

WILLIAM MORRIS
NORMAN KELVIN

The Collected Letters of William Morris, Volume IV

1893-1896



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THE COLLECTED LETTERS OF
WILLIAM MORRIS

VOLUME IV



EDITED BY NORMAN KELVIN

ASSISTANT EDITOR: HOLLY HARRISON

THE COLLECTED LETTERS OF

**William
Morris**



VOLUME IV

1893–1896



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TO ALL WHO HAVE PARTICIPATED
IN THE MAKING OF THIS EDITION

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EDITORIAL PRACTICES

Transcription

FOR MOST of the letters, the text has been taken from the holograph original. In cases where the only extant source is a printed text (notably Mackail's 1899 biography), the letter or whatever part of it was quoted is reprinted here. In a very few instances the copytext used has not been Morris's own draft, even when this has been available. This has been the case with letters to newspapers, when it is clear that the rough, heavily canceled surviving draft in Morris's hand was not the one sent, and on one other occasion, when Morris's draft included a note in his own hand addressed to Sydney Carlyle Cockerell, "Please fair copy", and Cockerell's draft was in fact located among the records of the recipient. The decision in these instances has been, in the first case, to use as copytexts the letters as they appear in the newspapers to which they were sent, and, in the second, the draft in Cockerell's hand.

Inevitably, the translation of a holographic document to the printed page introduces some distortion of the original. Certain visual cues are lost. In particular, the end of a handwritten line may indicate the completion of a sentence even though a period is not used, space left between sentences may signify the sense of a new paragraph whether or not a new line is started or an indentation appears, a sentence may contain interpolated or canceled material indicating the writer's second thoughts. These features appear often in Morris's letters. My idea has been to remain completely faithful to the text, but the realities of putting into print documents that were in no way intended for posterity have forced me to adopt certain conventions for the sake of readability with which the reader will want to be familiar.

Paragraphing, occasionally but not often, presents a problem. In some letters Morris seems to intend the end of a paragraph by concluding a sentence well before the edge of the page and beginning the next sentence on a new line without, however, any indentation. On the few occasions when this has in fact been the case, I have introduced an indentation to signify the new paragraph that Morris clearly seemed to intend.

Material canceled by Morris, but still readable and representing a variation from what he finally wrote, is given in angle brackets. False starts in spelling, however, are not shown.

EDITORIAL PRACTICES

On the very few occasions on which material has been added, it has been enclosed in square brackets. Question marks in square brackets indicate uncertainty in reading the preceding word. Most of the time Morris's handwriting is perfectly legible.

Dates and addresses have been placed in the upper right. When a date, or any part of one, has been supplied by the editor, it is given in square brackets. A question mark indicates that the suggested date is a plausible one only. When there is no question mark, the bracketed date is offered with confidence, since it was arrived at through internal evidence, cross-reference, or other compelling information, such as entries in Morris's diaries. Letters that could be assigned only approximate dates have been placed in best-guess chronological order.

Apart from these liberties, Morris's words stand as they were written. Misspellings, run-on sentences, abbreviated words or names, idiosyncratic punctuation and capitalization, occasional obscure passages or apparent slips of the pen are by and large not the subjects of editorial notation except as noted above, in the belief that the reader will prefer to work things out or ponder the ambiguities as Morris's actual correspondents may have had to do. In the publication of historical evidence there is no reason for the editor to come between the document and the reader except insofar as the translation from the original medium to print poses problems that must be solved typographically.

Annotation

A note giving the location of the holograph manuscript, or the published source if the original letter no longer survives, will be found following each letter. Previous—that is, first—publication in biographical or critical works, not including short excerpts, is also recorded. The other notes then follow. I try to give useful, and sometimes new information about Morris's correspondents, the people and things he mentions, his work, and his connections with the events of the time, without overwhelming the letters themselves. In the case of well-known figures, for whom full biographies and other studies are readily available, a brief identification is given on first appearance, and thereafter such details are added as throw light on the letter at hand. For lesser-known figures, about whom information is harder to come by, a somewhat longer biographical account is provided at first mention. Cross-references from later references back to the first note are given when it has seemed useful to do so, but in general readers should use the indexes to locate information. I should also mention that the notes occasionally provide comment on a peculiarity in the text.

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MY GRATITUDE to the many individuals to whom I am indebted for help in completing Volume IV is expressed at the beginning of Volume III, since the two volumes were prepared together; and assistance for one was invariably assistance for the other. Therefore I record here only the institutions and individuals who own the originals of the letters appearing in Volume IV; and I do so with thanks for their providing me with copies and permission to publish the letters. I am indebted to George Abrams; W. P. Barlow, Jr.; Ben Bass; Sanford and Helen Berger; The City of Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, Birmingham; The British Library; The Bodleian Library, Oxford; The Brotherton Collection, Leeds University Library; Le Fonds Octave Maus, Archives de l'Art Contemporain, Musée royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels; Le Fonds Henry Van de Velde, Bibliothèque Royale, Brussels; Manuscripts Collection, Bryn Mawr College; Ellen Clarke Bertrand Library, Bucknell University; the Syndics of Cambridge University Library, Cambridge; Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museums, Cheltenham; William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, Los Angeles; The Council for the Protection of Rural England, London; Dr. R. L. Coupe; Anthony Crane; Baker Memorial Library, Dartmouth College; Estelle Doheny Collection of the Edward Laurence Doheny Memorial Library; Special Collections Library, Duke University; the Provost and Fellows of Eton College, Windsor; the Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge; Collection of John S. and Edith S. Mayfield, Special Collections Division, Georgetown University Library; The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities; the Houghton Library, Harvard University; Castle Howard Archives, Castle Howard, Yorkshire—by kind permission of the Howard family; The Huntington Library, San Marino, California; National Library of Iceland; Lily Library, Indiana University, Bloomington; International Institute for Social History, Amsterdam; University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City; Department of Special Collections, Spencer Library, University of Kansas; University of Liverpool; British Library of Political and Economic Science, London School of Economics; Department of Special Collections, Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles; The William Morris Collection, Special Collections, University of Maryland at College Park Libraries; The John M. Wing Foundation, The Newberry Li-

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INTRODUCTION

MANY LETTERS of 1893–1896, the last four years of Morris's life, are on the surface marked by a listless tone, a crabbed style, and disjointed development—the result in part at least of the illness that also marked his last years: illness already a topic in his letters of December 1894 and, probably, beginning to shadow his life even earlier. Beneath the surface, however, and regularly rising to view, is matter that shapes itself with time into several narratives: continuations and sequels to the narratives of earlier years, but with inflections and conclusions of their own.

At the center again are family and friends, the Kelmscott Press, the activities of the S.P.A.B., book buying, and Morris's career as artist and author. But the relationships shift, as the last year of his life is approached, among both people and activities. Values emerge and submerge, ties weaken and strengthen, the simplification of a multiactive life takes place.

With respect to family, the first thing to note is that there are almost no surviving letters to Jane and none to May Morris. The letters to Jenny, however—as numerous as ever—are often a conduit for information to other family members or concerning them, and include messages to Jane. On October 21, 1895, Morris even sends a business document meant for Jane via this roundabout route. Finally—with respect to family—on December 8, 1894, Morris's mother died at the age of eighty-nine, and there is a letter to Georgiana Burne-Jones, dated December 14, that is important because it begins as an expression of feelings about someone to whom Morris was close, and concludes—by turning to politics—in a way that makes the slight revelation of self in the earlier part problematic.

As for the even greater than usual paucity of letters to Jane Morris, part of the explanation is that Morris was much less away from home during the final four years than ever before; and part that Jane almost certainly destroyed—or simply discarded—letters. But unanswered is why he often wrote to Jenny with an included message for Jane.

The question may have to remain unanswered, if answer means something firmer than conjecture. All one can say is that there is no documentary evidence of a fresh cause of tension between William and Jane Morris. However, to say there is no documentary evidence is not to say we know for a certainty no new troubles occurred. Moreover, any conjecture about the state of Morris's domestic mood and feelings has to be sharply qualified

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by Mackail's recording in his notebook that all of Morris's letters to Georgiana Burne-Jones for 1892 and 1893 are missing (and, he might have added, for the first nine months of 1894). There is at least a chance that Morris confessed to pain in these missing letters, and that he came *sufficiently close to describing what was going on between Jane and W. S. Blunt* to prompt Georgiana to try to conceal the revelation for all time.

