

THE HOLLOW LAND

AND OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS
TO THE OXFORD AND
CAMBRIDGE MAGAZINE

William Morris

WITH A NEW INTRODUCTION BY
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Publisher's Note

The publisher has gone to great lengths to ensure the quality of this reprint but points out that some imperfections in the original book may be apparent.

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INTRODUCTION

I

Morris's earliest publications, the pieces printed in *The Hollow Land and other contributions to the Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*, were not assembled and printed as a book until forty-seven years after the *Magazine* ceased publication with the December 1856 issue. Now we can reconstruct the reasons, both for the long delay and for the decision in 1903 to make a book of these stories, essays and poems. In the course of a uniquely busy and productive life, Morris himself resisted suggestions that he should revise and republish his first work. Harry Buxton Forman says he had a 'genuine misprision' regarding *The Defence of Guenevere*, though he allowed it to be reset and reprinted without alteration in 1875, and he issued a new edition (largely unrevised) from the Kelmscott Press in 1892. But his writing of 1856 was never presented in his later life to that growing audience which, as the century approached its end, valued increasingly the startling new approach to romance Morris had invented in his Oxford days and later developed in *The Defence of Guenevere and other Poems*. Never temperamentally inclined to revision, Morris was like the protagonist of his story 'Frank's Sealed Letter', who says,

I could soon find out whether a thing were possible or not to me; then if it were not, I threw it away for ever, never thought of it again, no regret, no longing for that, it was past and over to me; but if it were possible, and I made up my mind to do it, then and there I began it, and in due time finished it, turning neither to the right hand nor the left till it was done. So I did with all things that I set my hand to.

Revisions, being in the nature of second thoughts or the revisiting of past decisions, have no place in this image of the self, and Morris's later practice seems to confirm that this attitude toward creative production remained with him through his life and had its impact on all the things to which he set his mind or his hand.

But the self is not the only factor involved in such public acts as the writing and publishing of stories, poems, and essays. Copyright law sets conditions and limits to intellectual property rights, underwriting a principle that Morris himself, as the socialist he later was, might have approved: that the human mind works collectively through a common inheritance of ideas, forms, techniques, and – in the case of writers – of language. Inventions, once published, are not absolutely and eternally private property, any more than they were originally entirely our own. The Copyright Act of 1842 provided that Morris's property rights over his literary publications, and those of his heirs and assigns, were protected for forty-two years after publication or seven years after the author's death, whichever was longer. This meant that Morris's first publications in *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* of 1856 were in 1902, when the editors began work on the present volume, already well past the 42-year requirement, and would come into the public domain

on 3 October 1903, seven years after Morris's death. Two of the trustees of the Morris Estate – Robert Proctor (a Morris enthusiast and internationally known expert on early printed books), and Sydney Cockerell – anticipated this by embarking on the present collection when, in January 1903, Messrs. George Bell and Sons proposed to bring out a facsimile version of the *Magazine* with F. G. Stephens, one of the seven members of the original Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, to write an introduction.¹ Cockerell, the principal executive of the Morris Estate trustees, wrote on 27 January to explain the situation to Mrs Morris:

What has happened about the O & C Magazine is this – We are printing Mr. Morris's contributions in book form, & simultaneously Messrs. Bell (the original publishers) have conceived an idea to reprint the thing page by page, & they approached me to know whether supposing the Trustees had any copyright in the articles (WM's will be out of copyright in October) they would raise any objections to the scheme. I didn't see that there was much to be said for or against....²

¹ George Bell was earlier the senior partner in Bell and Daldy of Fleet Street, publishers of *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*, *The Defence of Guenevere*, and the first and second editions of *The Life and Death of Jason*. In 1880 he acquired the Chiswick Press, the most prestigious of Victorian presses and printer of the *Magazine*, the first edition of *The Defence of Guenevere*, and most of the Morris books, including *The Hollow Land*, from 1889 until well after the writer's death. So George Bell's connections with Morris spanned the writer's career. See Edward Bell, *George Bell, Publisher; A Brief Memoir* (London: printed at the Chiswick Press for private circulation, 1924).

² The Cockerell Papers, BL Add. MS 52738. Whatever the reason, the Bell proposal was not carried through; and a facsimile of *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* was not produced until the AMS Press of New York published one in 1972.

