose" series.

After our exchange of impressions, I returned to the exhibition halls to walk through them without reading any explications this time, but just enjoying the images and imprinting them in memory. Several hours later, on the night train from Moscow to St. Petersburg I thought of this wonderful day full of the Pre-Raphaelites. God knows when I will see them again . . . However, the exhibition curator said in an interview that since, unfortunately, the project had only conveyed a hint of the scope of British applied art, a new exhibition devoted to William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement was really a necessity and should be organized in the future. So I hope this future will not be too distant.

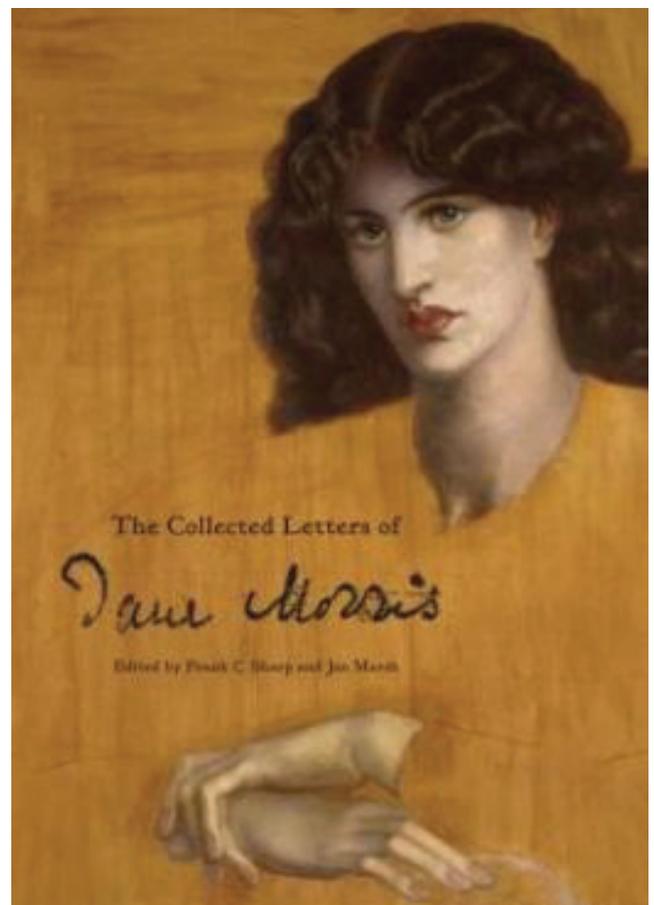
Anna Matyukhina is a senior curator of the New Acquisitions Department at the Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia. Awarded a Joseph Dunlap Memorial Fellowship in 2006, she defended her Ph.D. thesis on "Traditions of Medieval Tapestry Weaving and the Tapestry Revival of the 19th Century: William Morris" in 2006, and has published articles on William Morris and tapestry weaving as well as on Morris-related artworks in Russia.

## TRUTH IS BEAUTY: THE WOMAN BEHIND THE IMAGE IN THE COLLECTED LETTERS OF JANE MORRIS

Bonnie Robinson

**T**he *Collected Letters of Jane Morris*, edited by Frank C. Sharp and Jan Marsh (Boydell, 2013), comprises 570 letters, including "all the letters by Jane Morris known to survive" (xxiii). It also includes illustrations of the letters' content, with images of Pre-Raphaelite figures and personal friends of JM; black and white plates, of William Morris's *La Belle Iseult*, for example, and photographs and drawings of JM, WM, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti; and color plates of paintings and drawings by Rossetti, George Howard, Charles Fairfax Murray, and Evelyn De Morgan. Images like these are the usual way of approaching JM; indeed, what we know of her generally is mediated through artists like WM and Rossetti.

In their introductory note, the editors acknowledge that the number of letters is "substantially smaller than those of either William Morris or Dante Gabriel Rossetti" (xxiii) due to the fact that JM's "letters were rarely saved in their own right" since they "apparently were seen



as trivial or domestic. In addition, many of Jane's correspondents were women, whose papers tend to survive in much smaller numbers."

This paragraph gives insight into JM's relative position to the great artists who were, respectively, her husband and her lover. It indicates that her fame and significance derive from these relationships and that her gender (and those of her friends) renders her relatively insignificant in her own right.

The book's structure seems to reinforce this perception of JM's life being ordered and made meaningful especially by her relationship to, and experiences with, WM: "The letters are listed in chronological order and are numbered" (xxiii) and are divided into five parts: 1869-79 Jane Burden Becomes Jane Morris; 1880-89 The Political Years; 1890-96 William Morris's Last Years; 1897-1903 The Morris Heritage; and 1904-14 The Last Decade.

