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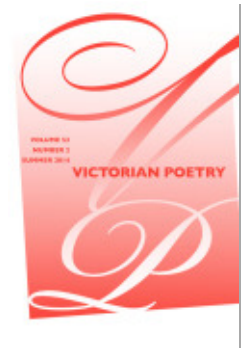
The Pre-Raphaelites

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possibility that wartime disruptions to its publication schedule may account for the small sale of the first edition of Hopkins' poems. The first issue (nos. 1-2) of *Hopkins Quarterly* for 2012 offers two remembrances, one by Adrian Grafe and one by Cary Plotkin, of the late and distinguished Hopkins scholar René Gallet. In the second issue Gerard Roberts makes a biographical contribution in "Living with Fr. Eyre: Hopkins at Stonyhurst College 1882–1884" (pp. 77–87); he focuses on a Jesuit superior who thought the poet eccentric if not mad. That same issue contains the first installment of "A Nautical Glossary of 'The Wreck of the Deutschland,' Part the first" by Cheryl Stiles (pp. 107–117), which shows in line-by-line annotation the poet's mastery of a terminology commonly known in his family—his father Manley was a marine insurance adjuster. Presumably we will be able to report on a second and longer installment (Part the second) in next year's review.

The Pre-Raphaelites

FLORENCE S. BOOS

The year brought more books, articles, edited letters and essay collections on the Pre-Raphaelites than can fit into a synopsis of conventional length. In what follows I will consider two volumes which offer synthetic studies of Pre-Raphaelitism as a whole, a variety of essays and book chapters focused on Christina Rossetti, Dante Rossetti and William Morris, and a comprehensive edition of the letters of Jane Morris.

The Pre-Raphaelites and Rossettis

The Germ: Origins and Progenies of Pre-Raphaelite Interactive Aesthetics (Peter Lang) by Paola Spinozzi and Elisa Bizzotto approaches Pre-Raphaelitism as a whole through the narrower lens of its originary periodical, a perspective which enables its authors to reconsider the ways in which the youthful Pre-Raphaelites' Victorian romanticism shocked their contemporaries and influenced their successors. Spinozzi and Bizzotto give careful attention to the views of less-often-cited figures such as William Michael Rossetti, Frederick Stephens, Walter Deverell, John Orchard, John Tupper, and Thomas Woolner, and in particular to their conviction that practicing artists in several media should be articulate critical intellectuals, who explained and interpreted the principles of their work in ways which influenced later periodicals such as *The Century Guild*, *The Hobby Horse*, and *The Yellow Book*.

In the book's first chapter, entitled "Origins and Propagations," the authors lay out *The Germ's* history, founders, brief four-issue run, initially favorable reception, and emphasis on manifestos as well as essays on art. Ignoring for the most part William Holman Hunt's claim that he and John Everett Millais were the originators of a Ruskin-influenced critique of Old Masters and advocacy of more direct and authentic views of the visual arts, they focus on the uneasy coexistence of the Rossettis' attempts to ally progressive calls for "truth to nature" with romantic medievalism and mildly "gothic" psychological states.

In chapter two, "A Biographical Perspective on the *Germ*," the authors offer brief assessments of the contributions and perspectives of each contributor, and bring into focus such figures as Robert Campbell and William Bell Scott. The section on "Ellen Alleyn," for example, argues that Christina Rossetti permitted her elder brother to provide her with a pen-name and select from among her poems those he thought fit for inclusion, but took a keen if sometimes critical interest in the project and offered advice and commentary from a distance.

In chapter three, "Aesthetic Prose in *The Germ*: Moulding a Literary Mode," Spinozzi and Bizzotto argue that the periodical modeled forms of self-referential aesthetic prose in which "statements acquire full significance only through a specific formal structure" (p. 100). Rossetti's "Hand and Soul," for example, modeled the psychological romance and "imaginary portrait," and essays by John Tupper, John Orchard, John Frederick Stephens, and Coventry Patmore considered the roles of critics, principles of close observation, and the interrelations of verbal, visual, and other arts.

In chapter four, "Germinal Poetical Imageries: From Pre-Raphaelitism to the Fin de Siècle and Modernism," the authors offer critical commentary on each of the periodical's poetic selections by John Orchard, Thomas Woolner, Walter Deverell, James Collinson, Robert Campbell, Coventry Patmore, and the three Rossettis. Arguing that these writers anticipated later Pre-Raphaelite poetic sensibilities, they endeavor to find common strands in their use of symbolism and portrayals of natural details, romantic relationships, and transcendence, and clarify ways in which common literary models and tacit common principles anticipated subsequent paradigms (Rossetti's "Sonnets for Pictures" later "picture poems," for example).

