

in the meantime . . .

(Continued from page 89)

THE VICTORIAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION OF WESTERN CANADA will hold its annual conference at the University of Saskatchewan, October 8-9, 1976. Key speakers will be Jerome Buckley and Christopher Ricks. For information contact L. M. Findlay or L. B. Horne, Department of English, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7N 0W0.

The editor of *Victorian Poetry* has some bad news and some good news. Jo Walton Eaton, after many years of managing our office affairs, keeping our contributors reasonably happy even when rejection notices had to be sent, and, as contributing editor, producing our "In the Meantime" feature and compiling "Books Received," has resigned to become a student in the West Virginia University College of Law. Mrs. Eaton has been replaced by Mrs. Carol Del Col, who brings to the position a background of an M.A. and additional graduate studies with specialization in the Victorian period. Correspondence concerning manuscripts, announcements, etc., should be sent to Mrs. Del Col.

An Unpublished Tale from
The Earthly Paradise

K. L. GOODWIN



WILLIAM MORRIS was so abundant an author that he planned and even wrote many more tales for *The Earthly Paradise* than the twenty-four included in the published work. There were always, apparently, intended to be two stories told in each month of the year, but from the first published announcement of the work, at the end of the first edition of *The Life and Death of Jason* (1867), eight of the twenty-four tales listed were ultimately omitted: "The Story of Theseus," "The King's Treasure-House," "The Story of Orpheus and Eurydice," "The Dolphins and the Lovers," "The Fortunes of Gyges," "The Seven Sleepers," "The Queen of the North," and "The Story of Dorothea." A year later, the first volume of *The Earthly Paradise*, containing twelve stories, carried an announcement for the remaining twelve. Three of those announced at the end of *The Life and Death of Jason*, "The King's Treasure-House," "The Seven Sleepers," and "The Queen of the North," had by this stage been dropped. But the five others that were ultimately omitted were retained, and one other unused tale, "Amys and Amillion," was introduced.

Of the total of nine tales announced but eventually omitted, all but two were certainly or probably written; the two for which no evidence of writing exists are "The Story of Theseus" and "The Seven Sleepers." Four others, "The King's Treasure-House," "The Fortunes of Gyges," "The Dolphins and the Lovers," and "Amys and Amillion," appear to be no longer extant; a fifth, "The Queen of the North," exists, if it exists at all, in the fragment beginning "In Arthur's house whileome was I" (*CW*, XXIV, xxxi, 316-328).

The remaining two tales, "The Story of Orpheus and Eurydice" and "The Story of Dorothea," are complete and extant, but only the first of them has been published. May Morris included it in volume XXIV of the *Collected Works*; in the same volume she included all that Morris had written of two other tales, "The Story of Aristomenes" and "The Wooing of Swanhild," which, although never part of an announced scheme for *The Earthly Paradise*, had obviously been intended for that work. But she declined to print "The Story of Dorothea," her reason being that "of this tale of the Christian martyr one may say that if it had shown any of the warmth and simple piety expressed in the young poet's mediaeval poems, I should have hesitated about

finally excluding it; but it is cold and unconvinced from beginning to finish and I have no wish that it should see the light now or at any future time" (XXI, xix).

If one could agree that the story was "cold and unconvinced" one could readily consent to leaving it in decent obscurity. But it seems to me to have quite as much merit as several other stories in *The Earthly Paradise* and to have the added interest of being on a subject treated in art by Burne-Jones and in verse by Swinburne. Indeed, it seems far superior to Swinburne's poem, "St. Dorothy," which was included in his *Poems and Ballads* (1866).

Morris' interest in the legend of St. Dorothea may date from the autumn of 1857, when he spent a fortnight in Manchester visiting his friend of Oxford undergraduate days, Richard Watson Dixon. The visit was notable for the opportunity it provided for him to view the Pre-Raphaelite paintings in the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition and, according to J. W. Mackail, for his work on a watercolor, "The Soldan's Daughter in the Palace of Glass," and a poem, "Praise of My Lady" (Mackail, I, 115).