There is also one surviving letter to Georgiana Burne-Jones of a somewhat later date—August 29, 1895—in which Morris writes. "I was thinking just now, how I have wasted the many times when I have been 'hurt' and (especially of late years) have made no sign, but swallowed down my sorrow and anger, and nothing done! Whereas if I had but gone to bed and stayed there for a month or two and declined taking part in life, as indeed on such occasions I have felt very much disinclined to do, I can't help thinking that it might have been effective. Perhaps you remember that this game was tried by some of my Icelandic heroes, and seemingly with great success. But I admit that it wants to be done well." However, given the date of the letter, whatever the "hurt," there was nothing new as of that moment, or in the immediate past so far as we can tell. The point again, in noting how few are the surviving letters to Jane Morris in the last four years, is that nothing was happening that was not already in train in earlier years—by 1889 certainly. For whatever this adds, it seems likely Jane's affair with Blunt was over by the summer of 1894, so far as physical intimacy was concerned; or so Blunt's Diary entry for August 15, 1894, suggests: "I found a pansy on the floor of my room when I went to bed," *he wrote, recording a stay at Kelmscott with both Morris'es present*; "But it is too late alas, and I slept soundly." And indeed what becomes increasingly a theme in Jane's letters to Blunt, thereafter, is her concern for Morris's health.

The conclusion seems to be that for both husband and wife their relationship in the last years, at least 1894 to the end, was made up as much out of memories as of deeds. We have a few references to what Jane recollected. Two days after Morris's death, she allegedly told Blunt that she had never loved her husband; though later, in 1903, and also according to Blunt, she spoke of Morris's generosity in great things, calling him "the least selfish of men"; and concluding "I suppose if I was young again I should do the same again." And a few months after Morris's death, writing to Cornell Price from Cairo, where she had gone at Blunt's invitation, she spoke of thinking "incessantly" of Morris. As for Morris, we have no late retrospective view of his marriage at all, and must read what we can—which is very little—in the care he took in his will to secure Jane's comfort, ease, and security.

With respect to May Morris, an effort to explain why there are no

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letters at all to her in the final years runs into even more difficulties. In May 1894 she separated from her husband, Henry Halliday Sparling, we learn from Jane's letter to Blunt of May 26, 1894; the reason being that Sparling would no longer accept a place in the triangle into which he had been put by May Morris's continuing her relationship with George Bernard Shaw. Surely, there must have been some comment by Morris to a friend, some expression of feeling. One assumes that he particularly felt free to confide in Georgiana Burne-Jones. But there are as indicated no surviving letters to her for the months approaching the separation; and the parallel absence of letters to May suggests she, too, perhaps, wanted no record of this period and destroyed letters from her father commenting on the breakup. However, though absence of letters is sometimes as eloquent as plenitude, it is impossible to conjecture what Morris's feelings were about the breakup (a divorce occurred in 1898). One cannot even know his thoughts about the role of his friend Bernard Shaw—for friend Shaw had become. For what it is worth, there are in these years two surviving letters from Morris to Shaw—both cordial and friendly—along with numerous references to him in Morris's letters to others (including Jenny) written after the collapse of May's marriage.

Jenny is the recipient of many letters in these last four years—indeed thirty-two have survived. They are, however, different from those of the years 1889 through 1892; for their tone and style are increasingly shaped by Morris's illness rather than hers. There seem in fact to have been fewer episodes of severe prostration for her between 1893 and 1896, the years that were the last of Morris's life; and perhaps that is why his letters to her are more buoyant, more genuinely chatty, more relaxed in tone than they were earlier. They are also responsive to her apparently becoming more able to get about (we know from Jane Morris's letter to Blunt on February 13, 1896, that at least one visit to Swinburne took place). Yet what Morris must finally do, starting particularly in late 1894, is shield Jenny as best he can from the fact that illness has settled on him, and shield her at all costs from having to think about what life without him would be like. Presumably the best way to do this was to continue to report on his own activities (and thus continue as well to provide her with materials to add to her own life, still that of a semi-invalid). Not surprisingly the Kelmscott Press is a main theme and topic as he does this.

News of his designing woodblock initials and decorative borders, particularly, gets recorded. (And it is in a letter to Jenny on August 22, 1894, that we learn the *Chaucer* was fully subscribed, though in the event two years from issue.) As for reasons why designing borders and decorative initials becomes a theme, perhaps Jenny had expressed pleasure in ornaments for earlier books; but certainly one reason is that Morris in these

INTRODUCTION

years gets much of his own pleasure from this activity (even as he also does from writing stories, his progress with them also regularly reported to her) He had practically ceased designing for Morris and Co (J H Dearle and May Morris produced most of the patterns in these years, as Linda Parry has shown), and it is almost as if the Press had replaced the Firm as the enterprise fulfilling Morris's need for visual expression That designing borders and floriated initials was his most singular visual pleasure makes it finally unsurprising that when telling Jenny about them he could write easily and with genuine enthusiasm

As for his mother's death, the December 14, 1894, letter to Georgiana Burne-Jones, in which he discusses the burial of his mother, should be read also in the context of letters written to Emma Shelton Morris over the years The letter to Georgiana registers a quiet and sober sadness, and in it Morris speaks of his mother as one who was always kind to him It had been a mother-son relationship in which he had apparently always been attentive—remembering her birthdays regularly and visiting her often, but in which, perhaps characteristically for a Victorian man, he told his mother little about his life, sending her mainly reports on Jane and Jenny's health and an occasional word about his business Certainly nothing about his troubles with Jane was ever communicated, and during the socialist years hardly a word about his political activities appears What his letters to her do suggest is that he knew he was loved, he may well have thought himself Emma Shelton Morris's favorite son Yet the genial self-limiting to mild details of domestic life suggests communication had to be confined to a narrow range of topics, as in his December 23, 1893, letter, in which he notes Jenny reading beside him and his family's health, and intersperses repeated references to the weather, as well as advising her he has sent her pocket handkerchiefs Finally, his letters to his mother over her lifetime, like the December 14 letter to Georgiana Burne-Jones musing on his mother's death, suggest it was enough for Morris to be accepted and to feel himself addressed with kindness, if not insight

All this, however, is hardly problematic What *is* problematic is that Morris, after the musing on her death, done in a single paragraph, turns briskly to a discussion of the London County Council elections, expressing hopes that Georgiana Burne-Jones (a candidate for Rottingdean) would win, and indulging in pessimistic musings on the Fowler Bill The abrupt change of subject may hardly be worth noting, but Mackail apparently thought it was, printing the two halves as if they were different letters written on different days, Mackail that is, apparently thought it inappropriate to let his readers know that in the space of a single letter Morris turned from musing on his mother's death to discussing politics, and this only a few days after her burial Morris's writing such a letter

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might be explained by observing that since the election in which Georgiana would stand was about to take place, he could not ignore the subject, moreover, that his mother was ninety permits our seeing simple acceptance by him that death follows old age and the living must get on with life. Still, unless transitional paragraphs were deleted by Mackail and are lost, the briskness in the change of subject within the letter calls attention to itself for any reader, even as it probably did for Mackail.

Beyond family, there are the several close friendships of the last years. Characteristically for Morris, most are related directly to his activities, so that the best way to discuss the friendships is to discuss the activities as context for the friendships, before turning to these activities for their own sake. The Kelmscott Press is the topic of concern when he writes to Emery Walker, and often when he writes to F. S. Ellis or Walter Crane. And after July 1894, the same is true when he sends notes to S. C. Cockerell, for at that date Cockerell succeeded Sparling as Secretary to the Press. We know as an obvious matter too that Morris was in continuous exchange with Edward Burne-Jones over the illustrations for the *Chaucer*, and eventually other books, and had letters to Burne-Jones survived there would be more like the one of September 6, 1895, in which Morris ecstatically expresses his anticipated pleasure in seeing designs for *Sigurd the Volsung*. In all of the letters about preparing or executing projects for the Press, Morris is the self in relation to others that seems to fulfill him: businesslike, warm and affectionate when he is pleased about something, but basically the one in charge—most often of an activity aimed at getting a material object produced. Perhaps it is too much to say that these activities disguised Morris's feelings about others. Perhaps it is more accurate to say there is a successful siting in work relationships of most of Morris's needs for human connectedness, all that is, other than those directed at his family, and those, so difficult to define, that Georgiana Burne-Jones was able to meet, all the needs, it could be said, he was aware of having.

The Kelmscott Press is too large a topic to be discussed only or primarily as context for friendships and work relationships; and Morris's absorption in the Press, for the larger part of the period with which we are dealing, will be a matter receiving full attention here. But before the Press is brought in focus, two other activities that continue the narrative of his life require mention. They are socialism and the S.P.A.B.