But, even though preparing a collection of these early pieces, Cockerell and his fellow trustees were inclined to Morris's judgement, that is, to see them, or at least some of them, as the less permanent productions of youth – 'callow' Morris called them – not up to his later standard and therefore not appropriate for an audience accustomed to his mature work. In 1899, J. W. Mackail said of them:

These romances have never been reprinted. Their author in later years thought, or seemed to think, lightly of them, calling them crude (as they are) and very young (as they are). But they are nevertheless comparable in quality to Keats's 'Endymion': as rich in imagination, as irregularly gorgeous in language, as full in every vein and fibre of the sweet juices and ferment of the spring.³

With Mackail's urging, the executors agreed to publish the collection, but in a limited edition. The book was designed to be a collectors' item, as much like a Kelmscott Press book as it was possible to make it without Morris's own decorative initials and borders. Printed on Kelmscott Press paper in Morris's Golden type, with shoulder notes in red throughout, the book is bound in Kelmscott Press style of blue quarter holland, with grey paper-covered boards and a printed paper spine label. When issued on 10 August 1903, it was beautiful, expensive (the retail price was 25 shillings), and limited to 315 copies, of which 300 were sold and the rest distributed as gifts to the members of the Morris circle of family and friends. When C. J. Longman, the 'Lion of Paternoster Row' and the head

³ *The Life of William Morris*, new edition, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1901), vol. 1, p. 102.

of the Morris publishers Longmans, Green and Company, proposed with the support of Robert Proctor a cheaper edition to be priced at 5 shillings, Cockerell declined, later explaining his reasons to Mrs Morris:

I have not arranged for a cheap edition, as some of the pieces struck me, when reading them carefully for the press, as justifying Mr. Morris's objections to their publication, but it seemed right to gather them together in a limited edition – & probably someone else will print at any rate some of the stories, of which the copyright will expire in October.⁴

Cockerell was certainly right about the interest of other publishers in these early writings. Such trade journals as *The Publishers' Circular* and the major library catalogues, the *British Library Catalogue*, and the *National Union Catalogue* of the United States, record many new editions of the individual poems and stories, as well as various combinations of them, issued in the last months of 1903, and through 1904 and 1905. And C. J. Longman was probably right to call attention to the commercial prospects in favour of a cheaper edition, but one was never published.

While conscious of the need to protect the Morris property, the trustees were never inclined to give exclusive attention to commercial prospects, seeing their central obligation as giving expression to the 'will' of Morris, not only as expressed in the legal will but also as to his values so far as they could know them

⁴ Letter of 29 July 1903 (BL Add. MS 52738). Proctor says in his diary (20 August 1903) that though he 'angled' for a cheap edition, it was opposed by Crom Price and Philip Webb (BL Add. MS 50192). This is a fair sample of how discussion and decision-making were extended beyond the trustees to the inner Morris circle when important issues involving the use of the Morris copyright were in question.

from years of personal and professional association. One obvious consequence of all this is that the first edition of *The Hollow Land and other contributions to The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* has remained a rare book. Though in 1910 the text was reset for volume 1 of *The Collected Works of William Morris* (also a limited edition), the first edition has never been reproduced until now.⁵

II

The original editors – Sydney Cockerell and Robert Proctor, both trustees – are not identified in *The Hollow Land*; and their contribution, though crucial to the book, is nowhere described. Besides the painstaking sub-editorial task of proof-reading, they settled the design and copied and edited the texts, with particular attention to correcting the accidentals. Proctor proposed a policy for their handling of these matters:

As to punctuation, etc., my view which was gradually formed in the copying process is this: that there are two alternatives before us: one is to produce an exact reprint of the original, misprints, mispunctuations (which often make sheer nonsense) and all, and state publicly that it is so. The other is to do for our author what he would have done for himself, as far as may be; at any rate to give the matter the best presentation, and not to handicap it by irrelevant difficulties.

⁵ The term 'edition' is used here and throughout in its bibliographical sense, as meaning 'the whole number of copies of a book printed at any time or times from substantially the same setting of type-pages' (Fredson Bowers, *Principles of Bibliographical Description* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949, reprinted 1962], p. 39).

And this I think is our duty, because if we don't do it, nobody else can, but anybody after October 1903 can issue facsimile reprints to his heart's content. One can hardly imagine anyone less likely to take trouble about proof-reading and correction than W. M. at 22; the work he did not do then we should do now as far as lies in our power.⁶

That they did their editing according to Proctor's rationale is obvious if the present text is compared with the paragraphing, punctuation, spelling, etc., of the original magazine. They also chose the format, type, and paper – though Proctor proposed 'an apple paper quarto in the Chaucer type',⁷ they settled on a flower paper octavo in Golden type – and created a title (using the one from Morris's longest tale). But, most important, the editors decided the contents.

Settling the contents proved to be their major difficulty because it forced them to revisit the vexed question of precisely which pieces Morris contributed to *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*. Except for the poem 'The Porch of Life', which is initialled 'G. B. M.' for Georgiana Macdonald (later Lady Burne-Jones), items printed there were unsigned.