Dixon informed Mackail that Morris "seemed to pay little attention" to the paintings in the Exhibition, but it is possible that he saw there an oak panel of "SS. Peter and Dorothy" by the painter nowadays known as the Master of the S. Bartholomew Altarpiece. This work of the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century was lent by Prince Albert from the Kensington Palace collection (Manchester Provisional Catalogue No. 440; Definitive Catalogue No. 441). After Albert's death it was presented, in 1863, to the National Gallery by the Queen in accordance with his wish, and is now NG 707. The Gallery already had a German painting of "S. Dorothy," acquired in 1854 as part of the Krüger collection (NG 2152), but it was in poor condition. Both works depict St. Dorothy with her typical iconographical accompaniment of a basket of flowers.

Even if Morris was unaware of these works, it is certain that by 1861 St. Dorothy engaged the attention of himself, Burne-Jones, and Swinburne. In that year Burne-Jones made a design for embroidery of Saints Cecilia and Dorothea (Plate 1).¹ The figures are in the same style as those of "Good Women" that he was painting on pairs of tiles at this time, and the figure of St. Dorothea, with its long columnar neck, thick lips, long nose, and crisped hair falling over the forehead is unmistakably taken from Jane Morris. She holds a plaited basket containing roses. In the foreground are powdered flowers in the style of Morris' "Daisy" tile and wallpaper of 1862 and some of Burne-Jones's tile designs. Behind the figures is a brocaded curtain held up by decorated poles. Above the curtain is clear space to form a backdrop for

¹The cartoon is now in the City of Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, 50'98; it is reproduced in Aymer Vallance, *The Decorative Art of Sir Edward Burne-Jones, Baronet* (The Easter Art Annual; London, 1900), p. 16.

the heads of the figures, and above the heads are some "gothic" trees. The whole arrangement is very similar to some of the panels in the "Mort d'Arthur" series of stained-glass panels made in 1862 for Walter Dunlop's house, The Grange, near Bingley, Yorkshire.²

Swinburne seems to have completed his poem, "St. Dorothy," by mid-January 1861,³ though it was not published until 1866. It had some influence (which I shall refer to later) on at least one detail in Burne-Jones's watercolor of "St. Dorothy" (begun in 1863, but not completed until 1867), a work subsequently exhibited as "St. Theophilus and the Angel" (Plate 2).

Morris, while undoubtedly aware of Burne-Jones's work on the legend, may well not have known of Swinburne's. For his own basic material he went directly to the source he used for many of the tales in *The Earthly Paradise*, the series of saints' lives assembled in lectionary form by Jacobus de Voragine under the title of *Legenda Sanctorum*, or, as it soon came to be known, *The Golden Legend*. The story of St. Dorothy was not in the original compilation, but was added well before Caxton translated the work for his edition of 1483. It was this version that was used for the Kelmscott Press edition of 1892. One other likely source—itsself based on *The Golden Legend*—was the fifteenth-century poem of Osbern Bokenham, *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*, or, as it was named in the Roxburghe Club edition of 1835, *Lives of the Saints*.

The story told in *The Golden Legend* and in the *Legendys of Hooly Wummen* may be summarized as follows. During the reign of the Roman emperors Diocletian and Maximian, when the Christians were persecuted, one Christian family fled to the city of Caesarea in Cappadocia. In this family there were three daughters, Crysten (or Trystem), Calestyn (or Kalystem), and Dorathe (or Dorothy). The exceptional beauty of the youngest daughter, Dorothy, inflamed with love the prefect or provost of that place, Fabricius. Having declared his love and offered marriage, he was refused by Dorothy, who said that she was the bride of Christ. In his wrath, Fabricius caused her to be cast into a vessel of burning oil, but she emerged from it miraculously unharmed. He then starved her in prison, but she was sustained by the heavenly consolation of angels and emerged more beautiful than ever. Brought before Fabricius as judge, she was threatened with hanging if she did not sacrifice to idols. He set up a pillar and placed his god on top of it, but

²Morris' cartoon for King Arthur and Sir Lancelot from this series is reproduced in A. Charles Sewter, *The Stained Glass of William Morris and His Circle* (Yale Univ. Press for Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 1974), Plate 82. Another panel, not reproduced by Sewter, but illustrating the same kind of placement of the figures is Guinevere and Isoude, the cartoon for which is in the Tate Gallery, No. 5222.

