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News and queries

News of Members

PETER ALLEN (University of Toronto) published "Morrow on Coleridge's Church and State," in the Journal of the History of Ideas, 50.3 (1989), 485-89.

CLIFFORD HOLLAND (O.I.S.E.) gave a paper on "Social Darwinism and the North American Triangle" at the Symposium on Perspectives in the Social Sciences, Canisius College, Buffalo, in April.

JUDITH KNELMAN (University of Western Ontario) will be retiring as editor of the VSAO Newsletter after the Spring 1990 issue.

GOLDIE MORGENTALER, a graduate student, is interested in exchanging information on Victorian notions of heredity and how it was believed that characteristics were passed on from parent to child. Her address is 456 Barton Ave., Montreal H3P 1N4.

GARY PATERSON (University of Western Ontario) is a consulting editor for The Eighteen Nineties: An Encyclopedia, to be published by Garland under the editorship of George A. Cevasco. Many of the 500+ entries (ranging from "absinthe" to "Zangwill") have not yet been spoken for. Anyone interested in contributing should contact him at the Department of Modern Languages, King's College, 266 Epworth Ave., London N6A 2M3.

DAVID SHAW (University of Toronto) has a new book, Victorians and Mystery: Crises of Representation, a sequel to The Lucid Veil, scheduled for publication by Cornell University Press in April 1990. He has published "Incomprehensible Certainties and Interesting Uncertainties: Hopkins and

Tennyson," in Texas Studies in Literature and Language 31 (1989), 66-84, and "Poet of Mystery: The Art of Christina Rossetti" in The Achievement of Christina Rossetti, ed. David A. Kent (Cornell University Press, 1987). An essay by him on "Browning's Murder Mystery: The Ring and the Book and Modern Theory" is published this fall in a special issue of Victorian Poetry marking the hundredth anniversary of Browning's death.

JILL SHEFRIN, librarian at the Osborne Collection of Early Children's Books, alerts us to an exhibition of interest to Victorian scholars: Richard André (1837-1907), illustrator (until 14 January 1990).

* * *

Other News

Philip Anisman, a Toronto lawyer and former student of the late F.E.L. Priestley, has started a fund to honour Professor Priestley with an annual memorial lecture series in the history of ideas. The FELP Visiting Scholar would be invited to visit the University of Toronto for a two- to four-week period during which he or she would lecture, attend, and participate in graduate and undergraduate seminars and classes, and meet with faculty members and students informally as well as formally. The goal is \$150,000; so far over \$70,000 has been committed. Contributions can be sent to Anisman at 80 Richmond St. W., Suite 1905, Toronto M5H 2A4.

* * *

On Sunday, December 17 at 3 p.m., l'Harmonie Universelle Ancienne will present A Victorian Family Christmas at the Western Ontario Conservatory

of Music in London. Old-time vocal and instrumental favourites with parlour music and readings will be featured. The same group will hold a Victorian Echoes weekend May 11-13 in London on dance and entertainments from the 1890s and the turn of the century. For information phone (519) 659-3600.

* * *

A series of instructional videotapes on some of the major Victorian novels is being offered free to teachers. The tapes were designed to be viewed by students after they have read the novels but before class discussion of them. Information from R.G. Malbone, Department of English, SUNY College at Cortland, P.O. Box 2000, Cortland, NY 13045, U.S.A.

* * *

Dickens Quarterly, the journal published by the Dickens Society, invites articles, notes, and reviews on the life, times, and literature of Charles Dickens. In the coming years it will devote quarterly issues to The Old Curiosity Shop, Barnaby Rudge, and Martin Chuzzlewit. Submissions should be sent to the editor, David Paroissien, Department of English, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003, U.S.A. Membership in the Dickens Society, which includes a subscription to the journal, is \$15 (U.S.) a year. Order from The Dickens Society, Office of the President, Administrations Building, University of Louisville, Louisville, KY 40292, U.S.A.

* * *

Advertisements, greeting cards, magazines, tickets, stationery, posters, labels, etc. will be on sale at a bazaar of the Ephemera Society on December 10 at the Victory Services Club, corner of Seymour Street and Edgeware Road in London (Marble Arch

tube station) from 11 to 4 p.m. The Society is a non-profit organization concerned with the preservation, study, and educational uses of printed and handwritten ephemera. Applications or information on 1990 sales from The Ephemera Society, 12 Fitzroy Square, London W1P 5HQ, England.

* * *

The Victorian Review is a refereed interdisciplinary journal published twice yearly. The editor welcomes submissions on all aspects of the nineteenth century, including history, literature, art, science, religion, music, and law. Papers should be 10 to 20 pages long and follow the MLA style sheet. Contributions (no more than seven pages) to a forum on the influence of recent critical thought on the teaching and study of the nineteenth century are also welcome. Send two manuscript copies and, if possible, diskette, preferably WordPerfect, to G. Stephenson, Editor, Victorian Review, Dept. of English, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alta. T6G 2E5, Canada.

* * *

CALL FOR PAPERS: The Victorian Studies Association of Western Canada invites proposals for papers to be delivered at the nineteenth annual meeting of the Association at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, 10-13 October, 1990. Submissions are welcome from all areas and disciplines of Nineteenth-Century Studies, including history, art, literature, music, science, and law. Detailed proposals of 500-700 words should be sent by 1 January, 1990. Only members of the Association are eligible to submit proposals. Applications for membership (\$20.00 per year, \$15.00 student rate) and proposals should be sent to the Secretary-Treasurer, Glennis Stephenson, Dept. of English, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alta. T6G 2E5.

Conference notes

VSAO Conference 1989

The morning speaker at our 1989 conference, Martha Vicinus, presented an illuminating reading of Charlotte Brontë's Villette in the context of a work she is preparing on the role of secrets in Victorian society. Secrets, she noted, are an intimate part of power and gender politics: those who know hold the reins. On the personal level, the keeping or telling of secrets is a powerful index to our character, our friendships, even our mental stability. Whereas the modern world is obsessed with political secrets (witness the spy novel), the Victorians were particularly intrigued by sexual ones such as illegitimacy and homosexuality. The whole world of women was in a sense hidden behind the closed doors of private, inviolate middle-class homes; feminists, seeking to escape from the cot, were typically concerned with bringing to light the hidden facts of prostitution and venereal disease.

The process of growth in Villette is partly a process of learning to handle secrets appropriately. Lucy must find out which secrets to tell; in the claustrophobic world of the pensionnat, surrounded by the obsessive prying and intelligence-gathering of Mme Beck and the devious machinations of Père Silas, she finally reaches psychic wholeness when, on the moonlit balcony, she is able to share the secrets of her emotional life with her beloved M. Paul. M. Paul, like many of Brontë's heroes, must complete himself by adopting some woman-like traits and learning to keep a secret until the appropriate time, as he does in his preparations for Lucy's school. (In the male world, women were stigmatized as alternately too secretive and unable to keep a

secret.) As a narrator--"the second most famous unreliable narrator in Victorian fiction" (first prize also going to a Brontë creation)--Lucy is notable for her withholding of essential information from the reader. The gaps in her narrative are as staring as the gaps in the books M. Paul gives her, where too explicit passages have been snipped out with scissors in what seems a metaphor made flesh for modern critics. At the end, however, she retains her reserve, refusing to divulge the fate of M. Paul to the unknown and possibly uncaring reader; in Brontë's novel, the sharing of secrets cannot extend from the private space of lovers into the public world.

In the afternoon lecture, Margaret MacMillan discussed the way in which the British experience in India helped to call into question the early Victorian belief that mankind evolves uniformly in a progressive manner. She concentrated particularly on two figures: Sir Alfred Lyall, an administrator who spent four years in the almost feudal native states of Rajputana and wrote widely on Indian topics, and Sir Henry Maine, who went out as the Law Member of the Governor-General's Council in 1862. Lyall's involvement in putting down the Mutiny shortly after his arrival (an exhilarating experience for him) suggested the dangers of meddling with Indian customs; his later service in the native states convinced him that the attempt to introduce Western ideas could lead to social chaos. For reasons that he tried to analyze, Indian society had ceased to develop according to the expected pattern, and it could be that it was destined never to evolve the institutions that the West considered the natural fruits of civilization. In his study of Hinduism, Lyall also began to doubt the benefits of the progress envisaged by Positivists from polytheism, through monotheism, to morality alone, fearing that morality

without a supernatural sanction might prove too weak to hold the social fabric together.

Sir Henry Maine too viewed India as a case of arrested development. As a champion of the disputed notion that European civilization began with the Aryan race in India, he was concerned to find reasons why Indian society had not followed the European path, suggesting the influence of climate or the fact of intermarriage with inferior races. Like Lyall, he doubted whether modern European institutions would necessarily prove beneficial: in his work on land law he found that the ancient collective system of Indian villages had been adversely affected by the superimposition of the Western notion of private property. These Victorian thinkers and their contemporaries did not generally come to the conclusion that Indian society had evolved in its own different way. But by helping to break down the idea of a homogeneous upward progress, they cleared the way for a new approach that developed early in the twentieth century, in which the attempt to rank societies on the scale of development was abandoned altogether in favour of a study of their institutions in terms of function and structure.

Besides the two speakers, the conference featured entertainment by Hans de Groot and an exhibition of Victorian ephemera arranged by Barbara Rusch. Rusch, founder and first president of the Ephemera Society of Canada, has been collecting Victoriana for nine years, and mainly from her own collection was able to provide an extensive display which complemented the themes of the papers. One display, Victoria and Empire, followed the story of Victoria's life through artefacts ranging from medals and albums to decorated cigar boxes, with particular emphasis on the Indian empire. The second, Women's Sexuality, illustrated ideals of beauty and con-

duct through trade cards, hair tonic, etiquette books and the like. The numerous fascinating corset ads, in particular, surely provide much to ponder on the theme of secrets revealed and concealed.

Jean O'Grady
University of Toronto

* * *

On April 5-7, 1990, the University of Alberta will be holding a large-scale interdisciplinary symposium called "In Her Own Image: Representations of Women in Culture." Among the speakers on literature, theatre, history, film, and popular culture, those on Victorian topics include Deirdre David (University of Maryland) on women in nineteenth-century India, Heather Dawkins (Paris) on the feminine counterpart to masculine discourse on sexuality, and Glennis Stephenson (University of Alberta) on the depictions of women in the verse, prose and illustrations of the Keepsake annuals. Information from Juliet McMaster, Department of English, University of Alberta, Edmonton T6G 2E5.

* * *

Our annual conference will be held this year at Glendon College on Saturday, April 7, 1990. The subject will be the history of science. James Secord of Imperial College, London, will discuss the diffusion of scientific information in the Victorian period, and Michael Ruse of the University of Guelph will speak on the notion of progress in relation to evolution.

* * *

Victorians and the Periphery will be the topic of the annual meeting of the Midwest Victorian Studies Association in Urbana, Ill., on April 27-28. Information from Michael Clarke, Department of English, Loyola University of Chicago, 6525 N. Sheridan Rd., Chicago, IL 60626, U.S.A.

