

The William Morris Society Newsletter: January 2007

A LETTER TO MEMBERS FROM FLORENCE BOOS

A Letter from the President

December 2006

Dear Members of the William Morris Society:

Six members of the Governing Committee and past president Gary Aho met in New York September 16th and 17th to consider the Society's long-term future. Tom Tobin, Mark Samuels Lasner, and I were in New York to attend the Research Society for Victorian Periodicals conference that weekend, and three other members live there. The seven who were able to attend (Tom, Mark, Gary, Fran Durako, Frank Sharp, Hartley Spatt and I) began our meeting over dinner with a discussion of the Society's aims and prospects, and focused our remarks by general agreement on efforts to make Morris' life and work more widely known.

We met again for six more hours the next day at the University Club, where we discussed ways to make our web site more interactive, redesign it for greater clarity and better access, and arrange its offerings under straightforward rubrics such as "Life," "Writings," "Art" and "Social Thought." Other tentative ideas advanced included improvement of our membership brochure; possible sponsorship of an Elderhostel course; preparation of primary, secondary and adult education lesson plans for courses on Morris; editorial changes to the Wikipedia Morris entry (now widely used); and addition of proposals to prepare teaching materials at all levels to the list of projects eligible for the Society's annual fellowships.

All these projects would benefit of course from active collaboration, and we invite interested members to help.

Our book sale this year was a success, and we have decided to advertise our books on eBay and elsewhere in an effort to reduce our annual revenue shortfall. To this end, we seek donations in kind from any members who might willing to contribute books and other items of Morrisian or Pre-Raphaelite interest.

As for future events, we hope to celebrate Morris's one-hundred-seventy-third birthday in March and sponsor a garden party in the Washington, D. C. area sometime next summer. I have proposed a session on "Morris and Material Culture" for the North American Victorian Studies Association Conference in Victoria next October, and we will devote our annual sessions at the Modern Language Association Convention in Chicago on December 27th-30th, 2007 to "The Pre-Raphaelite and Aesthetic Family" and "Morris as Metatext: Editions/Printforms/Illustrations." We have also made tentative plans to host a conference in Delaware on "The Aesthetics of Rebellion: The Pre-Raphaelites and William Morris" in the summer of 2008.

Since our last newsletter appeared, Alan Crawford, a historian of British architecture, has offered a talk on "William Morris: Socialist and Shopkeeper" to the Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association on August 15th, and a public reading of Ignacio Zulueta's play *Red House* took place July 22nd at the Bus Barn Theatre's 2006 Summer Festival in the Bay Area of San Francisco. In *Red House*, Ignacio has explored the complex artisanal and emotional lives of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, William Morris, and Edward Burne-Jones through the recollections and reflections of a thoughtful and observant Georgiana Burne-Jones, and we are grateful that he has kindly given us permission to reproduce an excerpt of the script below.

In late October, I also spoke about "'Everyday Life' in William Morris' *News from Nowhere*" at a three-day conference on "Literary Utopias of Cultural Communities" in Leiden, Holland, and was impressed by the cohesion and cordiality of the conference itself and the insights of its participants. Especially interesting was a talk in which Professor Douwe Fokkema compared Morris with Herman Gorter (1864-

1927), a Dutch admirer of Morris, poet and author of a four-thousand-line verse epic *Mei* [May], and founding member of the Dutch Social Democratic Party (*Sociaal-Democratische Partij*). An ardent opponent of the First World War, Gorter may be best-known to social historians for the mordantly critical "Open Letter" (1920) in which he denounced "Comrade Lenin"'s decision to crush workers' councils in the name of socialism.

In two brief trips to Amsterdam's International Institute of Social History, I also found two hitherto unpublished Morris essays, and used Max Nettlau's carefully preserved collection of late-nineteenth-century socialist and anarchist documents (among them the archives of the Socialist League) to make copies of early translations of Morris into Dutch, Spanish, Italian and German, some of which I hope will find a (virtual) home on the Society's site.

By the time this reaches you the new year will have begun. May it bring a measure of peace to the world's inhabitants, and personal happiness to you.

In fellowship,

Florence

William Morris Society Sessions at the 2007 and 2008 Modern Language Association Convention

The topics chosen for our December 2007 sessions are "Morris as Metatext: Editions/Printforms/Illustrations" and "The Pre-Raphaelite and Aesthetic Family." Please send abstracts by March 20th, 2007 to florence-boos@uiowa.edu. For 2008, the topics will be "Pre-Raphaelite (and Aesthetic) Prose" and "William Morris: Friends and Associates."

Morris at the 2006 MLA

Thursday, 28 December

190. Pre-Raphaelitism and the World of Victorian Art

12:00 noon–1:15 p.m., 406, Philadelphia Marriott

Program arranged by the William Morris Society

Presiding: Mark Samuels Lasner, Univ. of Delaware Library

- 1. "Eve, Pandora, and the Woman Question in Pre-Raphaelite Art," Jude V. Nixon, Oakland Univ.**
- 2. "Strong Travailing: Elizabeth Siddal, Women's Vision, and Female Labor," Jill R. Ehnenn, Appalachian State Univ.**
- 3. "Pre-Raphaelitism, Virginia Woolf, and Her Family," Evelyn Harris Haller, Doane Coll.**
- 4. "'No Life Is Complete without Vice, and Technique': Late Victorian Reception of Pictorial Form," Andrew Marvick, Southern Utah Univ.**

1.30 Annual Meeting of the Society, to follow immediately [election of the governing committee]

2.00 Governing committee meeting

Franklin Inn Club, 205 S. Camac St. located six short blocks south from the MLA

5.30: Drinks party, which may also be a book launch for *Bound for the 1890s: Essays on Writing and Publishing in Honor of James G. Nelson*. Nelson is a member of the Society, as are four of the contributors to the volume.

6.30 Dinner, probably \$25 per person

Saturday, 30 December

722. Morris and Gender

12:00 noon–1:15 p.m., Grand Ballroom Salon K, Philadelphia Marriott

Program arranged by the William Morris Society

Presiding: Florence S. Boos, Univ. of Iowa

- 1. "Revisiting the Garden: Fruit and Sexual Expression in the Work of William Morris,"**

David Faldet, Luther Coll.

2. "Pygmalion Swoons: The Aesthetics of Subjection in Pater, Morris, and Wilde," Mia McIver, Univ. of California, Irvine

3. "Beyond Gender: Wordsworth's 'The White Doe of Rylstone' and Morris's Love Is Enough," Sharon A. McGrady, Rutgers Univ., New Brunswick

4. "Morris's Polyvalent Women: Sexual Violence and the Dramatic Monologue," Florence S. Boos

For copies of abstracts, write to florence-boos@uiowa.edu after 15 Nov.

William Morris Session at the 2007 North American Victorian Studies Association

For a session on "William Morris and Material Culture," papers are sought on the material aspects of the artistic endeavors of Morris and his circle. These may concern poetry, prose romances, translations, architecture, travel, gardening, book design, textiles, tapestries and other decorative art work, as well as Morris's work for the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and his views about nature and the environment. Proposals should be sent by February 1st to florence-boos@uiowa.edu (preferable) or by February 15th, 2006 to florence-boos@iowa.edu and to navsa@uvic.ca. The conference will be held October 10th-13th, 2007, at the University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia.

Joseph R. Dunlap Memorial Fellowship and William Morris Society Awards

The Joseph R. Dunlap Memorial Fellowship supports scholarly, creative, and translation projects about William Morris and his designs, writings, and other work. Up to \$1,000 per year is granted to individuals (there can be multiple or partial awards) for research and other expenses, including travel to conferences. In addition, at the fellowship committee's discretion one or two William Morris Society Awards may be offered each year for a total of up to \$1000.