The editors provide a general introduction, as well as excellent introductions to each of these five parts. These introductions do much to counter the apparent assessment of JM's life via WM. In fact, the book as a whole suggests viewing JM in an entirely different way, as a woman of skill, depth, insight, and compassion, rather than as a beautiful muse.

The introduction to the book as a whole acknowledges the impact of WM on JM's life: "her rise from poverty in the slums of Oxford to life in both Bohemian artistic circles and in respectable, even aristocratic, Victorian society" (1). But it throws the credit for this rise onto JM herself, on her "keen intelligence, warm human sympathy and common sense as she adapted to her changing fortunes" (1).

The editors note the perceptions of JM by her contemporaries, perceptions that have shaped subsequent views of her, as a model or muse, as a cold hypocrite, as an unfaithful wife who was "selfish, unloving and ill-educated" (1), and as a "morose, self-pitying invalid who spent all her days lying on a sofa" (1).

These letters, though, give a strong foundation to the editors' suggestion for taking a different perspective on JM; they offer

a hitherto unopened window into her world, showing how she met the opportunities and challenges that life presented. We see... that she had a wide range of interests and friends – some previously unrecorded; that she supported her husband's endeavours throughout his life and guarded his reputation after his death; that she had strong affections and deep sorrows, together with reserve and self-control; and

that the realms of art, literature, music and social progress were of abiding importance in her life. (2)

The editors helpfully heighten this different perspective, highlighting insights to be gained from JM's letters – to her lifelong interest in reading, her love of music, her fluency in French, her ability to run a household, "including budgets, menus, laundry and dress-making, managing and training servants as well as the many intricate elements of entertaining in a middle-class household (4-5), her deep concern for her two daughters, Jane Alice (1861-1935)" "always known as Jenny, and Mary (1862-1938) always known as May" (5).

While JM's letters often refer to her own poor health and nerves, they refer just as often to her pleasure in travel, love of nature and animals, enjoyment of both company and solitude, bouts with depression, and a love of humor and laughter. In a January 1893 letter to Wilfred Scawen Blunt, she writes, "I find laughter does me more good than anything" (241).

Her dimensionality appears in and through her famous marriage; JM's fulfilling her traditional role as wife is "challenging" due to her "rise" in class. But she also proved a strong partner to WM in his public, artistic endeavors. More than just a model or muse, JM "became an accomplished needlewoman, and her embroidery shows remarkable technical skill as well as an expert eye for colour" (6). She "crafted a number of miniature books...elaborately decorated and bound in vellum, velvet or leather. Apparently intended as gifts, they contained handwritten extracts of English and French verse, with illuminated capitals or other decoration. In 1889 she designed the cover for Wilfrid Scawen Blunt's volume of poetry" (7).

She assisted WM in his design firm, taking "charge of the group of women outworkers who stitched the firm's embroidered textiles" (5). Consequently, her letters "provide much new information about the operations of the Morris firm itself. To give one example, when the Morris firm encountered difficulties with its American agents, including the retention of the profits and passing off inferior goods as Morris products, we learn of these previously unknown issues from one of Jane's letters" (6-7).

She supported many of WM's related "enterprises." In addition to her substantial contribution to the firm, she was, for example, involved in the 1882 Icelandic Famine Relief Committee and participated in promoting the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. She also assisted WM's work in the Kelmscott Press, "urging friends to purchase its publications, and proofing the two volumes of Blunt's poetry published by the Press" (12).

While these activities speak to WM's own range of skills and interests, they do reveal JM's own, independent abilities, talents, and interests.

JM refers to WM as "my husband" and "the father." But she notes her personal differences with some of his views. In a 12 January 1888 letter to Jane Cobden, JM writes: "I wish my husband cared more thoroughly about Home Rule, he is but half enthusiastic on the subject, it makes me miserable sometimes to have no one to speak to about it" (162). She doesn't accept his indifference even though she accepts their differences. In a 14 January 1888 letter also to Jane Cobden, JM discloses that "I taxed him this morning with not caring about Home Rule. He says he does as one of many things but that there are more evictions in London in a week than there are in all Ireland. Then I retort the people are not so nice and it is even more hopeless to deal with the huge cities here — and so on — we can't convince each other" (163).

She fulfilled her position as WM's wife in more traditional/expected ways, too. For example, JM tended to WM's health throughout his life and to his death. In a 15 December 1894 letter to WSB, she writes that "always I have the anxiety of my husband's health, he was in doctor's hands for several weeks, but is now better — his mother's death a week ago was a shock to him" (256). How difficult a "patient" WM may have been appears in a 2 March 1896 letter to Lucy Faulkner Orrin Smith: "We have known the tendency of this illness (diabetes) for many years past. The difficulty has been to induce him to see the danger, and seek advice from a competent doctor. Dr. Broadbent is attending him now and I feel sure he is in good hands" (267).