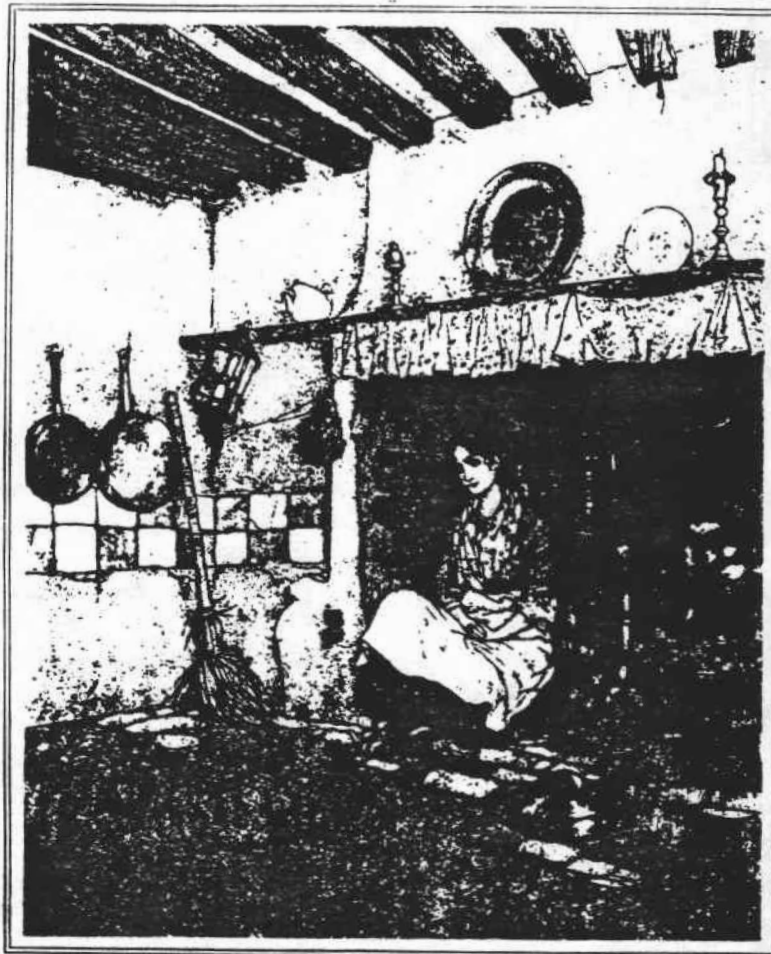
Riddle-de-dee

OLD CAMERON'S Nursery Rhyme Riddles

No. 6

Hot seat,
Hot feet,
Pristine clothes defiled--
Drives your mother wild;
Beat, beat
Hot seat,
Mother's really wild:
Take that, you dirty child!

Solution on page 38



A Wizard to the Northern Poets: Notes on William Morris in Nineteenth-Century Canadian Poetry

D.M.R. Bentley
University of Western Ontario

In the final decades of the nineteenth century, two William Morris arrived in Canada: the medieval William Morris of the Defence of Guenevere volume of 1858 and the utopian William Morris of the News from Nowhere volume of 1890 (the pirated American edition) and 1891. As the chronology of Morris's own metamorphosis from the colourful Arthurianism of the Oxford days to the outspoken socialism of the London years might lead one to predict, it was the young Morris who appeared earlier in Canada and the mature Morris who appeared somewhat later. Indeed, the chronology and characteristics of Morris's life and work may also have a bearing on the places in Canada where Morris's two presences were most tellingly felt. The medieval Morris made his greatest impact, not surprisingly, in Fredericton, New Brunswick, in the late 1870s or early 1880s--not surprisingly, because Fredericton, with its neo-Gothic cathedral and its High Church elements, was perhaps the most medieval of English-Canadian towns.¹ By contrast, the utopian Morris made his presence

¹Bishop Medley, who built Fredericton's Anglican Cathedral in the early part of the century, was "not only a friend of Pusey, and Keble ... [but] also an ecclesiologist, the author of ... Elementary Remarks on Church Architecture (1841)." For this, and other, comments on Medley's impact on the cultural life of nineteenth-century Fredericton, see Malcolm Ross, "A Strange Aesthetic Ferment," Canadian Literature, Nos. 68-69 (Spring-Summer, 1976), pp. 13-25.

felt--again not surprisingly--in the capital city of Ottawa in the 1890s, a place predictably receptive to the social and political satire of News from Nowhere and hence to that work's vision of a brighter and better future. By now it will already have been guessed by anyone familiar with Canadian literature that Morris's most significant literary impact in nineteenth-century Canada was on the Confederation school of "Northern Poets," a school that divides into the Fredericton group of Charles G. D. Roberts, Bliss Carman, and the lesser known but most Morrissian Francis Sherman, and the Ottawa Group of Duncan Campbell Scott, William Wilfred Campbell and, above all (at least for the present purposes), Archibald Lampman.

I

Morris's way was paved for him in Fredericton by the most influential and important teacher in post-Confederation Canada, George Parkin. Probably remembered by Canadian literary scholars primarily as the master (and later headmaster) at Upper Canada College who taught Stephen Leacock, Parkin was in the seventies the headmaster of the Collegiate Grammar School, Fredericton, and a catalytic influence on Charles G.D. Roberts and Bliss Carman. According to his biographer, Sir John Willison, Parkin was a "non-Collegiate student" at Oxford for about six months in 1873/74, at which time he heard Ruskin's "first lecture [as Slade Professor] on art" and worked on the "too-famous road at Hinksey."²

Evidently he returned to Canada and to Fredericton full of knowledge about current intellectual and artistic trends in England. Of particular importance for us here, he brought with him an apparently infectious enthusiasm for the Pre-Raphaelite poets--for Rossetti, whose Poems had belatedly appeared in 1870, for Swinburne, whose Poems and Ballads (First Series) had been published in 1866 and, of course, for William Morris, whose Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems had appeared in 1858 and whose Earthly Paradise was published in three volumes in 1868/70. In the dedicatory essay "To My Teacher and Friend George Robert Parkin" that begins his collection of essays entitled The Kinship of Nature (1903), Carman affectionately reminds his mentor of

those hours in the class-room, when the Aeneid was often interrupted by the Idyls of the King or The Blessed Damozel, and William Morris or Arnold or Mr. Swinburne's latest lyric came to us between the lines of Horace.³

Probably thinking of himself and his cousin Roberts, Carman stops short of burdening Parkin with "the heavy responsibility of having turned more than one young scholar aside into the fascinating and headlong current of contemporary poetry." Nevertheless, he continues, "it is certain ... that you gave us whatever solace and inspiration there is in the classics and in modern letters, and set our feet in the devious aisles of the enchanted groves of the muses." It is equally certain that for Carman and Roberts the influence of Parkin was

²Sir George Parkin: A Biography (London: Macmillan, 1929), p. 30.

³The Kinship of Nature (Boston: Page, 1903), p. vii, and see also p. 148 for comments on "The Blue Closet" as "subconscious art."

an enduring one, as was the influence of the poets whom Carman associates with Parkin in The Kinship of Nature. Morris is a recurring subject of discussion in the correspondence of the two Fredericton poets--in an unpublished letter of November 1884 to Carman, for example, Roberts discusses two poems from The Defence of Guenevere, agreeing with his cousin's assessment of "The Gilliflower of Gold" and registering his mixed approval of "Concerning Geffray Teste Noire." He is also a recognizable presence in the early poetry of both men.

Perhaps because Carman's first book of poems, the Low Tide on Grand Pré volume of 1893, did not appear until his youth in Fredericton and the enthusiasms of Parkin were well in the past, the presence of Morris is more general and diffuse there than it is in Roberts's Orion and Other Poems, published thirteen years earlier, in 1880. Morris's presence in Carman's earliest (and, many would say, best) work is not so general and diffuse, however, that it has gone entirely unobserved by the critics. In his 1966 book on Bliss Carman, Donald Stephens connects the Canadian poet and the early Morris in terms of what he regards as their excessive "fluency." "There is energy and force" in both poets, Stephens notes, and in both cases, "the recurrent themes are the beauty of life, the fleetingness of love, and the inevitability of death."⁴ After granting that "Carman seldom uses a medieval setting" in his poetry, Stephens argues that he nevertheless "creates an atmosphere which appears medieval" and hence achieves something of the "Morris tone" in such stanzas as the following:

⁴Bliss Carman (New York: Twayne, 1966), p. 119.

The scarlet fruit will come to fill,
The scarlet spring to stir
The golden rowan of Menalowan,
And wake no dream of her.

What Stephens is associating with Morris in this stanza is, I suspect, the use of vivid adjectives ("scarlet," "golden") which here, as frequently in the Defence of Guenevere poems, touches the natural world with a sense of the artificial, as well as with a sense of imminent decay. Morris's poetry was probably, as Stephens concludes, only a "minor influence on Carman's verse," but the presence of the early Morris even in the mature Carman--particularly, it could be argued, in the Canadian poet's concern with sensuality and transient beauty--is one channel through which the influence of Morris was carried forward to the young Ezra Pound and Wallace Stevens, and thus into Anglo-American Modernism. Yeats's debt to the early Morris is well known. Less well known is the debt of Stevens and Pound to Carman⁵--a debt which brought with it an indirect inheritance from William Morris. No doubt both Stevens and Pound (especially the latter) were acquainted directly with Morris's poetry. But when Stevens praises the "sense of warm beauty" that he finds in Carman, he is surely responding to one of the most Morrissian qualities of the Canadian poet who is as yet insufficiently acknowledged as a mediator between the Pre-Raphaelite and Modern sensibilities.

In the early work of Parkin's other prominent student at the Fredericton Collegiate, Morris's influence is, as

⁵For a discussion of Carman's impact on late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century poets in America and England see my "Preface: Minor Poets of a Superior Order," Canadian Poetry, 14 (Spring/Summer, 1984), [v-viii].

already intimated, more specific and apparent. One of the most complex and also the most Morrissian of the poems in Roberts's Orion volume of 1880 is "Launcelot and the Four Queens," a twelve-page narrative that describes the capture of the knight by four wicked enchantresses and his subsequent escape, with the physical help of a "damsel" and, the poem implies, the spiritual assistance of Queen Guenevere. While "Launcelot and the Four Queens" owes a noticeable debt to the early Tennyson (not least in its various stanza forms) and, beyond Tennyson, to Malory (its story appears in the sixth book of the Morte Darthur),⁶ it also reveals at several levels the influence of the Defence of Guenevere volume, particularly of "The Defence of Guenevere" itself and its companion-poem "King Arthur's Tomb." Indeed, "Launcelot and the Four Queens" probably reveals the influence of Morris in its very selection of Launcelot in his role as Guenevere's lover as a central focus, as well as in its association of him, as in "King Arthur's Tomb" and the Oxford Union frescoes of Rossetti, Morris, and others (which Parkin very probably saw in 1873/74), with an apple tree. Whereas in "King Arthur's Tomb" Launcelot meets Guenevere and subsequently falls asleep in "A place of apple-trees, by [a] thorn tree,"⁷ in "Launcelot and the Four Queens," the knight is introduced asleep "under an apple-tree" with a nearby "hawthorn hedge." (In Rossetti's contribution to the Oxford Union Library, "Sir Launcelot's Vision of the

⁶For a discussion of these aspects of the poem, see L.R. Early, "An Old-World Radiance: Roberts' Orion and Other Poems," Canadian Poetry, 8 (Spring/Summer, 1981), 19-21.