In chapter five, "The *Germ* as the Prototype of the Artist's Magazine," the authors conjecture that fine art/literature magazines such as *The Savoy* (1896), *The Idler* (1892–98), and the *English Review* (1908–37) were influenced by the example of the *Germ* and adopted some of its "constitutive aspects," among them "the Romantic legacy, the presence of charismatic personalities, interart

osmosis, aspiration to the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, [and] ambivalent relationship with the public and the market” (p. 199). They also give consideration to the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* and assert that in a comparison, “*The Germ* wins” in importance (p. 196), a debatable assertion in the light of the OCM’s much wider coverage of education, religion, feminism, and labor relations.

The Cambridge Companion to the Pre-Raphaelites, edited by Elizabeth Prettejohn, provides a welcome compendium and overview of the movement’s major figures and intellectual origins, although the collection devotes more attention to artistic than literary aspects of the movement. The volume includes chapters on *The Germ* and the “literary Pre-Raphaelites,” Dante Rossetti, Christina Rossetti, William Morris, and William Michael Rossetti, for example, but its otherwise helpful entry for Elizabeth Siddall makes no mention of her poetry, and a number of talented Pre-Raphaelite-influenced poets and artists make no appearance at all.

In her introduction, Prettejohn examines complex ways in which the term “Pre-Raphaelitism” has impeded as well as aided the understanding of this artistic/literary movement, and argues that “Pre-Raphaelitism was both a literary and an artistic movement; or perhaps it would be better to say that it was neither, in that it refused to recognize the difference as meaningful” (p. 7). Observing that Pre-Raphaelitism has had a better press among literary critics than art historians, she concludes in her “Envoi” that Pre-Raphaelite art’s subsequent international popularity merits further exploration, but makes no mention of a relatively recent such effort, *Worldwide Pre-Raphaelitism*, edited by Tom Tobin (SUNY Press, 2004).

In “The Pre-Raphaelites and Literature,” Isobel Armstrong focuses on the “Immortals” the original Pre-Raphaelites sought to emulate, and observes that their choices reflected “muted but perceptible feminism,” “a republican and democratic strain of thought,” and a welcome effort to unite English and continental literary traditions. After examining the contrasting Pre-Raphaelite responses to influential predecessors such as Dante and Keats, for example, as well as the now-forgotten romance writer Charles Wells, Armstrong considers the importance they ascribed to portrayals of erotic love as “a sensory state in which eye and touch are not severed” (p. 22), and their conviction that a symbol should not be allegorical but “inherent in the fact” (p. 26) of lived human experience. But she also observes that it was inevitable that individual interpretations of such “facts” and experiences would eventually clash, and when that happened “the fractured nature of Pre-Raphaelite aesthetic theory and of the texts—often the same texts—that [had] held the group together . . . tore it apart” (p. 18). A second Pre-Raphaelite half-generation represented by

Swinburne and Morris heightened the criteria mentioned earlier into something “more agonistic and more confident—the politics became more radical, the reading of sexuality both more flagrant and more conflicted, the experiment with genre more deconstructive” (p. 28).

In “*The Germ*,” Andrew M. Stauffer notes that the joint contributions of the Rossettis to *The Germ* followed a tradition of earlier Rossetti family magazines such as the *Hodge Podge* and the *Illustrated Scrapbook*. He examines “Hand and Soul” in some detail as an embodiment of Dante Rossetti’s view that “truth to nature” was a “code for the expression of one’s imagination” (p. 79), a dictum which complemented F. G. Stephens’ admonition that an artist “must not forget the soul for the hand” (p. 80). Stauffer also focuses on the collaborative nature of the Brothers’ meetings; their shared respect for Poe and contemporary poets such as Browning; and their regard for the art historian Jean Baptiste Louis George Seroux d’Agincourt for his interest in the culture of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. He concludes that their views “shifted the terms and practice of Victorian art” (p. 84).

In “The Poetry of Dante Gabriel Rossetti,” Jerome McGann argues that Rossetti’s poetry was significantly influenced by his early work as a translator of Dante and the *stil novisti* circle, from whom he derived models of concision, diction, rhymes, artifice, and use of autobiographical personae. McGann also observes that Rossetti rejected literal translations in favor of fidelity in a broader sense and advocated a “transparency of style,” by which he means the evocation of prior syllabic metrical patterns beneath their accentual English counterparts. Noting Rossetti’s skill in the use of “minute particulars” and “double poems” in the pairing of poems and paintings, McGann argues that this “gap which stands between the composite parts of the Rossetian double work is one of its essential features” (p. 97), and concludes that *The House of Life*’s final sequence acknowledged a “moral order where change and uncertainty rule” (p. 101).

In “Christina Rossetti,” Lorraine Janzen Kooistra interprets significant aspects of Christina’s poetry as reflections of a shared family aesthetic principle, in the sense that “if Pre-Raphaelite art schools its viewers in ‘close looking,’ the Pre-Raphaelite poetry of Christina Rossetti seeks to instruct its readers in close reading” (p. 164). Describing Christina Rossetti’s participation in the shared family creation of illustrated books and informal illustrations, Kooistra argues that she designed her works to “encourage . . . readers to read emblematically and anagogically” (p. 169) and to decode “detail and allusion within a form that is itself symbolic” (p. 170). She also remarks that Rossetti’s active participation in the choice of the designs, covers, and illustrations for *The Prince’s Progress* and

Sing-Song influenced the work of designers such as Charles Ricketts, Laurence Houseman, and Camille Pissarro who were “were inspired by the example of Christina Rossetti’s verbal-visual aesthetic” (p. 180).