Her role as mother was also both traditional and exceptional. Their eldest daughter Jenny suffered from epilepsy, the attacks of which and/or the treatment the Morrises tried, left her with "damaged cognitive abilities" (8). Jenny's seizures gave JM lifelong concern; in a 9 August 1888 letter to WSB, she declares that she never gets used to Jenny's seizures: each one strikes through her "like a dagger" (169). Jenny's care involved trying to find not only cures but also care-givers, nurses, assistants, companions, and comfortable homes. The editors surmise that the extraordinary care that Jenny's condition involved limited JM's social life: "When the list of Jane Morris's correspondents is compared to that of her husband or other members of her circle such as the Burne-Joneses, the relatively restricted extent of her contacts is evident. The most likely reason for this is her daughter's disability" (9). Their younger daughter May proved a consolation in terms of her abilities and work. MM was "informally trained by her father [and] followed her mother in becoming an expert embroiderer and textile artist (later a jeweler also

and studied this skill at the leading South Kensington School of Design. She took over management of the Morris company's embroidery department in her early twenties" (9).

But in her more traditional position as wife, MM "also caused concern to her parents" (9). Her attachment to George Bernard Shaw led her marriage to Halliday Sparling to end in divorce and to unfulfilled hopes of subsequently marrying GBS. In a 24 May 1894 letter to WSB, JM writes thus of MM's divorce: "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. We have not spoken of it yet outside the family" (252).

The editors note how these "comments on the end of MM's marriage, [suggest that] JM seems to have felt a degree of shame and regret over its circumstances" (253). While this may have been the case, other letters comment on MM's subsequent career as editor and lecturer, all relishing her success. And JM reveals sympathy and understanding for her daughter's unusual situation. In a 6 September 1898 letter to WSB, JM writes that "May is with me now and much more cheerful than formerly — so I hope she will get a little out of life at last" (317).

JM's own exceptions to the Victorian married life, her affairs with DGR and WSB, present her unconventional-ity and "daring" as well as infidelity and hypocrisy. The editors present these matters objectively. They note, for example, that JM reportedly never loved WM, that she probably had an early and initial passion for DGR and that WM himself treated her with courtesy and affection, if not passion: "In her relationship with Rossetti Jane... risked the possibility of being sued for divorce and denied access to her daughters; at the least she would be socially branded as an immoral woman" (10). That none of these consequences occurred speaks to the type of relationship she did achieve with her husband: "together Jane and her husband found a solution to the problem [through the joint lease on Kelmscott Manor, for example]" (11). While she pursued her extramarital affairs, JM—through choice or otherwise — retained "her relationship with Morris" (11). The editors note that her ultimate suppression of DGR's letters (if they were love letters as WSB claimed) at the least indicates her desire to be known not as DGR's lover but as WM's wife.

Besides passionate affairs, Jane's personal life was rich with friendships, with men and women from various "ranks" and abilities, with George and Rosalind Howard; Lady Mary Howard; Blanche, Countess of Airlie; Lady Anne Blunt; Cornell Price; Philip Webb; Jane and Geor-

gie Burne-Jones; Kate Faulkner; Lucy Orrinsmith; Mary De Morgan; Jane Cobden.

Her intellectual life was equally rich, comprehending the arts as well as social and political issues. These latter interests included Irish Home Rule, the war in Africa, the Education Bill, the Eastern Question, Egyptian “matters,” and utopian communities. In a 17 March 1889 letter to WSB, she describes

Topolobampo... [which] is a new city, a modern Utopia, where everything is as it should be, an American was here the other day with plans of it (for it is not yet built) blocks of houses arranged in a chessboard pattern with gardens at intervals with an esplanade of many miles along the bay; all this does not sound very original in appearance, but it will be self-governed, no police, no gaols, only nice people who want to be good are to be admitted” (180-81).

This blithe idealism is countered by such practical concerns as the Pure Beer Bill. In a 26 March 1906 letter to Crom Price, she asks

why did they throw out the Pure Beer Bill? It was not a good one, but something might have been done with it, and now there is no time for another to be got up. It was of far more importance than the Scotch sites, and feeding the school children. I don't believe in the last at all it only means more money for the parents to drink much as one would like to see the poor little things with their “bellies” stiff. (394)

Also evincing idealism and practicality (as well as unsavory stereotypes) is her comment on a coal miners' strike. In a 4 March 1912 letter to Sydney Carlyle Cockerell, she writes that

I think miners ought to be paid at least twice as much as they seem to get, and all the owners & Jews & financiers & idle rich people generally ought to work in the mines at least one day a week, perhaps by this means a little sympathy might be produced between the different classes – and those poor ponies! I see in one pit 400 have been left to their fate (451).