³See his letter to Pauline, Lady Trevelyan, January 19 [1861], *The Swinburne Letters*, ed. Cecil Y. Lang (Yale Univ. Press, 1959-62), I, 38.

angels cast down the idol and utterly destroyed it, while the voices of devils complaining about the harm Dorothy was doing were heard.

Fabricius next commanded that she be hung upside down on a gibbet, torn with hooks, and scourged, and that her breasts be burned. Half dead, she was returned to prison, but the next day appeared unscathed. Fabricius pitied her, but ascribed her preservation to the mercy of his own gods. He sent her two sisters, now apostates from Christianity, to plead with her, but instead she converted them, and they professed their faith before the prefect, who had them bound back to back and burned. When Dorothy professed "the loue of my spouse Jhesu cryste, in whos gardyn ful of delyces I haue gadred roses, spyces, and apples," Fabricius had her face beaten to a pulp, but again on the next day she appeared unharmed.

Fabricius then ordered her to be decapitated. On the way to the place of execution a scribe or prothonotary, Theophilus, mocked her, requesting her to send some roses and apples from the garden of her spouse. She promised to do so, though it was winter. At the place of execution she kneeled and prayed for all those who would be her clients, and a voice from heaven was heard welcoming her as spouse. A child, barefooted, with fair curly hair, clothed in a purple garment ornamented with gold stars, appeared and offered her a gold basket containing roses and apples. She asked him to take them to Theophilus, and then bowed her head to the executioner. Theophilus received the gifts and he and most of the city were converted. Fabricius caused him to be tortured and his body tom into small pieces.

This rather gruesome version of the legend was treated with some skepticism by the compilers of the *Acta Sanctorum*; in it, they said, "hyperbolice exaggerata quaedam, ut propterea haud multum absimilia apocryphis videri possint."⁴ Both Swinburne and Morris stripped away the spurious accretions, retaining as a miracle only the account of the heavenly basket. In addition, both took considerable liberties with the remainder of the plot. Swinburne set the story in Rome rather than in the city of Caesarea; he assimilated Dorothy's would-be lover and the man who requested her to send a sign from heaven into one person, Theophilus, and created a new character, Gabalus the emperor, for the role of condemning her to death; he specified the pagan worship that Dorothy rejected as being worship of the goddess Venus, including an annual parade of twelve naked maidens; and he made Theophilus' appeal for the sign, which in all other versions is represented as a mocking taunt, into a sincere, half-believing request. The sign itself, moreover, appears on earth only after Dorothy's execution, not before it—the same is true in Morris' version—and becomes a basket containing not

⁴*Acta Sanctorum*, compiled by J. Bollandus, G. Henschenius, et al., 3rd ed. by J. Carnandet et al. (Paris, 1863-1940), February vol. I (1863), 780.

merely roses and apples as in other versions but white and red roses, marigolds, "the flower that Venus' hair is woven of," apples, peaches, poppies, and lilies.

"St. Dorothy" is a poem full of Keatsian richness in sight, sound, and smell; full of conscious archaisms, deliberate medieval anachronisms, and mock-Chaucerian naivete; larded with Homeric similes and with echoes of *Hero and Leander*. It is a poem of some charm but over-much contrivance and self-consciousness posing as simplicity. It is full of awkward repetitions of word and sound and is too obviously an imitation of Morris' early "gothic" style.

Morris' "The Story of Dorothea" exists in two manuscripts: a lightly corrected holograph in The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, obviously posterior to a lost draft; and a fair copy in the round hand of an amanuensis in the British Museum, Additional MS. 45309, fols. 50-81 (fols. 52-81 being numbered by the amanuensis as 1-30). The first of these manuscripts belonged to Charles Fairfax Murray, the second to May Morris.