Consequently, when the editors began their work on this book in mid-1902, the growing public reputations of several contributors, particularly Morris and Burne-Jones, as well as the fame of D. G. Rossetti, meant that the authorship of the contributions had become a matter of curious interest. Various lists were made, usually but not always by contributors, lists that have an unfortunate and confusing tendency to contradict

⁶ Proctor to Cockerell, 28 September 1902 (Cockerell Papers, BL Add MS 52743).

⁷ Proctor to Cockerell, 23 September 1902 (*loc. cit.*).

each other. The 'Contents' list on p. iii of *The Hollow Land* embodies Cockerell and Proctor's decisions after their own investigation. Though the product of independent enquiry and judgement, the Cockerell-Proctor list matches that published by J. W. Mackail,⁸ and both are consistent with *The Hollow Land* as reprinted by May Morris in volume 1 of *The Collected Works of William Morris* (1910-15). But all three disagree with most of the earlier lists as well as the two previous bibliographies of Morris, both published in 1897. They also disagree with several later ones, including *The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals*. Where Morris is concerned, and his are the contributions most discussed, the disagreements centre on three items: 'The Two Partings', published in the February issue and 'A Night in a Cathedral', in the May issue, both prose fiction, and 'Ruskin and the Quarterly', a critical essay published in June. The disagreement remains a present issue.⁹

This first reprinting of *The Hollow Land editio princeps* provides the occasion for a review of the controversy. From the 1880s through the late twentieth century, scholars have attributed the two stories variously to Morris or to William Fulford, while the essay on Ruskin has been assigned to Morris, or Burne-

⁸ See *The Life of William Morris*, vol. 1, p. 92.

⁹ Helen Timo cites style and subject matter as her evidence for saying that Morris wrote 'A Night in a Cathedral' in 'A Church without God: William Morris's "A Night in a Cathedral"', *The Journal of the William Morris Society*, vol. 4, no. 2 (Summer 1980), pp. 24-31; and, following her lead, J. M. Baissus maintains, on the same grounds of style and subject matter, that not only 'A Night in a Cathedral' but all three disputed pieces are by Morris in 'Morris and the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*', *The Journal of the William Morris Society*, vol. 5, no. 2 (Winter 1982), pp. 2-13.

Jones, or to the two of them in collaboration.¹⁰ Though over a century old and correspondingly intricate, this controversy may yet yield something to analysis; a present perspective may at least clarify some of the issues, particularly with some new evidence which has recently become available.

III

Obviously, the main lists of Morris's contributions have their authority by virtue of their sources of information about the *Magazine*. In the following descriptive list, only those that have the clearest claim on our attention appear, with some account of other documents where they are relevant to a particular list. In this 'list of lists', items are in roughly chronological order, and each includes a summary of the position taken on the three disputed pieces:

1. The Vernon Lushington-William Bell Scott list is the 'OxCam List' of the *Wellesley Index*. It appears to be the first attempt at a comprehensive set of attributions to get public notice.¹¹ Here 'Ruskin and the

¹⁰ And these uncertainties have had their consequences. No less a scholar than John Dixon Hunt attributes 'A Night in a Cathedral' by turns to Morris, then to Fulford. See *The Pre-Raphaelite Imagination: 1848-1900* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), pp. 41-2, 131. In the *Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940) the entry on Morris, by S. C. Cockerell (vol. 3, p. 314) gives him credit for the same contributions that appear in Mackail and *The Hollow Land*, neither of which gives the essay to Morris; but in the same source, in H. G. Pollard's section on Ruskin, 'Ruskin and the *Quarterly*' is attributed to Morris and Burne-Jones (vol. 3, p. 706).

¹¹ An abbreviated version of this list, from a marked copy made available by Messrs. W. Heffer and Sons of Cambridge, was published by Walter Graham in his *English Literary Magazines* (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1930, reprinted 1966), pp. 300-301.

Quarterly' and 'A Night in a Cathedral' are assigned to Morris, but there is no reference to 'The Two Partings'. This list is usually found in marked copies of the magazine, perhaps because it was the first comprehensive table of contents and circulated widely in an unpublished form. Its difficulty, besides its omissions, is that Vernon Lushington, being one of the Cambridge group of contributors, did not have direct contact with the inner circle of Oxford contributors at the time, and William Bell Scott was neither a contributor nor a member of the Oxford group. And some of the attributions, eg. the assignment of 'The Porch of Life' to William Fulford, are demonstrably wrong.