In “The Writings of William Morris,” Jeffrey Skoblow searches for unity in the multiplicity of Morris’ poetic, artistic, and political work. Finding in Morris’ poetry a conviction of the need for renovation in art and society, he argues that it waged “a moral crusade . . . with the weapons of aesthetic politics”; closed a “great divide” (p. 197) through the historical imagination of his poetry, essays, and prose romances; dramatized the distance between artistic ideals and the “eyeless vulgarity” of modern civilization (p. 201); and demanded “an immersion that anthologies, by their nature, and our own modern and post-modern reading habits militate against—which is another dimension of Morris’ insistence that the modern and the beautiful live in two different worlds” (p. 204).

In “William Michael Rossetti,” Angela Thirwell, author of *The Other Rossettis: William and Lucy Rossetti* (2003), argues that Rossetti’s early poem “Mrs. Holmes Grey” was an innovative attempt to apply Pre-Raphaelite principles to the depiction of everyday life; that his arrangement for the exhibition of Pre-Raphaelite art in the United States advanced American appreciation for its principles; and that his art criticism was valued by its contemporaries for its broad appreciation of different modes and schools of art. Observing that William hoped originally to become a doctor—a *datum* that suggests that the history of the Rossetti family might have been quite different had Dante helped William pursue his ambitions rather than the other way around—Thirwell also concludes that William’s “virtuosity in dealing with . . . art and literature parallel[ed] his brother’s more celebrated dual skills in poetry and painting” (p. 253).

In “A Pre-Raphaelite Abroad: Dante Rossetti’s ‘A Trip to Paris and Belgium,’” (*Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies* 21 [Spring 2012]), D.M.R. Bentley provides a thorough analysis of the sonnets and blank verse Rossetti wrote during his fall 1849 journey as an illustration of Pre-Raphaelite principles in verse. Noting his scrutiny of rapid travel, observations of natural phenomena, and explorations of the contemporary urban milieu, Bentley observes that Rossetti was unattracted by conventional tourist sites such as the battlefield of Waterloo and the Old Masters in the Louvre (“Because, dear God! The flesh thou madest smooth / These carked and fretted”). By contrast he responded warmly to the work of Jan van Eyck and Hans Memling; celebrated in “The Carillon” and “Pax Vobis” the epiphanic experience of standing in a belfry surrounded by its chimes; and “show[ed] himself to have been almost continually . . . concerned with the body and its relationship not only with the mind or soul, but also with

the objects and people who impinge upon and surround it" (p. 54).

In *Religious Imaginaries: The Liturgical and Poetic Practices of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Christina Rossetti, and Adelaide Procter* (Ohio University Press), Karen Dieleman offers a neutral step-by-step guide to the Anglican service for non-adherents and analyzes the effects of denominational differences on nineteenth-century women's religious poetry. Taking as examples a Congregationalist, Anglo-Catholic, and Roman Catholic poet, she argues that their themes, arguments, and imagery were often influenced by these confessional traditions and suggests that some of Rossetti's aesthetic and religious choices reflected the changes in church rituals and decorations she encountered at her place of worship.

In "The Beloved Anglican Church of My Baptism': Christina Rossetti's Religious Imaginary," Dieleman argues that Tractarian practice "[took] mystery and uncertainty as a gift, not a problem" (p. 101), an attitude familiar to readers of Rossetti's poetry, and posits that Anglican traditions "[did] not privilege the verbal [as in preaching] but instead [saw] object, ritual, and symbol as equally or more able to manifest the focal meaning of the Christ-event."

She also singles out three aspects of Anglo-Catholic practice she finds reflected in Rossetti's work and sensibility: "Tractarianism," "ecclesiology," and "ritualism." "Tractarianism" focused her attention on sacraments rather than sermons, in deference to "the power of the divine presence in material objects" (such as communion wine) (p. 114). "Ecclesiology" could be seen in her attention to "spatial arrangements and the material effects of the book or page" (p. 125) along with elaborate chancels, prominent baptismal fonts, and raised east-facing altars. "Ritualism" nominally supported her beloved doctrine of a communion of saints, but it also imposed distinctions of dress, venerated objects, and placement of the priest, choir, and congregants, as well as exclusion of girls and women in the choir, since "the duty of leading belong[ed] to the men" (p. 133). Such rigidities, Dieleman suggests, "stimulated her to envision the Christian community in her final collection of poetry not in ritualist terms but with a more historic Anglican understanding of communion" (p. 134).