JM's spiritual life seems also unique and interesting. She appreciates the aesthetic appeal in institutional religion, expressing great regard for the music in services and the hieratic beauty in Roman Catholic ritual. She also professes to a belief in transmigration. In a 18 September 1897 letter, she thanks William James Stillman for sending her “the lovely little story of ‘Billy & Hans’, it is most beautiful, and I hope will touch the hearts of many into treating our little fellow-beings with less cruelty – for myself, I have long believed in the transmigration of

souls, and consequently have regarded all living creatures with reverence” (298). The editors add this note: “It is not known where JM encountered the Eastern religious belief in reincarnation, whereby individuals are unknowingly re-born as ‘higher- or ‘lower’ creature [sic] and therefore all living beings deserve equal respect” (299). One wonders if JM knew of Madame Blavatsky, the Order of the Golden Dawn, theosophy, or any other of the esoteric societies of the late Victorian era; indeed, she was friends with Oscar Wilde and “used to see Willie Yeats before he became famous” (363).

And she evinces a lively if somewhat constrained imaginative life. She writes in a 26 October 1895 letter to WSB that she plots out numerous novels – but never writes them because she is never alone: “I am always inventing plots for novels and if I ever find myself anywhere in peace I believe I should develop them, but I daresay they would be bad and would not sell” (261).

Besides its insightful introductions, the book offers excellent annotations, a useful bibliography, and a chronology. Moving beyond her image, this book convincingly proves the value of taking a different, more authentic, perspective on Jane Morris.

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## NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### MORRIS'S ALBION PRESS MOVES TO ROCHESTER

About 35 people came to the special viewing of William Morris's Albion press on Thursday, 4 December at Christie's in New York. The group included members of the Morris Society, the Grolier Club, and the American Printing History Association but not—certainly—the new owner of the press when it was sold the next day, Friday, 5 December, for \$233,000 (including the auction house commission). The press, manufactured by Hopkinson & Cope in 1891, was bought by Bromer Booksellers, of Boston, acting on behalf of a then-unnamed client “who will put it to good use.” Tom Lecky, of Christie's book department, briefly described his and the auction house's role in the sale and then introduced Jethro Lieberman, who had inherited the press from his parents, J. Ben and Elizabeth Lieberman. In recounting the press's presence in his family for over a half century Lieberman recalled a number of incidents, beginning with the surprise appearance of a *New York Times* reporter



Sylvia and Bill Peterson, authors of *The Kelmscott Chaucer: A Census*, with the Albion Press

soon after the press came to their New Rochelle home in 1961. His parents were not at home so the reporter took a picture of the 17-year-old Jethro (in coat and tie) standing next to the Albion. This photograph was reprinted in an article in the *Times* on 6 December, together with an image of Jethro (also wearing coat and tie) with the press in Christie's salesroom. Lieberman also told of the numerous occasions on which visitors were invited to set their own name in type and print a personal keepsake.

In describing his decision to sell the press, Lieberman said he hoped that it might be more than an icon of William Morris, since it had been used continuously over the last 120 years; indeed his father, a journalist, printer and one of the founders of the American Printing History Association, had refused offers from institutions which wanted to purchase the press and merely put it on display.

A day later the purchaser "who will put it to good use" was revealed to be the Rochester Institute of Technology's Cary Graphic Arts Collection. The purchase was made possible by the family of Brooks Bower, a 1974 School of Print Media graduate and Rochester Institute of Technology trustee. Steven Galbraith, curator of the Cary collection, remarked on the extraordinary history of the Albion No. 6551. After Morris used it to issue the Kelmscott Press books, the American type designer Frederic Goudy imported it from England to Marlborough, New York in 1924, for use at the Village Press. Shortly thereafter Goudy sold it to Spencer Kellogg, Jr., who ran the Aries Press of Eden, New York. From 1932 to 1941, Albion No. 6551 was owned by the Cary Collection's namesake, Mel-

bert B. Cary, Jr., director of the Continental Type Founders Association and proprietor of the private Press of the Woolly Whale. Galbraith explained that "Cary bequeathed the press to his pressman George Van Vechten, and in 1960, J. Ben and Elizabeth Liberman acquired Albion No. 6551 for their Herity Press. They topped the press with a Liberty Bell, a reminder of the vital role that private presses play in the freedom of the press."

Albion No. 6551 will join the Cary Collection's Arthur M. Lowenthal Memorial Pressroom, a working collection of 15 historical printing presses and more than 1,500 fonts of metal and wood type. Supporting study of the press is a collection of Kelmscott Press publications and archives of material related to Frederic Goudy and Cary's Press of the Woolly Whale.

## MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION SESSIONS 2015:

The 2015 MLA will be held next January in Vancouver. Papers are sought for a session co-sponsored by the William Morris Society and the Old Norse Discussion Group on any aspect of William Morris and his associates in relation to Old Norse topics: literary, linguistic, artistic, biographical or political, ranging from pre-historic origins to the present day. Please send abstracts and c. v. by 15 March 2014 to [bryane@mst.edu](mailto:bryane@mst.edu) and [florence-boos@uiowa.edu](mailto:florence-boos@uiowa.edu).