2. The Price Lists, of which there are at least two, were compiled by Cormel Price, one of the Oxford group that planned and wrote for *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*. He remained an intimate of the Morris circle for the rest of his life. The earlier set of his attributions appears in his letter to an unidentified correspondent, dated 14 March 1889. In the first list, 'Ruskin and the Quarterly' is given to Burne-Jones, but with some hesitation indicated by a question mark following the attribution. Both 'The Two Partings' and 'A Night in a Cathedral' are unequivocally ascribed to William Fulford. But 'Twelfth Night; or What You Will. A Study in Shakespeare', usually ascribed to Fulford as author of a three-part series on Shakespeare, is given to Morris.¹²

Price's second set of attributions, used in the *Wellesley Index*, is contained in Price's letters to Falconer Madan on 19 November and 22 December 1909, twenty years

after his first list.¹³ It is a notable instance of consistency in a debate marked more by inconsistencies, that between the early and late Price lists the only changes relating to Morris are the switching from him of 'Twelfth Night' to 'Mrs Hill?' and the removal of the uncertainty concerning Burne-Jones's authorship of 'Ruskin and the Quarterly' with the removal of the aforementioned question mark. These changes, moreover, belong to later issues of the *Magazine*, about which Price says he cannot guarantee his accuracy. It may also be worth noting that so far as Morris's contributions are concerned the second Price list matches the Mackail printed list, this *Hollow Land* volume, and the reprint of that in volume 1 of *The Collected Works of William Morris*.

3. Harry Buxton Forman provides two lists in his Morris bibliography.¹⁴ The first he calls 'the Morris list' because 'Morris himself was my authority for that list' (as a claim to authority, this tops all the lists). The second, a comprehensive table of contents, is his own. But for the purpose of identifying the Morris contributions, they both give the same testimony: 'The Two Partings' and 'Ruskin and the Quarterly' are attributed to Morris, 'A Night in a Cathedral' to Fulford. It is true that Forman carefully qualifies his appeal to Morris's

¹³ The holograph Price letters of 1909 and Madan's list are in the collection of Prof. Joseph Dunlop of New York City. I am grateful to Prof. Dunlop for his generous provision of copies of these documents and for pointing out the change in the attribution of 'A Night in a Cathedral' in the *Wellesley Index*, vols. 4 and 5, which I had not noticed.

¹⁴ *The Books of William Morris* (London: Hollings, 1897, reprinted 1967), pp. 27-8 and 28-32. Since it merely repeats the Morris attributions of the Lushington-Bell Scott list and turns up no new sources of information, the list in Temple Scott's *A Bibliography of the Works of William Morris* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1897), p. 38, is not discussed here.

¹² This 1889 letter is in the collection of Mr Mark Samuels Lasner of Washington DC, to whom I am indebted both for drawing it to my attention and supplying a copy.

authority, saying: 'Morris did not profess to be certain about all the ascriptions in this list, and it turns out to be wrong in several particulars' (p. 26). But the errors he cites all have to do with other contributors. The reader is left with Morris's authority intact where his own work is concerned.

Documents in Carmel, California, in the Morris collection of Sanford and Helen Berger, reveal some of Forman's efforts to compile his list and provide an insight into his relation to the Morris circle and his claim to the authority of Morris.¹⁵ Two letters from Georgiana Burne-Jones to Forman, dated respectively 19 February and 28 May 1897, are obviously in response to queries from Forman. In the first she says she tried in 1895 to compile a list, with the help of both Morris and her husband, but without success; that the *Magazine* depended on rather than initiated friendships; that towards the end as members of the original group became interested in other things, some help with contributions was sought from outside the circle; and that none of her sisters wrote anything for the *Magazine*. Her second letter returns two holograph lists, both written in a copperplate hand. One is headed 'List of Articles in Oxford and Cambridge Mag. from a list supplied by Mr. Vernon Lushington and Mr. W. Bell Scott'. The other, unsigned, is the Forman list of attributions as published in his bibliography. The file also has a fragment of a list, clearly in Forman's hand, with a heading that indicates it is from a marked copy, hence it may be a version of the Lushington list (as one might expect, marked copies have a tendency to inconsistency

¹⁵ I am indebted to Mr and Mrs Berger for many kindnesses, including especially their hospitality when I worked with their collection in 1990 and, later, their generous supply of copies of the documents discussed here.

even when the source of their attributions is identified). In her covering letter, Georgiana says she had, as requested by Forman, offered the lists to Mackail, her son-in-law, on the chance that they might be of use to him in the Morris biography. It seems however that Mackail's reaction was only that, 'there was nothing new to him in them'. She ends by declining to go into detail about the attributions since she is not certain about some items. Her expression communicates clearly a very polite but also very firm refusal to say what she does know, other than that Forman is wrong.

4. J. W. Mackail produced three known lists, two as unpublished holograph working notes. The first of these notes is limited to Morris's contributions, and the second is a complete list of writers and works in the *Magazine*. Both began existence as research notes taken down in his Notebooks as he prepared *The Life of William Morris*. His third list, which is confined to Morris's contributions, is published in the *Life*.¹⁶ Mackail never made his hand-written notes public, and parts of them show clear evidence of revision. It seems impossible to say from the evidence in the Notebooks whether the revisions were made before or after the *Life* was published in April 1899; but in the normal course the notes are preliminary to the publication.