In "Manifestation, Aesthetics, and Community in Christina Rossetti's *Verses*," her second chapter, Dieleman considers the volume in which Rossetti reprinted earlier poems with new titles and revisions, and an eight-part arrangement of sonnets and roundels designed to encourage "manifestations" or direct encounters with Christ and his communion of saints. The SPCK brought forth this volume at a price designed to encourage wide circulation, and Dieleman observes that the hymns in Rossetti's *Verses*—which reached seven

editions—found their way into the Anglican hymnal as well as into those of other denominations in North America as well as Great Britain.

Time has blurred distinctions between the remarkably many branches of nineteenth-century British Christianity, and although many careful studies of Christina Rossetti's religious writings have paid homage to her intentions and sensibilities, fewer writers have taken the trouble to analyze their personal and institutional antecedents. Dieleman's lucid arguments help clarify why Rossetti framed her idiosyncratic spiritual experiences as she did.

In "Heartsease/Found': Rossetti, Analogy, and the Individual Believing Subject" (*Literature and Theology*, Oxford Journals, November 27 online), Richard Frith rejects assertions that Rossetti's faith was naïve or childlike and argues that she fortified her responses to doubt and uncertainty with "inner standing points"—a term sometimes applied to the poetic stances of her brother Dante Gabriel—which "allowed her to relocate 'objective' divine analogies within the mind of the poem's speaker" (I, para. 8). Contrasting Rossetti's appeals to analogies with those of Hopkins and Tennyson, Frith traces analogical undercurrents in "The First Spring Day" and "The Old-World Thicket" ("arguably her greatest engagement with nature and analogy" (II, para. 9), and concludes that her search for a "perspectivist" epiphany paralleled Friedrich Schleiermacher's conjecture that "the [human] mind is in some sense divine in its capacity to reveal the nature of God through created things."

In "Vampires and Goblins: Coleridge's Influence on Christina Rossetti" (*Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies* 21 [Spring 2012]), Nancee Reeves argues that the "vampire imagery" of *Goblin Market* departed from its patriarchal antecedents in *The Vampyre* (1819) by Rossetti's uncle John Polidori. She suggests that Coleridge's "Christabel" provided a more direct model in its irregular rhythms, kinship of victim and predator, and the latter's complex self-loathing. In his conclusion, Reeves conjectures that Rossetti's volunteer work at Highgate Penitentiary offered a template for her allegory of redemption through sisterhood. She argues that *Goblin Market* was the sole "nineteenth-century example of successful female agency in a vampire story" (p. 70), and "very different from other literature of the penitentiary movement in that the pure woman is not set before the fallen woman as an example; instead, as in 'Goblin Market,' the two are seen as equals" (p. 67).

In "'Come Buy, Come Buy': Christina Rossetti's 'Goblin Market' and the Cries of London" (*Journal of Victorian Culture* 17.1), Megan A. Norcia compares the raucous chants in *Goblin Market* with vendors' cries the Rossettis would have heard day in and day out in Charlotte and Albany Streets in London. She describes contemporary "alphabet books" of London folklore and the hundred

and eighty compendia of such cries printed for the amusement and admonition of adults as well as children. Observing more generally the use of Victorian children's literature as handbooks of such instruction, Norcia also remarks in her conclusion that the very familiarity of the "goblins" cries illustrated the extent to which "the children's literature of the 1860s was in a state of flux regarding instruction and entertainment" (p. 45).

William and Jane Morris

Slow Print: Literary Radicalism and Late Victorian Print Culture by Elizabeth C. Miller (Stanford University Press) offers the first comprehensive account of the principles and circumstances of late-Victorian publication for a relatively small-scale audience and/or political aesthetic counterculture, in opposition to the mechanization and capitalist control of print production. Miller's first and fourth chapters are devoted to *Commonweal*, the published voice of the Socialist League, and the Kelmscott Press, William Morris' aesthetically "radical" attempt to craft literary works as he believed they should be made.

In chapter one ("No News is Good News: William Morris' Utopian Print") Miller reminds the reader that *A Dream of John Ball* and *News from Nowhere* were initially serialized in *Commonweal* and reprinted a few years later in "fine book" form at the Kelmscott Press, and exploits this fact to construe each publication as an indictment of capitalism, one explicit and the other implicit. And in chapter four ("Measured Revolution: Poetry and the Late Victorian Radical Press"), she explores the uses of poetry in radical periodicals of the period, *Commonweal* among them, and finds in these poems "conventional verse forms" as well as "parody, ballads, and songs; regular rhythm and rhyme; pleasing aural qualities; [and] a tendency against first-person-singular speakers" (p. 220).