The involvement with socialism in the last years is best seen as a continued moral commitment, confirmed from time to time in articles and in letters to those who write to ask if he still is a socialist, though it may be significant that there is doubt in the air, prompting the inquiries. A more than symbolic affirmation of his stance is his helping to write the Joint Manifesto of the English Socialists, in 1893, along with representatives of

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the Fabians and the S.D.F. (including Bernard Shaw and H. M. Hyndman). In contributing to the preparation of the Manifesto, Morris did nothing so much as reiterate his wish that English socialists eliminate factionalism. That he wanted to be free from all internal rivalries among socialists—indeed from all the negotiations over power that constitute politics—suggests why anarchists often believed he was a kindred soul (leading him to insist he was not an anarchist and explain eloquently why not, as he does in his letters to Wolf Wess and James Tochatti, dated respectively January 15 and December 12, 1893). Morris moves also in these last years to an even stronger support of the labor union movement than he gave in 1889, at the time of the Dockworkers' Strike, and he does so in his response to the Coal Miners' Strike of 1893, which was significant, it may be added, because it was the first labor action in England aimed at shutting down an entire industry and because it partially succeeded. He not only gives his strong support to the strike but takes hold of the occasion to explore in print the relationship between art and socialism, doing so in his letter to the *Daily Chronicle*, dated November 9, 1893. He is never more eloquent than he is, here, in his iterated insistence there must be a rebirth of society before there can be a "genuine new birth of art."

Moreover, no discussion of socialism in the last years should overlook the very last article on the subject Morris was to publish, "The Present Outlook of Socialism in England," contributed to the April 1896 issue of *The Forum* (and included in Volume IV of this edition as Appendix A). He unequivocally insists in the article that class division should remain the focus of concern. He insists that eliminating this division should be the goal of socialism. The article demonstrates, at the very least, that remaining operative was the chief reason for his becoming a socialist, his belief that class division is the first cause of all social ills and evils, including, if not indeed foremost, the degraded condition of the arts.

But if socialism in these years takes the form of a reaffirmation of belief, Morris's engagement in his other main public activity—the work of the S.P.A.B.—is best characterized as an aggressive assertion of belief that has all the vigor of a newly discovered conviction. There are, as a result, memorable moments in the final years in Morris's career as a voice for the S.P.A.B. Plans to remove statues at the base of the spire of St. Mary's Church, Oxford; threatened restorations to Westminster Abbey and to Rouen, Chichester, and Peterborough Cathedrals; and the proposed thinning of trees in Epping Forest are occasions for some of Morris's most vigorous protests ever. The high number of letters in this volume to newspapers in behalf of the S.P.A.B. and the care taken with them, as early drafts of some make clear, suggest that of all his public activities his effort for the S.P.A.B. was the one least altered by ill health or diminished zeal.

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His readiness to write letters remains constant, though it is true the last for the S.P.A.B. appears in 1895. And if, sometimes, the text sent off represents Cockerell's "fair copying," the vigor of thought and argument are Morris's own.

The Kelmscott Press has been noted here as the continuing site, in the last years, of Morris's friendships and successful work relationships. Its continued presence in its own right in any narrative of these final years has also been noted. However, to shift the emphasis to the Press itself is only to say that though it achieved a large, public, historical meaning, the narrative of the Press as it pertains to the period between 1892 and 1896 invites a return to a view with Morris still at center, with questions of his friendships and work relationships turning into new questions about him alone. It is also to see the Press as an introduction to a constellation of Morris's activities and practices, in the last years, governed by two central questions: what do we mean when we speak of Morris as artist, and what did Morris mean when he spoke of art? The start to an answer to both can be made by noting three themes that in the letters after 1892 constitute the story of Morris and the Kelmscott Press. These are Morris's becoming his own publisher; his efforts to complete the *Chaucer* despite numerous delays, including, at a late stage, a particularly alarming problem—that of the ink; and his search for illustrators for Kelmscott Press editions of his own work who would satisfy him.

What the decision to become his own publisher signifies is, certainly, a new confidence, inspired no doubt by the success of *The Golden Legend* (issued at the end of 1892), that he could take on the financial risk. But arguably the decision had another meaning, too. It suggests a reaching back to the early days of printing, when printer and publisher were the same person. Though there were no production problems with Quaritch or other publishers when Morris was printer only, obtaining what he imagined was an historical kind of singular control may have helped him regard himself as the artist-in-charge of production, illusory as the desire for autonomous control was, since he was always dependent on friends, associates, and employees.

As for the books issued by Morris as publisher, the most notable was the *Chaucer*, and what the *Letters* record is, as suggested, the overcoming of numerous difficulties. It took two years to persuade the reluctant Clarendon Press to permit use of W. W. Skeat's edition of Chaucer's works as copytext, permission that was finally obtained in 1894. Cutting—to Morris's satisfaction—woodblock initials, borders, and the blocks for Burne-Jones's drawings, was a long process, often requiring the engravings be altered or done over. Finally, Morris's decision to turn publisher meant sorting out—with some tension and rancor—his future business relations

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with Quaritch, who had with good reason anticipated acting as publisher of the *Chaucer* himself. It is an epic narrative, for as Cockerell tells it, plans to print the *Chaucer* with illustrations by Burne-Jones were first made in 1891. From that time on, work of one sort or another was under way for the book until May 8, 1896, the first bound copy finally being placed in Morris's hands in June. With respect to the ink, mentioned here earlier as a particularly troubling problem, the first ink Morris had used was producing yellow stains on the printed sheets, threatening to halt the *Chaucer* at the late date of May 1895. There was great alarm "Steele had no business to tell you anything about my trouble with the ink," Morris wrote to F. J. Furnival on July 12, 1895; "I shall issue the *Chaucer* all right of course. In the meantime I must beg you not to say a word about it to anybody. or you will do me very serious injury." The problem was in fact a good while being solved. After obtaining from Jänecke Brothers in Hamburg an ink that satisfied him, Morris encountered protests from his pressman, who found it stiff and difficult to work. In timing, duration, and outcome, the story of the ink is a subplot of the production of the *Chaucer*, demonstrating nothing so much as Morris's tenacity, persistence, and thoroughness when the success of some craft object—that is, of art of his own making, was at stake.

As for the effort to find for Kelmscott Press editions of his own books illustrators whose work would satisfy him, it is, quite simply, a record of continuous dissatisfaction. But it has implications for the largest of questions, namely Morris's conception of what art is.

The illustrated *Glittering Plain*, with pictures by Walter Crane, is the first instance of the effort. The book was planned in 1891, but impatient to get the Press started, Morris did not wait for Crane's drawings and in that year printed as the first book an edition without illustrations. A second, illustrated, version was eventually prepared, and was published in February 1894; and it is this later one that is to the point here. Although Morris treated the project as a collaboration, agreeing to divide profits equally (the only time he did so), there is evidence he was unhappy with the book. Cockerell, annotating a letter to Morris from Philip Webb, which criticized the illustrations as too flat, wrote "Morris was no less dissatisfied with Crane's illustrations to his *Glittering Plain* & thought this volume his one Kelmscott Press failure." To be sure, this statement has to be balanced against Morris's February 17, 1894, letter to Crane in which he says, "I think your woodcuts look delightful", but there is no reason to give greater weight to Morris's compliment than to Cockerell's testimony as to what Morris actually thought.

Further to the point, and more complicated, was Morris's response to

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the drawings of Charles M. Gere, who had in 1892 done the frontispiece for *News from Nowhere* and was now doing illustrations for *The House of the Wolfings*; and his response to drawings by Arthur J. Gaskin, commissioned by Morris to illustrate *The Well at the World's End*. What happened is recorded in letters to the two artists in the years 1893 through 1895. These constitute a narrative—a double narrative—of continuous discontent, already adumbrated, it might be added, in letters to Gere of 1892 concerning the frontispiece for *News from Nowhere*.

Morris always, to some degree, complains. a background is not detailed enough, a figure is out of proportion, the artist has not got the costume "right." The message, sometimes clearly delivered, sometimes not, is that Morris has an image in his own mind of what he wants. Considering that *The House of the Wolfings* is set in a pre-medieval time and *The Well at the World's End* in an imaginary land, and thus of no particular time logically, it is arresting to see Morris attempting to get Gere and Gaskin to reproduce costumes, armor, and settings that are medieval, and to do so in the style of early woodcut illustrations. Although in two 1893 letters (one to Gere on August 28, and the other to Gaskin, April 18) Morris speaks of the need for free invention, he in fact wants fidelity to what might be called the subtexts of his texts, their grounding in the medieval romance that liberated his own imaginative powers as no other narrative material did. He wants also fidelity to the early woodcuts that, to his eye, expressed the pleasure in the tale—and thus the urge to decorate it—that he himself felt.

How to explain this? The *Letters* permit, if they do not insist on, the thought that the personality, character, and even originality of Gere and Gaskin inevitably showed through and registered as competition with Morris's most private imagining. His complaints are about unsatisfactory execution; and though without a full record of what he saw and rejected it is impossible to assess his objections, some of the drawings sent by both men do survive, and it is difficult to see what is wrong with them.

