300 copies have been printed for Theodore Lilienthal and Ward Ritchie for distribution to the members of the Roxburghe Club and the Zamorano Club.

The Ward Ritchie Press
September 21, 1958
The sun grows dim and the day waxes old  
And the blossoms droop, for May is a-cold  
And the nook in the street the wind doth hold
   And the night lies dark before us

But come if ye are weary and sad  
Or think too much of the days ye have had,  
For here is yet what shall make you glad
   Though the night lies dark before us

Shut in a narrow prison it is  
That weaver of the veil of bliss  
Across the face of all memories
   When the dark night lies before us

How shall we name it better than Wine  
That glorious hope, that deathless sign  
That the heavens yet to the earth encline
   Though the night lies dark before us

Think how while we sorrowed and slept  
Higher and higher the earth's flame crept  
Till out of the press the red stream leapt
   Ab the dark night lies before us

How did we yearn in our misery  
Till across the land and across the sea  
It came to the land where the chill winds be
   And the night lies dark before us

Come then and wreath this dark flask fair  
With the flowers our heads no more may bear  
Lest we scorch them black with the fires of curb
   For the dark night lies before us
Yea, lightly lay your hand thereon
For there lies hid the life of the son
Whereby are sorrow and joy made one
When the night lies dark before us

Sweet sweet, as the primrose beds
As the summer wind o'er the lily-heads
As the clover field the night dew weds
When the dark night lies dark before us

Heart O heart, now growest thou bold
And hope long dead, and a love long cold
For a little minute thou yet mayst hold
Ere the night lies dark before us

And this hard world that we kept at bay,
The panting struggles of yesterday
We gaze on now like an idle play
For the dark night lies dark before us

Clear grow our eyes and we see how vain
Were hope and fear of pleasure and pain—
How shall it be when it comes again?
Yet the night lies dark before us

Loath to depart, yet weak to abide,
Praying to see yet fain to hide
Bringing together that we may divide,
While the dark night lies dark before us

Such were we once, but now through thee
We share but the woes of divinity;
Better or worse we cannot be
And the night lies dark before us

With pensive tears hast thou filled our eyes
As musically now, and overwise
We talk of the curse that over us lies
And the dark night stretched before us

And if tomorrow but short and vain
We call this space betwixt pain and pain,
Yet life is long, it shall hap again,
Ere the dark night closes o'er us

W

WILLIAM MORRIS became a great influence in my life when, in 1928, I was introduced to Mrs. Alice Millard and her Little Museum of La Miniatura. This small, fragile woman, with piercing eyes and a glory of blue-gray hair, cherished an abiding passion for Morris, an enthusiasm which she kindled in almost everyone she met. I was attending Occidental College in Los Angeles at the time and, as a major in English literature, was interested in books—though in content rather than in format. Formitiously, there was a girl in one of my classes who knew Mrs. Millard and who took me one day to see the Little Museum.

It was a place which, once seen, would be remembered always. Situated precariously in a small tree-shrouded canyon dipping into the Arroyo Seco in Pasadena was a house of ornamental concrete blocks built by Frank Lloyd Wright. It was perfectly designed for tiny Alice Millard; few others could enter save at the hazard of a bumped head. Wright thought of it as a completely "modern" house but Mrs. Millard filled it with renaissance furniture and books of all periods. This at first horrified Wright but eventually, in admiration, he admitted that beautiful things of whatever age combine satisfactorily. In the canyon, beside the house, was the Little Museum where exhibits were held and books were displayed. Alice Millard, be it understood, was a bookseller who created a beautiful setting for very choice books which she offered to affluent California collectors.
She enjoyed sharing, especially with young people, her great enthusiasm for the printing revival inaugurated by William Morris in the nineties. Perhaps that is why she devoted so much time to showing me the beautiful Kelmscott Press books: the Chaucer in the Cobden-Sanderson binding, The Golden Legend, a copy of Gothic Architecture. The latter she vainly offered to sell me for $2.50, indicating something other than altruism, but her Morris enthusiasm was catching.

I later learned that as a young girl she had entered the “Saints and Sinners” corner of McClurg’s book store in Chicago in search of Mackail’s Life and Letters of William Morris. There she met George Madison Millard who admitted that he had known Morris. This meeting led to a dinner engagement, to marriage, and, after Millard’s death, to the book business in Pasadena. It led also, eventually, to my introduction to the works of Morris the printer and to my entry into the craft.