There is one significant discrepancy – if it is properly described as a discrepancy – between the list in Mackail's *Life* and the two MS lists, both in the first

¹⁶ Mackail's Notebooks, of which there are four (WMG, J163–J166), two for each volume of *The Life*, and his MS Notes (WMG, J188, J190), contain summaries of and quotations from a good deal of unpublished correspondence of Fulford and the other members of the Oxford circle of contributors, material only some of which found its way into the *Life*. Mackail's records are part of the collection at The William Morris Gallery, Walthamstow (WMG).

volume of the Notebooks (WMG, J163). The list of Morris's contributions published in the *Life* makes no mention of any of the three disputed pieces, enforcing the inference that Morris wrote none of them. But the list in the first Notebook differs from that in the *Life*. Arranged in tabular form with the months down the left margin and the headings 'Prose' and 'Poetry' across the top, the original entry is written in ink. But after the first draft, a further note was added, in pencil, in a space previously left blank opposite 'June' and under 'Prose', saying: 'Part of Ruskin & the Quarterly.' Otherwise, the MS list matches the published one: ie. 'The Two Partings' and 'A Night in a Cathedral' are excluded. A few pages further on in this Notebook is the complete list of attributions, where the two stories are ascribed to Fulford and the essay to 'Morris & Jones'. In his MS Notes (WMG, J188), Mackail adds a further comment:

Ruskin and the Quarterly – Burne-Jones and Morris, mainly the former: but Lady Burne-Jones in 1859 puts it down to Morris. The evidence of style is decisive to my mind for the preponderance of Burne-Jones in the actual writing.

And here he also says of his attributions to William Fulford of 'The Two Partings' and 'A Night in a Cathedral': 'authorship quite certain.' This 1859 attribution by Lady Burne-Jones needs to be read, obviously, with her later comments to H. B. Forman in mind.

But, though these comments were enough, apparently, to convince the authors of *The Wellesley Index* that the essay is a 'collaboration', ambiguity still hangs about Mackail's comment. First, the use of 'the evidence of

style' as a guide to authorship raises questions, particularly when used in conjunction with words like 'preponderance'. Were there parts notably not in Burne-Jones's style? And the phrase 'actual writing' seems to lean toward a separation of content from writing, suggesting that the ideas may be those of Morris and Burne-Jones, but the writing is Burne-Jones. But if this is what Mackail means to say, it raises the question whether this is properly called a 'collaboration'. Writers may confer about ideas, and adopt from any source; but so long as 'actual writing' means something distinct from taking dictation, as it would have to do in order to display an individual style, authorship surely refers to who does the 'actual writing'.

Another uncertainty as to Mackail's meaning surfaced in 1904. In that year he replied to a query from the editors of *The Works of John Ruskin*, E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, regarding who wrote 'Ruskin and the Quarterly'. Edward T. Cook says in his Introduction to volume 5 of *The Works of John Ruskin*:

One of the attacks on him [ie. Ruskin] – that in the *Quarterly Review* for March, 185– requires mention as having called forth in reply one of the few productions of Burne-Jones's pen. This was an article entitled 'Ruskin and the *Quarterly*', which he contributed to the Oxford and Cambridge Magazine for June, 1856, and which represented the joint feelings and views of himself and William Morris.¹⁷

Again, the content is shared with Morris while the writing comes from Burne-Jones. This provided the ground on which Walter K. Gordon, then preparing his

¹⁷ Library Edition (London: George Allen, 1904) vol. 5, p. lx.

Ph.D. thesis on the *Magazine*, decided that, contrary to Forman's list, the article should be attributed to Burne-Jones.¹⁸ But, attaching to this passage is a footnote in which Cook elects to paraphrase Mackail in a way that revives the note of ambiguity:

The article is attributed to Morris in Mr. H. Buxton Forman's *The Books of William Morris* (1897, p. 27); but Mr. Mackail informs me that, while representing the opinions of both Morris and Burne-Jones, it was for the most part written by the latter.¹⁹

The distinction between the writing and the content, or 'opinions', again raises the question whether this piece can be properly described as a joint effort. That ambiguity provides the ground, however, for the citation in the Cook and Wedderburn 'Bibliography', where the article is described as 'Written by Burne-Jones and William Morris'.²⁰

So, considering both the meaning of his various utterances, the nature of the two lists he left behind, and the one he published, which of his statements did Mackail mean to stand as his final position? Or, to put the same question another way, what weighting should be assigned to his different ascriptions in the notes and the list he published in the *Life*? Given the difference between his notes and the list of Morris's contributions in the *Life*, which should be taken as Mackail's final,

considered judgement? In the end the answer is surprisingly simple: though *The Life of William Morris* was one of the most celebrated biographies in an age of great biographies and went through numerous reprints and new editions during its writer's life, each of which offered the opportunity of revision, Mackail never altered his original published list. The Notebooks, as their name implies, have only the status of a record, more or less accurate and more or less complete, intended to be a help to memory during the process of research and deliberation. They do not have the author's approval for publication, that being reserved for the result of deliberation. In the absence of compelling evidence – and what evidence there is is not compelling – of a revised judgement, that result is only to be seen in the published work, *The Life of William Morris*. The most important insight the Notebooks provide is that in making the decisions involved in the list published in the *Life*, Mackail had at his disposal a greater array of documents from the members of the Oxford circle, including letters and diaries, than any other list-maker whose work survives.