Projects may deal with any subject--biographical, literary, historical, social, artistic, political, typographical--relating to Morris. They may be scholarly or creative, and may include translations or the preparation of educational materials.

Applicants for all awards may be from any country; applications are particularly encouraged from younger members of the Society and from those at the beginning of their careers. Recipients need not have an academic or institutional appointment, and the Ph.D. is not required. Applicants with scholarly or creative projects should send to the Society a two-page description of their projects, including a timeline and an indication of where the results might be published, along with a c. v. and at least one letter of recommendation.

For translation submissions, please send a copy of the translation (of the published version, if relevant), with a letter of reference from someone acquainted with both languages assessing the quality of the translation. Translations should have been completed within the past five years. We would like to place some portion of the translation on our web site if this is possible, but permission to do so is not a requirement for the award.

We also encourage submission of teaching materials--especially lesson plans and course materials--suitable for use at the elementary, secondary, college or adult-education level. The Society would hope to share these teaching materials via the Society's site. For teaching materials, no letters of recommendation are needed, but we request that you enclose a cover letter describing the ways in which the materials might be (or already have been) used in learning situations.

The deadline for applications for 2008 fellowship(s) is 15 December, 2007. Applications will be judged by at least three members of the Governing Committee, and results will be announced by 15 January, 2008. Kindly send applications to florence-boos@uiowa.edu or to Florence Boos, Department of English, 308 English-Philosophy Building, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa 52242.

Like to Help? Please Consider Donating Your Extra Books to the William Morris Society

We ask members to contribute good quality books and other items to help us raise money through resale. If you have such items which you might be willing to donate, please let us know. Such donations should be sent to the William Morris Society, P. O. Box 53263, Washington, D. C. 20009 or to Fran Durako, The Kelmscott Bookshop, 34 West 25th Street, Baltimore, MD 21218 (info@kelmscottbookshop.com).

Book by John Le Bourgeois Published

*A new book on the life and work of William Morris by Morris Society member John Le Bourgeois, **Art and Forbidden Fruit**, has been published by the Lutterworth Press. A reception to celebrate its publication was held at 6 p. m. on November 23rd 2006 at Holy Trinity Church Sloane Square in London, and copies may be obtained by writing sales@lutterworth.com or P O. Box 60, Cambridge CB1 2NT.*

Book on SPAB by Angela Yount

*The first book on this topic for a century, Angela Yount's **William Morris and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings** will be published by Routledge Press in 2007. She offers a valuable assessment of how the 19th century SPAB learned from its early mistakes and survived and adapted throughout the 20th-21st centuries. William Morris's love for historic architecture combined with the extremes of the Gothic Revival in nineteenth century Britain led to his founding of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) in 1877. Early SPAB work involved speaking against restoration and providing alternate ideas to promote preservation. Due to the continued monitoring of preservation practices concerning historic buildings, along with the evolution of techniques and adaptations throughout the years, the SPAB is now the oldest and largest conservation society in Britain. The SPAB so influenced late nineteenth century perspectives of historic preservation that it motivated the foundation of similar societies in Britain, in Europe, and around the world.*

"William Morris and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings" is the result of extensive research based on many original documents from the SPAB archive in London. The archive houses information, letters, and other documentation which outlines each of the SPAB cases since it's beginning. These case studies provide insight into the specific efforts of William Morris, each of the SPAB officers, and many of the SPAB members, both in the past and the present.

"William Morris and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings" outlines Morris's ideology and motivation, the popularity of the Gothic Revival and the preservation issues that evolved from it, and the SPAB's effectiveness in Britain through specific case studies. Then these issues are followed onto the continent, specifically in Germany in France, to examine the SPAB's influence there. Finally, the SPAB's twentieth century success is considered by looking at its current programs and cases.

Victorian Studies Research Guide published by the Rivendell Press

*The Rivendell Press is pleased to announce the publication of **Victorian Studies: A Research Guide - (revised edition)** by Sharon Propas. The first edition of this guide to research sources for Victorian studies was published in 1992, just as electronic resources were becoming major tools for scholars. Since then, the internet has changed the way in which research materials, especially indexes and other finding guides, are presented and used.*

Further details, including a secure ordering facility, may be obtained from

<http://www.rivendalepress.com/current/propas.html>

Morris's Essay, "Our Country Right or Wrong"

Florence Boos's edition of this work, with illustrations, notes, and an introductory article on Morris's relationship with the late nineteenth-century peace movement, will be published by the William Morris Society of the UK in conjunction with Stanhope

Press. Copies should be available at Kelmscott House and from the US Morris Society by late spring 2007.

First Presence of Morris Edition Text

A beginning version of *The Life and Death of Jason* has been posted on-line, with images of the manuscript ("The Deeds of Jason") and Kelmscott text. For this see <http://morrisedition.lib.uiowa.edu>.

The PRB, the DNB and the ODNB

By Florence Boos

The original *Dictionary of National Biography's* first editor Leslie Stephen famously complained six years after its inception in 1882 that "[t]hat damned thing goes on like a diabolical piece of machinery, always gaping for more copy, and I fancy at times that I shall be dragged into it and crushed into slips" (*DNB 1912-1921*). Stephen might not have been surprised to learn therefore that the *DNB's* early-twenty-first century successor, the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004; henceforth the "ODNB"), became the broadest collaborative intellectual effort ever undertaken in British studies. It cost twenty-six million pounds to assemble, benefited from the collective efforts of ten-thousand-odd contributors, and brought its readers fifty-four thousand biographical entries (a third of them entirely new), in sixty thousand physical and a hundred thousand virtual pages (the latter at www.oxforddnb.com) [Brian Harrison, introduction to the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison, OUP, 2004, vol. 1, v-xix.].

In the words of the work's general editor Brian Harrison, "[t]he shortage of articles on women, and the way their lives were treated, had come to seem perhaps the *DNB's* most notorious weakness--and it was the one most frequently mentioned when opinions were canvassed on the need for a new dictionary" [*Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford UP, 2004, vol. 1, ix]. As things have turned out, the new *ODNB's* 688 new life-sketches of nineteenth-century women raised their representation from five to eight percent [*Ibid.*, xvii]. The new editors also broadened somewhat the spectrum of its subjects' class backgrounds, and added a number of 'collective biographies,' such as "Women Artists in Ruskin's Circle, act. 1850s-1900," and "Women Traders and Artisans in London, act. c. 1200-c.1500." In addition, they introduced illustrations for eighteen percent of their subjects; eight of the ten entries I examined were graced by such reproductions--a tribute, perhaps, to the artistic aspirations and associations of their subjects.

A major change in the *ODNB* is that it has been largely written by specialists in their subjects. Staff members drafted only nine percent of the *ODNB's* entries, and most of its contributors were professional scholars who volunteered to write their entries [*Ibid.*, ix]. By contrast, Leslie Stephen and his successor Sidney Lee chose many of the original *DNB's* contributors from family, friends, former fellow students at Cambridge and Oxford and fellow members of London gentlemen's clubs. Richard Garnett, for example (1855-1906), an editor, poet and writer of short tales as well as the Keeper of the British Museum, prepared two hundred six entries, five of the ten I examined among them. The only woman who signed entries to the *DNB* before 1901 (eighty-one in all) was Elizabeth Lee--Sidney Lee's sister and household companion [Gillian Fenwick, *Women and the Dictionary of National Biography: A Guide to DNB Volumes 1885-1985 and Missing Persons*, Scholar Press, 1994, 6].

Here I will focus primarily on the *ODNB's* entries for three well-known Pre-Raphaelite literary figures, Dante G. Rossetti, Christina Rossetti, and William Morris, and secondarily on the entries for Jane Morris, May Morris, Maria Rossetti and Lucy Madox Brown Rossetti. I will gather my remarks under three rubrics: new entries, greatly improved entries, and entries better in some respects but worse in others.