This may seem a circumlocutory approach to the subject of William Morris’ Praise of Wine, but except for my excessive interest in and admiration for the man I never would have spent $2.50 for the original manuscript of this poem. This leads to memories of another bookseller, perhaps one of the kindliest and sweetest who ever catered to an impecunious book buyer. Ernest Dawson, who, when I first knew him, had his shop at the corner of Wilshire and Grand in Los Angeles, believed in buying the best books he could find and in getting rid of those same books as quickly as possible. There were never many “dusters” on Dawson’s shelves. He shifted his stock continually to give it fresh appeal but if, after a few months, a worthy book did not sell, he would reduce its price. If need be he would reduce it again and yet again until at last it would briefly come to rest on one of his bargain tables where no one could resist it. Knowing this, many Los Angeles booklovers made daily pilgrimages to Dawson’s to investigate the bargain tables.

Sometimes I went twice a day to spend my many hours and my few quarters. There, on a sunny afternoon, I spied on the “giveaway” table that item of items, the one which, since I was such an ardent William Morris devotee, brought me almost to a nervous collapse before I could claim my prize, get my money into Dawson’s pockets, and hurry home to caress and contemplate my “find.” I shall always be indebted to the Dawsons for this choice possession. In those precarious days, had the price been $3, I might have felt that I could not afford it.

The manuscript is entitled Praise of Wine. It is written on three pages of blue foolscap paper in the Morris hand, characteristically beautiful and precise, with only minor corrections. It is not a major piece and was never published in any of his collections except the posthumous volumes, William Morris; Artist, Writer, Socialist, by May Morris, but it serves to remind us that this poet, painter, printer, and designer was also interested in the pleasures of the palate.

The gayest times of his life were the years of the early sixties following his marriage to the beautiful Jane Burden, the model of so many pre-Raphaelite paintings. He built for himself and his bride a commodious home, “Red House,” in Upton, and there gathered almost every weekend a gay and stimulating group of his friends—Rossetti, Faulkner, Webb, Swinburne, Madox Brown, Burne-Jones, and others. “O the joy of those Saturdays to Mondays at ‘Red House,’” wrote one of these frequent visitors. Another remembered, “It was the most beautiful sight in the world to see Morris coming up from the cellar before dinner, beaming with joy, with his hands full of bottles of wine and others tucked under his arms.” Morris himself wrote, “I find my victuals dull without something to drink, and tea and coffee are not fit liquors to be taken with food.” He and his wife and
I can not help but think that this sonnet was written in a desperate moment of Morris' life. In his grief, perhaps, he grabbed the nearest sheet of paper, which happened to be the manuscript of *Praise of Wine*, and on it poured forth these words. The question "why," led me to remember a review written several years ago by Samuel Chew, professor of English at Bryn Mawr, for the *New York Herald Tribune Book Review*. Professor Chew wrote, "In the past there have been occasionally published guarded hints as to the ambiguous relationship between Rossetti and Jane Burden Morris, the wife of William Morris. Mr. Doughty has no doubt—though he never expresses his conviction in so many words—that she was Rossetti's mistress and that Morris, though not precisely a complacent husband, was aware of the situation." This poem which I have transcribed may have been written at the time that Morris first suspected this possibility.

I had heard that the correspondence between Rossetti and Jane Morris was in the British Museum and, hoping to clarify this whole subject and also to date more accurately my manuscript, I wrote to Mr. F. C. Francis, Keeper of Printed Books at the British Museum. He had been a most pleasant guest at the Zamorano Club and I hoped that he could aid me. He replied, "I have consulted our Manuscripts Department about the D. G. Rossetti-Jane Morris correspondence. I am told that they were reserved for 50 years from the death of Jane Morris, which took place in 1914, and that they will not therefore be available until 1964."

So there still remains a question to be answered about this heretofore unnoted poem of William Morris.

The reason this is being printed goes back to the early 1940's after I visited Fran and Ted Lillyenthal and enjoyed their hospitality at the Quercus Press, then situated in its own cool glen, complete with handpress. Soon after my visit they bought one of William Morris' Albion presses and, remembering that I had the manuscript of *Praise of Wine*, Ted wrote me in 1941 asking for a transcript. He had an inspired idea for a keepsake for the members of the Roxburghe and Zamorano Clubs—that of having versions of *Praise of Wine* separately designed and printed by each of the handpress printers of California, including one printed on the original Morris press. The plan died with the Second World War. More than a decade and a half later Ted Lillyenthal dug out our correspondence and suggested that we might forgo the handpress and bow to the machine age and still produce *Praise of Wine* as a keepsake for our friends of the Roxburghe and Zamorano Clubs in this year of the pilgrimage to Los Angeles, 1958.

WARD RITCHIE