⁷This and subsequent quotations are taken from William Morris, The Defence of Guenevere, and Other Poems, ed. Margaret A. Lourie (New York: Garland, 1981).

Sanc Graal," Launcelot is seen asleep by an apple tree against which Guenevere leans in a cruciform position and with an apple in her hand--a syncretic image of a temptress/redemptress which was beyond Roberts's power of imagining in 1880, but would not remain so for long. What I am implying here is that the fusion or confusion of sacred and profane love in the work of Rossetti and the young Morris may well be behind the syncreticism of Roberts's later work in the New York Nocturnes [1898] and The Book of the Rose [1903].) Also indicative of Morris's influence on "Launcelot and the Four Queens" are such stanzas as the following, with its decorative and sensual detail:

On upright spear each knight doth bear
 One corner of an awning rare
 Of silk, all green, and bordered fair
 With mystic-symbolled broidery;
 And o'er the ladies' milky-white
 Soft shoulders falls the tinted light
 And nestles tremblingly.⁸

While there is much of Tennyson in this stanza--in fact, the stanza form itself derives from that of "The Lady of Shalott"--the description of the ladies could surely not have been written without an awareness of Morris's magnificent description of Guenevere in "The Defence" with "soft still light" "lingering on her hands" and falling "Within [her] moving tresses." Other passages in "Launcelot and the Four Queens"--such as a description of a carved "dragon ... with brooding wing,/And dismal claws outspread"--are also indebted to poems in The Defence of Guenevere volume--to "Golden Wings," for instance, with its boat of "carved

wood, with hangings green" and to "The Wind," with its chair of "carved" wood and its grinning "dragons."

But perhaps Roberts's most considerable debt to Morris in "Launcelot and the Four Queens" lies in the poem's treatment of sexual and ethical dilemmas. Like Morris, Roberts depicts Launcelot as a man whose love for Guenevere is at once the lodestar of his life and the source of sin and treachery. Guenevere, sings the knight in one of the poem's interspersed songs, has the power "To make [him] foul before [his] God/And false unto [his] King." She also has the power, the poem implies, to sustain him in his darker moments and, through the agency of magic, to engineer his escape from the castle of the Four Queens. In that castle Launcelot is faced with a typically Morrissian dilemma--a choice between two options which, for one reason or another, are equally undesirable or arbitrary. Such choices are faced, for instance, by Guenevere in "The Defence of Guenevere" (the two famous cloths) and by Jehane in "The Haystack in the Floods" (Death in Paris or death-in-life with Godmar). In Roberts's poems, Launcelot faces the choice either of being killed or of living with one of the four queens; or, as he puts it, "This is a grievous case,/That either I must quit sweet life/Or keep it better with one of ye." As is the case with Morris's Guenevere, so it is with Roberts's Launcelot: loyalty to an adulterous love provides a sustaining centre in a world of treachery and violence. Both "the Defence of Guenevere" and "Launcelot and the Four Queens" close with their respective lovers alive and able to continue their illicit but sustaining love. Since Roberts was himself a man who would stray into several adulterous relationships shortly after his marriage in 1880, it is plausible to speculate that he was at least partly drawn to Morris's early poetry by its seeming endorse-

⁸This and other quotations from "Launcelot and the Four Queens" are taken from Charles G.D. Roberts, Orion, and Other Poems (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1880), pp. 37-49.

ment of adultery and sexual passion. For the poets of both Orion and Other Poems and The Defence of Guenevere, and Other Poems, an interest in the Launcelot-Guenevere story seems uncannily and prophetically to anticipate events that would later occur in personal life.

II

It was Roberts's Orion and Other Poems that convinced Archibald Lampman while he was still a student at Trinity College, Toronto, in the early 1880s that a Canadian poet could produce work of distinction. The work of distinction that Lampman wrote under the primary influence of Morris is "The Land of Pallas," a visionary poem written as "The Happy Land" in August 1891 and first published in the posthumous Alcyone volume of 1899. Before proceeding to an examination of the debt of "The Land of Pallas" to News from Nowhere, it is worth taking a moment to remark that in the 1880s--and apparently prior to reading News from Nowhere shortly after its appearance in North America in 1890--Lampman had almost nothing good to say about Morris either as a poet or as a thinker. In an 1885 essay entitled "The Modern Schools of Poetry in England," Lampman asserts that Morris has "written a great deal too much" in poetry and "has no true and vital principle upon which to base his work." "William Morris has done nothing to help the cause of order and divine beauty and peace," he concludes, "and his work can therefore hardly be of much lasting interest to mankind."⁹ Very likely it was the emerging socialism of both Morris and Lampman--and specifically the publication in 1890/91 of News from Nowhere--which led the Canadian poet to change his opinion of Morris from

the explicit animosity of the "Modern School" essay to the admiration implicit in the Morrissian qualities of "The Land of Pallas."

It may be that Lampman's attention was drawn to News from Nowhere by the relatively extensive review of it that appeared in the May 27, 1891, issue of The Week, the Toronto periodical which Desmond Pacey has described as "the focus of the literary and cultural life of the young Dominion"¹⁰ of Canada in the eighties and nineties. The bulk of the review consists of a faintly condescending description of Morris's "lovely communistic society" with its "untrammelled marital relations" and its many abolitions--no "punishment," no "inequality," no "monarchy, Parliaments, judges, lawyers, policemen, soldiers," money, unpleasant work. "In a word," says the anonymous reviewer, "human nature [has] been changed to the angelic, and, as a plain consequence, all [have] a lovely time." At its close, however, the review becomes less condescending and more positive in a way that might well have provoked an Ottawa poet, socialist, and residual Anglican into reading News from Nowhere:

News from Nowhere is altogether a poet's beautiful dream of the world that might be if humanity would but act on Christ's teaching: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." It is curious to reflect how that short command comprises all that is necessary to bring about a state of things blissful beyond the setting forth of any instructor of

¹⁰See D.M.R. Bentley and MaryLynn Wickens, A Checklist of Literary Materials in The Week (Toronto, 1883-1896) (Ottawa: Golden Dog, 1978), pp. iii-iv for this and other comments on The Week's importance in late nineteenth-century Canada.

⁹Archibald Lampman: Selected Prose, ed. Barrie Davies (Ottawa: Tecumseh, 1975), pp. 102-3.

Utopias. Books like this of Mr. Morris are useful to those who will read them rightly; they help to impress the world with the sense that human nature is capable of being improved, if not perfected; and that upon change of idea, and not otherwise, can be established a state of society where peace and good-will shall prevail.¹¹

The idealistic meliorism of these last few sentences may well have created a sympathetic reader of Morris in the Lampman who had concluded his essay on "The Modern School of Poetry in England" with the assertion that true art must assist in keeping "mankind in the gradual and eternal movement toward order and divine beauty and peace."

Although a detailed discussion of the relation between Lampman's "Land of Pallas" and Morris's News from Nowhere is beyond the scope of this article, there is time here to note briefly some of the major similarities and differences between the two works. Both writers effect the induction of their speakers to the "happy land" by means of a Bachelardian reverie--a day dream in which the rational mind is, if anything, more alert than during ordinary waking hours--and both locate their utopias in a relatively pleasant and largely pastoral future where, in Morris's words, there are many "exhibition[s] of extinct commercial morality."¹² Like Morris's, Lampman's utopia is one in which an "increase of beauty" is ineluctably connected to advances towards "freedom," "equality," plea-

¹¹The Week, 17 (27 May 1891), 272-3.

¹²All quotations from News from Nowhere are taken from the Centenary Edition of William Morris, ed. G.D.H. Cole (London: Nonesuch, 1948), pp. 3-197.

sant work and common ownership. For Lampman the "Land of Pallas" is

A land where beauty dwelt supreme,
and right, the donor
Of peaceful days; a land of equal
rights and gifts and deeds,
Of limitless fair fields and plenty
had with honour;
A land of kindly tillage and un-
troubled meads,

Of gardens, and great fields, and
dreaming rose-wreathed alleys.¹³

Here, as in "Nowhere," handsome men labour willingly and joyfully (there are no "Obstinate Refusers" in the "Land of Pallas") and beautiful women work happily and unambitiously in traditional domestic roles (there is no radical feminism in either work). Where Morris shows a characteristic interest in the function of art in "Nowhere," Lampman, as his title predicts, is more interested in the function of wisdom: the men of Pallas are remarkable for their "wisdom and high thought" and the women are "subtly wise ... calm counsellors"--"equal with men" in the realm of reason. In both "Nowhere" and "Pallas" marriage and divorce are non-existent because the affairs of the heart are, like all other affairs, conducted in a sensitive and sensible way. When commercialism disappears, so, for Morris and Lampman, does the necessity for all forms of contract, deed, oath, and punishment.

In both "Nowhere" and "Pallas" the past is principally useful as a means of teaching and affirming by contrast

¹³All quotations from "The Land of Pallas" are taken from The Poems of Archibald Lampman (including At the Long Sault), ed. Margaret Coulby Whitridge, Literature of Canada: Poetry and Prose in Reprint (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), pp. 201-10.

the advantages of the utopian present. As Ellen puts it near the end of News from Nowhere:

Who knows? Happy as we are, times may alter; we may be bitten with some impulse towards change, and many things may seem too wonderful for us to resist ... if we do not know that they are but phases of what has been before; and withal, ruinous, deceitful and sordid.

In "The Land of Pallas" an old man informs the speaker that the "traps and engines of forgotten greed,/The tomes and canons ... of many a vanished creed" are kept in a "gray storehouse," along with various other artifacts from the past, as "The symbol of dark days and lives remote and strange/Lest o'er the minds of any there should come unwitting/The thought of some new order and the lust of change." "If any grow disturbed," explains the "old grave man" (the Boffin figure):

... we bring them gently hither
To read the world's grim record
and the sombre lore
Massed in these pitiless vaults,
and they returning thither
Bear with them quieter thoughts,
and make for change no more.