The William Morris Society will also sponsor a panel on "The Pre-Raphaelites: The Ecological and the Oceanic." For this we seek papers on the Pre-Raphaelites, Morris and ecological concerns, the environment, 'green' politics, and/or oceanic journeys, Morris's influence in Asia and Oceania, or trans-Pacific approaches to Pre-Raphaelite studies.

Please send abstracts for proposals by 15 March 2014 to [florence-boos@uiowa.edu](mailto:florence-boos@uiowa.edu).

## MORRIS ONLINE EDITION CHANGES NAME

The Morris Online Edition will soon become the **William Morris Archive**, a name change intended to convey more accurately its increasing trove of images and non-literary materials, as well as the presence of many separate editions within it. In 2013 the

Archive has made gratifying progress, with new material on the Book Arts, introductions for *Love Is Enough* and *Three French Romances* (Peter Faulkner), *News from Nowhere* (Tony Pinkney), and a historical introduction and notes to *A Dream of John Ball* by Peter Wright. New transcriptions of autographs of *Lancelot of the Lake* (Karen Carcia) and *Child Christopher* (Matt Runkle) have been added, as well as the *Commonweal* texts of *The Pilgrims of Hope* and Morris's political romances.

In addition, we are in the process of preparing Martin Stott's photographs of the Morris Society's July 2013 tour to accompany the text of Morris's Icelandic diaries for 1871 and 1873. These stunning photographs will greatly enhance appreciation of Morris's journals.

New editions are underway or in prospect: Nathaniel Gilbert has begun to prepare *The Odyssey*; Clara Finley is planning a section on the SPAB; new portals on "Lyric Poems of the *Earthly Paradise* Period," and *The Pilgrims of Hope* are underway; and images of autograph manuscripts of *The Odyssey*, *The Aeneid*, *King Magnus*, and *A Dream of John Ball* will soon be posted.

The location of the Archive is unchanged:  
[morrisedition.lib.uiowa.edu](http://morrisedition.lib.uiowa.edu).

## A FRENCH EDITION

A French edition of Morris's fiction is being brought out for the first time by a small publishing company, Les Editions Aux forges de Vulcain. Water of the *Wondrous Isles*, or *Le Lac aux îles enchantées*, is the newest title, joining three others: *Un rêve de John Ball*, *Le pays creux*, and *Le Puits au bout du monde*. In this enchanting translation, Birdalone becomes Petite-Grive, or Little-Thrush.

Read a sample online here: <http://ow.ly/nkVkj>

See the complete list of titles here: <http://ow.ly/nkVt4>



Images courtesy of Aux forges de Vulcain.

## MAY MORRIS IN ICELAND

### *Adapted from a letter from Örn Gíslason*

My wife and I joined a William Morris Society excursion to Kelmscott Manor around May 2008, where we learned that, like her father, May Morris had visited Iceland, traveling there in 1922, 1924 and 1929. The Manor contained several mementos and gifts acquired on these trips, among them a decorative box dating from 1844 which held needles for making nets; a casket carved by Ríkharður Jónsson and given to May in 1924; and a food bowl, dated 1874, probably acquired on her 1924 visit. On my return home I learned that the National Archive of Iceland contains the private papers of Guðbrandur Magnússon (E52), which include two letters from May to Guðbrandur dated 1925 and 1930. These read as follows:

26th February 1925

Dear Mr Guðbrandur Magnússon,

Miss Lobb and I are never tired of talking of our Iceland travels, and specially of the happy rides on your fine horses and all that wonderful journey you planned for us so successfully. I gave a little lecture with lantern-slide illustrations in our village lately, and am going to give it again later on, in the early summer. We find that people are much interested about Iceland travel, and are very pleased to see the pictures of the strange and beautiful places we visited.

It was only on our last day before leaving Reykjavík that I discovered that a parcel left for us at the British Consulate was a handsome "rúm-teppi" of Mrs Magnússon's weaving! It was sent from the ladies at the Bazaar without any message. We were sorry that we could not take it as we had no more room in our luggage.

I venture to send a little gift to you and Mrs Magnússon—a greeting from England in the shape of some English knives, which I hope she will find useful. They are addressed to you, in the care of Mr Ásgeir Sigurðsson at the British Consulate, and I have asked him to be good enough to let you know when the parcel comes, that you may get it when you come to Reykjavík. Please remember us kindly to Gunnar Vigfússon.

I hope you and the family are all in good health. With kindest regards, and best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

May Morris

A second letter, dated 23rd September 1930, reads:

Dear Mr Magnússon,

It was so pleasant to receive your friendly letter which

came to me where Miss Lobb and I were camping our tent in Barra [the Outer Hebrides].