Perhaps even more significant, if we focus on *The Well* alone, is that Morris, when he decided not to use Gaskin's designs, turned to Burne-Jones, getting him to produce four drawings for the book. There is no surviving record of any complaint about these illustrations and we can assume they satisfied in ways that Gaskin's had not. But placing a Gaskin and a Burne-Jones drawing together (illustration, p. 38) makes it anything but obvious that Burne-Jones's is better, and only leads to a new question—why did those by Burne-Jones satisfy, if they truly did, and those by Gaskin did not?

What emerges from all this is a suggestion that Morris's aesthetic per-

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ception, when it came to illustrations for his own work, was shaped by his relationship to the artist. Burne-Jones had been his friend for forty years and was the one—along with Philip Webb—to whom Morris felt closest. The possibility that presents itself is that whatever lines Burne-Jones drew, they could not help but be informed for Morris by the memory of shared enthusiasm for all things medieval, memory of discussions about medieval literature and art that had occurred over a lifetime, memories of discussions of doing books together in the 1860s and 1870s. This is not to disparage Burne-Jones as an artist but only to suggest why his drawings were acceptable while the arguably quite satisfactory drawings of Gaskin were not.

There is a further possibility: that Burne-Jones's four drawings for *The Well* did not satisfy either, and Morris accepted them simply to have done with a problem too long in existence and, as with Crane, Morris found he could not express dissatisfaction to a friend about the friend's drawings. Highly conjectural as any such view must be, it is more than interesting to note that Morris, according to E. H. New's Diary entry of October 11, 1895, said in an interview that "[h]e does not think his books want illustrations [for] he describes his scenes so minutely and paints them so vividly that an illustration would rather limit than enlarge the reader's conception." Morris added, according to New, that Shakespeare's plays "require no illustration" either, and though Morris apparently did not elaborate as to why, in another context in the interview he said, also according to New, that Shakespeare's plays "really belong to all time" and thus "would be best acted in a generalized costume." This astonishingly advanced notion suggests an interesting link between illustrating and costuming, since Morris's concern in both cases is to resist limiting "the reader's conception." Almost—though not quite—incidentally, one feels prompted to ask again why Gaskin, invited to illustrate a fantasy of no particular time or place, i.e., *The Well*, should have been required to study medieval costume in order to get the dress "right" on Morris's figures. One wishes there was some corroboration for New's Diary notes, since Morris is not on record elsewhere as rejecting all illustration for his work—nor for that matter as expressing such implicit admiration for Shakespeare. Nevertheless, there is at least a consistency between Morris's chronic dissatisfaction with illustrators and the views imputed to him here. There is also the fact that by October 1895, when New says he had the interview with Morris, Gere and Gaskin's drawings had been rejected, Crane's illustrations had been accepted but mentally rejected (if the usually reliable Cockerell reported accurately), and Morris most probably had seen preliminary sketches of Burne-Jones's four illustrations for *The Well*, since Gaskin's last effort to persuade Morris to let him keep the assignment

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had occurred on March 1 (according to Morris's *Diary*) and Morris had presumably turned to Burne-Jones shortly, if not immediately, thereafter

All this belongs as indicated to the narrative of producing Kelmscott Press volumes in the last years. The more limited discussion of illustrators just concluded might more properly be termed the narrative of Morris's search for aesthetic realization of his own books. The *Chaucer* is a somewhat different matter—different, among other reasons, because it was from the first envisioned as a collaboration with Burne-Jones and because the questions raised about Gere, Gaskin, and Morris's texts simply do not apply. Chaucer, the greatest of writers to Morris, was yet not Morris. The texts *could* be interpreted by another, all the more safely had there been a problem since that other was Burne-Jones.

The narrative of illustrating the *Chaucer* is, like the making of the book itself, one of continuous overcoming of difficulties, but it is also, as registered in the *Letters*, one of continuous purposeful advance, unlike the involvement with Gere and Gaskin. The *Letters* agree with all our other sources of information that the *Chaucer* took shape—if over several years—with the aesthetic objective held clearly in mind (though the number of illustrations increased from the sixty originally planned to eighty-seven), and presumably it was an objective shared or agreed upon by Morris, Burne-Jones, and others who played a role, particularly F. S. Ellis. The *Letters* agree, finally, that issuing the *Chaucer* was an event promising to define in a celebratory way both the history of the Press and the lifelong career of William Morris as artist.

But in fact to pursue this narrative to its conclusion is to observe it, at the very end, divert sharply from the depiction of Morris as artist-producer. From 1893 through 1895 the theme is his absorption in the Press and his struggle to get things right with the *Chaucer*, as it had been since 1891. When the book was finally issued, however, Morris's response—whether in letters, his *Diary* or the recollections of others—was decidedly antichlimactic.

Most to the point, his response to the placing of the first bound copy in his hands in June 1896, as recorded in his June 24 letter to Cockerell, does nothing so much as contrast with his enthusiasm, in many other letters of the same period, for the medieval manuscripts he was purchasing—and with increasing frequency—in the last years of his life. For indeed, a passion for manuscripts was pushing to the side his enthusiasm for printed books in general, whether his own or even early books, including incunabula. The antichlimactic response to the *Chaucer* may speak of a simple letdown, or of fatigue brought on by illness, or of some dissatisfaction with the triumph (in all other eyes) of his printing career. But more likely

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than any of these possibilities, his absorption in manuscript books had become so intense by the time the *Chaucer* was issued that the passion to acquire them had displaced at the center of his existence the desire that the finished *Chaucer* could gratify.

Whatever the reason, finally, if any one "narrative" of the years 1893 to 1896 can be said to wax, rather than wane, it is the story of Morris's increasing desire for manuscript books. In 1893 those that he purchases begin to compete in number with the printed books he is buying, and from the summer of 1895 nearly to the end of his life they dominate all else. It was during this concluding period that he acquired the Brabant, Huntingfield, and St. Albans Psalters; the Tiptoft Missal; and his final purchase—from Lord Aldenham for £1000—the Windmill Psalter. And surely there is a feeling of closure in the circumstance that the second-to-last important book he was able to buy—a twelfth-century English Bestiary bought from the dealer Jacques Rosenthal for £900 in May 1896—was brought to Morris, and thus first seen by him, on what was to be his last stay at his beloved Kelmscott. Given his own insistence that a fine book is an architectonic triumph (certainly manuscript books are included in this vision), and his love for the architectural presence of Kelmscott, it is not too fanciful to see a twining of beloved objects for him at the end, as the first sight of the Bestiary and the last view of Kelmscott concur almost to the day. There is also a sense of closure in the way he refers to the value of the Bestiary to his family after his death—"But you see it will certainly fetch something when my sale comes off," he writes to Webb on May 4, 1896.

And if, as his letter to Webb suggests, there is something dry and practical accompanying his pleasure, it is a condition imposed by his need to convince himself he is not damaging his family by spending large amounts. Indeed, in the last sixteen months of his life he spent over £6,500 on manuscript books—i.e., more than half the final valuation of his entire collection of manuscripts and an amount in purchasing power today equivalent to £325,000. That Morris's final passion was in fact for objects of beauty he felt compelled to look upon as commodities—as objects contaminated in meaning by the commercial civilization he denounced—would be an irony were he looking forward to a long life and further exchanges of books for money. Given his sense of impending death, however, the conversion he contemplates is conversion of pleasure experienced in the present into comfort and security for his family in the future, and if not precisely in keeping with his dreams of happiness for society in general (in which books played a large part), it was an extension into the future of his caring self: the self that wanted to shield and protect

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Jenny, and to be at least a good provider for Jane, if he could not be a husband she loved.

There is also another way of seeing Morris's absorption at the end in manuscript buying. The tactile objects of beauty he obtained represented to him what art should be. It is possible to say that in becoming absorbed in them as he did he was making a statement *within* his own age, despite the superficial implication of withdrawal signaled. Morris *was* involved in his own age, until the end, and from the larger perspective this fact provides, the passion for manuscript buying, though a final narrative in Morris's life, embraces the past not as nostalgic dream but as a concrete entity that can exert its energy in the present. Moreover, this narrative masks, because it seems to consume so much of his energy in the last fourteen months, another narrative that begins before it does and then runs alongside it: that of the Morris who interrogates his own age on the question what art is, even as he is interrogated by it.

This complex involvement is of course expressed in Morris's designs for the Kelmscott Press. It is expressed also in the last years in other enterprises and involvements, and in some ways the most salient if problematic of these is his relationship to the Arts and Crafts Movement in general and the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society (ACES) in particular.