In creating his "gray storehouse" of distasteful relics, Lampman may have had in mind the "Parliament House" of News from Nowhere--a House which, it will be recalled, is used as a "dung-market" by the inhabitants of Morris's utopia. It may even be that Lampman had in mind Morris's pungent solution for the use of purpose-built political edifices when, in a letter of February 10, 1893, he described

¹⁴An Annotated Edition of the Correspondence between Archibald Lampman and Edward William Thomson (1890-1898), ed. Helen Lynn (Ottawa: Tecumseh, 1980), p. 58.

our own parliament as "the great national dunghill."¹⁴

Concerning the differences between News from Nowhere and "The Land of Pallas," much could be said that would be important both to an estimation of Lampman as a creative writer and to our understanding of Canada as a culturally distinct entity in the late nineteenth century.¹⁵ First, "The Land of Pallas" is not a slavish imitation of News from Nowhere. Though Lampman fleshes out his utopia with some of Morris's ideas and words, he presents them not in archaic prose but in flowing hexameters--a form that is entirely appropriate to a Land of Pallas both because of its tranquil movement and because of its classical resonances. Second, Lampman chose not to follow Morris in three major and probably related areas: where News from Nowhere is set on the Thames, "The Land of Pallas"--while heavily reliant on river imagery--depicts a generalized rather than a localized landscape; where News from Nowhere is explicit about the revolutionary nature of England's transformation to Utopia, "The Land of Pallas" implies an evolutionary transition from the commercial present to a communistic future; and where News from Nowhere constructs its utopia on medieval foundations, "The Land of Pallas" draws its inspiration from the classical world for its vision of "A land for gods to dwell in, free from care and pain." In short, while Morris is concerned to present a utopia that will, through revolution, recreate in England conditions once existant there, Lampman is a gradualist whose utopian vision contains

¹⁵L.R. Early, Archibald Lampman, Twayne World Authors Series, Canadian Literature (Boston: Twayne, 1986), regards "The Land of Pallas" as a "versified reduction" (p. 29) of News from Nowhere that "owes much--perhaps too much" (p. 102)--to Morris's work.

only a slight component of patriotism and even less of a component of medievalism. That Lampman was himself a formidable student of the classics goes much of the way towards explaining some of the crucial distinctions between his poem and Morris's work. The point may also be made, however, that English Canada is an area whose landscape possesses no medieval past in Morris's sense--possesses no genuine gothic architecture whose characteristics can be contrasted favourably with nineteenth-century architecture--possesses (at least in European terms) no ancient culture whose supposedly pre-fallen and organic qualities can be imagined forward as a utopian vision of the future. It would take the genius of the Leacock of Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town (1912) to recognize that the Ontario small town could be for Canadians the equivalent of what the middle ages was for Morris, Carlyle, Ruskin, and others: a focus for the sort of nostalgic imagination that seeks to remember forward from the past an organic society of interdependent neighbours who live in harmony with themselves and each other in a rural (or semi-rural) pastoral landscape.

III

Although Morris's medievalism failed to find in Archibald Lampman the fertile ground in which to propagate, it did, as was seen earlier, find such ground in the Charles G.D. Roberts of "Launcelot and the Four Queens." Neither Roberts nor, indeed, Carman was the Fredericton poet who was most influenced by the medieval Morris, however; that distinction must go to a much lesser-known Confederation poet of the second generation, Francis Sherman. Described by A.J.M. Smith in the Introduction to The Book of Canadian Poetry (1943) as the nineteenth-century Canadian poet "who came most strongly under the domination of the Pre-Raphaelites,"¹⁶ Sherman was in fact the Confederation poet most in-

fluenced by Morris. According to Roberts it was the early Morris, the Morris of The Defence of Guenevere, and Other Poems, whose influence on Sherman was most profound and enduring.¹⁷ Corroborating this, Lorne Pierce observes that even towards the end of his life (he died in 1926), Sherman "loved to quote to his friends The Defence of Guenevere."¹⁸ Sherman's knowledge of Morris evidently did not stop with The Defence of Guenevere volume, however, for--as we shall see in a moment--he also alludes to such later works as The Earthly Paradise, The Story of Sigurd the Volsung, and The House of the Wolfings. Nevertheless, several poems in Sherman's first collection, the slim volume entitled Matins that he published in Boston in 1896, could be described as nearly unalloyed imitations of poems in The Defence of Guenevere volume. Any number of passages from such poems as "A November Vigil," "Between the Battles," "The Quiet Valley," "The Conqueror," and "The King's Hostel" could be quoted to illustrate Sherman's enormous debt of tone, form, and subject-matter to the early Morris. A few stanzas from "The Kingfisher," a poem closely modelled on "The Wind" in The Defence of Guenevere volume, will serve here as evidence of Sherman's mastery of Morris's early style:

He knew she came from some far
place;
For when she threw her body down,
She seemed quite tired; and her
face
Had dust upon it; and her gown,

¹⁶The Book of Canadian Poetry (Toronto: Gage, 1943), p. 25.

¹⁷See "A Foreword," The Complete Poems of Francis Sherman, ed. Lorne Pierce (Toronto: Ryerson, 1935), p. 24. All subsequent quotations from Sherman's poetry are taken from this edition.

¹⁸Ibid., "A Memoir," p. 11.

That had been yellow, now was
brown.

She lay near where the shadows lie
At noontime when they meet the
sun.

The water floated slowly by
Her feet. Her hair was all undone,
And with the grass its gold was
spun.

The trees were tall and green
behind,
And hid the house upon the hill.
This place was sheltered from the
wind,
And all the little leaves were
still,
And every fern and daffodil.

Her face was hidden in her hands;
And through the grass, and through
her hair,
The sunlight found the golden
bands
About her wrists. (I was aware,
Also, that her two arms were
bare.)

From his high branch, the King-
fisher
Looked down on her and pitied her.

While "The Kingfisher" is not written in the same stanza form as "The Wind," it shares with its model a repeated refrain, a parallel scenario, an equivalent emphasis of colours, and a similar emphasis on the mysterious. In short, Sherman's poem constitutes, by comparison, say, with "The Land of Pallas," a relatively uncreative and uncritical use of Morris. Perhaps no more should be expected in the apprentice work of a minor poet.

Yet in the very year that the Matins volume was published, 1896, there occurred the event which predictably wrung a minor masterpiece from Morris's most fervent Canadian acolyte. That event was, of course, the death of William Morris, and the poem that

it wrung from Sherman is "In Memorabilia Mortis" (note the pun on the poet's surname), a sonnet sequence and a pastoral elegy which, it could be argued, is one of the finest elegies written in Canada and, perhaps, the best elegy written anywhere on the death of Morris. No doubt because Morris died on October 3, 1896, Sherman's poem both begins and ends in a very Canadian fall.¹⁹ In its middle section, as will be seen, the poet learns that, though Morris is dead, the world of his art lives on for those with the imaginative power to enter into its spirit:

In Memorabilia Mortis

"But ye--shall I behold you
When leaves fall,
In some sad evening of the
Autumn-tide?"

I

I marked the slow withdrawal of the
year.
Out on the hills the scarlet maples
shone--
The glad, first herald of triumphant
dawn.
A robin's song fell through the
silence--clear
As long ago it rang when June was
here.
Then, suddenly, a few gray clouds
were drawn
Across the sky; and all the song was
gone,
And all the gold was quick to disap-
pear.
That day the sun seemed loth to come
again;
And all day long the low wind spoke
of rain,

¹⁹A detailed discussion of the poem can be found in my "A Well-Wrought Clay: Francis Sherman's 'In Memorabilia Mortis,'" Essays on Canadian Writing, 30 (Winter 1984-85), 320-38.

Far off, beyond the hills; and
 moaned, like one
 Wounded, among the pines: as though
 the Earth,
 Knowing some giant grief had come to
 birth,
 Had wearied of the Summer and the
 Sun.

II

I watched the slow oncoming of the
 Fall.
 Slowly the leaves fell from the elms,
 and lay
 Along the roadside; and the wind's
 strange way
 Was their way, when they heard the
 wind's far call.
 The crimson vines that clung along
 the wall
 Grew thin as snow that lives on into
 May;
 Gray dawn, gray noon,--all things and
 hours were gray,
 When quietly the darkness covered
 all.
 And while no sunset flamed across the
 west,
 And no great moon rose where the
 hills were low,
 The day passed out as if it had not
 been:
 And so it seemed the year sank to its
 rest,
 Remembering naught, desiring naught,
 --as though
 Early in Spring its young leaves were
 not green.

III

A little while before the Fall was
 done
 A day came when the frail year paused
 and said:
 "Behold! a little while and I am
 dead;
 Wilt thou not choose, of all the old
 dreams, one?"
 Then dwelt I in a garden, where the
 sun
 Shone always, and the roses all were
 red;

Far off, the great sea slept, and
 overhead,
 Among the robins, matins had begun.
 And I knew not at all it was a dream
 Only, and that the year was near its
 close;
 Garden and sunshine, robin-song and
 rose,
 The half-heard murmur and the distant
 gleam
 Of all the unvest sea, a little space
 Were as a mist above the Autumn's
 face.

IV

And in this garden sloping to the sea
 I dwelt (it seemed) to watch a pa-
 geant pass,--
 Great Kings, their armor strong with
 iron and brass,
 Young Queens, with yellow hair bound
 wonderfully.
 For love's sake, and because of
 love's decree,
 Most went, I knew; and so the flowers
 and grass
 Knew my steps also: yet I wept, Alas,
 Deeming the garden surely lost to me.
 But as the days went over, and still
 our feet
 Trod the warm, even places, I knew
 well
 (For I, as they, followed the close-
 heard beat
 Of Love's wide wings who was her sen-
 tinel)
 That here had Beauty built her cita-
 del
 And only we should reach her mercy-
 seat.

V

And Ye, are ye not with me now
 always?--
 Thy raiment, Glauce, shall be my
 attire!
 East of the Sun I, too, seek my
 desire!
 My kisses, also quicken the well-
 wrought clay!
 And thou, Alcestis, lest my little
 day

Be done, art glad to die! Upon my
 O Brynhild, let thine ashes ^{pyre,} feed the
 fire!
 And, O thou Wood Sun, pray for me, I
 pray!
 Yea, ye are mine! Yet there remaineth
 one
 Who maketh Summer-time of all the
 year,
 Whose glory darkeneth the very sun.
 For thee my sword was sharpened and
 my spear,
 For thee my least poor deed was
 dreamed and done,
 O Love, O Queen, O Golden Guenevere!

VI

Then, suddenly, I was awake. Dead
 things
 Were all about me and the year was
 dead.
 Save where the birches grew, all
 leaves were shed
 And nowhere fell the sound of song or
 wings.
 The fields I deemed were graves of
 worshipped Kings
 Had lost their bloom: no honey-bee
 now fed
 Therein, and no white daisy bowed its
 head
 To harken to the wind's love-
 murmurings.
 Yet, by my dream, I know henceforth
 for me
 This time of year shall hold some
 unknown grace
 When the leaves fall, and shall be
 sanctified:
 As April only comes for memory
 Of him who kissed the veil from
 Beauty's face
 That we might see, and passed at
 Easter-tide.

With its dual reference to the death
 of Christ and the death of Rossetti
 (who died on April 9, Easter Sunday,
 1882), the conclusion of "In Memorabilia
 Mortis" shows that Sherman
 was truly Pre-Raphaelite in his
 fusion--some might say confusion--of

the aesthetic and the religious.
 Behind that fusion or confusion lay,
 in Sherman's case, the High Church
 sensibility²⁰ which very likely provided--along,
 once again, with the influence of George Parkin--the basis
 for the elective affinity that existed
 between the Fredericton poets and
 the early William Morris. A final
 point to be made about "In Memorabilia
 Mortis" is that Sherman's poem is
 typical of the Confederation period
 in its association of a revered English
 poet with an aspect of the Canadian
 environment. Those familiar with
 Roberts's "Ave," for instance, would
 recognize a parallel between Roberts's
 sense of a kinship between Shelley
 and the Tantramar seascape and
 Sherman's affirmation of a perpetual
 association between Morris and the
 New Brunswick fall: for both poets--
 as for the Duncan Campbell Scott of
 the much later "Ode for the Keats
 Centenary"--a Canadian place or time
 becomes privileged because somehow
 (through imaginative projection, of
 course) it seems to embody the spirit
 of a dead and admired English poet.
 It was by means of such projections
 that the Confederation poets succeeded
 in making the English tradition
 present in Canada, in drawing Shelley,
 Keats and William Morris across
 the Atlantic and making them an
 inspirational presence in the New
 World.