New Entries:

In the first category of new or almost-new entries appear the *ODNB's* brief lives of Jane Morris and Maria Rossetti (to whom Richard Garnett devoted a paragraph-long annex in his 1897 life of her sister Christina), and portraits of each appear in their respective

entries. Not so coincidentally, both of these 'new' subjects were women--Maria Rossetti and Jane Morris, by Susan Elkin and Frank Sharp--and Sharp, coeditor of an edition of Jane Morris's collected letters with Jan Marsh, had brought his subject Jane Morris to the attention of the ODNB editorial board.

Candor and avoidance of certain now-obvious stereotypes mark these new entries. A (counterfactual) DNB entry for Jane Morris would surely have focused primarily on her domestic roles and near-lifelong invalidism, but Sharp's entry for "Jane [née Burden] Morris, embroiderer and artist's model" comments in some detail on her work for Morris and Co. and her affairs with Dante Rossetti and Wilfred Scawen Blunt, but makes no mention of her illness, the rearing of her daughters May and Jenny and the latter's debilitating epilepsy, a source of great sorrow to her and her husband.

Richard Garnett included a single paragraph on Maria Rossetti in his DNB life of her sister Christina. In this he described Maria as "the most practical" of the Rossettis and "the most attentive to domestic concerns," but added that she had also left "an adequate memorial of herself in 'A Shadow of Dante: being an Essay towards studying himself, his World, and his Pilgrimage,' (1871), a manual highly valued by Dante scholars."

By contrast, Susan Elkin's much more extensive ODNB life of "Rossetti, Maria Francesca (1827-1876), author and Anglican nun," illustrated with a winsome photograph of its unassuming subject, focuses on her early precocity, her linguistic gifts, her work as an Italian teacher, her frustrated desire for a classical education, her devoted adherence to the Oxford movement, and her principal publications, an Italian textbook and devotional book as well as A Shadow of Dante. Elkin also endeavors to give the reader a sense of Maria's personal traits and temperament, and observes that she managed to fulfill her lifelong ambition to join the All Saints Sisterhood shortly after she became aware of the first symptoms of cancer.

Greatly Improved Entries:

In Richard Garnett's brief DNB notice for Lucy Madox Brown Rossetti (1843-1894), he mentioned only five of her paintings, made no comment about their style or manner, and omitted a number of details others might have considered significant (that after her mother's death when she was four, for example, her father had her educated away from home until she was twelve). He did end his entry with the sympathetic remark that "she was a genuine artist, who would have obtained an eminent place among painters but for the interruption of her career occasioned by domestic cares."

Angela Thirwell, by contrast, the author of William and Lucy: The Other Rossettis (2003), tells us in her ODNB entry that Lucy Rossetti was actually Emma Lucy Madox Brown Rossetti, presents a much more fully-nuanced account of the latter's personal and intellectual and personal life, and canvasses briefly the sources of her artwork, political views, intellectual gifts and artistic ideals. Sadly, the distinguished portrait of Lucy Rossetti executed by her brother-in-law does not grace Thirwell's entry.

Garnett's brief DNB-sketch of Christina Rossetti's life (about a fifth the length of his entry for her brother Dante) praised her devotion "to domestic duties and works of charity" (as he did in his remarks about her sister Maria, quoted above), and disregarded, in his assertion that she had "enjoyed the same educational advantages as the rest of the [Rossetti] family," the simple fact that unlike her brothers she had no formal education. He also expressed personal regret that "[her Anglo-Catholicism] had the unfortunate result of causing an estrangement between herself and a suitor to whom she was deeply attached. This circumstance explains much that would otherwise be obscure in her poetry, and accounts for the melancholy and even morbid character of most of it. Few have expressed the agonies of disappointed and hopeless love with equal poignancy, and much of the same spirit pervades her devotional poetry also."

Garnett did admire "Goblin Market," which he found "original in conception, style, and structure, as imaginative as 'the Ancient Mariner,'" but used this phrase as a rhetorical pivot for a summary judgment that "[e]xcept in 'Goblin Market' . . . she never approaches [Dante's] imaginative or descriptive power. Everywhere else she is, like most poetesses, purely subjective, and in no respect creative." Dismissing at length Rossetti's six books of devotional writings as "meritorious in their way, but scarcely affecting to be literature," he concluded that ". . . her reputation would certainly have stood higher if she had produced less or burned more. No excision, however, could have

removed the taint of disease which clings to her most beautiful poetry, whether secular or religious, 'Goblin Market' excepted." Four decades of Rossetti critics have sought to refute these dismissive judgments, and her admirers bring forth a dozen or more articles, books and editions each year.

The editors of the ODNB did not assign Christina Rossetti's four-page entry to one of these Rossetti scholars, but to Lindsay Duguid, a fiction-editor for the Times Literary Supplement. The entry is graced by an early sketch of Christina by her brother Dante (who merits eight pages in the ODNB), but Duguid focuses gratuitously on her appearance and the debilitating effects of Grave's disease in ways often spared her chloral-addicted brother ("Photographs of her from the 1870s show a stout, swarthy, undistinguished-looking Victorian matron"). Duguid briefly surveys Rossetti's posthumous reputation and recent critical reception, but imposes Freudian readings which tend to slight the range of Rossetti's writings as well as recent critical views of them. Like Garnett and most other commentators, Duguid focuses attention on "Goblin Market," and praises "[Rossetti's] strangely direct, assertive manner--so different from the muffled voice of her brother's poetry," but adds a caveat that "the poetry seems more heroic when set in the context of what seems to the modern reader to be an unimaginably restricted life. . . . her pious scrupulousness seems at odds with the heartfelt emotion expressed in her poetry." Acknowledging recent "reassessments which place [Rossetti] at the head of nineteenth-century women's writing, itself newly reassessed," Duguid finally concludes that "[Ford Madox Ford's judgment of Rossetti as] a modern writer is the one which stands."

Entries Better in Some Respects but Not Others:

Richard Garnett's DNB entry for Dante Rossetti drew heavily on William Rossetti's 1885 memoir of his brother, and blended a measure of censure of Rossetti's character and graphic descriptions of his personal problems under the influence of chloral with a perceptive and sometimes effusive account of the different stages of his work. Here, for example, is what he had to say about Rossetti's poetry:

Everywhere he is daringly original, intensely passionate, and 'of imagination all compact.' His music is as perfect as the music can be that always produces the effect of studied artifice . . . ; his glowing and sumptuous diction is his own, borrowed from none, and incapable of successful imitation. . . . He is a poet or nothing, . . . wanting no charm but the highest of all, and the first on Milton's list--simplicity. Notwithstanding this defect, he must be placed very high on the roll of English poets.

One may not agree with every aspect of this eloquent panegyric, but it expressed the careful and considered judgments of someone who was himself a poet as well as an editor and significant literary historian.

In his eight-page ODNB entry for Dante Rossetti, J. C. Bullen, Professor of English at Reading University and the author of *The Pre-Raphaelite Body: Fear and Desire in Painting, Poetry and Criticism* (1998), has furnished a detailed account of Rossetti's life and intertwined endeavors which gives emphasis to the development of his painting, his complicated negotiations with his patrons and the ambivalent responses of his Victorian audience. Bullen tells us quite straightforwardly about Rossetti's affair with Jane Morris and the circumstances of Elizabeth Siddal's suicide (both absent from Garnett's account)--and his narration of the exhumation of Rossetti's poems from his wife's grave is a small masterpiece of metaphorical understatement: "On 5 October Dr Llewellyn Williams was engaged to disinfect the manuscript volume of poems which had been carefully removed by gravediggers. The collection was damaged by water, and -- in keeping with the whole macabre, rather Jacobean incident--'Jenny' had been pierced by a worm."