In "William Fulford, 'The Set,' and *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*" (*Victorian Periodicals Review* 45, no. 3), Patrick C. Fleming looks beyond Rossetti and Morris in an overview of the "Oxford Brotherhood"'s more ambitious political, social, historical, and artistic essays and observes that Rossetti "ensur[ed] both [the] fame and [the] demise" of the *Magazine* when he urged Morris and Edward Burne-Jones to focus on the study of art (p. 303). He also points out that except for Cormell Price, only Fulford and William Morris from the original "set" submitted contributions after the *Magazine's* issue for July (roughly halfway through its one-year life). His conclusion that the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* furthered some of the other contributors' careers but left Morris and Fulford with "the drudgeries of publication" (p. 313) does overdue

justice to the talents of one of the “Brotherhood”’s more ardent *spiritus rectores*.

In “Morris and Pre-Raphaelitism” (*Journal of William Morris Studies* 19.4 no. 4), Peter Faulkner considers the extent to which Morris’ work participates in and was indebted to Pre-Raphaelitism as a whole, an effort which requires careful definition of “Pre-Raphaelitism” as well as attention to the complexity of Morris’ many artisanal as well as political and literary endeavors (his work in stained glass and fine-book design, for example). Faulkner reviews the insights of earlier critics, who have discerned Pre-Raphaelite qualities in the intensity, decorativeness, and concern for pattern in Morris’ work, to which Faulkner adds the influence of Ruskin and medieval revivalism. He notes that Morris’ lecture on Pre-Raphaelite painting celebrated Burne-Jones’ contributions to “the completely decorative side of the Art” (p. 58). He cites Caroline Arscott’s insight that he sought to realize a more comprehensive “vision of embodied cosmic unity” in all his work, including his decorative work, and concludes that Morris was guided primarily by “his own inner being” (p. 59).

In “‘Als Ich Kan’: Flanders and the Work of William Morris,” Marysa Demoor suggests that Morris must have had a modest acquaintance with the Dutch language to employ Flemish medieval texts by Jacob van Maerlant as the basis of his socialist lyric “Mine and Thine.” She also records his appreciation of the Flemish art he encountered in an 1854 visit to Bruges and several later journeys, and his admiration for Flemish illuminated books and the paintings of Hans Memling and Jan Van Eyck, which he used as models for some of his decorative art. Observing that he was also drawn to the history of the revolt of Ghent as recorded in Froissart’s *Chronicles*, Demoor concludes that he saw in medieval Flemish culture “an ideal way of life and one that he wanted to revisit both in his decorative art and in his writings” (p. 65).

In “‘And My Deeds Shall Be Remembered, and My Name That Once Was Nought’: Regin’s Role in *Sigurd the Volsung and the Fall of the Niblungs*” (*Journal of William Morris Studies* 19.4), Kathleen Ullal notes that Morris granted the flawed dwarf-artisan figure of Sigurd’s tutor—who taught his pupil forging, rune-carving, harp-playing, and the graces of “soft speech” (p. 69) before he succumbed to a lust for gold and power—greater significance than Regin had in his *Urtext*, the *Volsunga Saga*. Arguing that Morris’ portrayal was also consistent with his concern that the “real” history of prior ages—simple, amoral, and unheroic—be preserved, and his desire to modify Nordic hagiography “to ensure that many voices are heard” (p. 67), Ullal concludes that his willingness to “make . . . Regin such a complex and affecting character is, I believe, Morris’ early recognition of what it means to be ‘other,’ without power, the ‘loser’

rather than the 'victor' in history" (p. 71).

In "The Land Which Ye Seek is the Land Which I Seek to Flee From': The *Story of the Glittering Plain* and Teutonic Democracy" (*Journal of William Morris Studies* 20.1), Dustin Geerart reviews the ideals behind Morris' printing practices at the Kelmscott Press and notes that his first choice for publication at the Press was *The Story of the Glittering Plain*. In this tale Hallblithe leaves the monarchical Glittering Plain, a land whose subjects live an effete but deathless life based on the labor of others, to join people who "liv[e] in a cooperative society based on loyalty and honour" (p. 31), a social order Geerart interprets as an idealization of the proto-democratic culture of medieval Iceland.

In "Morris's Late Style and the Irreconcilabilities of Desire" (*Journal of William Morris Studies* 19.4), Ingrid Hanson argues that the "very aesthetic expansiveness, and the universality of [the late romances'] generic characters, work[ed] in tension with their . . . haunted evocations of individual desire. . . suggest the irreconcilability of individual and communal identity" (p. 75). She interprets "refusal[s] of the dominant literary forms and social structures of Morris's day" (p. 82) of the late romances as anticipations of twentieth and twenty-first-century aesthetics.

In "Edward Bellamy's Review of *News from Nowhere*" (*Journal of the William Morris Society* 20, no. 1), Tony Pinkney observes that Bellamy—despite the fact that Morris had considered *Looking Backward* a dystopia—found *Nowhere* quite attractive. He remarked, however, on the absence of any underlying administrative arrangements, for "nothing is more certain than that a great deal of system must have been required to produce the effect described" (p. 40). Bellamy may also have pondered other virtues of Morris' alternative model, for in *Equality*, his sequel to *Looking Backward*, he outlined a society which resembled *Nowhere* in several ways. It began, for example, with a revolution which led to "certain limited moves towards more participator democracy" (p. 38); featured a population and social order which was more evenly balanced between city and country; and viewed benevolently the existence of Thoreau-like communities in which those who chose to opt out of his original "industrial army" pursued more pastoral objectives in peace.