Morris' version opens in a much less leisurely fashion than Swinburne's. The city of Rome is introduced in the first line, Dorothea's father, Dorus,⁵ in the fifth, the theme of world-weariness and longing for a happier life within the first fifteen lines. Morris says of Dorus, in a mood characteristic of all the tales in *The Earthly Paradise*:

But as the grey hairs one by one grew up
The false love-token and the drinking cup
He east aside, for now in middle age
The world began to seem like some vast cage,
Barred with inevitable death about
The clinging lovers and the conqueror's shout
And the great gift of life seemed small enow.⁶

Throughout the tale, Morris supplies details and rearranges others to make a narrative far more coherent and credible than occurs in any of the sources or in Swinburne. Like Swinburne, though to an even greater degree, he emphasizes the love-interest of the story—the sadistic love of the torturer Fabricius, the pure love of Dorothea for her heavenly spouse, the interrupted love of the three sisters for each other, the lascivious love of the demi-monde and their clients, the latent love of Theophilus for Dorothy.

At the beginning he follows the *Golden Legend's* apocryphal account of the pious Dorus and his family fleeing to Caesarea because of an outbreak of

⁵The authority for the name is *The Golden Legend*, some editions of which give it as Theodore. Bokenham gives it as Dorotheus.

⁶Fitzwilliam MS., fol. 1; B.M. MS. fol. 52 (fol. 1 of "The Story of Dorothea"). In this and all subsequent quotations the Fitzwilliam MS. has been used as the copy-text, with any substantive departures from it noted. Accidentals have been silently corrected where there can be no dispute about the interpretation intended; in the present passage, for instance, both Morris in the Fitzwilliam holograph and the amanuensis in the B.M. copy have written "conquerors" in the second-last line.

persecution in Rome. But he removes a curious anomaly that Jacobus, with characteristic hagiographical zeal, had created: he had caused Dorothea in her saintly wisdom to be the instigator of the family move from Rome to Cappadocia, but he had also included a narration of her baptism by the bishop after their arrival in the new land. Considering that her parents were Christians in Rome, this seems inconsistent. Morris, in this respect following Bokenham, solved the problem by having Dorothea born after the family's arrival in Cappadocia. Dorus, he says,

came unto a noble fair city
Called Cesarea; where he dwelt in rest
A poor man now, but yet by none opprest
For five years more, and late in the third year
Of his sojourn his wife to him did bear
Another daughter, whom he took straightway
That Adam's sin might clean be washed away,
Unto the bishop.

(fol. 4; B.M. fol. 54[3])

With his practical concern for consistency and order in his stories—a concern for which he has rarely been given credit—Morris then corrected a lacuna existing in all the sources. The traditional story implies that before Dorothea's confession and passion began, her parents must have died. Morris states this explicitly:

But when her sixteenth year was fully come
Her father and her mother were called home,
And in a quiet place their bodies laid,
Where fearfully the burial rites were paid.
For now in Cesarea as in Rome,
New orders from the Emperor were come
That duly Jove should now be worshipped,
Nor longer Citharea veil her head
So there was slain full many a Christian man
And crimson with their blood the channels ran. (fols. 4-5; B.M. fol. 54[3])

The outbreak of persecution in Caesarea gave Morris an opportunity to develop the characters of Dorothea's two sisters, who, though commonly acclaimed as saints, are neglected in all the sources up to the point where they are converted from their apostasy. So shadowy are they, in fact, that Swinburne found it possible to omit them entirely. But Morris, in order to emphasize the steadfastness of Dorothea, gives details of her sisters' renegade actions, and, in order to provide dramatic irony in his account of Fabricius' lust after Dorothea, he has them, through vanity and avarice, decline into prostitution.

Moreover some there were within that place
Who rather chose to live on earth a space
That life despised even by the heathen wise,
Than pass through death to joy in Paradise.
Amongst whom Dorothea's sisters twain,
Eriste and Calliste, fearing pain,
And doubting of the happy life to come,

Reared up a little altar in their home
Unto the idols, though indeed no one
Had harmed them ought, but let them live alone.

So when they thus had given up their faith
For earthly life, then, as the old tale saith
The seven other devils came to them,
And finding them outside the guarding hem
Of Christ's robe, put in their hearts straightway,
That from this earth all folk pass quick away,
And well it is to live in joyance there.

So when at night each other's body fair
Each one beheld and saw herself thereby,
So tall and straight, and made so cunningly,
Then would she redden, thinking is not this,
That which all men desire past all bliss;
Does it not pass in few and doubtful years,
And being gone, what longing and what tears
Will bring it back; and for the lending it
Among rich things and jewels may I sit,
And men will give me love and kisses sweet,
And grovel on the ground before my feet.