Rather surprisingly and in marked contrast to Garnett's remarks, Bullen makes few personal evaluations of Rossetti's poetry, but confines himself for the most part to a canvass of its critical reception, and concludes somewhat debatably that "Rossetti has remained much better known for his poetry [than his art]." He alludes briefly to Jan Marsh's substantial biography, and acknowledges that "[t]he electronic archive published on the internet by the University of Virginia under the direction of Jerome McGann provides access to both Rossetti's written and his art work," but slights this on-line edition's apparatus of and textual, head- and footnotes and multiple versions when

he asserts that "a scholarly edition of [Rossetti's] writing has yet to be published." Otherwise Bullen's entry seems the most current brief account of Rossetti's life, work and interrelations with his period.

William Morris died in 1896, six years after the cutoff date for inclusion in the first series of DNB volumes but before 1900, when he would have become eligible for an entry in one of the many twentieth-century supplements, and many other seekers may have had difficulty finding J. W. Mackail's life of him, buried away in volume iii of the first DNB supplement. Mackail, the Burne-Jones' son-in-law, classical scholar, Oxford Professor of Poetry (1906-11) and author of the two-volume Life of William Morris (1899), is still considered the best contemporary source we have for Morris's life (with qualifications noted below), and his DNB entry for Morris was superior to the others I have examined in style and literary (if not social or artistic) acuity.

Markedly less sympathetic with Morris' politics, Mackail asserted with distaste that Morris was "conspicuous alike by means, education and character" among his comrades in the Socialist League. Mackail also dispatched Morris' work for the Eastern Question Association and the founding of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings in two sentences, and mistitled as well as misdated Hopes and Fears for Art, 1882, Morris' first volume of essays on social topics which he cited as The Aims of Art, 1887, puzzling mistakes for an otherwise careful scholar. Finally, Mackail made only one passing allusion to Jane, May and Jenny Morris, in his remark that "Morris and his family" were forced to leave the Firm's premises in 1872.

Mackail's countervailing strengths in this essay lay in his summary assessments of Morris' literary work, which I cannot reproduce in full. Here are two excerpts:

In all his work after he reached mature life there is a marked absence of extravagance, of display, of superficial cleverness or effectiveness, and an equally marked sense of composition and subordination. . . . His genius as a pattern-designer is allowed by all qualified judges to have been unequalled. . . . And it is the quality of design which, together with a certain fluent ease, distinguishes his work in literature as well as in industrial art. . . . With 'Jason' and the 'Earthy Paradise' he attained a wide popularity: and these poems, appearing as they did at a time when the poetic art in England seemed narrowing into mere labour on a thrice-ploughed field, not only gave a new scope, range, and flexibility to English rhymed verse, but recovered for narrative poetry a place among the foremost kinds of the art.

In his conclusion, Mackail even provided a favorable assessment of Morris' social and political engagement:

Morris's great effect was to stimulate the artistic sense and initiate movements. So likewise it was with his political and social work. Much of it was not practical in the ordinary sense; but it was based on principles and directed towards ideals which have had a wide and profound influence over thought and practice.

In her eight-page ODNB synthesis of the life and work of "Morris, William (1834-1896), designer, author, and visionary socialist," Fiona MacCarthy, author of four studies of British art and the now-standard biography, William Morris: A Life for Our Time (1995), has crafted an exemplary brief life.

MacCarthy may lack a sympathetic ear for the quality of Morris' poetry, but prose style and organizational skills are fluent and persuasive. In her ODNB entry she also weaves together deftly the many concurrent strands of Morris's life in ways which present the details and likely motivations of his wide-ranging endeavors with perceptive and empathetic insight. MacCarthy's ability to give new resonance to an oft-told tale is evident in passages such as the following:

On 13 January 1883, three years after Morris & Co. had been commissioned to decorate the throne room at St James's Palace, Morris joined the Democratic Federation, a new revolutionary socialist party led by the Marxist Henry Mayers Hyndman. This was a decisive move out of his class, entailing rifts with many friends, professional opprobrium, and absence

from many of the places and activities that Morris depended on and loved. His involvement in the socialist cause depleted his income and damaged his never robust health. At the age of almost fifty, at a time when the Firm was prospering and Morris's literary reputation was secure, it was an act of almost insane courage, and he wrote of it in terms of a homecoming, a final recognition of inevitable destiny. His 'conversion' (MacCarthy, 462), as he called it, came as an all-suffusing joy.

It is difficult to discuss each aspect of a life as full of endeavor and accomplishment as Morris' in eight pages, and MacCarthy's treatment slights somewhat Morris' contributions to the SPAB, his role in the British reevaluation of Icelandic literature and his continuing influence on several forms of twentieth century poetry and poetic prose. As with Mackail, her best qualities appear in the synthetic force of her peroration, entitled "Reputation and legacy," in which she sets forth her assessment of Morris' contributions to decorative art and social thought:

At the time of his death Morris's reputation stood highest as a poet, but his more enduring influence has been that of a social critic of peculiar insight and a designer of great sweetness and enormous versatility.

Morris's visionary novel *News from Nowhere* became one of the essential early twentieth-century socialist texts, translated into numerous languages and widely distributed in Russia in pre-revolutionary years. In Britain his political influence ran through from R. H. Tawney and G. D. H. Cole to Clement Attlee and the founders of the post-war-welfare state. . . . From the 1970s onwards Morris's protectiveness of the environment led him to be recognized as a founding father of green politics.

Morris's tangible legacy is in his works of art. In spite of attempts by such modernist critics as Sir Nikolaus Pevsner to claim Morris as a modernist, he had come to be defined by the end of the twentieth century as a conservative radical designer. Morris's wallpapers and textiles, still in quantity production a hundred years after his death, make him arguably the most successful industrial designer ever known. Morris & Co. stained glass appears in retrospect as one of the wonders of Victorian church art. The Kelmscott press generated the private press movement, important in its influence on twentieth-century European and American typography, and book design. . . .

In his grand and sympathetic view of human potential Morris was both of his own Victorian age and far beyond it. E. P. Thompson described him correctly as 'a man whom history will never overtake' (E. P. Thompson, 739).

This ODNB essay is not only the best place to turn for those seeking a general introduction to its subject and the many stages and facets of Morris's life. It also testifies to some significant artistic and literary possibilities inherent in the apparently modest genre of "biographical essay."

Passed over in the DNB twentieth-century supplement for those who died between 1930 and 1940, May Morris appeared belatedly in its *Missing Persons* volume, published in 1994, only ten years before publication of the ODNB. In her entry for this supplementary volume, Linda Parry, author of *William Morris Textiles (1983)* and *Textiles of the Arts and Crafts Movement (1988)*, was able to take into account new information which had appeared in Jan Marsh's *Jane and May Morris (1986)*. Parry also provided an expert's overview of May Morris' activities as a "designer and embroideress," and added her speculation "that [Morris's] preoccupation with her promisingly clever older sister, Jenny (*Jane Alice*), caused unhappiness in May's childhood and further spurred her on to succeed in the practical arts."

Jan Marsh's entry for May Morris in the ODNB, accompanied by a graceful picture of May looking down at her work, is about three times as long as Parry's, and comments more extensively on her childhood influences as well as her publications, exhibitions and several of her designs. Parry, for example, had recorded that ". . . in 1907 [May Morris] helped found the Women's Guild of Arts," but Marsh notes more pointedly that "[a]s women were excluded from the professional craft association the Art Workers'

Guild, in 1907 May Morris founded the Women's Guild of Arts, remaining president until 1935."