5. The table of contents in *The Hollow Land and other contributions to The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* conveys the judgements of the editors of what items Morris wrote. The book says nothing of what led to their decisions, but the correspondence and diary entries of the time leave no doubt that they approached the question anew, not merely accepting Mackail, but looking at both internal and external evidence, and seeking advice where reliable advice was available. That they began with Forman's list as a guide seems likely, since they began with the inclusion of 'The Two Partings', and Forman's is the only major list that

¹⁸ Except in this instance, Gordon in his thesis accepts the attributions of H. B. Forman. See his *A Critical Selected Edition of William Morris's Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* (Dissertation, The University of Pennsylvania, 1960), p. 88.

¹⁹ E.T. Cook, *loc. cit.*

²⁰ *Works of John Ruskin*, vol. 38, p. 136.

assigns that story to Morris.²¹ Shortly after they began work, Cockerell heard something that shook his confidence in Forman's accuracy, perhaps nearly as much as confidence in his honesty was shaken some five years earlier when the appearance of forged Morris first editions led them to suspect Forman's complicity in manufactured rarities.²² Cockerell wrote Proctor about his misgivings with regard to Forman's ascription of 'The Two Partings' to Morris and got the following reply, dated 28 September 1902:

The Two Partings is certainly rot, but I don't think it (the prose) much worse than Frank's Sealed Letter, the authorship of which is not disputed. I had no doubt when copying it that it was by W. M., I confess. Mackail, I see, omits it, but he also omits Ruskin and the Quarterly. It will certainly be best left out, if you are sure about it. (BL Add. MS 52743)

Clearly, to question the attribution of this story was to open questions regarding the other pieces Forman did or did not attribute to Morris.

In the end Cockerell and Proctor omitted all three disputed pieces. But they first satisfied themselves that Morris did not collaborate on 'Ruskin and the Quarterly'. This, it seems, they did by consulting with Georgiana Burne-Jones. And she, on this occasion being more cooperative than she had been earlier with

²¹ Mackail also consulted Forman's work, not only through the handwritten list that came to him via his mother-in-law (see above), but using the Forman book. This is confirmed by Mackail's Notebook citations of page numbers when referring to specific Morris publications, page numbers that clearly locate discussion of the same items in Forman.

²² See John Collins, *The Two Forgers: a Biography of Harry Buxton Forman and Thomas James Wise* (New Castle, Delaware: Oak Knoll Books, 1992), pp. 139-41.

Forman, provided an answer different from the one reported in Mackail's Notebook. In a letter dated 29 July 1903, from Cockerell to Mrs Morris, Cockerell arranges the distribution of the fifteen gift copies of *The Hollow Land*:

The volume of contributions to the Oxford and Cambridge Magazine is now being bound, and I think you will like it.²³ I have directed Longmans to send a copy to Lady Burne-Jones, who took pains to settle a difficulty that arose about the authorship of one of the pieces.

That the 'one of the pieces' was 'Ruskin and the Quarterly' seems an inevitable conclusion. Edward Burne-Jones having died some years earlier, she was the one living person best placed to say who wrote it, and that she went to some lengths to 'settle' that question seems obvious from the context.

6. Our continuing uncertainty regarding Morris's contributions to the *Magazine* is evident even in *The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals*, the last list requiring review here. Over the years since its publication, people concerned with questions of authorship in Victorian periodicals have come confidently to expect definitive judgements from *The Index*. But where Morris and *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* are concerned, there are some surprises. First, there is the odd acceptance of Mackail's Notebooks as more authoritative than the list in *The Life of William Morris*. From this follows the description of 'Ruskin

²³ Readers will notice that the date the book was 'finished,' as stated in the colophon (p. 233), 10 July 1903, obviously refers only to the machining. The actual day of issue was 10 August, as indicated in Longmans' accounts for that year (The Smith Bequest Archive, The Library of the William Morris Society, Kelmscott House, Hammersmith).

and the Quarterly' as a 'collaboration' between Morris and Burne-Jones. There is no reference in the *Index* to the list in the Morris biography, for which the Notebooks were a preparation, except as the occasion for the MS Notes, nor is there any attempt to account for the differences between the Morris ascriptions there and those in the Notebooks. Whether or how much weight was given to Mackail's correspondence with the editors of *The Works of John Ruskin* is not discussed.