Indeed odd, so far as the *Letters* are evidence, is the question of Morris and the ACES. As suggested, his connection with the ACES reflects his relation to the Arts and Crafts Movement in general; involving him with people like Walter Crane and Cobden-Sanderson, with whom he had already worked closely on private projects; and it also anticipates an even larger theme of necessary concern here: Morris and modernism. But the salient point—or at least the one with which really to begin—is that Morris was much less responsive to the ACES than its other members were to him, especially the younger ones who regarded him as a leader. Some individuals were his friends and acquaintances and their work presumably had his approval; but the idea of regular exhibits received lackluster support from him, and a certain amount of negative anticipation of the outcome, even of the exhibit of 1893, of the year, that is, in which he had become the Society's president. His pessimism, as expressed in a letter to Walter Crane on July 30, 1893—"I believe the public (the big public) are somewhat tired of our exhibitions . . ."—should at least have been qualified, it seems from our perspective today, by a reference to the promising fortunes of the arts and crafts in general, and particularly the success of Morris and Co. in these years. For though it is true the ACES had experienced financial difficulties over the years, as Peter Stansky has ably demonstrated, it is also true, as several recent studies have shown, that the

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British middle class did support the Arts and Crafts Movement at this time. Its products were finding their way into British homes, with women in large number among its practitioners and patrons both, and—as patrons—helping to increase its markets. It was, in brief, an expanding and historically significant movement. We have only Morris's glancing references to the ACES—and none to the larger movement—and perhaps the former's financial troubles did warrant his pessimism, but one detects in him in the matter the same sort of pessimism that led him earlier to speak of the hopelessness of art under a plutocracy: people have yet to be taught to want beautiful things; or, more often, have yet to have had their natural inclination for the beautiful liberated from the distorting influence of social conditions. In all this, finally, there is a complicated resistance in Morris to much that is new and a refusal to recognize it has arrived, when indeed it has. He is more at ease denying the age can produce creatively, even as his own need compels him to try—and to succeed.

Again, as for the ACES in particular, there is no satisfying answer—none, certainly in the *Letters*—for the lack of any strong evidence of enthusiasm on Morris's part. (He goes to Kelmscott despite preparations-in-progress for the October 5 opening of the 1893 ACES exhibit, we learn from a September 29 letter to Jenny. And though he returns for the opening, he stays only the one day, leaving London again on the 6th.) All that can be said is that Morris provided the aesthetic and political rationale for the ACES, as well as designs and products that won admiration, emulation, and enthusiasm for him; but most often refused the word of encouragement. It is an apparent contradiction that sets difficulties in the way of discussing him and his achievement historically.

The issue does open up into a larger one. There is in Morris a sense of isolation in these years that does not always respond or correspond to the social and political realities about him. It is perhaps instructive that when Webb protests against Morris's regularly giving him expensive Kelmscott Press volumes as they appear, Morris (in a letter dated August 27, 1894) answers: "I do the books mainly for you and one or two others; the public does not really care about them a damn. . . ." This does not tally with Morris's readiness to quarrel with Quaritch over the right to control a share of the market through pricing. But it is not hypocrisy either. It is, rather, a figurative way of expressing what Morris wanted. to feel close to Webb, to obtain his sympathetic response and praise for the Press's books as they were produced. It is also—quite explicitly—a statement of genuine indifference to the aesthetic judgment of Kelmscott Press books by strangers, including presumably the judgment of his many eager customers. The larger image is that of a man who thinks of himself as an artist and

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who feels unconnected with the society around him, including, by implication, with other artists.

The image of the artist at variance with his contemporaries is common in the early modern period—in the 1890s, to which Morris at the end belongs. What is uncommon is that Morris continued to have appeal for many of those in whom he could—or would—take no interest (Lucien Pissarro is an example), as well as growing appeal for the art world in general. One of the most interesting indications of the latter was the desire of Octave Maus to include Morris's work in both the first and second salons of *La Libre Esthétique* in 1894 and 1895, respectively; exhibitions held in Brussels and conceived on even broader grounds than Morris's—i.e., on the idea that all the arts, including the decorative ones, should be exhibited together. Significantly, the *salon* attracted the attention and work of many important early moderns. In 1894 Morris and Co. papers and fabrics and examples of Morris's typography, ornamental letters, and decorative initials for Kelmscott Press books, were exhibited along with work by Paul Gauguin, Lucien and Camille Pissaro, Paul Signac, Alfred Sisley, Odilon Redon, and Pierre Auguste Renoir. Of some small worth in the history of irony, if only as a passing reference, one of Morris's co-exhibitors in the *salon* of 1895 was Aubrey Beardsley, to whose work he had taken an intense dislike, and who in turn felt obliged to regard Morris as an antagonist. This relationship is stressed here because it points up how truly problematic is the relationship of Morris to early modernism. And certainly of significance, Morris was quite ready in 1895 to write to Holman Hunt and speak approvingly of *La Libre Esthétique* and urge him to participate (he did). The strong impression made by this fact is that when Morris was properly approached, or perhaps approached from the Continent, an ambitious dream of the next generation could appeal to him.

Whatever the explanation, Morris's extraordinary lying down peaceably with some of the most formidable young modernists, in the Brussels *salon* if not in London (and perhaps because he was unaware of what the work of his fellow exhibitors at the *salon* was like), is part of the narrative of the last years in focus here. Perhaps, finally, what his readiness to exhibit at *La Libre Esthétique* suggests, though it is hard to see him bring this to the surface, is a willingness to sympathize with the broad movement of the period: a period of self-consecration among artists as artist-priests and a period that witnessed the growth of belief in the autonomy of art. At this point, too, we can enlarge the question of Morris in the 1890s and his relation to modernism, by exploring his attitude, in the decade, to himself as author. He was pleased to think of himself as a professional author, for it was as such that he described himself in his letter in 1892 to Charles

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Shannon—even denying any professional authority as a visual artist—and in his application in 1894 to the Society of Antiquaries for membership. That Morris was at the end so intent on being recognized as a *writer* brings him into even closer connections with the voices creating the mood of the 1890s: the mood of early modernism and the belief in the autonomy of art that these voices were articulating.

And Morris's sense of himself as author, re-articulated in the context of the 1890s, multiplied for him the ways in which art and socialism could relate. Of interest is his July 16, 1895 letter to *The Spectator*, in which he vigorously objects to a reviewer's reading of *The Wood Beyond the World* as a socialist tract. There is no allegory, he insists: it is "meant for a tale pure and simple, with nothing didactic about it," i.e., without reference to nineteenth-century English society and culture in any way, without any lesson to teach. The position is reconcilable with the fact that art was always the priority for Morris. The goal of social transformation for him was a world in which the energies of everyone would be liberated for the making and enjoying of art. Carefully considered, this means that he implicitly staked his claim for the autonomy of art in the future. We can read backwards to see that on some level his romance writing in the present functioned as a paradigm of the practice of art in the future—in a post-political and post-historical future, it might be said. True, when writing to the *Daily Chronicle* (November 9, 1893) about the Coal Miners' Strike, he says there will only be art in the future if people want it, but he adds that it is *natural* to want art (ital mine). And if nothing else, the "natural" is autonomous, with respect to social causation: it may be shaped by social forces, but it exists by definition before they begin to operate, and—if this were possible—after they cease to exist.

However much Morris's repudiation of the idea of himself as an allegorist tells us about his self-image, it is important also to note that Morris takes keen satisfaction, at the very end, in the image constructed by others of himself as author. He accepts the cultural process that has conferred rank on him as a writer, a process that was already under way when he had been seriously considered as a possible successor to Tennyson as Poet Laureate in 1892. While "art for art's sake" was an abhorrent concept to him intellectually and morally, as a *performance* his production of literature, and his willingness to be praised, made it possible for others to appropriate him for a literary movement in many ways alien to him, and if not to assimilate him into the Aesthetic Movement, to see his work as sympathetic or harmonious with it. Morris was seen by many of his contemporaries in the 1890s as helping to make the literature of the decade, that perception is as important to a discussion of him as any effort he did or did

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not make to position himself within the decade. And he did not, it should be added, make any effort to reject acceptance of him by the age.

Illuminating in this last respect is his November 20, 1895, letter to Hans Ey, a student at the University of Marburg, who had asked Morris whether there was any similarity between himself and Chaucer, saying a friend was writing a thesis on the two poets. It is arresting to learn that Morris, a living author, was an appropriate topic for academic discourse at Marburg; and further, to note that even to suggest (as his friend's—or Ey's—thesis does) that there were grounds in that discourse for comparing Chaucer and Morris, is to confer enormous importance as a writer upon Morris. But it is equally significant—in illuminating how the construction of him by others affected his self-image—that his reply contains no hint he feels unworthy of such extraordinary literary honor and distinction. Rather, there is a note of somewhat astonishing complacency in his response to the comparison.