Parry also made little mention of May Morris's political allegiances, but Marsh observes that "[a]s a young woman May Morris followed her father politically, joining the Socialist League alongside figures like Eleanor Marx and Edward Aveling, with whom she shared a passion for the new drama, acting with them in a private production of Henrik Ibsen's controversial A Doll's House in 1886, as well as the celebrated Socialist League burlesque The Tables Turned, or Nupkins Awakened (1887), written by her father." Parry briefly characterized May's last twenty-four years at Kelmscott Manor as a period in which "she involved herself in village life with all her characteristic energy and enthusiasm until her death . . .," but Marsh adds that "during the First World War [May Morris] helped to establish the local Women's Institute, and . . . built two cottages in her mother's memory and, in 1934, a village hall to mark the centenary of her father's birth; the architect for both projects was Ernest Gimson, and the opening of the hall was attended by the prime minister, Ramsay MacDonald." These informative ancillary observations and the entry's full list of sources, likenesses and archival materials make Marsh's entry the best introductory account we have of May Morris' life.

What conclusions might be drawn from comparisons of these two very different but sequentially related reference-works? Was David Amigoni correct when he asserted that "We need . . . to preserve the old DNB: it possesses a vital textual afterlife as a linguistically and culturally dense insight into the complex business of late Victorian life writing"? [Journal of Victorian Culture, 10.2 (Winter 2005): 287] If what Amigoni had in mind was a straight observation that the literary judgments of Victorian 'men of taste' were sufficiently and interesting and informative in themselves to warrant continued retrieval of the DNB's venerable tomes from their storage-vaults (and the ODNB conveniently provides the earlier versions along with each current entry), he was right. Thoughtful and well-read Victorian biographers such as Garnett offer us the considered opinions of a cultured readers of their class and time with a purity later scholars could never begin to reconstruct. Those opinions had horizons and unexamined limitations which they could not anticipate--and so do ours.

Nonetheless, for teaching as well as reference, the ODNB will almost by definition be indispensable. Its illustrations and more readable format make it as attractive and accessible as its more modest American rival, the more pedagogically oriented Dictionary of Literary Biography, and a century of research and interpretation have made it possible for its biographies to explore wider aspects of Victorian social reality, and avoid opinionated excesses of the sort which made the most idiosyncratic DNB entries either quaintly charming or infuriating.

Morris, Rossetti and other figures associated with the Pre-Raphaelites seem to have fared about as well in their ODNB-entries as our own period's boundaries permit. Nonetheless other aspects of the new Dictionary's entries seem to me to fall somewhat short of its editors' professed aspirations: an eight-percent-allotment to the literary aspirations and accomplishments of nineteenth-century women leaves extensive margins for emendation and recuperation, and many of the period's working-men and -women fare less well in its pages than do their middle-class counterparts Jane and May Morris or William and Lucy Rossetti. The ODNB's experiments with "communal biographies" which blend cultural and political history with individual lives might well also be extended more widely to nineteenth-century Britons of color; to the 'Spasmodic' poets as a group; to the craftworkers of Morris and Company; or to the many activists in the period's socialist and suffrage movements and other efforts to achieve social justice.

The ODNB's accomplishments are sufficiently many so that it might seem captious or utopian to ask for more. But the project's administrators have fortunately solicited more biographies and revisions, and promise to include them in periodic on-line emendations and reprinted volumes of the Dictionary in years to come. Perhaps those who read them may be inspired to seek out and complete Victorian lives yet untold. If so, and if we are fortunate, our successors may acknowledge our efforts as they in turn enter the endless ascending helix of the 'hermeneutic circle.'

RED HOUSE

a play for eight actors and a piano.

by Ignacio Zulueta

CAST

MRS. BURNE-JONES:

50s, the older aspect of Georgie: a respectable Victorian matron. She plays the piano.

MR. BURNE-JONES:

60s, an established Victorian painter and Baronet: Sir Edward Burne-Jones.

GEORGIE:

Late teens, the younger aspect of Mrs. Burne-Jones: neither model nor artist. She plays the piano.

WILLIAM:

Late 20s, a failed painter and budding craftsman: William Morris.

NED:

Late 20s, an experimental painter and bohemian: Edward Burne-Jones.

DANTE:

30s, a notorious poet and painter: Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

LIZZIE:

Late 20s-30s, a famous Victorian model and frustrated artist: Elizabeth Siddal Rossetti.

JANE:

Early 20s, a famous Victorian model: Jane Burden

SETTING

A respectable house in London, June 1898.

An experimental house in Upton, Kent, from 1860-1865.

The points of human intersection between the two.

SCENE ONE:

A COUCH to the left, a BED to the right, and a PIANO at center. EMPTY FRAMES of wood, suspended at right angles. They could be paintings or windows or portals.

TWO DOORS open at the same time.

At the right door: MR. BURNE-JONES in full evening wear: white tie, top hat, scarf on shoulders, gloves, cane. He enters with MRS. BURNE-JONES following, dressed in a drab and expensive evening gown.

MR. BURNE-JONES

I'm sure I'll come to regret that dinner.

At the left door: NED in long coat, soft wool jacket, plum trousers, looking green and ill and leaning heavily on GEORGIE, dressed in a cheap and cheerful day dress.

NED

I'm sure I'll come to regret that dinner.

Georgie carries a pair of suitcases, a GREEN UMBRELLA, a parasol, and, of course, her husband.

NED & MR. BURNE-JONES

Still, Georgie, what are the odds that I would have made it this far? Not one in two-hundred-and-six, at least.

Mr. Burne-Jones removes his hat. Ned stands alone.

Steady on, now. Off we go!

Ned steps over the threshold and stumbles. Mr. Burne-Jones tosses his hat at Mrs. Burne-Jones.

GEORGIE

Oh Ned.

MRS. BURNE-JONES

Ned, really.

GEORGIE & MRS. BURNE-JONES

Do be mindful.

MRS. BURNE-JONES

This was a very expensive present.

GEORGIE

Let's not add injury to illness. You must keep up your strength for the crossing tomorrow.

NED

Georgie...

MR. BURNE-JONES

Oh Georgie!

NED & MR. BURNE-JONES

Don't be a scold.

MR. BURNE-JONES

This is mine to toss if I please and you know it.

Mr. Burne-Jones hands his cane to Mrs. Burne-Jones.

NED

I was caught in a rainstorm on the way to the chapel.

MR. BURNE-JONES

Once you give something away, its fate is quite out of your hands.

NED

Then stuck on a train for three rattling hours-

MR. BURNE-JONES

If it should then be soiled-

NED

-gagging on smoke-

MR. BURNE-JONES

Dirtied or scraped-

NED

Fouled by reeking sweat and clouds of tobacco-

MR. BURNE-JONES

Gouged-

NED

Jostled-

MR. BURNE-JONES

Torqued-

MR. BURNE-JONES & NED

Trampled and hustled and trodden to bits.

MR. BURNE-JONES

At that point it's quite out of your hands.

GEORGIE

But we had to ride in our class. It couldn't be helped. Anything else would have been too extravagant.

MR. BURNE-JONES

Don't you agree?

NED

And look at me now. Here's the price of economy for you. I can scarcely be relied upon to cross the floor, much less the English channel.

Georgie helps Ned towards the bed, as Mr. Burne-Jones crosses towards the couch with Mrs. Burne-Jones following. Neither couple is aware of the other as they pass in the center.

GEORGIE

But we've already paid for our passage, dear.

MRS. BURNE-JONES

Well, if you are determined to throw away gifts, then at least let me provide with a list of charitable causes.

GEORGIE

And it's not just the ferry. Think of our reservations in Brittany, and in Paris. We've already sent our deposit.

And think of the Rossettis and all the plans we made. Think of all the paintings Gabriel wants to show you.

MR. BURNE-JONES

Charity! Bah!

Mr. Burne-Jones removes his gloves.

GEORGIE

Heavenly paintings all day, and as the evening draws down, Lizzie and I shall await your return on the hotel balcony in crisp white dresses with Japanese fans. She's promised champagne and strawberries.

Isn't there a chance you'll recover in time for the morning ferry? Let me bring up beef tea and a plate of digestive biscuits-

Ned sits on the bed.