In "Morris and Devon Great Consols" (*Journal of the William Morris Society* 19, no. 4), Patrick O'Sullivan and I considered the tension between Morris' growing socialist convictions and prior involvement in his original family's copper and later arsenic mine in Devonshire. After describing the mine's boom-to-bust history and ruthless treatment of its workers, we argue that Morris viewed his family ownership of the mine and his brief collaboration with it with a form of self-disgust which sharpened his desire to "reconcile the

potential inconsistencies of a principled private life.” Taken collectively, his political writings in the 1880s assembled “one of nineteenth-century Britain’s most wide-ranging attacks on the assumptions of market capitalism” (pp. 31–32), and he described his personal anguish in passages such as the following from “Misery and the Way Out” (1884):

How is it with the professional classes? The noble class of hangers-on to which I myself belong? Here at any rate I am at home, and I think I can tell you something about them. . . . [H]ere I stand before you, one of the most fortunate of this happy class, so steeped in discontent, that I have no words which will express it. . . . I can only say we are driven . . . into a longing for revolution: that we are oppressed by the consciousness of the class of toiling slaves below us, that we despise the class of idle slave-owners above us. (*Artist, Writer, Socialist*, ed. May Morris, 2:156, 158)

In “William Morris and the Garden City,” a chapter of *Ecology and the Literature of the British Left: The Red and the Green*, edited by Gustav Klaus and John Rignall (Ashgate), Anna Vaninskaya compares Morris’ convictions with the practices of Letchworth, Ebenezer Howard’s Garden City, and observes that Howard built Letchworth with capitalist funding and as a result set aside his own ideals for the construction of communal housing. Contrasting the aims of twentieth- and twenty-first century environmentalists with Orwell’s and Chesterton’s contempt for naïve middle-class adherents of a “simple life,” she also concludes that Morris’ “portrait of the end-state was in many respects an anticipation of Howard’s, [but] his conception of the process of change places him in a different league altogether” (p. 136).

The Collected Letters of Jane Morris, edited by Frank C. Sharp and Jan Marsh (487 pp., Boydell) joins *The Collected Letters of William Morris* (4 vols., 1984–96), and *The Correspondence of Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (9 vols., 2002–10) in its provision of significant information about the lives and elaborate interconnections of its participants, as well as a view of the inner world of a hitherto little-understood model, wife, embroiderer, and visual icon whose face has launched a thousand paperbacks.

A number of Jane Morris’ letters to Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Wilfrid Scawen Blunt had already been published, but in preparing this wider edition the editors confronted the indifference of university librarians (“[We] can’t be expected to catalogue every artist’s girlfriend” [p. xii]), and tirelessly canvassed potential correspondents and lost letters which could no longer be traced. Most of Jane Morris’ letters to Rossetti, with whom she conducted an affair from 1869

to 1874, are no longer extant, as are almost all of her letters to her husband William Morris, and her early correspondence with Georgiana Burne-Jones. What we have in abundance are her letters to Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, a Tory anti-imperialist, advocate of Home Rule, and serial womanizer, who recounted in his diaries his intermittent affair with her from 1887 to 1894.

Passages in her letters suggest that Jane Morris esteemed a husband to whom she may have felt little attraction. The editors make it clear that Jane was a lifelong reader of serious books in English, French, and Italian, and that she appreciated plays and musical performances as well as paintings and literary works. Her family's friends considered her a good hostess and household manager (and to that extent perhaps a model for "Annie" in *News from Nowhere*), and the extant evidence suggests that she was a thoughtful and attentive mother to her two daughters, Jenny and May. She worked diligently in her garden, played the piano and the mandolin, tried her hand at landscape sketching, organized collections for mildly progressive causes, and supervised the embroidery production of "The Firm" until her daughter May took it over in 1885.

Written in a clear, dignified style, her letters also afford direct and indirect glimpses into a complex network of artistic, literary, and to a lesser extent, political contacts. The volume's footnotes identify hundreds of friends and friends-of-friends, among them Susan Norton, Jane Cobden, Marie Stillman, Lady Anne Blunt, and Rosalind Howard, a patron to whom she remarked after a shared visit to Italy, "You can't think what a magical effect a bright presence like yours has on so quiet a creature as myself. I enjoyed every visit you made me, and every day that your husband painted near us more than I can say" (p. 73; June 1878).