Finally, readers may wonder about the published second thoughts of the editor in volumes 4 and 5 (here different from the two original editors) regarding 'A Night in a Cathedral'. In volume 2 of the *Index* (1972), Walter E. Houghton and Walter K. Gordon, the writers of the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* section, decide that both 'A Night in a Cathedral' and 'The Two Partings' are by William Fulford. But *The Wellesley Index* volumes 4 (1987) and 5 (1988), edited by Jean Harris Slingerland, differ from volume 2 in that 'A Night in a Cathedral', is removed from Fulford, given to Morris and retitled 'A Night in (Amiens) Cathedral'.²⁴ No explanation, other than references to the various lists, is provided for the change. But the section of the *Index* devoted to additions and corrections suggests that the shift came of the discovery at the University of Tennessee of another marked copy of the *Magazine*²⁵ with attributions corresponding to the Lushington-Bell Scott (or 'OxCam') List. So questions arise: how can the number of marked copies discovered bear on the reliability of the attributions they contain? Is the insertion of '(Amiens)' in the title taken to mean

²⁴ Bracketing by the editor of those volumes.

²⁵ See *The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals*. 5 vols. (Toronto: The University of Toronto Press, 1972-88) vol. 4, pp. 797, 817, and vol. 5, p. 558.

that Morris is the more likely author, having visited there in 1855 and written two pieces for the *Magazine* that make use of that experience? But William Fulford also made that trip, in company with Morris and Burne-Jones, and he too had a personal and increasing professional interest in medieval churches, being himself not only intended but destined for the priesthood. But it is vain to speculate on arguments never uttered.

IV

So where are we now with reference to the three disputed pieces? The evidence so far assembled indicates a definite conclusion: Mackail's decisions in the *Life*, Cockerell and Proctor's in *The Hollow Land*, and May Morris in volume 1 of *The Collected Works of William Morris* provide the most reliable guide to Morris's contributions. But there are, besides the earlier Price list and Georgiana Burne-Jones's letters, two other bits of evidence that have, strangely, not been noted, though they arise from internal evidence of the texts. The first is simply the observation that 'Ruskin and the Quarterly' is written throughout in the first person singular. Properly to see the significance of this, something of the context is helpful. Fulford published an essay on Tennyson in the first number, in response to which the poet laureate responded with thanks for the 'refreshing' qualities of 'truthfulness and earnestness' of the magazine and said, 'very refreshing likewise is the plain "I" in lieu of the old hackneyed unconscientious editorial "we". May you go on and prosper.'²⁶

²⁶ Quoted in Mackail's *Life*, p. 90.

Considering the group's commitment to just those qualities of earnestness and candour and the high estimation of Tennyson in the group, it is reasonable to presume that the great poet's comments circulated around the Oxford circle, as they finally came to the notice of Morris's biographer. Given that context, and even without that context, it is hard to imagine Burne-Jones and Morris concealing a plural authorship under a singular pronoun.

The second point is that William Fulford, like Morris, was a poet – or at least thought he was – and he published several volumes of poetry after his Oxford years.²⁷ In the earliest of his volumes, *Songs of Life* (1859), two poems appear – 'Lost Love' and 'Love Long Ago' – both of which first appeared in 'The Two Partings' in 1856.²⁸ So, there can be no reasonable doubt that Fulford wrote the story. And, this being the case, there is yet more reason to doubt Forman's appeal to the 'authority' of Morris for an attribution that can now be seen clearly to be wrong.²⁹ In the April issue of the *Magazine*, Morris used the same device, incorporating a poem in 'Frank's Sealed Letter'. This he later reprinted in *The Defence of Guenevere* (1858), with a

²⁷ I am indebted to Roger Simpson for reminding me that Fulford was a published poet. His article 'In Defence of William Fulford: A Minor Pre-Raphaelite Poet', *The Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies*, vol. 2 ns, no. 2 (Fall 1993), pp. 21–7, makes the case for Fulford's early work. Walter Gordon mentioned Fulford's poetry in his 1960 thesis, but the actual poetry is easily passed over, copies being difficult to find. The copy referred to here is the British Library's.

²⁸ *Songs of Life* (London: Alexander Heylin, 1859). 'Lost Love' is on pp. 101–102 and 'Love Long Ago' on p. 106.