I send the second of my two articles on Iceland, which I missed seeing, being away.

Yes indeed, I was much touched by the honour conferred on me by the Icelandic Government [the Order of the Falcon], which I have done so little to deserve—beyond my love for your country and your people. I am very proud indeed of the Order.

What beautiful children! And what pictures of health they are! The seven month old child, whose name you don't give, is surely wonderfully fine for her age.

With warm regards from us both to yourself and Mrs Magnússon.

Yours sincerely  
May Morris

On the occasion of the 1000th anniversary of our ancient parliament, the “Alþingi,” in June 1930, May Morris was awarded the Icelandic Order of the Falcon, in tribute to her and her father's friendship toward Iceland and her role in publicizing the anniversary in English newspapers. During her visits she made many Icelandic friends, some of whom later visited her at Kelmscott Manor, and among her generous gifts was a donation of 400 books to the library at Húsavík. Her three visits were widely publicized in the Icelandic language press, both in Iceland and in Manitoba. I have located more than 43 of these articles published between 1924 and 2002; the following list summarizes the contents of those published during the 1920s and 30s.

24 June 1924 *Lögrjetta*: praises WM highly and welcomes MM, noting that she had long desired to visit Iceland.

28 August 1924 *Vísir* (Reykjavík): describes MM's June-August visit, bids her farewell and hopes she will return. Other papers in succeeding days carry similar sentiments.

2 September 1924 *Lögrjetta*: bids a warm farewell to MM.

24 September 1924 *Lögberg-Heimskringla* (Winnipeg, Manitoba): describes MM's visit and reproduces the farewell sentiments of the *Vísir* editor.

September 1924: Icelandic papers record MM's contributions to hospital fund.

November and December 1925: papers in Manitoba and Iceland record her gift of apples.

17 July 1926 *Dagur* (Akureyri): mentions the visit of MM

and Miss Lobb to their city after having traveled in the south.

22 May 1930 *Lögberg-Heimskringla* (Winnipeg, Manitoba): notes that MM had published an article on Iceland in *Wanderlust*, a travel magazine, in which she had praised Iceland and mentioned the upcoming anniversary of the Althing.

28 July 1930 *Vísir* (Reykjavík): reports on the publicizing of the 1000 year anniversary in foreign newspapers; mentions MM, her travels to Iceland, and her recent informative and praiseful article in the *Manchester Guardian*.

26 August 1930 *Morganblaðið*: announces the award of the Order of the Falcon to MM.

1934 The magazine *Eimreiðin* reported that MM had been following in her father's footsteps in Iceland through her visits and familiarity with Old Icelandic manuscripts.

24 March 1934 *Morganblaðið*: reports on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of WM's birth; suggests that readers listen to commemorative radio broadcasts on his life and work; and expresses gratitude to MM, as similar to her father in her Icelandic interests. It notes that the Icelandic prime minister plans to visit her during an upcoming trip to London to convey the nation's thanks.

26 March 1934 *Tíminn*: celebrates the 100th anniversary of WM's birth and his ties to Iceland; notes that MM had visited Iceland and hosted Icelandic friends at her home at Kelmscott Manor, where she preserved mementos of Iceland.

1934 *Fálkinn*, no. 13: discusses at length WM's associations with Iceland; mentions MM as having also visited and shared her father's love of the country.

25 April 1934 *Lögberg-Heimskringla* (Winnipeg, Manitoba): adulatory article expressing gratitude to WM and MM for their love of Iceland.

28 July 1936 *Morganblaðið*: records MM's donation of 400 books to the library in Húsavík, northern Iceland; WM had visited the librarian there, and MM and Miss Lobb had also visited some years previously.

29 July 1936 *Alþýðublaðið*: similarly discusses MM and her gift of books.

29 July 1936 *Vísir* (Reykjavík): describes in detail MM and her donation of books.

29 July 1936 *Nýja Dagblaðið*: describes MM's gift.

6 August 1936 *Nýja Dagblaðið*: mentions a gift by MM and Miss Lobb to an Icelandic church.

27 August 1936 *Lögberg-Heimskringla* (Winnipeg, Manitoba): announces the book donation and reprints the *Morganblaðið* article of 28 July.

1937 *Aegir*, no. 7: reports that MM had published an article about Pike Ward, a Canadian who had introduced better methods of preserving fish into Iceland.

1937 *Íslendingur* (Akureyri), no. 33: similarly mentions Pike Ward, with whom May Morris had discussed Icelandic matters during a visit to Canada two years before his death.

17 October 1938 *Lögberg-Heimskringla* (Winnipeg, Manitoba): obituary and discussion of MM's life and great friendship toward Iceland.