²⁰Sherman lived next door to
 Bishop Kingdon (Medley's successor in
 Fredericton) who, before coming to
 Canada, had served as a curate at
 St. Andrew's Wells Street, a church
 attended by Christina Rossetti in her
 time, as well as by Millais and
 Charles Collins. One of his teachers
 at the University of New Brunswick
 was William Stockley, a devout Roman
 Catholic with a scholarly interest in
 the work of Cardinal Newman.

In conclusion, it must be said that, while William Morris did not exert as powerful an influence on late nineteenth-century Canadian literature as did Keats, Wordsworth, Shelley, Arnold, and others, his work nevertheless found in Fredericton and in Ottawa admirers enough to make his sensual medievalism and pastoral socialism noticeable components in the corpus of Confederation poetry. While Canadian literature and criticism was under the sway of the modernist hostility to the Romantic-Victorian tradition, it was fashionable to deplore the influence on Canadian poets of the Romantics in

general and, in particular, of those writers such as Dante Gabriel Rossetti and William Morris whom Graham Hough called "the last romantics." Perhaps times and tastes have changed enough now, however, to make possible the recognition that for the Confederation poets, particularly for Lampman and Sherman, the influence of Morris was liberating and creative: for these "Northern Poets," the author of The Defence of Guenevere and News from Nowhere was, indeed, a "Wizard"--a writer capable of casting that particular spell known as poetic inspiration.



Books

J.B. Conacher. Britain and the Crimea, 1855-56: Problems of War and Peace. London: Macmillan, 1987.

In this book Professor Conacher concentrates not so much on the Crimean war but on the impact that it had on British political life. By doing so, he resolves the "diplomatic and military problems" that his first book, The Aberdeen Coalition, 1852-1855 (1968), introduced. Conacher brings an unrivaled knowledge of the complex world of party politics in this era to his study, and he succeeds admirably in making this world accessible to the reader.

The book consists of eight chapters, five dealing with the period of hostilities, one with the indeterminate period from the fall of Sevastopol to the opening of the peace conference in Paris, and two with the peace itself and its aftermath. The book opens with the collapse of the Aberdeen coalition and traces the tortuous events of February 1855, when a new government was cobbled together by Palmerston. This having been done, the new government (in the second chapter) was immediately faced by the abortive Vienna conference, which ended in a stalemate caused by the unwillingness of the British and French to accept Austrian proposals for a compromise peace. The third chapter deals with the parliamentary ramifications of the rejection of peace, and Conacher reveals how Lord John Russell's inept defence of his role at Vienna led to his resignation. Similarly, he argues that partisan attempts to blame the poor performance of the British army on Palmerston's government, rather than on its predecessor, diminished the force of Parliamentary attacks on the new coalition. Finally, in Chapter Four,

we get a glimpse of the war itself, but Conacher adds little to our understanding of how the campaign was actually fought. Instead, the campaign is used as the background for the political attacks on the command of the army, the functioning of the government departments concerned with the war, and the performance of the government generally. The fifth chapter leads us from the death of Raglan to the fall of Sevastopol. It is evident that Raglan's successor as commander-in-chief, General James Simpson, was viewed only as the best of a bad lot of possible successors, and that as a result his well-justified caution after September was unfairly explained as a further manifestation of his incompetence. In this chapter Conacher also discusses how the war was continued in the Baltic, Far East, and Caucasian theatres even after Sevastopol, and outlines the British determination to carry the war into 1856 should peace not be reached on acceptable terms.

This determination was undermined by the growing disinclination of the French to fight. In a superb analysis, Conacher chronicles the collapse of the Anglo-French coalition and the growing solidarity of interests between Britain and the hitherto despised neutral, Austria. Both before and during the peace conference, it became apparent to Palmerston and Clarendon, the foreign secretary, that France was a broken reed and that Britain was unlikely to get Gallic support for hard terms. Conacher argues convincingly, however, that the tough British stand--including her apparent willingness to go it alone--resulted in a settlement that was more favourable than would have otherwise been the case.

What do we learn from this book? First and foremost, it is clear proof that international relations can be comprehended only if the domestic political context of decision-making is understood. Conacher shows the inadequacy of previous accounts--especially the otherwise admirable work of Paul W. Schroeder--of the diplomacy of the Crimean war. British policy is intelligible only in light of the fragile nature of Palmerston's coalition and the delicate Parliamentary base upon which it rested. Conacher also demonstrates that most of the attempts to reform the British government so as to be able to prosecute the war more effectively were determined by the exigencies of Parliamentary politics. This is a useful corrective to works such as that of Olive Anderson, which tend to ignore political realities in favour of abstract notions like the liberal drive for efficiency.

Another important contribution of this book is its elevation of Clarendon's role in the peace settlement. In this account, Clarendon and Palmerston are equals, and it is often the foreign secretary's view of events that proves more realistic than that of his combative prime minister. Both shared, however, an over-inflated estimate of Britain's own strength and of her ability to carry on the war single-handedly if necessary. Still, they realized that public (if not popular) pressure in Britain, combined with French reluctance, would make further war difficult, and bowed to the inevitable. The Treaty of Paris was the triumph of rational, hard-nosed thinking, and reflected the realities of power.

This is an excellent book. It is solidly grounded in the primary sources, and Conacher knows and uses the secondary literature well. The writing is clear and well organized, if not always exciting. My only reservation is that the conduct of

the war itself--outside of its political dimension--has been left outside the scope of this study. While Conacher is gently critical of both Raglan and Simpson, there is little evaluation of the general thrust of British strategy and of the way it was carried out. Were, for example, either the Baltic or the Far Eastern naval campaigns worthwhile? Did Britain have the economic, financial, and military wherewithal to win the war? But these are only musings that should not be taken as criticisms. To wish a book longer is a reviewer's highest compliment.

Keith Neilson
Royal Military College of Canada

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Papers for the Millions. Ed. Joel H. Wiener. New York: Greenwood Press, 1988.

This collection of essays, the product of a conference, constitutes a tentative description and analysis of the "New Journalism" which transformed its field at the end of the nineteenth century in Britain, being especially associated with W.T. Stead and the Pall Mall Gazette. The volume has a scholarly introduction, discussion of the character of the New Journalism (ch. 3), and concluding bibliographical essay, all by Joel Wiener. The rather diverse contributions are divided into four sections dealing with the beginnings of the New Journalism, its flowering, subjects and audience, and an assessment of its achievement. Laurel Brake in Chapter 1 rather portentously discusses its beginning in terms of "cultural production." B.I. Diamond (ch. 2) carefully discusses Frederick Greenwood of the Pall Mall Gazette as a precursor in the late sixties and early seventies. Joel H. Wiener and Harry Schalk in Chapters 3 and 4 survey the scene of the New Journalism proper.

In Part 2, "The Flowering of the New Journalism," Ray Boston (ch. 5) discusses Stead's leading rôle. J.O. Baylen (ch. 6) learnedly shows the specific political intervention in the Pall Mall Gazette on the part of Lord Esher. John Goodbody (ch. 7) discusses the socialist Star and Aled Jones (ch. 8) surveys the New Journalism in Wales. In the even more miscellaneous Part 3, "Subjects and Audiences," John M. Robson (ch. 9) playfully dissects the treatment of the important topic of marriage in the correspondence columns of the Daily Telegraph earlier, in 1868. Kate Flint (ch. 10) discusses unsympathetically the reactionary art criticism of J.A. Spender in the Westminster Gazette. Deian Hopkin (ch. 11) surveys the journalism of the left. Rosemary T. Van Arsdel (ch. 12) shows the character of representative interviews in women's periodicals, and Martha S. Vogeler (ch. 13) documents the rather insignificant personal intervention of Frederic Harrison on behalf of his son as correspondent of The Times. The final overview is provided by James D. Sturtt (ch. 14). All this information is needed in order to give an indication of the motley contents of the volume.

Myself more of a specialist in the magazines and reviews of the first half of the century, I can only look at the volume from a broader perspective. It is clear that Carlyle anticipated Stead's sense of the Press as fulfilling the rôle of the pulpit and as a means of government. For example, he wrote in Sartor Resartus (1834), ch. vi, "The Journalists are now the true Kings and Clergy." Fifty years later, Stead described the editor as the "uncrowned king of our educated democracy" (p. 93), himself dedicated to "the final overthrow of the Powers of Darkness in high places" (p. 94). Also earlier in the century, Dickens had approached the technique of the "investigative expo-

sé" (p. 26) for the sake of social reform as well as an enhanced readership in Oliver Twist and Nicholas Nickleby (1837-39). This anticipated the journalism of Greenwood and Stead. The sense of the shabby journalistic milieu achieved by Gissing in New Grub Street (1891) (p. 48) had been communicated by Thackeray, especially through his portrayal of Captain Shandon in Pendennis (1849).

To turn to the later nineteenth century itself, several of the essays in the collection (Introduction, Chapters 1-5) include a quotation from Matthew Arnold. Arnold wrote disparagingly in 1887 of the "feather-brained" character of the New Journalism corresponding with that of the new democracy at which it was directed. To its telegraphic style corresponds the location of its typical reader, the hurried commuter: "It is picked up at the railway station, hurried over in a railway carriage, dropped incontinently when read," wrote T.P. O'Conner in 1889 (p. 30).



It is "the phonograph of the world," according to Stead (p. 65), giving "utterance to the inarticulate moan of the masses" (p. 96), as well as an attempt at social control (contemporary comment, hidden away in a footnote, p. 65). Though he is frequently quoted, little attempt is made to determine the force of Arnold's objection to this development, however glibly he may make it here. Of course, the locus classicus of his social philosophy was Culture and Anarchy (1868), his response to the growing commercial, technological, and political threat. It could be argued against Wiener that though Arnold "stood on one side of a great cultural divide" (p. xiii), in another sense he sought to transcend it.

Among other major contemporaries, Ruskin is mentioned as appreciative of Stead's rôle (p. 102), but I think that his own efforts to find an audience, for example in Fors Clavigera (1871-84), betray not only personal idiosyncrasy, but probably also a systemic fault. This was not compensated for by the host of peripheral and short-lived socialist newspapers identified in Chapter 11.

The collection overall has the appearance of a description or occasionally even a celebration of the combination of reformism, sensationalism, imperialism, "democratization and commercialism" (p. 288), the populist and the authoritarian which characterized the New Journalism: the triumphs of Northcliffe in Fleet Street anticipated, according to Wiener, those of Murdoch at Wapping today (p. xii). Surely a critical response, at least in the spirit of Arnold, is more appropriate than Wiener's deprecatory remarks concerning him (p. 65), so that we can understand the New Journalism as a contribution to the development of civilization. Here the analyses of Raymond Williams are both more critical and more constructive than is allowed for

(see The Long Revolution, 1961, and Communications, 1966). Yet all in all, Papers for the Millions is an attractive and stimulating compilation. One hopes that it will whet the appetites of young scholars to undertake the daunting but important "task of studying newspapers" (p. 310).

Peter Morgan
University of Toronto

* * *

J.A. Yelling. Slums and Slum Clearance in Victorian London. London: Allen & Unwin, 1986.