MR. BURNE-JONES & NED

Bah and Biscuits! Georgie! Look here. What if I were to die at this precise moment?

Mr. Burne-Jones and Ned snap their fingers.

GEORGIE

Edward! Don't joke.

MRS. BURNE-JONES

You've been saying that for as long as I can remember.

MR. BURNE-JONES

It's because the lesson clearly hasn't sunk in.

NED

I merely want you to see clearly.

MR. BURNE-JONES

After thirty eight years toil and triumph, together, do you really want our last earthly conversation to be about material possessions?

NED

We've waited three years for this moment- this night, this union- and now the moment is passing. And it could take me with it.

MR. BURNE-JONES

I demand that you enjoy our anniversary.

Georgie kneels before Ned. Mr. Burne-Jones sits on the couch.

GEORGIE

Shall I... Take your coat and jacket?

Ned nods. Georgie smiles. As Mr. Burne-Jones speaks, Georgie removes Ned's coat and jacket.

MR. BURNE-JONES

Don't be so sulky and tart, now. Not on a summer night such as this. For isn't June

golden, and fiery, and magnificent mild this year? Let the darkling heat simmer and mellow your sharp sour-plumness into apple-sweet sap and jam.

He holds his gloves out. Ned wiggles his feet.

MR. BURNE-JONES & NED

Go on, Georgie.

Mrs. Burne-Jones takes the gloves, and begins removing his scarf. Georgie removes Ned's shoes and socks.

MR. BURNE-JONES

That's a dear, sweet girl. Now then, I'd like you to gather up your little upsets. Gather up your daily drabs of dismay. Take up your needled moments, your nettled minutes, take every petty plague and dolorous bogle.

Georgie carefully sets aside Ned's coat, jacket, shoes, and socks.

-

MR. BURNE-JONES (cont.)

Take all your grimaces, glooms and glares, grumps and glances most foul. Sweep them all up and pour them all out into one of those gloves you hold in your hand.

Pour out your woes like bitter tea into a black bone-dry sponge.

And when that glove is brimming full, with all you've wrung out from yourself, then by all means hurl it at me-

Fling it at my impudent self with all your might and main. And Lo! Tell me true, my little girl, if that don't set you to rights.

Beat.

MRS. BURNE-JONES

I fear I would require a larger glove.

Mrs. Burne-Jones exits with scarf, gloves, cane, and hat.

Beat.

MR. BURNE-JONES

Touché!

Beat.

I think.

NED

Well then- anything else to remove?

Beat. Georgie goes to a frame and looks 'outside'.

I didn't mean the shutters and blinds.

GEORGIE

Oh, Ned. It's too dark to see the sea.

NED

Excuse me?

MR. BURNE-JONES

Neddy boy, Neddy boy. Some days you just can't win.

He settles in and closes his eyes.

And on this day, especially.

GEORGIE

The sky has gone dark as... As dark as grapes.

MR. BURNE-JONES

...infuriating hysterical woman...

NED

When was the last time you ate?

GEORGIE

There are lights too low in the sky to be stars. Those must be boats, musn't they? Boats on the waves too dark to be seen, burning their lights alone.

Mr. Burne-Jones has dozed off.

And Ned- Oh, Ned.

NED

Yes dear?

GEORGIE

There's something out there. There's something completely unknown on the wind.

NED

And here I thought we asked for a nice room.

GEORGIE

Oh Ned, it's wondrous, it's unearthly. Can't you smell it?

Ned smells, and makes a face.

I admit its very pungent, and yet, it doesn't suffocate.

It's too full of promise to smother. It's nothing like rivers at all. It doesn't smell of bounds and limits. It isn't kin to canals, baths, gutters, locks or rain barrels. This un domesticated, immeasurable, primordial odor. This smell is the opposite smell of dust. This is the ocean, isn't it?

NED

I'm afraid it is.

GEORGIE

I admit I have gotten dizzy looking at your paintings. I mean this in the best of all possible ways. Following the strokes of your brush with my eyes I have pretended that my body too rises and sinks on the crest of each ripple and wave. I can't stop thinking about the deep.

NED

Nor I.

Ned puts his hands over his eyes.

GEORGIE

Tomorrow there's a chance we'll be sailing, don't you think?

And I have never so much as felt a wave. Not in person, nor even through the medium of a vessel or floating dock. And to think tomorrow we'll be out on it-Splitting the waves in a steaming boat of steel.

I have never even stood on a beach. I have never felt the ocean push in against my toes, run up beneath my feet, glide around my ankles.

I have never felt a wave push my toes apart, nor my feet, nor my ankles. Nor my calves.

Nor my knees.

Nor my th...

Nor my h...

They say the ocean lifts you.

That's what they say, isn't it?

They say it gently hoists you up from every place at once.

I have never so much as seen the sea, much less even felt it.

But soon I know I will know both.

And afterwards...after I have seen and felt the sea.

Afterwards, afterwards: Paris.

NED

Georgie?

GEORGIE

Yes?

NED

Perhaps you ought to fasten the window.

GEORGIE

Aye aye, my captain.

NED

No- Georgie- Quickly. All of them!

GEORGIE

What?

NED

Too late.

GEORGIE

Oh Ned! What is it?

NED

Ooooughh.

GEORGIE

Is it another attack?

NED

Bucket.

GEORGIE

What?

NED

Bucket!

GEORGIE

But- I haven't got one.

NED

Oough.

GEORGIE

Ned!

NED

Ou- Ough-

GEORGIE

Umbrella!

She grabs the green umbrella and opens it. Ned leans over to vomit. Georgie inverts the umbrella beneath his chin.

NED

HUORK.

Georgie holds the umbrella stoically.

HUAH. HUOUGH. HRAUGH.

GEORGIE

Finished?

NED

HURK.

Mrs. Burne-Jones enters beneath the following lines.

GEORGIE

There now. There now, Edward. There.

NED

Hugh.

Brief tableau at the bed. Mrs. Burne-Jones sniffs the air, then shakes her head and goes to the sofa.

MRS. BURNE-JONES

Are you asleep? Edward?

No response. She sits at the piano and plays an loud opening chord. Mr. Burne-Jones awakens.

MR. BURNE-JONES

What's the meaning of this?

MRS. BURNE-JONES

You shouldn't be dozing off like that. After what happened last week-

MR. BURNE-JONES

Well the doctor says I'm rallying and that's why I continue to employ him. What happened last week was travel, that's all. You know how much I enjoy the railroads.

Ned has dry heaves. Georgie pats his shoulder. Tableau.

It's simply too brutal to go anywhere at all. Why leave the house you like and the things you know and pack yourself off to somewhere perfectly filthy and drab?

MRS. BURNE-JONES

There was one place you didn't mind visiting.

MR. BURNE-JONES

Well I'm sure it's burnt and gone now. All the loveliness is draining out of the world like the ocean tide, and here I am left all alone on the strand, scooping teacups of dreamstuff out of the vanishing fiery sea and flinging them on the thirsty uglified earth and yelling- "Quick- come see- a living dream- oh I know it looks like a mud puddle from afar but look! Please look! Note the gossamer colors and heavenly lines that I have lovingly made for you! And now it is fading! It is fading!"

Beat.

"It is gone."

Mrs. Burne-Jones touches his forehead.

MRS. BURNE-JONES

How are you feeling?

MR. BURNE-JONES

Stop that.

MRS. BURNE-JONES

Does it hurt anywhere?

MR. BURNE-JONES

Yes.

MRS. BURNE-JONES

Where?

MR. BURNE-JONES

Where you're touching me.

GEORGIE

Can't I possibly make you feel better?

NED

How about a song, little pet?

MRS. BURNE-JONES

I visited the Red House at this time last year.