18 October 1938 *Vísir* (Reykjavík): announcement of MM's death.

18 October 1938 *Þjóðviljinn*: obituary of MM, with mention of WM's socialism and MM's generosity to Icelanders in times of need.

19 October 1938 *Morganblaðið*: extended obituary mentioning MM's great abilities, her father, and her love of Iceland.

20 October 1938 *Alþýðublaðið*: obituary of MM which

discusses her life, her lecture tours in Britain and the United States, and her ability to speak Icelandic.

20 October 1938 *Tíminn*: obituary with mention of MM's generosity to Icelanders.

1939 *Dvöl*, no. 1: periodical article on MM's friendship with Iceland; her life at Kelmscott Manor and the Icelandic items she had collected.

1939 *Íslendingur*, no. 17: announcement of death of Miss Lobb, who had recently sent books to Iceland; mentions May Morris's many book donations and her receipt of the Order of the Falcon.

For the entire list, including articles to 2002, see the William Morris Archive (*Icelandic Journals, Supplementary Materials*), [morrisedition.lib.uiowa.edu/icelandicdiaries.html](http://morrisedition.lib.uiowa.edu/icelandicdiaries.html).

The preceding material is adapted from a 10 September 2013 letter to Gary Aho from Örn Gíslason, an Icelandic member of the William Morris Society. More information on May Morris's Icelandic journeys may be found in Gudrun Jónsdóttir, "May Morris and Miss Lobb in Iceland," *Journal of William Morris Studies* 7.1 (Summer 1981). — Florence Boos

## THE LAST WORD

### MORRIS ON HIS RETURN FROM ICELAND:

From May Morris's Introduction to the *Icelandic Journals*, on the 1873 Expedition:

The return to Iceland touched him even more closely than his first visit had; . . . all that first excitement gave place to an exaltation of spirit peculiarly intense, expressed in some degree by the sort of detachment the diary conveys. . . . [H]e had withdrawn into a frame of mind in which he saw the wilderness in its real loneliness, awful, unloveable and remote from human life—the elemental horrors had seized upon him and perhaps he saw sights and heard sounds from another world than that in which he and his fellow-travellers were moving—who knows indeed where the poet wanders when he withdraws into his own country?

"The journey," he writes of it after his return, "has deepened the impression I had of Iceland and increased my love for it. The glorious simplicity of the terrible and tragic, but beautiful land, with its well-remembered stories of brave men, killed all querulous feeling in me, and has made all the dear faces of wife and children and love and friends dearer than ever to me. I feel as if a definite space of my life had passed away now. I have seen Iceland for the last time: as I looked up at Charles' Wain to-night, all my travel there seemed to come back to me, made solemn and elevated in one moment, till my heart swelled with the wonder of it: surely I have gained a great deal, and it was no idle whim that drew me there, but a true instinct for what I needed.