J.A. Yelling's book may not contain all that you have ever wanted to know about slums and slum clearance, but it certainly contains a lot I had never read before. The vast number of facts allows one to piece together a picture of life both within Government and within the houses with which it concerned itself. In three chronologically overlapping sections, he outlines "Policies and programmes," "Property and compensation," and "Tenants and rehousing." Adding considerably to the interest of the discussion is the approach: Yelling is a geographer. There are two great advantages in reading a book by a digger in a field other than one's own: it is always interesting to see what one's neighbour's vineyard is producing these days, and it is interesting to see how his harvest is garnered. Geographers, at least this one, are tabling the facts and producing commonsensical conclusions, which complement the more subjective, ideologically based accounts of slums from recent historical scholars. For example, Chapter 6, on compensation and ownership, begins:

An American author has recently complained that "too frequently a stereotyped monolithic view of landlords is espoused by those interested in oversimplified housing solutions for the city. Whether

the stereotype is that of a multitude of small owners ... or its inverse, a tightly knit group of exploiters, usually depends upon the prejudices rather than the knowledge of the commentators." This seems an appropriate comment on much Victorian discussion, which was additionally enlivened by the presence of a leasehold system, and by a predilection for building up arguments from an initial assignment of moral responsibilities. [T.] Beames [The Rookeries of London, 1852] wanted to begin his inquiry into the rookeries "by asking under what landlords such traffic exists. Some one must be much to blame". (p. 91)

Yelling's 159 pages of graphs and tables and statistics of assorted kinds show that really no one was much to blame. (Of course, statistics can lie as easily as stereotypes but they seem to lie--if at all--on the other side.) Yelling's approach may disappoint those who want to find a villain then--and by analogy now--but the historical, geographical and

economic analysis carefully presented step by step makes it difficult to isolate one person or one group to chastise. Basic societal attitudes contributed to the perception and consequently to the solution--it might be more accurate to say the non-solution--of the problem (and that is as true now as then) but it is hard to single out as culprits those who shaped and shared society's assumptions.

His thesis is that any strategy for slum clearance, indeed any political strategy, involves a way of seeing a problem.

It is a problem-selecting as well as a problem-solving device. Moreover, as a relatively concrete entity it is necessarily built up from a combination of ideological and empirical referents. These embrace not only the nature of the slum but also the nature of the proposed remedies. For if the view of the slum shapes the remedies, it is also true that the nature of the remedies shapes the view of



"THE KITCHEN", FOX-COURT, GRAY'S-INN-LANE

the slum. Whether in the general approach to the slum or in the detailed complexity of, say, the compensation question, this relationship is central to policy outcomes. (p. 2)

The Victorian understanding of the problem, embodied in a series of Acts starting with Cross's in 1875, was that slums were a product of the unenlightened past, contaminating life far beyond their borders. These borders could be identified, however, and in London the Metropolitan Board of Works and, after 1888, the London County Council could and should abolish substandard dwellings, rehousing the inhabitants in decent accommodation, at low rents, on the cleared land of the old slum districts. Behind the solution lay the assumption that slum landlords had profited when building standards were unregulated; responsible government bodies would no more than cover their expenses and the poor would reap the benefit of superior housing at low rents.

There were flaws both in the perception of the problem and therefore in the solution as Yelling admirably demonstrates, relating the strategy to the "larger geographical organization reflected in land values, workplaces, and transport" (p. 1). He has tabulated the remarkably detailed information in the archives of the Metropolitan Board of Works and the London County Council. A large amount of the information is about Boundary Street, just east of Shoreditch High Street, an area that had been cited by social commentators from the 1850s on, investigated in particular detail by Charles Booth, and finally razed by the London County Council in the 1890s. Yelling, however, covers enough districts to provide a broad base for his thesis. The minuteness of the detail is fascinating:

At the Islington (Essex Road) Inquiry, Dr. Tidy [some names seem to come from the card game "Families"] read from his notes regarding Cottage Place that "the houses are dirty, damp and dilapidated. Floors close to the earth. Roofs very defective. Some of the houses have no back yards and are supplied with water butts in the houses in Popham St. 4-8 have small back yards, the rest none. (p. 76)

Having myself just acquired a cheap property up north, I was much attracted by one medical officer's reference to cellars being "receptacles for all sorts of abominable and useless refuse" (p. 77).

Locating the nuisance is only the beginning; removing dwellings and their inhabitants is no simple matter. First, as Gordie Howe once said about his love for hockey, "And then there's the money." One of the myths exploded by experience was that areas were homogeneous and easily defined. In fact, land use was multifarious. Scattered throughout an area designated as a slum and slated for clearance were valuable commercial properties and many less valuable ones. These caused a major problem for both the Board and the Council. Even slum property in the centre of London--and that of course is where the slums were--had a high market value, evaluations being based on recent sales and auctions of nearby properties. Compensation payments were far more costly than anticipated although not unreasonable, as Yelling shows from an archival unearthing of contemporary land values. In Boundary Street, 36% of the purchase money, £94,600, went to business properties; central area slum land could run as high as £500,000 for 12 acres. One solution finding favour by the end of the period was to sell the cleared land to commercial interests and use the proceeds to buy land in the suburbs

(as low as £44,238 for 39 acres) upon which to relocate the dispossessed-- Sydney Webb advocated such a practice. But even on the cheaper land, it was found not to be possible to build model housing at low rents without losing the taxpayers' shirts.



With rooms restricted to 144 square feet for living rooms and 96 square feet for bedrooms--small even by the standards of the protesting prospective inhabitants--three percent return on the money could not be achieved if rents were to stay competitive. In the old Boundary Street rents had started at 1s. 6d., the mean being 2s. 7d., and these rates seem to have varied little in neighbouring areas.

Inhabitants too were multifarious. Yelling's tables based on Booth's notebooks and the London County Council census show 149 labourers, 126 hawkers, 120 cabinet makers, 119 general dealers, 74 couch and chair makers, and 74 shoemakers among the 1057 employed adults enumerated. Many did not want to move because their homes, however noisome, were also their workshops, and they pointed out vociferously that there was not so large a market for 74 couch and chair makers in suburbia as next to Clare Street Market. And where were the barrow boys and their donkeys to go in the meantime? Many of the schemes took years (or forever) to complete, and the legislators were startled to find that the original inhabitants

had perforce found somewhere else to go. The tracing of their exodus is a fine example of Yelling's painstaking and understated scholarship. After quoting Charles Booth's description of Wilmers Gardens as full of "thieves, prostitutes, bullies and flower sellers and cadgers, having received incomers from Boundary Street," Yelling remarks:

Although it is certainly true that the longer-distance movements of Boundary Street tenants also often involved poor and deteriorating streets, only two are recorded as having moved to Wilmers Gardens. (p. 148)

Another example is his statistical commentary on Booth's view that people "often cling from generation to generation to one vicinity, almost as if the set of streets which lie there were an isolated country village" (p. 45). Peter Laslett has shown that Booth was wrong about isolated villages; Yelling shows from the compensation statements concerning the Boundary Street clearance that 42% had been there fewer than five years and less than 20% had been there more than 15.

After reading Yelling I had to modify my perception of overcrowding: of one- to two-person households 48% lived in one room, 23% lived in two rooms, and 18% lived in three or more rooms (I know that does not add up to 100%--that's why I have to be dragged into appreciating quantitative history). The chart can be read across as well and then it adds up: of the one-room tenements, 48% were occupied by 1-2 persons, 31% by 3-4 persons, 16% by 5-6 persons, and 5% by 7-8 persons. It is nice to have the statistics. Just as it is nice to know that in 1892 there were still 23 cows in Mount Street and 57 sheds for donkeys and ponies in Charlotte Court.

Ann Robson
University of Toronto

* * *

N.N. Feltes. Modes of Production of Victorian Novels. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1986.

As its title indicates, Norman Feltes's book is a Marxist analysis of the material conditions under which five novels (Pickwick Papers, Henry Esmond, Middlemarch, Tess of the D'Urbervilles, and Howards End) were produced. As such, Feltes's concern is not with the themes or forms of these novels as elements contributing to their unity or their meaning per se, but rather "with technological and ideological changes, the constitution and reconstitution of power relations in publishing, the constitution and reconstitution of 'audiences'" (xi-xii).

Feltes works in the general theoretical framework of Louis Althusser and Terry Eagleton. His work is not exactly part of the tradition of the sociology of literature. He is interested in how books are published, but he goes further to insist that the works themselves are not only produced under certain conditions but inevitably partake of the ideology or mediate what is historical.

In other words, the changes in literary modes of production (whether in monthly parts, three volumes, magazine serials, bi-monthly parts, or single volumes) are not just background but determinants in the writing of the novel. Feltes's object is not to give us the essence, truth, or unity of any one novel but to indicate how the ideological struggles and shifts in modes of production interact with or inform the writing of these Victorian novels. They will appear as "traces" in the novel, for instance, professionalism in Pickwick Papers, or gender constraints in Middlemarch.

The choice of twenty-year intervals from 1839 to 1910 allows Feltes to cover a "period of transformation in England from a precapitalist, petty-commodity mode to a fully capitalist literary mode of production" (x). He argues that the book in this time was transformed from a "commodity-book" to a "commodity text" for which the surplus value became the basis of power struggles among authors, publishers, booksellers, and libraries. He begins with Pickwick as a locus of that struggle and that transformation. It "marks the transition (the 'explosion' and 'take off') from the petty-commodity production of books to the capitalist production of texts" (3). The ideology of free exchange and the notion of the professional are traced through various public battles beginning with the Statute of Anne of 1709, where the author in his own right appears on the scene. By 1774, the author owns the property of the text, a right that is marketable.

Each chapter explains at length the peculiar historical forces that exist at the time of the production of one novel and ultimately shows the "traces" of those forces in it. George Eliot presents an interesting case because her own desire to be considered a professional writer inevitably conflicts with the very premise of this rise in professionalism, which is that it must exclude certain groups, including women. The revisions to the novel, the combining of Dorothea's story and that of Lydgate, are seen as traces of the author's own concern with and contradictory positions on "vocation" and "profession."

In one of the strongest chapters, Tess of the D'Urbervilles is seen in the context of its publication within a new kind of journalism, that of the clique or class journal, where an audience is conceived in terms of its market character, its ability to con-

sume goods. Feltes's analysis of the advertisements and illustrations that surround Hardy's story helps to break the notion that a text stands independent of its mode of production. Within this framework Tess loses her status as a conscious agent and risks being stereotyped, as are other characters in the novel.

After a long preliminary discussion of the shift from discount selling to a policy of net and subject pricing (the Net Book Agreement), Howards End is situated within the struggle to produce and to write for a mass audience. If the audience is in fact more and more the consumers of marketable commodity-texts, then the writer is left, as Forster is, with "the awkward indeterminacy of the narrator's indefinite pronouns, 'we' and 'one'" (94). Feltes's book ends abruptly, although one might say that the preface has given all the conclusions and generalizations necessary. We end with Forster and the fully fledged commodity-text presenting itself as marketable to "one" and "everybody," that is, to an audience without class distinctions. The desire to "only connect" and the predicament of Leonard Bast can be explained not only as part of Forster's Edwardian liberalism but also as a result of particular publishing procedures: "In the ambiguity of its constructed reader-subject Howards End bears the impress of its historical mode of production, encodes within itself, in the ways we have seen, its own record of 'how, by whom and for whom it was produced'" (98).