Her letters to Crom (Cormell) Price, one of the Morrises' several lifelong friends, were among her happiest and most enthusiastic. She planned joint excursions of the Morris and Burne-Jones families to Price's martello-like "Tower" in Broadway in the Cotswolds and rowing trips to Kelmscott Manor, and when the recession of 1878 hurt the Firm's sales of decorative art, she told him *mine de rien* that "we have all begun to think of what we could turn our hands to, in case of an absolute failure in the Art line. Top suggests shoemaking for the men, and plain sewing for the women. I refuse. I won't try to be respectable I'll be a refractory pauper, and tear up my clothes every day" (p. 78; October 1878). She also assured Crom after Burne-Jones had received a bill of clean health from his doctor that the latter would "play us many more wicked jokes in this world" (p. 85), and joked darkly that "we will all go somewhere in a barge next August, if none of us have taken a trip in another barge across dark waters before that

time" (p. 92).

Her elder daughter Jenny's epilepsy, which gradually blunted her considerable mental capacities after its onset in 1875, was a source of deep sorrow for "Top" as well as Jane, and undercurrents of depression and craving for encouragement became more urgent in Jane's later letters. In 1880, for example, she wrote Rossetti that "there is so little pleasure left one in this world" (p. 106), though the gift of his pictures was "a great pleasure once more in this life" (p. 110) and four years later she wrote Blunt that "I am often amazed at the capacity for enjoyment still left me" (p. 132; July 26, 1884). To some extent, she may have sublimated such needs in a less radical counterpart of her husband's interest in alternative social orders. She read the apocalyptic eco-dystopia *After London* twice, for example, and described Albert Owen's plans for a model world as follows: "Topolobampo. . . is a new city, a modern Utopia, where everything is as it should be, . . . blocks of houses arranged in a chessboard pattern with gardens at intervals with an esplanade of many miles along the bay; . . . it will be self-governed, no police, no gaols, only nice people who want to be good. . . Do you think it sounds inviting?" (To Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, pp. 180-181; March 17, 1889).

These and other yearnings were skillfully exploited by in the 1880s by Blunt, to whom she addressed profusions such as the following:

"I want so much to hear from you in my exile." (p. 136; March 4, 1885).

"Let me know beforehand [when you visit] if you can, or I may be out when you call, then I should tear my hair." (April 18, 1886)

"Are you sure you have brought no magic arts from Egypt, and have employed them against a poor defenceless woman?" (p. 186; August 21, 1889)

"[Your] letters give me the greatest pleasure, and cheer me when I am at the lowest pitch of mental suffering." (p. 194; December 1, 1889)

"Alas! So very little comes in my way—you have many things to enjoy and you are too restless to care for them, so we are about equal." (p. 142; August 30, 1885)

But an oblique glimpse of Morris' character appeared in her advice to Blunt to visit Kelmscott in her absence, since William's "splendid flow of spirits might help you to some extent" (p. 168; July 11, 1888), and "Jenny is more cheerful

than anyone except her father" (p. 196; December 29, 1889). Years earlier, before the onset of Jennie's epilepsy, she had written Rosalind Howard that she and May had "inherited from their Papa that precious gift of enjoyment it is a gift and not an acquirement" (p. 42; July 6, 1870). Somewhat more puzzling was Jane Morris' remark in 1888 to Jane Cobden that she was "miserable" because she could not discuss her passion for Irish Home Rule with Morris (p. 162; January 12). As the editor of *Commonweal*, the newspaper of the Socialist League, Morris denounced British imperial oppression in all its forms, its ruthless rule of Ireland among them, and the "Bloody Sunday" Morris memorialized in *News from Nowhere* was a demonstration against the Irish anti-coercion acts.

Jane Morris admired Rossetti's and Edward Burne-Jones's artwork and seems to have regarded Morris' poetry more highly than his translations and socialist lectures. On a somewhat different plane, she passionately loathed London fogs and English winters, and loved Italy, for which, she remarked to Price, "a more appropriate name would be Garden of Eden, . . . it is a paradise of delights" (p. 67; August 23, 1877).

She also complained of a number of physical ailments—colds, indigestion, eye-problems, bronchitis, rheumatism, spinal-related difficulties (which may have eased in later life), and recurrent neuralgia which caused sudden, sharp pains. To Rossetti, for example, she wrote that "I can breathe without gasping" (p. 86; March 1879) and "the violent pain in the back is gone but I have no use in it, I can't straighten myself" (p. 88; July 1879), but "Kelmescott is out of the question for me this year, I am too ill to manage an extra house and entertain visitors" (p. 91; August 1879). To Price she added that "I have known no peace from neuralgia since you left" (p. 107; February 11, 1880); to Watts that "I have been so weary and out of health" (p. 125; January 28, 1883); to Blunt that "rheumatism seized me by the hands with a most unfriendly grip" (p. 139; June 22, 1885); to Mary Howard that "I have a horrid cold . . . I am no longer hysterical and that was what vexed me most about myself, it seemed so idiotic" (p. 156; October 3, 1887); and to Jane Cobden that "going out on such a day for me would have meant another long illness. I have not been outside the door since Xmas" (p. 162; January 12, 1888). Also to Cobden, she wrote that "I am much better for my stay here [in Great Malvern] but I feel that such a very little would throw me over again" (p. 168; July 11, 1888); "several attacks of fever closely following each other have weakened me more than usual" (p. 172; December 13, 1888); and "I seldom go out for fear of bronchitis" (p. 178; January 16, 1889). She tried to use such periods of forced inactivity to read, and Morris quietly bore the expenses of

her travels to warmer climes.