Equally to the point is his letter of March 7, 1895, to Watts-Dunton, in which Morris revels in the latter's praise of *The Wood Beyond the World* in the *Athenaeum* (March 2, 1895), and comes close to providing us with his theory of language when he heartily agrees with Watts-Dunton that his—Morris's—own writing is free from “euphuism,” “didacticism,” and “the curse of rhetoric.” Morris is presumably pleased to think of himself as direct, simple, bold, and natural in his writing of narrative description and dialogue. But by “the curse of rhetoric” he must have meant figures of speech, metaphoric language, and syntactical variations for effect. Once again he sees himself as “against the age,” in the phrase Peter Faulkner applies to him, even as some critics are ridiculing his language as archaic or pretentious, as an attempt, doomed to fail, to restore the idiom of an earlier—and obsolete—period. That Morris saw none of this—that he regarded himself as expressing himself naturally—is all the more remarkable. And at the heart of the matter is his insistence, in a way that suggests he sees his own art as autonomous, that he was as an author realizing a “truth to self” that enabled him to give pleasure to his readers.

What the prose style of Morris's romances in fact achieves is the engagement of the reader in the “pleasure of the text”: there is often a sensual quality to the imagery and rhythms. It is not so much an invitation to read over the writer's shoulder, as nineteenth-century literature often is, but an invitation to enter a speech compact with Morris, whose whole purpose is pleasure and whose method is to make the narrator the subject of attention. Paradoxically, Morris's archaïcising is intended to negate alienation. It is intended to say that he who gives pleasure, as narrator, and the one who receives pleasure, the reader, are bound together by what has

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thus transpired. It is intended finally to say that by giving pleasure through the particulars of his tone and style Morris desires to enter the lives of his readers: to make a connection between "art and life" in *that* way rather than by making art a criticism of life. In the 1890s, when writers were withdrawing from the compact that makes civil society possible, learning to distrust both history and the yearning for simplicity, Morris seems to resolve the problem of alienation by converting it into a double stance: a political radicalism that allows him to reconnect with society as its involved critic; and an aesthetic reaching out that asserts art is not an instrument of social criticism but a paradigm for the future, that is, for a new ordering of human culture in which the taking pleasure in art will not only constitute living freely and in fulfillment, but in which part of that fulfillment will also be a reconstitution of social relations *through* art.

Finally, precisely because his writing calls attention to itself as literature, rather than as social criticism, history, or philosophy, Morris is seen by his fin de siècle contemporaries as radical. An age that has begun to believe in the redemptive power of art reads Morris's writing as a working out of desire—a new phase after the frustrations of desire charged to society have been overcome by eliminating their causes. It is as if the rhapsodic vision of Morris as romantic, as well as the wisdom of Morris the socialist, have given rise to a vision of human fulfillment. Tone, mood, and indeed imagery substitute psychologically, if not metaphorically, for doctrine and realism. So Morris seems to have it both ways: to be more humanistic in social vision than the naturalists but as liberated as the aesthetes in inventing narratives and imaginary landscapes. And surely though he would have objected to being called an aesthete (though not a humanist, if the term could be freed from its renaissance associations) his belief in the autonomy of art—his image of himself as author—corresponds, as others about him perceived, to that of the Aesthetic Movement.

It remains only to speak of how themes come together in the last months of Morris's life. The gratification of manifest desire in obtaining in May 1896 the English Bestiary, and in July the Windmill Psalter, are oddly complemented by Morris's muted, anticlimactic response to first seeing, in June, the bound *Chaucer*. It is as if Morris had reached back beyond all printed books, even his own, in his search for the pleasure to be found in the true book. There is too, if the surviving correspondence is any accurate record of the matter, the emergence of Webb as the friend to whom he is closest in the last months. There are—essential to note—truly heroic efforts to shield Jenny, even as his life is ebbing away, resulting in the unspeakably moving last line in his last surviving letter, which is to her: "I believe I am somewhat better," he wrote with a feeble hand

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on September 14, three weeks before his death. There is also the strength of the love he feels for Georgiana Burne-Jones—"I want a sight of your dear face," he writes as he lies dying in September.

What happens is in good part a return to beginnings—to the historic age of manuscript books, to the pleasure in them expressed also in his own early ambition to illuminate manuscripts, to first friends—Webb had been met in 1856 in G. E. Street's office—and to the love of architecture he could best express when writing to Webb. But it is also a turning, as well as a return—to love that had no room for the erotic, and to a kind of stoicism—even humor—in the face of discomfort, pain, and weakness, that was truly noble. Morris at his best as a human being relating to others.

The fantasy of "rest" that had appealed to him at the beginning of the 1890s, when he wrote *News from Nowhere*, of being a man in search of closure to his own life narrative, oddly no longer suits him. It is not, at least, how others saw him. When the news of his death on October 5 reached the public, the response affirmed that a great man had died. In the last months, even years, he had done much reaching back, but the obituaries rightly described him as a voice of action in the present—in art and in politics—a voice that despaired of the present but hoped for the future in a way that made the present seem bright because of that hope.

Indeed, like all great artists and important thinkers, Morris in his art and in his social thought enabled people in large numbers to imagine their own future—to imagine the gratification of their desires, whatever they might be. But the conditions for this private fulfillment that he promised were always to be public and universal. Society would exist for the sake of the health and welfare of the body, art for the gratification of the senses, and all institutions and social arrangements would have as their goal the nurturing of that which regards itself as more than a well-nourished body, more than a site for sensory experience—the self that humanistically proclaims the importance of every other life. The self, that is, able to embrace with affection both art and other people, so that affection, love, even eros become the single, unifying, ground beneath both art and life.

All this was in the image of Morris already in existence in the public imagination when he died. Perhaps the fortuitous, unprogrammable, and random way in which his letters emphasize, at the end, the art he loved and his love for the people who meant most to him, and the singular link between his love of art and of those important to him, casts a backward light on all the letters that record his life and career. Letters that in retrospective view can be seen as a continuous orienting of desire toward dreams within a humanistic creed: desire for the pleasure of human fellowship and for the pleasure that art provides—and withal, that strive to

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work out the connection between the two desires, the two pleasures. Perhaps that his letters have done this is the measure of their enduring value for reading the life of an enduring figure.

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January 1995

MORRIS CHRONOLOGY

BASED on "A Calendar of Principal Events in Morris's Life," May Morris, *William Morris: Artist, Writer, Socialist*, II (Oxford, 1936), 632-37; and on the letters in the present edition.

- 1834 Born, March 24, at Elm House, Walthamstow.
- 1840 Family moves to Woodford Hall, Walthamstow
- 1847 Father dies.
- 1848 Goes to school at Marlborough. Family moves to Water House, Walthamstow.
- 1851 Leaves school at Christmas, after school rebellion in November.
- 1852 Reads with Dr. F. B. Guy, Forest School, Walthamstow. Matriculates at Exeter College, Oxford, in June. Plans to prepare for the Church.
- 1853 Goes to Oxford in January. Meets Edward Burne-Jones, C. J. Faulkner, R. W. Dixon, Harry Macdonald, and William Fulford. In rooms at Exeter College by December. During this and following year reads Ruskin's *Stones of Venice*, Carlyle's *Past and Present*, Thorp's *Northern Mythologies*, and Charlotte Yonge's *The Heir of Redclyffe*.
- 1854 Visits Belgium and Northern France in the summer, seeing the paintings of Memling and Van Eyck, and Amiens, Beauvais, and Rouen Cathedrals. Meets Cormell Price. Reads Ruskin's *Edinburgh Lectures* and becomes aware of the Pre-Raphaelites. Morris, Burne-Jones, and their circle plan a monastic brotherhood.
- 1855 Reads Chaucer and Malory. Makes second tour of France, accompanied by Burne-Jones and Fulford. Morris decides not to take orders, and to follow art as a career.
- 1856 Edits and finances the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*. Articled to G. E. Street, the architect, in whose Oxford office he meets Philip Webb. Takes his B.A. degree. Moves to London with