The strength and weakness of the book come from the fact that Feltes draws on so many other theorists and analysts: we get glimpses of their theories but sometimes only a glimpse. Multiple references, a specialized language that often requires background theoretical reading, and a density of argument are all related to the nature of Feltes's project and

make this book not an easy one to read. Nevertheless, his attempt to make the modes of production an integral part of our understanding of these novels succeeds.

Mary O'Connor
McMaster University

* * *

Patricia A. Malcolmson. English Laundresses: A Social History, 1850-1930. The Working Class in European History Series. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986.

Since the end of World War II more and more attention has been focused upon the working classes in British history. This was partly a reaction to the aristocratic tradition in British historiography and partly fueled by Marxist scholarship. Latterly, an inevitable reaction against the "history from the bottom up" school of Hill, Hobsbawm, Rude, et al. has resulted in more and more attention being focused upon the middle class and their "betters." Happily this reaction has not yet swept all other scholarship before it, at least not before Patricia Malcolmson could present us with a detailed study of the modern vicissitudes of the English Laundresses.

Getting the dirt out of clothing and linens was never an easy task, especially in the era when soap was unknown or prohibitively expensive--it was heavily taxed in Britain until 1853. Therefore, one did laundry as seldom as possible or, better still, found other people to do it for one. The traditional technique of soaking the cloth and beating out the soil was complemented by the use of cleansing and bleaching substances that now strike us as obnoxious--urine and dung, which are rich in ammonia, and lye, which was routinely obtained from wood ashes. Trampling, beating (or "beetling" with a wooden bat or "beetle"), and lye-washing

(known as "buck-washing" or "buck-ing") persisted throughout much of the nineteenth century.

The trade of "professional" laundress evolved as a kind of last respectable resort of widows and women whose husbands were disabled and/or otherwise unemployed. Although a drudgerous task, the laundress's skills were easily acquired and the needed equipment cheaply obtained. Indeed, a common act of village charity was to take up a collection to equip a new widow with a mangle, or wringing device, and a copper boiler so that she might become self-supporting by taking in laundry. Malcolmson is at her descriptive best in portraying the long hours and grim conditions in which laundresses laboured in a trade that was "sweated" in both a figurative and a literal sense. The toll that the working conditions and hours of labour took upon laundresses' children and family life, not to mention the ever-present danger posed by wages paid partly in beer, are recounted in vivid detail.

Urbanization brought about the rise of small laundries in great profusion, and mechanization led to the creation of large "steam-laundries," which were factory-like in size and scope. By the century's end upwards of 200,000 workers, mostly women, were employed in the laundry trade. A near total absence of government regulation led to abundant abuses, such as ludicrously low wages and crushingly long hours. Malcolmson devotes much of her book to tracing the ultimately successful attempts by middle-class reformers, beginning in the 1890s, to include laundries under the aegis of the factory acts and the purview of the factory inspectorate. Some modest legislative successes were achieved early on but, as with so many other things, it was World War I which led to the most stirring changes, by instilling laundry workers, as they should now be called, with newly found solidarity and militancy.

That such change and reform were so long in coming might appear inconsis-

THE LONDON CO-OPERATIVE LAUNDRY & CLEANING COMPANY, BLITHE LANE, WEST KENSINGTON PARK, NEAR ADDISON ROAD STATION.



An 1888 advertisement for the London Co-operative Laundry and Cleaning Company.

tent with the English laundress's well-earned reputation for boisterousness and independence of mind. Indeed, "one proprietor, a man with colonial experience who had invested in a laundry after his return to England, was led to remark to a factory inspector 'that he would rather continue to manage a hundred coolies on a West Indian estate, than ten girls in a laundry.'" Such changes, however, as unionization (laundresses formed unions as early as 1877 in Notting Hill, Hampstead, and Brighton), government regulation, and inspection, had to await the relatively late industrialization of the laundry trade, which in turn waited upon not merely mechanical and technological innovation, but such fundamentals as the elimination of the duty on soap, and the latter's mass production and distribution.

In preparing this enlightening study of a major, albeit oppressed and neglected trade, Malcolmson has made admirable use of manifold sources, including government committees and inspectors' reports, contemporary periodicals, and the memoirs of both the middle-class reformers and--most esoteric of all--some of those women who actually laboured in the laundry trade. In the process the author has made a significant contribution to the history of British industry, labour, and women. This is also a book that should cause its readers to pause and reflect when next they deliver their garments to the local laundry or dry-cleaning establishment.

Merrill Distad
University of Alberta

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Judith Weissman. Half Savage and Hardy and Free: Women and Rural Radicalism in the Nineteenth-Century Novel. Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1987.

Judith Weissman's study of an impressive range of nineteenth-century novels opens with a double grievance, charging that the dominant literary voices of Victorian England "never considered looking for intelligence and radical politics in the rural life of their present," and that in contemporary literary criticism "the reality of rural life is usually simply ignored, displaced by topics such as narrative voice, structure, language, intellectual movements" (3). Weissman's response to this state of affairs is to re-enter the familiar literary landscape of nineteenth-century British fiction (the one American exception is Hawthorne) from an unexpected direction. Drawing on the rural radicalism of writers from Wordsworth and Hardy to E.P. Thompson and Raymond Williams, Weissman seeks to displace a critical tradition she sees as having read the nineteenth century through the assumption that rural life is idiotic.

The argument which Half Savage and Hardy and Free determinedly pursues through twelve chapters on twelve novelists (Austen, Charlotte and Emily Brontë, Hawthorne, Mary Shelley, Thackeray, Dickens, George Eliot, Bram Stoker, Trollope, Hardy, Forster), is clearly laid out in the introduction. Weissman's "theoretical" grid (the qualifying quotation marks are hers) identifies two radical traditions in nineteenth-century literature, whose origins she traces back to Wordsworth and Shelley respectively. Weissman's characterization of these two traditions of Romantic radicalism in the opening chapters unequivocally sets the agenda (and the tone) for the rest of the book, leaving little doubt as to the author's enthusiastic endorsement of the one (Wordsworth's)

and her hostile rejection of the other (Shelley's). For Weissman,



Shelley's spiritual radicalism, which she also sees as forming the basis of contemporary feminism, is a radicalism divorced from the land, an individualistic, inward-looking and pleasure-seeking philosophy oblivious to the contingencies of labour, ecology, and the production and consumption of material goods. In Shelley's radicalism as in contemporary feminism, contends Weissman, a focus on sexual and personal oppression has displaced more vital concerns with political and economic oppression, and the promotion of individual self-development and the satisfaction of personal aspirations has come at the expense of community values. Wordsworth's radicalism, on the other hand, which serves as Weissman's valorized point of reference throughout the book, is viewed as a "political radicalism that is tied to an agricultural economy, and to forms of labor that can evade the oppressive and unjust structures of capitalism" (8).

Weissman's analysis and assessment of individual novels is both generated by and contained within this framework of binary opposites, and the novels are labeled and grouped according to their radical inclinations. While Weissman clearly favours those displaying a commitment to a radicalism infused with the spirit of rural life, she is critical of novels marked by what she regards as the hallmarks of Shelley's radicalism: a movement away from the values of country life and towards the urban and capitalist ideology of self-fulfilment. The readings thus tend to foreground a leaning in one direction or another, leaving unexamined the possibility of other, more complex ideological configurations.

Echoing Wordsworth, Weissman opens and concludes her study with a decla-



ration of faith: her belief that it is in the country that men and women can be their truest selves. The novels that she singles out for praise, Trollope's Barsetshire chronicles, Hardy's Tess of the D'Urbervilles,

and Forster's Howards End, are those which attempt to "offer women heroic images of their own possible best selves, images that invite women to ally themselves with the agricultural world, and with the Romantic, radical tradition of resistance--resistance to the slavery of conformity, the slavery of economic uselessness, the slavery of subjection to an industrial and monopolistic and imperialistic economy" (301). These novels are discussed in the last section of the book, entitled "Returns," as Weissman finds in them a renewed hope in a rural social order based on mutual aid in which a strong woman (like Tess) is strong precisely because she "finds her truest self in agricultural labor itself, not in a [shelleyean, urban] world of spirit" (254). Weissman likewise commends Trollope for giving voice to a hope inherited from Wordsworth's rural radicalism: "if places like Barsetshire, the agricultural villages that educated and progressive people despise and ignore, can produce strong women and heroic men as well as the good food that keeps England alive, then they are worth saving" (237).

The "return," title of Weissman's last section, is a welcome return to the "Beginnings," title of her first section, a renewed faith in the rural radicalism that had inspired such novels as Austen's Emma and Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights. In the beginning, however, there was also that other radicalism, Shelley's, and its unsavoury by-products. Weissman is unsparing in her condemnation of Charlotte Brontë, who "turned her back on the country and its people and its past and made Romanticism a special world of her upwardly-mobile heroines" (76). The middle section of the book--"Reactions"--lines up those Victorian novels which likewise fail in Weissman's estimation because they fail to defend "the moral economy of agricultural England against the exploitation of urban industrial

capitalism" (124). In Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, writes Weissman, instincts win, not good instincts but bad ones: "not pity and mutual aid or attachment to home or capacity for joy, instincts radical writers defend against the falseness of bourgeois culture, but fear, cruelty, blindness" (132). Weissman's moral-theoretical grid produces a reading of the novel which puts its author on trial for her view of human nature (as essentially unchangeable and cruel) and for the angelic helplessness of her female characters. The list of casualties grows longer as Weissman groups together Thackeray, Dickens, George Eliot, and Bram Stoker, to conclude that in separating their heroines from the life of agricultural England, and in leaving behind the rural community, these writers "go wrong ... mistaking this form of Romantic radicalism [Shelley's] for the whole, and the city as the true location of a good life" (207).

Weissman's provocative argument in Half Savage and Hardy and Free is one that forces us to reconsider the radical heritage of English Romanticism and challenges us to re-examine the ideological horizons of the nineteenth-century novel. Her emphasis on the rich potential of a rural radicalism for women renders visible, in the novels under consideration, an important struggle and some heartening victories. It is all the more regrettable then, that in giving voice to this struggle Weissman has effectively silenced others, and that her celebration of one vision entails the condemnation of others. The radical and feminist endeavours of writers from Charlotte Brontë and George Eliot to Virginia Woolf and Kate Chopin surely deserve better than to be dismissed as a "dead end" (297).

Bina Freiwald
Concordia University

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Sarah Levitt. Victorians Unbuttoned: Registered Designs for Clothing, Their Makers and Wearers, 1839-1900. London: Allen and Unwin, 1986.

It is possibly the main achievement of Victorians Unbuttoned that it brings to our attention the existence, in the archives of the Public Record Office at Kew, of a great deal of information about Victorian dress. This information is in the form of assembled garments, an important collection of nineteenth-century textiles, and drawn illustrations. The



requirement that manufacturers register their designs as a means of laying claim to them gives us information that would otherwise have been lost. Except for these records the knowledge of whatever was cheap and commonplace, some working-class clothes, for example, would have vanished; and oddities that might have enjoyed limited success in the market-place, such as a "belt for keeping the mouth closed while sleeping," inflatable suspenders to save

the wearer from drowning, or a spiked metal anti-garrotting "cravat" to protect against dangers lurking in poorly lit streets, might have remained unknown, thus depriving us of those minute details which, by the sum of their small strokes, enrich our picture of Victorian life.