So thought they to themselves, and soon for gold
Their virgin shamefast beauty had they sold;
With whom dwelt Dorothea none the less,
But as she might hiding her loveliness
From lustful eyes: and yet did God ordain
That her great beauty blossomed not in vain,
Since in the end it bore her such a crown.⁷

Morris' representation of the attraction of Christianity is, as usual, centered exclusively on the possibility of eternal life; when that hope is dimmed the sisters apostasize. The revival of hope when Dorothea later preaches to them in prison causes their reconversion; the same doctrine of hope also causes Theophilus' conversion, and it is used, though without any evangelistic success, in Dorothea's confession of faith before Fabricius. The incident of the sisters' prostitution appears to be entirely original with Morris. When it is introduced with a reference to the "seven other devils," the attribution, "as the old tale saith," is presumably to be taken as referring only to the biblical parable, not to the life of the saint. This invention alone, developed as it is as a background to Fabricius' wooing, would cast doubt on the appropriateness of May Morris' description of the tale as "cold and unconvinced."

In another invention Morris has the prefect, Fabricius, ride through the city accompanied by his "knight." Dorothea, seen, as befits her character, retiring through the doorway of her house, excites the amorousness of Fabricius. His question to the knight provides the opportunity for an entirely invented, if brief, episode of mildly amusing misunderstanding. The prefect asks,

⁷Fols. 5-6; B.M. fol. 55(4). In line 14 of this extract the B.M. reading is "And finding them at last outside the hem."

"Who dwells in that house?"
 "Sir," quoth his Knight, "two damsels amorous
 Who from the Christian folly late have turned
 Because they saw some wretched damsel burned."
 "Nay truly," said the prefect, "was she such
 I saw just now, that any man could touch
 Her body if he lists, so seemed she not
 But like a perfect maid without a spot."

"Yea," said the other, "neither said I so,
 The damsel who stood there I nowise know
 Although ere now myself have had the grace
 To spend some happy hours in that place,
 When slaves enow I saw about the house,
 None other but the sisters amorous.
 And, as to her, I think that verily
 Of some near kin unto them she must be;
 For like to them she is, but fairer still
 And lower down the right side of the hill
 On the worse side whereof all beauty wanes.
 Also it seems to me that whoso gains
 Her lovely body, will be strong and wise
 For she looks hard to win as Paradise." (fols. 7-8; B.M. fols. 56-7[5-6])

The task of winning her is entrusted by Fabricius to another of Morris' invented characters, a faithful and cunning slave. He conducts negotiations with yet another original character, a gossip or bawd who works in the sisters' house. Again there is a wry misunderstanding. The crone thinks that the money offered by the slave is intended as payment for her mistresses' favors, and she indignantly rejects it as being insultingly little. But she is more than placated when the slave indicates that it is for her. The task for which it is payment is the securing of an interview with Dorothea. After a wistful discourse on Dorothea's belief in immortality, the crone promises an interview, but warns that nothing more is to be expected.

With an innocent disregard for Victorian convention—reflecting, perhaps, Morris' own disdain for the niceties of the morning room and withdrawing room—Dorothea admits the slave to a private interview. But his proposal that she should become the kept mistress of Fabricius brings tears and a premonition of martyrdom to Dorothea. In a speech mingling defiance, fortitude, and fear she says:

"O man thou bringest me my death;
 And though indeed my death will bring me life,
 And give me deep rest after pain and strife,
 Yet is my weak heart fain to linger here
 Where many things I find both sweet and dear
 And full strange things for I am young enow
 And many a hidden thing have I to know." (fol. 15; B.M. fol. 61[10])

Her fears are well grounded. After contemplating the matter in torment for a month—a torment parallel to Dorothea's—Fabricius seals an order for her arrest on charges of impiety. His faithful slave tells Dorothea that he will destroy the summons if she yields to Fabricius,



PLATE I

Or else indeed by this you well may guess
What shall befall you for your stubbornness,
The bonds, the hangman's hands, the open shame,
The torturing lash, the gibbet and the flame;
The dark void waste instead of this bright world,
And the dishonoured body rudely hurled
To dogs and birds outside the city gates. (fol. 20; B.M. fol. 65[14])