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- Street's office and shares rooms with Burne-Jones. Meets Rossetti and abandons architecture for painting by end of the year
- 1857 Decorative work begins at 17 Red Lion Square. Frescoes in the Oxford Union painted, under leadership of Rossetti. Meets Jane Burden. Macmillan rejects *The Defence of Guenevere*.
- 1858 *The Defence of Guenevere* published by Bell and Daldy at Morris's own expense. With Faulkner and Webb, visits France again.
- 1859 Morris and Jane Burden married on April 26 Tour of France, Belgium, and the Rhineland. Philip Webb builds Red House, at Upton, Kent, for them.
- 1860 Morris move into Red House. Edward Burne-Jones and Georgiana Macdonald married on June 9.
- 1861 Firm of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner and Co. founded Jane Alice ("Jenny") born January 17. Morris begins writing stories for *The Earthly Paradise*.
- 1862 Mary ("May") Morris born March 25. Firm shows work at the Great Exhibition and is awarded two gold medals.
- 1864 Morris ill with rheumatic fever. The Burne-Joneses decide against sharing Red House, and the plan for a "Palace of Art" there is abandoned.
- 1865 Red House sold to a retired naval officer and Morris family moves to 26 Queen Square, London, where the Firm also sets up shop.
- 1866 *The Earthly Paradise* takes form. Morris visits France again, with Warrington Taylor and William Fulford.
- 1867 *The Life and Death of Jason*, originally intended as a tale in *The Earthly Paradise*, published separately in January. Firm begins decoration of dining room at South Kensington Museum.
- 1868 *The Earthly Paradise*, Volume I, published in April Morris begins studying Icelandic with Eiríkr Magnússon.
- 1869 "The Saga of Gunnlaug Worm-tongue" published in the *Fortnightly Review* (January). *The Story of Grettir the Strong* published in June. Morris takes his wife to Bad Ems for her health. Burne-Jones's breakdown, precipitated by affair with Mary Zambaco
- 1870 Volumes I and III of *The Earthly Paradise* published. Translation (with Magnússon) of *Völsunga Saga* published. Completes first

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- illuminated manuscript, *A Book of Verse*, as gift for Georgiana Burne-Jones. Meets Aglaia Coronio and begins long friendship and correspondence.
- 1871 Takes Kelmscott Manor, Lechlade, Gloucestershire, in joint tenancy with Rossetti in June. Rossetti and Jane Morris and children take up residence there. In July Morris leaves on first Icelandic trip, accompanied by Faulkner, Magnússon, and W. H. Evans. Makes an illuminated *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* for Edward Burne-Jones. A second (on vellum), a gift for Georgiana Burne-Jones, begun and completed following year.
- 1872 Morris family leaves Queen Square (Firm continues there) for Horrington House, Turnham Green. *Love Is Enough* published. Rossetti suffers breakdown and attempts suicide.
- 1873 With Burne-Jones, visits Florence and Siena in spring. Second trip to Iceland in summer.
- 1874 Rossetti gives up his share of Kelmscott Manor. Morris takes family on trip to Belgium. In winter of 1874–75, begins illuminated *Aeneid* on vellum.
- 1875 Morris, Marshall, Faulkner, and Co. dissolved and reestablished as Morris and Co., with Morris as single owner. Takes M.A. degree at Oxford. *Three Northern Love Stories* published. Begins experiments with dyeing, staying with Thomas Wardle, at Leek, for the purpose. Morris's translation of the *Aeneid* published.
- 1876 Becomes Treasurer of Eastern Question Association and begins first period of political activity. Appointed Examiner at School of Art, South Kensington. Jenny suffers first epileptic attack and becomes semi-invalid for the rest of her life. *Sigurd the Volsung* published.
- 1877 Gives first public lecture, "The Decorative Arts." Helps found the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings ("Anti-Scrape") and becomes its first secretary.
- 1878 Takes family on visit to Venice, Verona, and Padua in spring. Move to Kelmscott House, Hammersmith, on return. Morris begins tapestry weaving. Russo-Turkish war ends with Treaty of San Stefano in March; after Congress of Berlin, June–July, EQA becomes inactive.
- 1879 Leads protest by S.P.A.B. against proposed restorations at St. Marks, Venice. Becomes treasurer of the National Liberal

MORRIS CHRONOLOGY

- League First meeting with H M Hyndman, founder in 1881 of the Democratic Federation
- 1880 Firm decorates Throne Room at St James's Palace
- 1881 Merton Abbey works of Morris and Co started
- 1882 *Hopes and Fears for Art* (first collection of essays) published Death of Rossetti on April 9
- 1883 Joins Democratic Federation on January 13 Made Honorary Fellow of Exeter College on same day Death of Karl Marx, March 14 High warp tapestry started at Merton Abbey works Lecture, "Art and Democracy," sponsored by Russell Club and delivered in University Hall, Oxford, with Ruskin in chair, in November
- 1884 Partially subsidizes *Justice*, organ of the Democratic Federation *Chants for Socialists* and *A Summary of the Principles of Socialism* (with H M Hyndman) published In dissension with Hyndman at end of year, and along with others resigns from Democratic Federation (renamed Social Democratic Federation in August)
- 1885 The Socialist League founded and *Commonweal* started with Morris as editor Free speech demonstration, Dod Street, on September 20 Morris arrested when protesting sentencing of free speech demonstrators (charge dismissed in court next day) *The Pilgrims of Hope* published in *Commonweal*, 1885–86
- 1886 Demonstration of unemployed in Trafalgar Square, February 8 ("Black Monday") *A Dream of John Ball* appears in *Commonweal*, 1886–87 *A Short Account of the Commune of Paris* (with E Belfort Bax and Victor Dave) published
- 1887 Morris's translation of the *Odyssey* published in April *The Tables Turned, or Nupkins Awakened* produced at hall of Socialist League on October 15 Trafalgar Square demonstration attacked by police, November 13 ("Bloody Sunday") Pall bearer at funeral of Alfred Linnell, who was fatally injured in demonstration
- 1888 *Signs of Changes*, second volume of lectures, published in May Lectures on tapestry weaving at the first exhibition of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society Attends the first Art Congress, held in Liverpool *The House of the Wolfings* published in December (Takes interest in its design and begins to consider the technique of printing)

MORRIS CHRONOLOGY

- 1889 Delegate at International Socialist Congress, July, in Paris, at which Second International is founded. London Dock Strike (August 14–September 14). *The Roots of the Mountains* published in November. Opens series of lectures at second exhibition of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society. Attends Art Congress in Edinburgh (November)
- 1890 Designs type, preparing to start the Kelmscott Press. *News from Nowhere* appears in *Commonweal*. Leaves Socialist League at end of year and forms Hammersmith Socialist Society.
- 1891 The Kelmscott Press begins printing in January; its first book, *The Story of the Glittering Plain*, issued in May. *Poems by the Way* and first volume of Saga Library published in October. Serious illness. Takes Jenny to France. Address on Pre-Raphaelites at Municipal Art Gallery, Birmingham, in October.
- 1892 Death of Tennyson on October 13. Morris mentioned as possible candidate for Laureateship. Reputedly declines to be considered. Elected Master of the Art Workers' Guild for the year. Principal Kelmscott Press books: *The Defence of Guenevere*, *The Golden Legend*, *The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye*. Second volume of Saga Library published
- 1893 Joint Manifesto of English Socialists drawn up by Morris, G. B. Shaw, and H. M. Hyndman. *Socialism. Its Growth and Outcome* (with E. Belfort Bax) published. Principal Kelmscott Press books: More's *Utopia*, *News from Nowhere*.
- 1894 Morris's mother dies at age 90. Principal Kelmscott Press books: *The Wood beyond the World*, Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon*, Keats's *Poems*, and Rossetti's *Sonnets and Lyrical Poems*. Sydney Carlyle Cockerell becomes Secretary of the Kelmscott Press.
- 1895 Morris goes to Rottingdean for his health. Death of Friedrich Engels in August. Kelmscott Press publishes *Beowulf* (Morris's translation) and *The Life and Death of Jason*. Purchases Huntingfield Psalter and Tiptoft Missal. Speaks at Sergius Stepniak's funeral.
- 1896 Kelmscott Press publishes *Chaucer* and *The Well at the World's End*. Purchases Windmill Psalter (the last manuscript he was to buy) Sea voyage to Norway in attempt to restore health. Death of Morris, October 3.

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- 1898 Death of Burne-Jones, Bernard Quaritch, and Kate Faulkner. Sale of Morris's library at auction by Sotheby's. Final Kelmscott Press volumes are issued, and the Press is closed.
- 1900 Death of John Ruskin.
- 1906 Death of Aglaia Coronio. Final volume (6) of the Saga Library completed and published by Eiríkr Magnússon.
- Deaths of the following.
- 1914 Jane Morris.
- 1915 Philip Webb.
- 1920 Georgiana Burne-Jones
- 1935 Jenny Morris.
- 1938 May Morris.
- 1962 Sydney Carlyle Cockerell.

ABBREVIATIONS OF MANUSCRIPT LOCATIONS

(Printed text locations are included in list of Abbreviations of Works Frequently Cited.)