What does Levitt do with this information? In the Introduction she promises with modesty, if vaguely, "to trace some aspects of the development of the mass clothing trades and their products." Within the narrow space of 25 pages--the first part of the book--she presents some history of the registering of designs, a too brief look at those who bought and those who supplied articles made from these designs, and a token glance at the history of the mechanization of the clothing trade and the deplorable conditions that accompanied it. One wishes Levitt had had more focus, and had spent more time evaluating the function served by the registering of designs, since the protection for which they were first established (by the 1839 Design Copyright Act) clearly did not prevent imitation,

as Levitt herself notices while pointing to the very many articles that are identical except for merely trivial differences. Indeed, it seems that registering a design which became profitable rendered its author vulnerable to the very theft it was supposed to prevent: it is slightly baffling, therefore, that so many designs were registered at all, since this was not a prerequisite for manufacturing. In turn, these questions raise the more essential one of how

protection can possibly be extended to matters of design. We suspect that the supreme value of registering was not to protect, but rather to enhance articles by conferring on them status, credibility, worth, authenticity.

Some of the most interesting pages in the first part of Victorians Unbuttoned are those on advertising, from which the astute reader may draw inferences about the Victorian character--something that, unfortunately, does not much interest Levitt. Anxiety about keeping up appearances is a commonplace we ascribe especially to Victorians. But to offer this as the attraction of "combination garments" (single garments posing as several articles, shirt, tie, waistcoat, for example) for those trying to keep cool in the tropical regions of the Empire, or for those trying to survive within meagre budgets at home, is not a novel addition to our insights into the period. More exciting is the consideration of, for example, how attractive the Victorians found elements of dress that are innocent and playful:

Political allegiances could be secretly [sic] maintained by one's braces: in 1885 George Statham ... registered webbing for braces which incorporated woven portraits of Disraeli, and in 1887 [another manufacturer] ... registered braces embellished with the Stars and Stripes. Heel plates were moulded to depict famous men, so that one could leave a hero at every tread. (p. 19)

Delights of this sort are very like those enjoyed by schoolboys today who take enormous interest in the weighty matter of the exact tread pattern of their shoes. They are akin to secret codes, invisible ink, talismanic inscriptions on youthful limbs, and secret objects carried about on their persons--all charged by the innocent

imagination which they delight.

If the title, Victorians Unbuttoned, and the picture of the corset with "expensible [sic] busts" on the jacket are what attracted us to this book, we feel cheated as we discover that not much unbuttoning has been done.

Isabelle Robinson
Toronto

* * *

Victorian Britain: An Encyclopedia.
Ed. Sally Mitchell. New York and London: Garland, 1988.

In issue 36 of the Victorian Studies Association Newsletter (Fall 1985), 8-10, Sally Mitchell outlined the intent of her project in compiling this work. She noted, for example, that the text was intended to be "both liftable and legible" (9). At



almost 1000 pages, the book as published may not be readily "liftable" by all. However, it has otherwise largely lived up to Mitchell's intentions as expressed in that 1985 article.

Mitchell's hope was, first, to produce a source providing basic infor-

mation as interpreted by "experts in the field" (8) and, secondly, to provide a new window into recent scholarship with the information included. The resulting text provides knowledgeable entries, in alphabetical order, regarding those topics generally well recognized as central to understanding the Victorian past. These range from "Agriculture," "Architecture," and "Army" to "Whig Party" and "Working-Class Literature"--to move quickly through the alphabetical spectrum. In doing so, one will also find all the major historical personages, ranging from William Acton to the Duke of Wellington.

Entries range in length from a few hundred words to, in rare cases, over 1000, but are usually remarkably informative, given their brevity. Each entry is followed by a short bibliography listing the major secondary sources. These bibliographies should prove particularly useful to those often required to provide direction to students regarding subjects with which even the most widely read of instructors may not be well versed. Indeed, with a discipline so productive of new scholarship and so interdisciplinary as Victorian studies, few instructors can hope to be able to provide bibliographical expertise on all subjects. Victorian Britain will prove a godsend to both beleaguered instructors and inquisitive students.

In particular, however, this text deserves attention because it also lives up to Mitchell's initial intention that it address topics that have only recently won scholarly attention. Indeed, it is this book's venture into fields still virtually untouched that makes it most exciting. These are fully inclusive of women's history, commencing with "Abortion" and--at the other end of the alphabet--ranging from "Sexual Violence" to "Women's Friendships." Certainly, this text provides infor-

mation on a host of topics only recently discovered as such, from "Circus," one of Mitchell's own entries, to Merrill Distad's fascinating "Smuggling."

Such entries may introduce subjects such as "Spasmodic Poetry" that are quite obscure to some of us. Mitchell's text illuminates why and how these topics are now being considered significant. And the plethora of subjects addressed in this volume helps to provide a window into the diverse subjective and objective realities of the Victorians themselves.

A book that attempts to be reflective of the most recent scholarship does face one intrinsic problem: it necessarily includes many topics which remain very thinly researched as yet. Some entries are seemingly based upon virtually no study and can provide little direction in their bibliographies. "Baby Farming" (59), for example, cites but one source, and is not written by the author of that source. One must wonder how comprehensive or useful such entries can be.

On the other hand, many entries on still obscure topics or on "lesser" Victorians are particularly useful. When no secondary sources are yet available, the authors cite some of the major primary sources, thus facilitating the research which may well lead to future examination. For example, Lydia Becker Ernestine is as yet the subject of no published studies. However, the entry on this leader in the women's suffrage movement points to at least some primary materials where one might begin to discover her (70).

This book may not facilitate ready access to all the topics it includes, because one may look for information under a particular heading which does not appear under the text's own nomenclature. However, each entry is followed by a cross-referencing to

any related categories. Nonetheless, it might have been useful to include an initial "Yellow Pages" style directory to point to various headings under which a topic might be found. On the other hand, the index can assist anyone lost in a sea of unfamiliar headings. Moreover, this text includes a closing guide to research materials which points the way to discovering information on special figures and subjects not specifically included in the volume.

In sum, a reference text intended to be "lifiable and legible" cannot possibly include all possible sign-posts to the Victorian past. But this book does surely fulfil the promise of Mitchell's Preface, that it will "serve as an overview and point of entry to the complex interdisciplinary field of Victorian studies" (ix). As well, Mitchell has deliberately imposed no particular style on the entries, "so that contributors could express their own judgment and opinions" (x). The result is that the contributions often provide a subtextual interpretation which the reader may not necessarily accept, but which renders this text not just informative, but also a rich stimulus to further research.

Patricia Morton
Trent University

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S.A. Muresianu. The History of the Victorian Christmas Book. New York: Garland, 1988.

In the 1840s the English Christmas was transformed into a major commercial festival complete with Christmas trees, greeting cards, and the large-scale exchange of presents. Publishers responded with special Christmas books, usually short novels or sketches, which were handsomely bound and lavishly illustrated. The stories generally had comic overtones, im-

probable plots, often with supernatural bells and whistles, and strong moral messages about repentance, forgiveness, and redemption. They were ideal for reading out loud to members of the family circle as they lay back sated with Christmas fellowship and food.

The History of the Victorian Christmas Book is Muresianu's Ph.D. thesis published in its original form. While it has certain drawbacks as a book, from the typeface to the inevitable need to demonstrate mastery of the second literature, it is amusing and well-written, with wonderful illustrations. Muresianu's subject promises to cast light both on Victorian writers, in particular Dickens and Thackeray, and on what Richard Hoggarth described as "the formative but largely submerged currents in an age's life."

A Christmas Carol, the most famous of them all, became a classic almost from the time of its publication in



MARLEY'S GHOST.

1843, and inspired scores of imitations. By the late 1850s, however, the genre had declined dramatically in popularity, perhaps, as Muresianu suggests, because their cheery message no longer appealed to Victorians grappling with doubts about religion and the nature of man. A more prosaic explanation is that the field had been overworked: even the acknowledged master in the field, Dickens, had run out of steam, producing in The Battle of Life and The Haunted Man Christmas books which were both artistic and commercial failures. The market moved on to special double issues of family magazines, which were cheaper to produce and less financially risky.

Even in their hey-day opinion was divided on the literary merits of Christmas books, including those of Dickens himself. Carlyle said, "He thinks men ought to be buttered up, and the world made soft and accommodating for them, and all sorts of fellows have turkey for their Christmas dinner." Thackeray praised Dickens but was hard on his imitators for carrying his arch tone to extremes: "Every object in the world is brought to life, and invested with a vulgar knowingness and outrageous jocularity." Dickens deprecated his own efforts as merely "a whimsical kind of masque which the good humour of the season justified, to awaken some loving and forbearing thoughts, never out of season in a Christian land."

The author, not surprisingly, sees much more than that. Following G.K. Chesterton, she argues that his five Christmas books "encapsulize Dickens's views on social reform" and reveal "an unshakeable belief in the essential goodness and regenerative possibility in man." In this reading, what might be perceived as cheap sentimentality, if not crass commercialism, becomes an unflinching prescription for dealing with evil on a psychological level. We must all try to

preserve, if necessary to recapture, the openness and awareness of children. Scrooge behaves wildly after his transformation because he has liberated his happiest impulses, in effect regaining his innocent past. The centrality of the Christmas books in understanding Dickens is persuasive only to a point. The awkward question still remains of how seriously to take books that were tailored to fit a particular market.

There is also a problem with using Thackeray's Christmas books as guides to his moral views (or those of the Victorians in general). He did not like moralizing and unrealistic cheerfulness. As he said of Vanity Fair, "I want to leave everybody dissatisfied and unhappy at the end of the story--we ought all to be with our own and all other stories." His Christmas books--for he could not resist the temptation to make some money--were light satirical sketches which generally refer only tangentially to the festival. Moreover, as the Edinburgh Review said of "Mrs. Perkins's Ball," the events described were fraught "with more melancholy than mirth." Thackeray's happy endings, such as they are, seem tacked on, and it is difficult entirely to accept the argument made by Muresianu that underlying his satire is an attempt to show that pretensions and ambitions stand in the way of "charity and brotherly love."

Lesser writers usually modelled themselves after Dickens, but in their hands the Christmas message became encrusted with an appalling sentimentality. The plots abound with mysterious recluses, orphans, wicked uncles, saintly heroines, even a fairy Bee. One shameless author borrowed Scrooge and gave him a death scene with Tiny Tim. ("Tiny, you'll come to my grave sometimes, when I'm gone, won't you?") Muresianu says, rather categorically, that such books were bad compared with those by Dickens

and Thackeray because they were done for money rather than for "heartfelt celebration."

In the end, one is left wondering what the author is trying to do with the Christmas books. Are they, as she suggests in places, a celebration of Victorian bourgeois values, from self-righteous nationalism to the elevation of women, children and, above all, the family, or are they a reflection of Christian values and an optimistic faith that good will tri-

umph over evil? If anything, she leans towards the latter, arguing that "Christmas comes but once a year ... and for this exceptional day it seems rather a noble and fortunate thing that a literature arose which, though retrospective, yet implicitly described the hopes for the new year that followed." That is a good happy ending, but her study might have been more interesting if she had investigated the first question further.

Margaret MacMillan
Ryerson



Solution to Riddle #6

Little Polly Flinders
Sat among the cinders,
Warming her pretty little toes;
Her mother came and caught her,
And whipped her little daughter
For spoiling her nice new clothes.