The mood here is more reminiscent of Swinburne's *algolagnia* than of Morris' normal, oblique treatment of pain and violence. It is a mood that Morris reverts to several times in his narrative of Dorothea's suffering. It recurs briefly, for instance, in the tableau facing Dorothea when she is brought to the judgment throne:

There in the midst upon a gilded throne
Was set her shameless lover all alone,
And on each side of him but lower down
The lawyers sat in solemn hood and gown.
Behind, the sergeants with their javelins stood;
And quite apart, strange things of brass and wood,
And cords and pulleys, and a stout ship's mast.
About which things three rugged fellows past
With hooks and scourges swinging in their hands.
(fol. 22; B.M. fol. 66[15])

Oddly enough, this brutal element in the story is hardly touched on by Swinburne, but it should be remembered that his version is a much simplified narrative.

Dorothea presents a noble exposition of her faith to Fabricius, scorning the false kind of life that he offers:

"Yea, I shall live," she said, "and not alone
Until no trace is left of all this stone
And moths have long consumed these braveries
And midmost here some yellow lion lies
Unchid of any, and the Roman tongue
With pain and toil from old records is wrung;
Yea, Yea, not only till the world is done
And no more use is found for moon or sun;
Happy and tireless I shall live for aye
Feeling no lapse of time or change of day." (fol. 26; B.M. fol. 69 [18])

She is committed to prison to reconsider her attitude. There—in accordance with Morris' practice of alternating misery with happiness—she has a blissful dream of childhood. But the reality to which she wakes is grim. Her sisters are sent to subvert her, but their "half-shamed" pleading is soon overcome by her persuasive advocacy of Christianity and its eternal reward. First Calliste and then Eriste resolve to repent. Returning to the prefect and announcing their reconversions, they are taunted by their former lovers, and brutally reminded by the prefect himself of the torments ahead of them and of the likelihood, when they are faced with a little pain, of their recantation. But they are resolute in spite of extreme torture and are, in accordance with the sources, tied back to back and burnt.

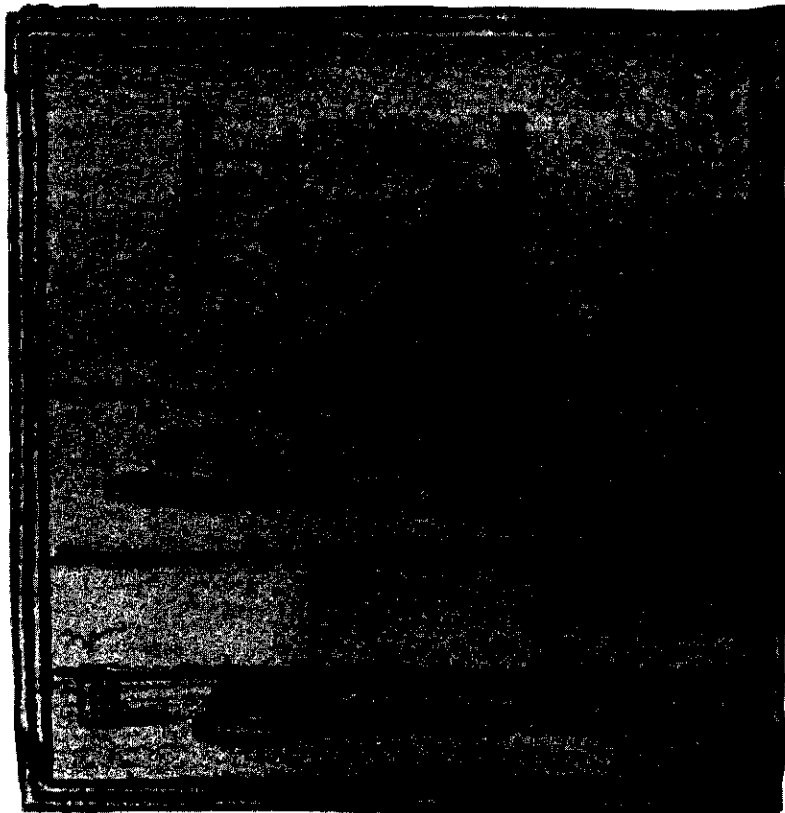


PLATE 28

Dorothea is brought again before Fabricius, her "eyes grey as glass"—the color of so many of Morris' heroines' eyes and of their medieval originals—and again she resists the temptation he offers. After torture she faces him once more, and expresses a desire for a speedy death so that she may "wander in some place where flowers and fruit / Spring up together." On her way to the place of execution this saying is used by Theophilus the Prothonotary as a gibe:

"O maid I should be glad by Juno's head
If you would send me shortly but a few
Of those fair flowers, which would be unto you
Surely a little matter since your King
Is able to do this and everything
And you shall be his love, as would indeed
That your fair body was my earthly mead."

(fol. 39; B.M. fols. 78-9[27-8])

Earnestly she promises to grant his request, and then continues on through snow and ice to be beheaded. Her body is laid on a "bier" and borne with song to the churchyard, accompanied by "many folk." This scene is an important one in Burne-Jones's watercolor of "St. Theophilus and the Angel."

On the other side of the town, Theophilus returns to his home:

But as he set his foot on his threshold
He heard a sound and turning did behold
A strange and fearful but most lovely sight.

There stood an angel clad in raiment bright
Of lovely blue set thick with stars of gold
Drawn round the girdlestead in many a fold;
A green wreath had he on his golden hair
And in the thickening frosty evening air
From both his shoulders wondrous wings arose
With feathers stranger and more fair than those
The solitary bird is wont to bear
Over Egyptian deserts, and these were
Still moving gently, that his naked feet
Rosy and bright scarce touched the wintry street
And on his lips a gentle smile he had,
But calm his face was though so sweet and glad.

(fol. 42; B.M. fol. 80[29])

This is, of course, the dominant scene of Burne-Jones's watercolor.⁸ The work shows a number of incidents connected with the story of Dorothea taking place simultaneously. Having used the street to depict the life of Caesarea and the funeral of Dorothea, he had to place the angel within the

⁸The original watercolor of "St. Theophilus and the Angel" seems to have been destroyed during World War II; it had been in the collection of Arthur Edmund Street, only son of George Edmund Street, the architect to whom Morris was artiled. A replica was executed in 1868, probably with the help of Charles Fairfax Murray; it also appears to be lost. The original was, however, reproduced in O. von Schleinitz, *Burne-Jones, Künstler-Monographien* 55 (Bielefeld and Leipzig, 1901), Plate 19 (facing p. 24). Thirty-seven studies and sketches for the work exist in the Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery. (See the *Catalogue of the Permanent Collection of Drawings in Pen*,

doorway of the building being entered by Theophilus—it is probably the law courts rather than Theophilus' private house as in Morris' poem. The angel is thus on the extreme left of the composition; Theophilus, wistfully looking back towards the bier, is not yet aware of his presence. In the pencil sketch for the whole composition the angel is younger than in the finished work, and is adorned with wings. In the watercolor the wings have gone and the angel, like almost all the other figures, is arranged in contraposto rather than frontally.

Many details of the watercolor are unrelated to Morris' poem. Among them are the decorative girls in the foreground drawing water from a frozen fountain; they were based on Burne-Jones's sisters-in-law, Agnes and Louisa Macdonald (later married to Edward Poynter and Alfred Baldwin respectively).⁹ In another detail the watercolor is indebted to Swinburne rather than to Morris. In Morris' poem it is "the Gods" to whom Dorothea refuses sacrifice; her worship is reserved for "God." But Swinburne makes the spurned idol that of Venus, "The goddess, that was painted with face red / Between two long green tumbled sides of sea."¹⁰ And Burne-Jones, on the right of his watercolor, depicts a slender domed and pillared shrine of Venus, with the women who have watched the execution being led towards it by a priest or magistrate.

Once the angel had been represented as offering the golden basket containing three apples and three roses to Theophilus, Morris seems to have lost interest in the story, which in *The Golden Legend* concludes with an extravagant if pious account of Theophilus' confession, passion, and martyrdom, and an exhortation to become clients of Dorothea. By contrast, Morris in ten lines has Theophilus take the basket, the angel disappear, and Theophilus win the martyr's crown, thus gaining reunion with Dorothea.