Georgie sings a provençal folk song softly: "Çe Fut en Mai". Mrs. Burne-Jones stands.

MR. BURNE-JONES

What?

MRS. BURNE-JONES

It was neither burnt nor gone.

MR. BURNE-JONES

Well it was nice of you to tell me so promptly.

MRS. BURNE-JONES

I was planning a trip there for your upcoming birthday.

MR. BURNE-JONES

But you know I hate surprises.

MRS. BURNE-JONES

It's not a surprise anymore, is it?

Beat.

I couldn't believe it was so- Unchanged. After thirty eight years it persists, defiant. One could recognize all the little lanes and roads and empty orchards. The fields round the garden were untouched, and oh, you should have seen the garden. The apple blossom was out, but none had yet gone to fruit. The great roses hedges were taller than ever and denser and thicker, but peering through I could still see the steep roofed well tucked away in the courtyard.

There are changes coming, though. Soon it will be surrounded by fresh buildings, hemmed in on all sides. The new owners- how odd it is to say that- are building a brick wall all about. How we would have scoffed at the notion of a wall in our time. And they said they could expand the house, something along the lines of the builder's original plan. But I don't think they have the funds for it.

Georgie finishes her song.

And besides, if William could not finish it, though it is a little selfish of me to say it, I think it should remain unfinished.

MR. BURNE-JONES

Could you play something? Some music?

Beat.

MRS. BURNE-JONES

Weren't you listening to me?

MR. BURNE-JONES

Should I have been?

Beat.

MR. BURNE-JONES & NED

I was just thinking of a song I'd love to hear. Would you like to know what it is?

GEORGIE

Oh, do tell me!

MRS. BURNE-JONES

Do I have a choice?

MR. BURNE-JONES & NED

Three Ravens.

GEORGIE

My favorite!

MRS. BURNE-JONES

That old chestnut?

MR. BURNE-JONES

Suit the song to the audience, dear.

Mrs. Burne-Jones plays. After a moment, Georgie sings. The vocals and accompaniment synch up seamlessly.

There were three ravens sat on a tree,

Down a down, hey down, hey down

They were as black as black might be,

With a down.

The one of them said to his mate.

"Where shall we our breakfast take?"

With a down, derry, derry, derry down, down.

Down in yonder green field,

Down a down, hey down, hey down

There lies a knight dead 'neath his shield,

With a down.

Down there comes a fallow doe

As heavy with child as she might go-

With a down, derry, derry, derry down, down.

The women glimpse one another, and cease.

NED & MR. BURNE-JONES

Georgie? Why have you stopped?

The women rise, unable to see one another, and very slowly cross to center.

GEORGIE & MRS. BURNE-JONES

I thought I... Heard someone-

GEORGIE

Playing a piano next door.

MRS. BURNE-JONES

Singing outside the window.

GEORGIE

Familiar in cadence, in timing, in tune.

MRS. BURNE-JONES

Singing along in perfect time.

GEORGIE & MRS. BURNE-JONES

A sort of- Echo.

NBJ

Preposterous.

NED

That's impossible, you know.

MR. BURNE-JONES

I didn't hear a thing.

GEORGIE & MRS. BURNE-JONES

I know.

Although they cannot see each other, the women reach out and touch one another's hand.

A great surge of light, then a blackout.

Sound of a heavy railcar clacking against the tracks.

End of Scene.

APPENDIX A :

"Ce Fut en Mai" – first seven verses of the song sung in scene 1.

PROVENÇAL VERSION

ENGLISH VERSION

Ce fut en mai
Au douz tens gai
Que la saisons est bele,
Main me levai,
Joer m'alai
Lez une fontenele.

In early May,
when skies are gay
And green the plains and mountains,
At break of day
I rose to play
Beside a little fountain.

En un vergier
Clos d'aiglentier
Oi une viele;
La vi dancier
Un chevalier
Et une damoisele.

In garden close
where shone the rose
I heard a fiddle played, then
A handsome knight
that charmed my sight,
Was dancing with a maiden.

Cors orent gent
Et avenant
Et molt très bien dançoient;
En acolant
Et en baisant
Molt biau se deduisoient.

Both fair of face,
they turned with grace
To tread their May-time measure.
The flowering place,
their close embrace:
Their kisses brought them pleasure.

Au chief du tor,
En un destor,
Doi et doi s'en aloient;
Le jeu d'amor
Desus la flor
A lor plaisir faisoient.

But shortly they
had slipped away
To stroll among the bowers.
To ease their hearts,
each played their parts
In love's games on the flowers.

J'alai avant.
Molt redoutant
Que mus d'aus ne me voie,
Maz et pensant
Et desirrant
D'avoir ausi grant joie.

I crept ahead,
all chill with dread,
Lest someone there should see me.
Bemused and sad
because I had
No joy in love to please me.

Lors vi lever
Un de lor per
De si loing com j'estoie
Por apeler
Et demander
Qui sui ni que queroie.

Then one of those
I'd seen there rose
And from afar off speaking,
He questioned me,
who I might be,
And what I came there seeking.

J'alai vers aus,
Dis lor mes maus,
Que une dame amoie,
A cui loiaus
Sanz estre faus
Tot mon vivant seroie,

I stepped their way
to sadly say
How long I'd loved a lady,
Who all my days
my heart obeys,
Full faithfully and steady.

APPENDIX B:

The Three Ravens, from Thomas Ravenscroft's 1616 edition of "Melismata".

There were three ravens sat on a tree,
Down a down, hey down, hey down
They were a black as black might be,
With a down.
The one of them said to his mate.
"Where shall we our breakfast take?"
With a down, derry, derry, derry down, down.

Down in yonder green field,
Down a down, hey down, hey down
Their lies a knight slain under his shield,
With a down.
His hounds they lie down at his feet
So well they do their master keep.
With a down, derry, derry, derry down, down.

His hawks they fly so eagerly
Down a down, hey down, hey down
No other fowl dare him come nigh,
With a down.
Down there comes a fallow doe
As heavy with young as she might go.
With a down, derry, derry, derry down, down.