²⁹ John Collins estimates that 'approximately 10 per cent of the contents of his Morris bibliography are his own productions, authorised and unauthorised' (*The Two Forgers*, p. 132). It must be a question now whether Forman's 'Morris list' is not also one of 'his own productions'.

title, 'In Prison', not included in the story. It is possible that he was inspired to use the poem as part of his story by Fulford's doing so in 'Two Partings' in the February issue. It is even possible, but more difficult, to imagine that Morris might have so far forgotten what really happened that he claimed 'The Two Partings' for himself. On the other hand, with present knowledge of Forman's production of 'creative forgeries', false 'first editions', it is not at all difficult to imagine him claiming a spurious (and unique) attribution as having the authority of Morris, that being a means of enhancing the claims of his bibliography.

In the end, all of this reinforces the decisions of Mackail, Cockerell and Proctor, and May Morris. Incontrovertible evidence is not available in all cases of the disputed pieces, but it is clear enough where the most authoritative and disinterested testimony is to be had. That testimony, as the published record indicates, is unanimous in saying that Morris wrote none of the three disputed pieces.

V

Morris created sixteen pieces for the *Magazine*: eight tales, mostly romances of a new and different kind; five poems, lyric and narrative; and three essays, on Amiens Cathedral, on two paintings by Alfred Rethel, and on Browning's *Men and Women*. To a surprising degree, they reveal the permanent features of his sensibility and thought. His sensuous affinity for the past world here combines with his ability to convey an extremely realistic imaginative conception and evocation of that world. In the romances, both prose and verse, he

strives to make the past present, to concentrate on that which operates at the borderline where dream or day-dream, the past, imagination, make contact with consciousness, the present, and reason. By careful structuring of meaningful detail³⁰ and action the stories suggest a coherence just beyond the reach of reason, but not therefore unreasonable. They attempt, not always successfully, to evoke a mystery, not a muddle. In the beginning the conventions of medieval romance and courtly love are there, deliberately evoked, but the brute fact of violent death and the betrayal of innocence turns the romance into a container for life as it was actually lived in those times, a far stronger vintage than the reader expects from the form. The narrative voice often comes from the dead, but even the dead provide no certain answers to the questions raised by their stories. What Amanda Hodgson says of the story 'Golden Wings', that it is 'at all points the antithesis of a medieval romance',³¹ applies with an equal force to most of these tales. The glorious pictures of buildings of the medieval past, the brilliant hues and design of clothing, arms and accoutrements, the symbolism of heraldry and colour, the protagonists' heroic aspiration to achieve honour, the tender love of man and maid, often seem to make more shocking the brutality of the medieval polity, more hopeless the struggle against overwhelming mortality as religious belief wanes.

³⁰ Frequently detail is made more significant by deliberate parallels with literary models, eg. the 'West Wind' in 'A Dream' (and elsewhere) with Shelley's 'Ode', or the pond in 'Lindenberg Pool' with Keats's in 'La Belle Dame'. That these early romances are not merely a retreat into literary make-believe is clearly demonstrated by Amanda Hodgson in her study of *The Romances of William Morris* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

³¹ *ibid.*, p. 38.

But what the romances embody in symbol and story the essays make explicit: that the crises of human life are moral, ie. that they have to do with free choice, with that which aspires to a good beyond the reach of death. To Morris in his youth as in his age, history is not a mere chronicle of chaos and destruction. In 'The Churches of North France. Shadows of Amiens', a connection, even a continuity across the ages is made possible through the popular art of the medieval workman. And if the courage of the knight in Browning's 'Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came' cannot overcome the death that awaits him, still – as Morris says – 'his life flows out triumphantly with that blast he blew'. Browning's art gives that action life and the power to move us. It has been said that Morris's review of Browning's *Men and Women* was the first properly to apprehend and state the extraordinary accomplishment that volume represents.³² What has not often been observed is that Morris, who from the first disliked critics and writing criticism, habitually displays a notable sensitivity and soundness of critical judgement when he takes the critic's role. What is more than usually apparent in this case is his independence of conventional attitudes, which involves his close attention to and honesty regarding his own responses, and his willingness to expend the effort required to open himself to the new experience of Browning's poetry at a time, 1855–6, when critical responses generally flowed in the opposite direction:

...I suppose, reader, that you see whereabouts I place Robert Browning; high among the poets of all time,

³² See, for example, Walter K. Gordon, 'Pre-Raphaelitism and the Oxford and Cambridge Magazine', *The Journal of the Rutgers University Library*, vol. 29, no. 2 (June 1966), pp. 42–51.

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and I scarce know whether first or second, in our own: and, it is a bitter thing to me to see the way in which he has been received by almost everybody.... (p. 286)

It is this honest independence combined with moral and aesthetic sensitivity and general soundness of judgement that positioned Morris in advance of his time, made him a great innovator in most of his pursuits. These also are the qualities that make his contributions to *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* a clear harbinger of his life work.

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THE HOLLOW LAND AND OTHER
CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE OXFORD
AND CAMBRIDGE MAGAZINE BY
WILLIAM MORRIS