Morris' rejection of the story from *The Earthly Paradise* is not difficult to account for. He had too much material for that work, and "The Story of Dorothea" was only one of several discarded tales. But the decision to discard it must have been a marginal one. Morris must have written out at least one draft in addition to the Fitzwilliam manuscript and have had the British

Pencil, Charcoal, Chalk, etc., including Cartoons for Stained Glass, 1939, pp. 55-60.) With the loss of the watercolors, the most important of these is now 509²⁷, a sketch for the whole composition, in pencil on squared paper, 10 1/8 in. x 13 7/8 in., inscribed (not by the artist) "Theophilus & the Angel. E. B. J." For much of the information in this note I am indebted to Miss Andrea Rose, Assistant Keeper in the Birmingham Gallery.

⁹See G[eorgiana] B[urne]-J[ones], *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones* (London, 1904), I, 295.

¹⁰Swinburne "medievalizes" the worship of Venus in terms both of the Mass and of devotion to the Virgin Mary. It was probably this trait that caused Alexander Macmillan to be wary of publishing the poem—see Swinburne's references to Macmillan's "funky reminiscences of the allusions to Venus" in a letter he wrote to Rossetti on September 15, 1864 (*The Swinburne Letters*, I, 108).

Museum manuscript transcribed for him. Perhaps in the end he was influenced by the publication of Swinburne's poem on the same topic in 1866. Or he may have felt that Dorothea's willing acceptance of death assorted ill with stories in which the desire to prolong life was so strong.

May Morris' aversion to the poem is more problematical. She could have had no objection to the Christian basis of the story, for she expressed approval of "warmth and simple piety," and in any case other tales in *The Earthly Paradise* were no less Christian. It is likely, I believe, that her distaste rested on one of two objections—or perhaps both. She may have felt that the poem was too fleshly, particularly in view of Eriste's and Calliste's mode of life after their apostasy, the knight's ribald comments about their profession, and the prefect's taunts. Or she may have felt that the poem was too sadistic in its expressions of delight at the prospect of pain applied to beautiful bodies. There is nothing quite like this elsewhere in Morris' work, and she may have felt that the result was "cold" in the sense of "chilling." Whatever the reason, it is clear that she felt a need to hide the poem from view, but her action was dictated, I believe, by considerations of a social and moral kind that were purely personal and local. The literary quality of the work justifies the removal of the suppression it has suffered.

"Landscape and Sentiment": Morris' First Attempt in Longer Prose Fiction

JESSIE KOCHANOVÁ

I



ON FEBRUARY 11, 1873, following a decade marked by personal "failure" and a series of events crucial to his life and art, Morris wrote to Aglaia Coronio: "My translations go on apace, but I am doing nothing original . . . Sometimes I begin to fear I am losing my invention. You know I very much wish not to fall off in imagination and enthusiasm as I grow older" (*Letters*, p. 53). Biographers have too often quoted the feelings expressed by Morris during this period as if they implied a permanent polarity between melancholy and his general sober and courageous optimism about life, but both biographical and literary evidence confirms that the emotional crisis which affected his creative writing was temporary.

It is generally accepted that his growing appreciation of the Icelandic sagas counteracted his earlier romanticism and "medievalism," giving a new vigor to his literary work, presenting him with a nobler and more useful code of conduct than Malorian chivalry, and coloring his whole future attitude to life itself. It was certainly in this decade that Morris finally bade farewell to any lingering ideas of Christian philosophy, with as much ease as in 1855 he had given up the idea of becoming a clergyman;¹ and his growing preference for the "pagan" outlook of the sagas paved the way for his final acceptance of Marxist materialism.²

The creative block to which Morris refers almost certainly relates to his first tentative essay into prose fiction—his "abortive novel," the manuscript

¹The "laicisation" of Morris' belief is discussed fully by Paul Meier in *La Pensée utopique de William Morris* (Paris, 1972), pp. 17-50.

²See the present writer's interpretation of *Love is Enough*, in "The Poetic Maturing of William Morris," *Brno Studies in English* (Prague, 1964), Ch. 2.