CW 8, xxxiii-iv

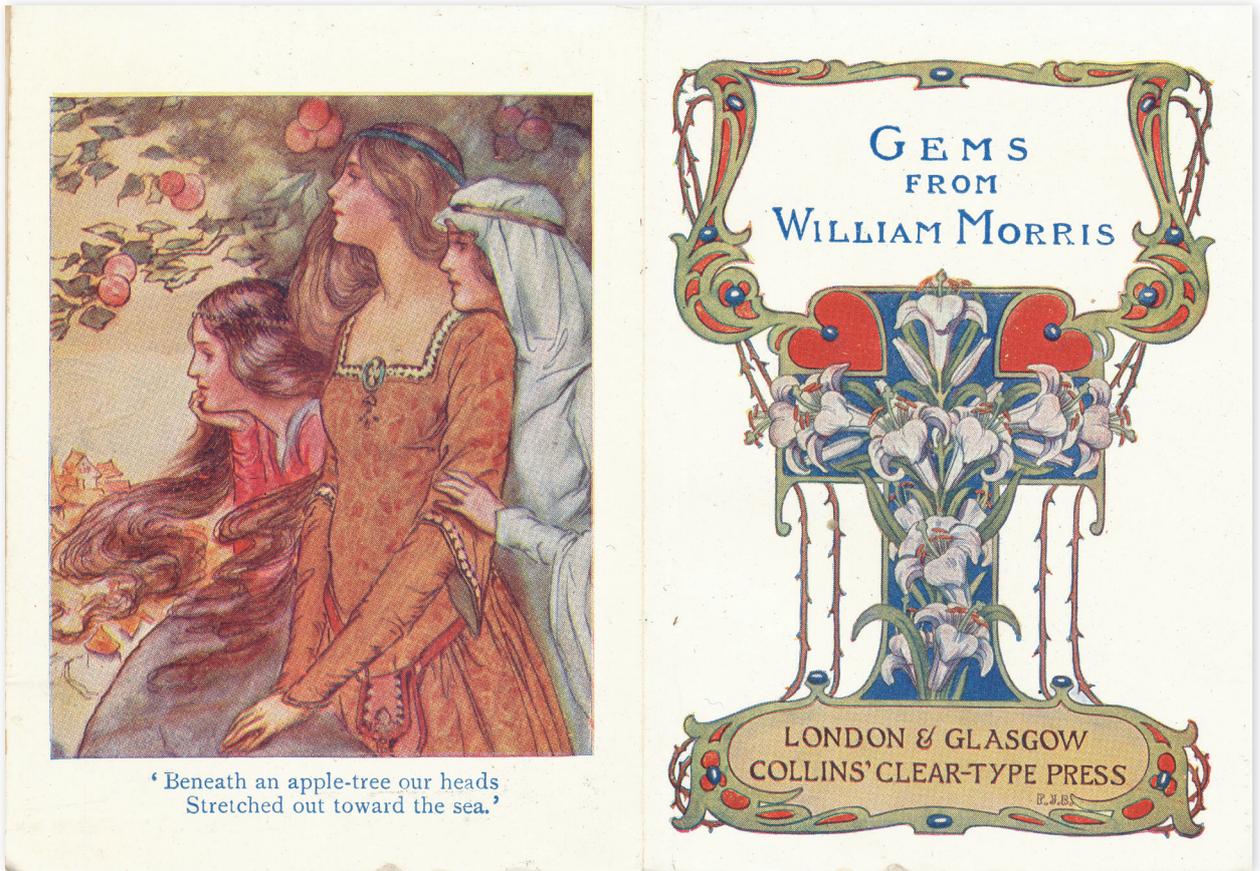


Figure 9

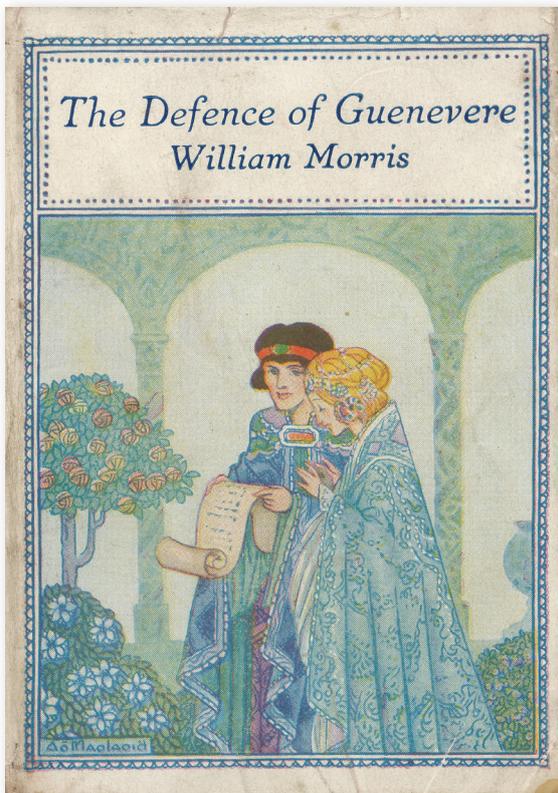


Figure 10

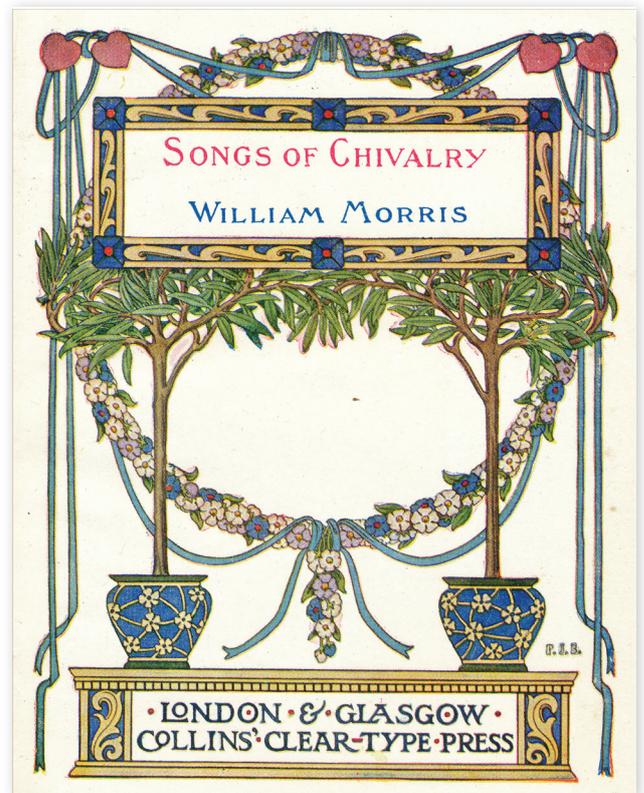


Figure 11