Abrams Coll.	Collection of George Abrams, New York
Bass Coll.	Collection of Ben Bass
Berger Coll.	Collection of Sanford and Helen Berger
Birmingham	City of Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, Birmingham
BL, Add. mss.	British Library (British Museum), London, Additional Manuscripts
BL, Ashley mss.	British Library (British Museum), London, Ashley Manuscripts
Bodleian	Bodleian Library, Oxford
Brotherton	Brotherton Collection, Brotherton Library, University of Leeds, Leeds
Brussels, Maus	Octave Maus Archives, Archives de l'Art Contemporain, Musée royal des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels
Brussels, Van de Velde	Henry Van de Velde Archives, Bibliothèque Royale, Brussels
Bryn Mawr	Bryn Mawr College Library, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania
Bucknell	Ellen Clarke Bertrand Library, Bucknell University, Lewisburg, Pennsylvania
Cheltenham	Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museums, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire
Clark Library	William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, Los Angeles, California
Coupe Coll.	Collection of Dr. R. L. Coupe

ABBREVIATIONS / MANUSCRIPT LOCATIONS

CPRE	Council for the Protection of Rural England, London
Crane Coll.	Collection of Anthony Crane
CUL	Cambridge University Library, Cambridge
Dartmouth	Baker Memorial Library, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire
Doheny (Ex)	Formerly in the Estelle Doheny Collection of the Edward Laurence Doheny Memorial Library, St. John's Seminary, Camarillo, California
Duffy Coll.	Collection of A. R. Duffy, CBE
Duke	Sir Thomas Wardle Papers, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina
Eton	Eton College Library, Windsor
Fitzwilliam	Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
Fitzwilliam, Blunt Archive	Diaries and Other Papers of Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, including Letters from Jane Morris The Department of Manuscripts and Printed Books of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge University
Getty	The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, Santa Monica, California
Gimson Coll.	Collection of Alfred G. Gimson
Harvard	Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts
Howard Papers	Castle Howard Archives, Castle Howard, Yorkshire
Huntington	Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California
Iceland	National Library of Iceland, Reykjavík
Iceland, Einarsson Papers	Stefan Einarsson Papers, National Library of Iceland, Reykjavík
IISH	International Institute for Social History, Amsterdam
Indiana	Lily Library, Indiana University, Bloomington
LSE	British Library of Political and Economic Science, London School of Economics

ABBREVIATIONS / MANUSCRIPT LOCATIONS

Mackail notebook	William Morris Gallery, Walthamstow, London
McMinn Papers	McMinn Papers, Society of Antiquaries, London
Mayfield Coll	Collection of John S. and Edith S. Mayfield, Special Collections Division, Georgetown University Library
Newberry	Wing Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois
New South Wales	The Mitchell Library, New South Wales, Sydney
NLS	National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh
Nudelman	Edward D. Nudelman, Fine and Rare Books, Seattle, Washington
NYPL	Manuscript Division, New York Public Library
NYPL, Gilder Papers	Manuscript Division, New York Public Library, The Richard Watson Gilder Papers
NYU	The Fales Library, Elmer Holmes Bobst Library, New York University, New York
Occidental	Occidental College Library, Los Angeles, California
Ohio	Department of Special Collections, Ohio State University Library, Columbus, Ohio
Oxford	Oxford University Archives (OUP)
Phalen	Collection of Kevin M. Phalen
PML	J. Pierpont Morgan Library, New York
Princeton T	Rossetti Collection of Janet Camp Troxell, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey
Princeton, Scheide	Scheide Library, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey
Quaritch	Bernard Quaritch, Ltd., London
Quaritch Archives	Bernard Quaritch, Ltd., London
Queensland	Hayes Collection, University of Queensland Library, St. Lucia, Australia
Rochester	University of Rochester Library, Rochester, New York
Rollin Coll.	Collection of Henry R. Rollin
Rosenthal Coll (Ex)	Formerly in Collection of Julia V. Rosenthal

ABBREVIATIONS / MANUSCRIPT LOCATIONS

Rylands	John Rylands University Library of Manchester
Schimmel Coll. (Ex)	Formerly in the Collection of S. B. Schimmel
Sheffield	City of Sheffield Library
Soc. Ant.	Society of Antiquaries, London
S.P.A.B. Archives	Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, Archives, London
Spilstead Coll.	Collection of H. L. Spilstead
Spitzbergen Diary	Getty Center
Subun-So	Subun-So Books, Tokyo
Syracuse	George Arendts Research Library for Special Collections, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York
TCD	Trinity College Library, Dublin
Texas	Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin
Thompson	Collection of the late E. P. Thompson
Turner Coll.	Collection of Joscelyn V. Charlewood Turner
UCSB	University of California, Santa Barbara
UCLA	Department of Special Collections, Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles
UIowa	University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City
UKansas	Department of Special Collections, Spencer Library, University of Kansas, Lawrence
ULiverpool	University of Liverpool, Special Collections
UMaryland	University of Maryland, Special Collections, College Park, Maryland
V&A	Victoria and Albert Museum Library, London
Walker Coll.	Collection of Michael L. Walker
Walsdorf Coll.	Collection of John J. Walsdorf
Walthamstow	William Morris Gallery, Walthamstow, London
Warwick	Modern Records Center, Warwick
Wess Coll.	Collection of Alfred Wess
Yale B.	Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Collection, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut

ABBREVIATIONS / MANUSCRIPT LOCATIONS

Yale O.	Osborne Collection, Yale University Library, New Haven, Connecticut
Yates Coll. (Ex)	Formerly in the Collection of Arnold Yates

ABBREVIATIONS OF WORKS FREQUENTLY CITED

ACES Catalogue, 1893	Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society Catalogue of the Fourth Exhibition (London: The New Gal- lery, 1893)
Addison	Sir William Addison, <i>Portrait of Epping Forest</i> (London: Robert Hale, 1977)
<i>Arts and Crafts Essays</i>	<i>Arts and Crafts Essays by Members of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society</i> (Rivington: Percival and Co., 1893; rpt., London and Bombay: Longmans Green, 1899)
Barker and Collins	Nicolas Barker and John Collins, <i>A Sequel to An Enquiry into the Nature of Certain Nineteenth Cen- tury Pamphlets by John Carter and Graham Pollard</i> (London and Berkeley: Scolar Press, 1983)
Blunt, <i>Diaries</i>	Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, <i>My Diaries</i> , 2 vols. (Lon- don: 1920; rpt., New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1923)
Blunt, Unpublished Diaries	Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, Unpublished Diaries, the W. S. Blunt Archives, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
Boos, <i>Diary</i>	"William Morris Socialist Diary," ed. and an- notated with introduction and biographical notes by Florence Boos, <i>History Workshop</i> (Spring 1982)
Brody	Elaine Brody, <i>Paris The Musical Kaleidoscope 1870-1925</i> (New York: George Braziller, 1987)
Buxton Forman	H. Buxton Forman, <i>The Books of William Morris</i> (1897, rpt., New York: Burt Franklin, 1969)
Campbell	Margaret Campbell, <i>Dolmetsch The Man and His Work</i> (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1975)

ABBREVIATIONS / WORKS CITED

- Carter and Pollard John Carter and Graham Pollard, *An Enquiry into the Nature of Certain Nineteenth Century Pamphlets*, ed. Nicolas Barker and John Collins, 2d ed. (London and Berkeley: Scholar Press, 1983)
- Carruthers, Spitsbergen Diary John Carruthers, "Spitsbergen Diary, July 22–August 17, 1896," Resource Collections, The J. Paul Getty Center, Santa Monica, California
- Cobden-Sanderson T. J. Cobden-Sanderson, *The Journals of T J Cobden-Sanderson*, 2 vols. (1926, rpt., New York: Burt Franklin, 1969)
- Cockerell's Diary Sydney Carlyle Cockerell, Unpublished Diaries, BL, Add. mss. 52772
- Cockerell, "History" Sydney Carlyle Cockerell, "A Short Description of the Kelmscott Press," in H. Halliday Sparling, *The Kelmscott Press and William Morris Master-Craftsman* (London: Macmillan, 1924, rpt., Folkstone: William Dawson and Sons, 1975)
- Cockerell, "List" Sydney Carlyle Cockerell, "An Annotated List of the Books Printed at the Kelmscott Press," in H. Halliday Sparling, *The Kelmscott Press and William Morris Master-Craftsman* (London: Macmillan, 1924; rpt., Folkstone: William Dawson and Sons, 1975)
- Compton-Rickett Arthur Compton-Rickett, *William Morris: A Study in Personality* (London: H. Jenkins, 1913)
- Cook and Wedderburn E. T. Cook and A. Wedderburn, *The Works of John Ruskin*, 39 vols. (London: G. Allen, 1903–1912)
- Crane Walter Crane, *An Artist's Reminiscences* (London: Methuen and Co., 1907)
- Curtain Call Doris A. Jones, *Taking the Curtain Call The Life and Letters of Henry Arthur Jones* (New York: Macmillan, 1930)
- CW William Morris, *Collected Works*, ed. May Morris, 24 vols. (1910–1915, rpt., New York: Russell and Russell, 1966). The Introductions to these volumes have been separately reissued as May Morris, *The Introductions to the Collected*