Jane Morris suffered Morris' fellow socialists in social settings, but at one point urged Price to "come[for] I have a new disease called "Socialism on the brain" (p. 149; September 2, 1886). Three years later, she asked Price whether "the socialism knocked down poor Charley?" (Charles Faulkner, another lifelong friend and mathematics don at University College, Oxford who actively shared Morris' views, suffered a crippling stroke in 1889) (p. 182; March 29, 1889), and complained that "Top goes to Paris on Saturday on Socialist business, I wish he would not, I hate those French revolutionaries, they are so much more likely to do something rash than our poor wooden people. I wish the week was over" (p. 183; July 8, 1889).

Frustrated when she felt unable to leave her house, she worried about aging, and complained to Blunt when her younger daughter May asserted a measure of independence, "How I wish I had the real close companionship of either of my children!" (p. 187; September 2, 1889). To Price she had poignantly described her anguish during Jenny's seizures, and added that "I am weak enough for anything, still I believe I should soon get all right again, if only I were not worried almost out of life, a doctor I went to the other day said the sort of anxiety I had had the past few months would bring on anything" (p. 129; September 10, 1883). And to Blunt five years later she wrote that "I never get used to it, I mean in the sense of not minding, every time the thing occurs, it is as if a dagger were thrust into me" (p. 169; August 9, 1888), and "I have been much more seriously ill than I thought when I left home, my doctor says I must never again live with Jenny while she is in her present condition, my brain was suffering from it" (p. 168; July 11, 1888).

In more hopeful times, William and Jane Morris had intended to send their bright first daughter Jenny to one of the new colleges in Cambridge, and many of her closest friends (Jane Cobden, Rosalind Howard, Georgiana Burne-Jones) were ardent suffragists and feminists. But she wrote Price in 1907, more than a decade after William's death, that "I can't make up my mind about our vote. . . . I object to these noisy women having an increased power because they only want to reverse things and spitefully trample on the men. I want both sexes to have equal rights when the women are better educated companions and housekeepers" (p. 401; February 26).

Jane Morris' letters also confirm her strong attachment to Rossetti, though she understandably did not wish to share a household with him. Nineteen days after his death in 1882 she wrote to Price that "the effect on me at the sudden news of Gabriel's death was quite unlooked for. . . . The shock would not have thrown me over so completely I think if Jenny had not been ill the same day

close to me. I am pretty well now though I can't do much yet."

More than a decade earlier—between 1869 and 1873—Morris had drafted a series of grieving poems about Jane's estrangement from him. May Morris printed some of them after his death, and they may be found in their entirety in the Morris Online Edition, <http://morrisedition.lib.uiowa.edu/list/poemsepperiod.html>). In "Alone Unhappy by the Fire I Sat," he confronted his anger at the collapse of his hopes:

[W]hen they both are gone I sit alone

.....

And think how it would be if they were gone

Not to return, or worse if the time bore

Some seed of hatred in its fiery core (B. L. Ms. 45, 298B, f. 29)

It was not loss of love he feared most deeply in that "fiery core," but isolation, pointless rancor and his own potential bitterness. That he did *not* sow the "seed of hatred" helped make many of the letters in this volume possible, and ironically it was Jane who carefully copied out this poem in preparation for possible publication. What her letters cannot tell us is what she felt when she "sat alone" in her old age and reflected on her roles as Morris' young wife, anguished older mother of an afflicted daughter, long-term mistress to Rossetti and Blunt, and friend to the long-suffering Lady Anne Blunt.

At her best, Jane Morris was an actively intelligent and (when health permitted) energetic woman who largely aligned her views and self-image with nineteenth-century patriarchy, partially reconciled her views of intellectual endeavors with those of the three men who were central in her life, and modestly asked Blunt in 1904, "Why should there be any special record of me, when I have not done any special work?" (p. 382; December 20).

In *Nowhere*, Jenny's epilepsy might have found treatment, her parents might have delighted in her accomplishments, and Jane might have found independent employment as an avid autodidact and accomplished embroidress. In that counterfactual world, she and William might even have enjoyed the particular grace granted to Arthur and Birdalone at the conclusion of *The Water of the Wondrous Isles*: that "their love never sundered, and . . . they lived without shame or fear."

In any case, Sharp's and Marsh's edition provides a rounded account of the life and marriage of a stableman's daughter who found an honored place in an artistic and literary elite, in which a man who discerned her aspirations sought earnestly to "think bigly and kindly" and managed in the end to do exactly that.