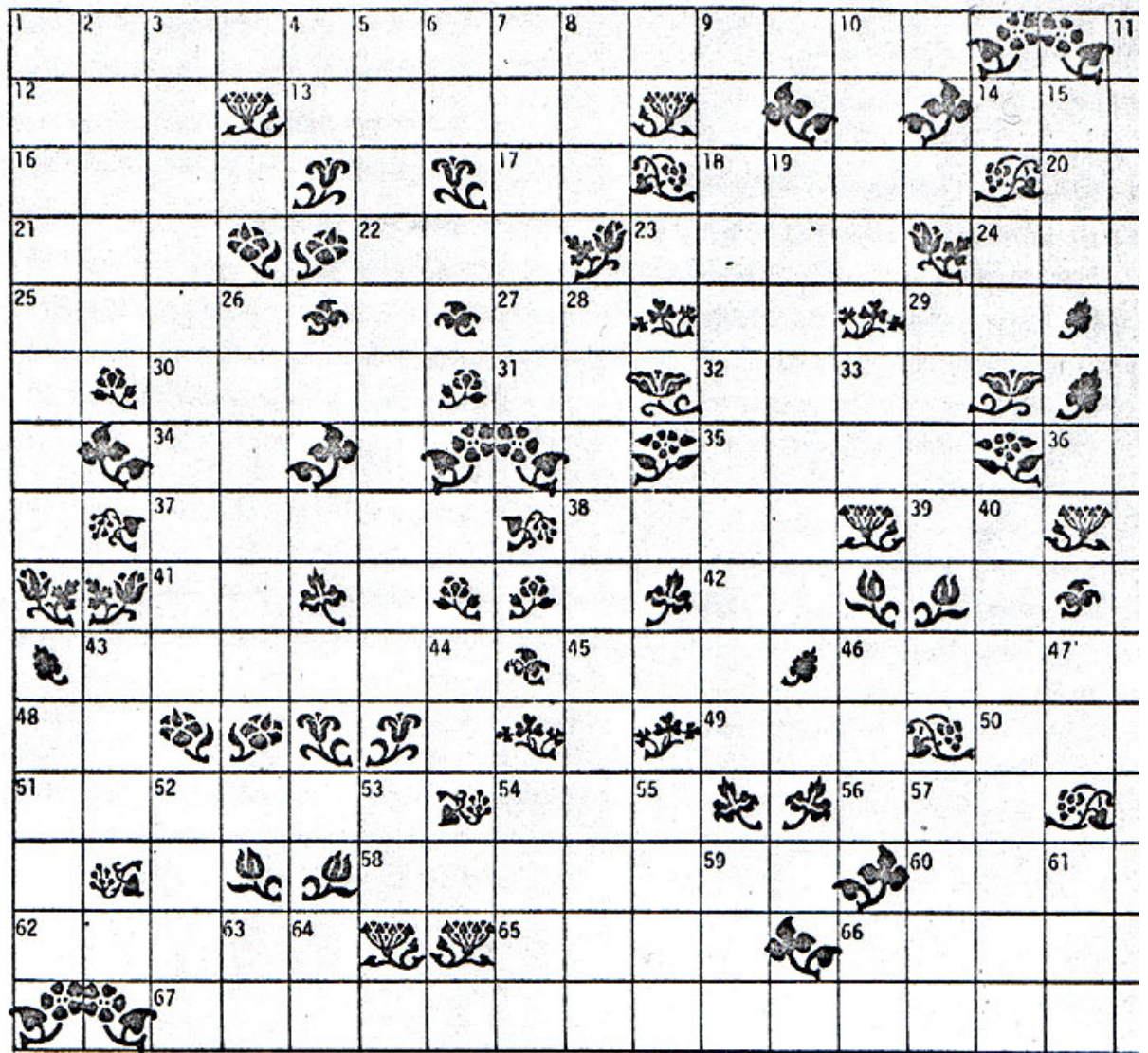
She lifted up his bloody head,
Down a down, hey down, hey down
And kissed his wounds that were so red,
With a down.
She got him up upon her back
And carried him to earthen lake.
With a down, derry, derry, derry down, down.

She buried him before the prime,
Down a down, hey down, hey down
She was dead herself ere even-song time,
With a down.

God send every gentleman
Such hawks, such hounds, and such leman,
With a down, derry, derry, derry down, down.

Morris Crossword Puzzle Keepsake

prepared by Betsy G. Fryberger with David Donaldson and Jane Harris



ACROSS

- 1. Destination of the haymakers**
- 12. Economy suggested to Morris by Warrington Taylor**
- 13. What Morris was called by his friends**
- 14. _____-Raphaelites**
- 16. "[19 Down] of the _____," embroidered panel by Morris and Burne-Jones**
- 17. Who they said "rides to dream" in Rapunzel**
- 18. One of the fonts designed by Morris**
- 20. An original partner of the Firm (init.)**
- 21. Lord Privy Seal (abbr.)**
- 22. _____ "si je puis," how Morris could have made his motto more emphatic**
- 23. A red square**
- 24. A signal of distress**
- 25. "Pallas and Aphrodite, claiming each this _____ of fairest" (Tennyson)**
- 27. The Green Dining _____ was an early and important commission (abbr.)**
- 29. Weaving technique that fascinated Morris (abbr.)**
- 30. What Morris used as a child riding in Epping Forest**
- 31. _____ deum**
- 32. Grettis _____**
- 34. Language of Beowulf (abbr.)**
- 35. What the strawberry thief did to the berries**
- 36. The Firm was one _____**
- 37. The Wandle is one _____**

38. " of the Screw"
39. Morris was one, a do
41. What Morris did from the Icelandic (abbr.)
42. What was sunk into the ground at Merton Abbey, the indigo v
43. "La Belle
45. The pile of cut velvet
46. Kathe Faulkner did work in this medium as well as paint tiles for the Firm
48. What was formed in 1861
49. "The Story of the -Dwellers"
50. What Catherine Holiday would do for the Firm
51. His nature was Gothic
54. A Fabian playwright (abbr.)
56. Source of Morris & Co. wool
58. Record of recipes from Merton Abey
60. Form of "to exist" (Fr.)
62. What Morris had to do to make the "Acanthus and Vine"
65. "Avalon"
66. First name of Marshall, one of the original partners
67. What the wanderers sought

DOWN

1. A capital socialist
2. One thing that 40 Down did not do with Jane
3. "The _____," Morris's first lecture
4. Morris & Co. showrooms at 449 Oxford
5. Socialist League organ
6. What the Kelmscott books are today.
7. Modest cotton garment
8. A piece of enclosed land (obs.)
9. Colloquialism for the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings
10. The county in which 1 Across is located
11. Morris's utopian novel
15. Vehicle for some of Morris's messages (abbr.)
19. See 16 Across
24. "Yea, there beneath them is her chin, / _____ fine and round, it was a sin / to feel no weaker when I see / Beata mea Domina." (Morris)
26. What 40 Down did feel for Jane
28. Gnerally agreed to have been an idyllic place to work
29. "The _____ of the House of the Wolfings"
33. Work of hagiography printed at the Kelmscott Press (abbr.)
40. Co-inhabitant of 1. Across and of the House of Life
43. What Ned had to say at the end of each of the years 1867-1870 to the Firm
44. The person who worked closely with Morris on the experiments with natural dyes (init.)
47. Region of England of "The Dream of John Ball" (abbr.)
48. He wrote admiringly of Morris's work in the 1930's
52. To foretell, prophesy (obs.)
53. An irritant to the bibliorapher (abbr.)
54. The last chapter of the first book in work that headed Morris's list of "100 Best Books"
55. Term that appears in the Merton Abbey Dye Book
57. Source of natural dye
59. _____ pro nobis
61. Thing (Lat.)
63. What the South Kensington was to Morris, is the _____ (abbr.) to us today
64. An August tale in 67 Across was of Ogi _____ the Dane
66. What Morris was to May and Jenny

This puzzle was first published in March 1975 on the occasion of an exhibition "Morris & Co." held at the Stanford Art Gallery (now the Cantor Arts Center), Stanford, California, and is reproduced by the kind permission of Betsy G. Fryberger.

"Birth of the Bestseller: The 19th Century Book in Britain, France, and Beyond"

New York, New York, 29-31 March 2007

The Bibliographical Society of America

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Victorian Secrets

University of Alabama, October 26-28, 2007

Conference Website:

<http://bama.ua.edu/~apionke/VI2007/VI2007welcome.mht>

Please send proposals of no more than 500 words by May 15, 2007 to

Dr. Albert Pionke

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The University of Alabama

Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0244

Email: apionke@bama.ua.edu

Victorian Landscape Descriptions

Northeast Modern Language Association (NeMLA), March 1-4, 2007, Baltimore,

Maryland

www.nemla.org

Size Matters: Scale and Proportion in Victorian Literature and Culture

NAVSA/ACCUTE, 26-29 May, 2007, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Canada

For more information contact:

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Victorian Emotions (special issue, Victorian Studies)

Deadline for submissions: 1 February 2007

Please direct all queries to :

Rachel Ablow (rablow@buffalo.edu)

The Research Society for Victorian Periodicals (RSVP)

Annual Conference

Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia, 14-16 September 2007

Submission Deadline: 1 February, 2007

For more information, please contact:

Mark Turner

mark.2.turner@kcl.ac.uk

Conference website: <http://www.rs4vp.org/>

COLOPHON

This newsletter was written and edited by Shannon L. Rogers. Items for inclusion, books for review, news from or about members, calls for papers, conference announcements, event notifications, and comments are welcomed.

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