The Fairy Family
248 pp, incl. 52 pp Introduction. Limited edition, £80 and £48

Early in the 1850s, Archibald Maclaren, proprietor of the Oxford gymnasium, adapted twenty-three little-known European fairy tales into ballad form. His enterprise was the product partly of the nineteenth-century folklore revival, partly of the equally nineteenth-century belief that reading matter for young people should be morally improving. Maclaren's verse is, quite frankly, flat. His morality, too, is of the simplest: death is not to be feared ('The Elf Folk'); good acts—towards the meanest, most unlikely object—bring a material reward ('The Moss Woman'). Had the book not appeared in 1857 with three anonymous illustrations, it would probably have been completely forgotten. But it contained the first published work of a man whose contributions to the art of the book would culminate in the magnificent Kelmscott Chaucer.

Burne-Jones would have preferred The Fairy Family to be forgotten. He discouraged discussion of the book. Only in the twentieth century was the authorship of the uncharacteristic drawings acknowledged.1 Maclaren had wanted a fully illustrated book, and the drawings were begun in 1854 by his friend, then merely Jones, Oxford undergraduate and amateur draughtsman. The arrangement was terminated in 1856 because the set was incomplete. Paradoxically the problem was that Burne-Jones had decided to become an artist. The early drawings, some very amateurish, were in the idiom of the contemporary illustrations which he loved: heroic knights, quaint fairies and picturesque landscapes. In 1856 Burne-Jones was overwhelmed by Rossetti's personality and style. The later drawings for the book were transformed and he probably felt thoroughly ashamed of the earlier ones. Perhaps Rossetti also made him unsympathetic to Maclaren's moralising, for he did not redraw them. The project was abandoned. The folio of drawings, safe in Maclaren's family, was 'lost' until the 1970s. This year the Dalrymple Press has
finally combined Maclaren’s full text with all Burne-Jones’s known drawings for it—not three, but eighty-eight!

Burne-Jones liked to imply that he grew up in a cultural desert, born an artist, but lacking any stimulus to reveal his destiny. ‘If there had been one cast from ancient Greek sculpture . . . in Birmingham’, he declared, ‘. . . I should have begun to paint ten years before I did’ (Quoted, Introduction, p. xxvii). Then in Oxford came the revelation of Pre-Raphaelitism. John Christian’s excellent Introduction to the reprint questions this self-image and greatly enlarges our knowledge of Burne-Jones’s early opportunities for visual education. The first drawings for *The Fairy Family* are almost the unique survivors of Burne-Jones’s pre-Rossettian work. The artist probably destroyed the rest. The Introduction shows clearly that Burne-Jones’s sense of destiny was created retrospectively. He had always enjoyed drawing, but the active quest for art and beauty became central to him only at Oxford. We read that not only were classical casts displayed in Birmingham—Burne-Jones could also have seen Pre-Raphaelite paintings there in 1852.

A full account of Maclaren’s life, containing more valuable new material, clarifies the mystery of a gymnasium proprietor writing fairy tales. Ray Watkinson points out that Maclaren also organised the Oxford celebration of the Burns centenary in 1859, revealing his sense of national identity as much as a love of poetry.

Like all the productions of the Dalrymple Press, the reprint is a very handsome volume. However it does not, as implied, ‘recreate the book as author and artist originally envisaged’ (Introduction, p. vi). No designer is credited and problems of design and layout are not discussed. The projected book would have been smaller than this *Journal*, scattering about seventy illustrations, mostly small, among over 300 pages of text. The reprint fits text, illustrations and rejected alternative illustrations into 195 larger pages, using a smaller typeface for Maclaren’s prose and setting the verse in two columns. There is no visual compression, nor stretches of unillustrated Maclaren, but we lose the Victorian layout for which the illustrations were designed. I regret that ‘full page’ illustrations, designed to be set apart from the text on thicker paper, are occasionally combined with text, and that the decision to place the illustrations against the verses they illustrate ignores the likely original plan of opening each poem with a large L-shaped illustration enclosing the first verse, and closing it with a tiny rectangular or round vignette. The 1857 pairing of elaborate title page and frontispiece (*Whisper, Whisper*) has regretfully been broken. This pairing was typical of mid-Victorian books, and was probably intended by Burne-Jones.

The illustrations to the reprint are not Victorian wood or steel reproductive engravings, but a very miscellaneous set of drawings. I have indicated their stylistic variety. In addition, some are very finished, some mere rough sketches. These facts, and the two-toned sepia reproductions on cream-coloured paper, give the book the intimate quality of a hand-illustrated album. The facsimiles are excellent, although occasionally the sepia tone creates a distracting boundary between illustration and page.

But these are minor criticisms. The Dalrymple Press has now given us the chance to examine the development of Burne-Jones’s first serious piece of artistic work, and it
is a real pleasure. The drawings are untutored, but the best have power as well as charm. It is easy to imagine that this is visible solely to modern eyes and would have been ignored in the nineteenth century, but this is not so. Maclaren would have recognised it. Chairing the Burns dinner he stated that Burns’s power of ‘original thought and expression’ was favoured by his untaught childhood. The quality probably caused Rossetti’s excitement. Rossetti was academically trained, but profoundly anti-academic. He found in Burne-Jones’s art, as he had found in Elizabeth Siddall’s, the spontaneous expression of the naive vision that he was trying to create deliberately in his own art. The Rossettian designs of Burne-Jones give value to this book, and it is not merely that of curiosity or historical scholarship. The drawings may be stiff and awkward, but they are also intense and deeply felt. If the artist could see the work of the Dalrymple Press today, might he not be moved to re-assess the work he once preferred forgotten, in terms similar to those he used of an exhibition of 1896 ‘My little early ones didn’t give me the shock I expected. There was such a passion to express in them and so little ability to do it. They were like earnest passionate stammerings.’

1 Discussions of the book not mentioned in the reprint include: Gleeson White, Children’s Books and their Illustrators (Studio Special Winter Number, 1897–1898), p. 29; Forrest Reid, Illustrators of the 1860s (1928), p. 99. It would be interesting to know how the 1857 publication was reviewed: watch this space . . .


Hilary Morgan
Images of God. The Consolations of Lost Illusions
Peter Fuller, Chatto and Windus, The Hogarth Press, 1985
ISBN 0 7011 2962 x Paperback £4.95

Peter Fuller’s previous books, including Seeing Berger (1980) and Aesthetics after Modernism (1982), showed him to be one of our liveliest and most stimulating art critics and journalists. The present volume, a collection of his writings of 1982 and 1983 which appeared mainly in Art Monthly, New Society and Crafts, confirms this reputation. In this period, as he explains in the Introduction, Fuller has been moving away from his early commitment to a kind of Marxism which he now thinks of as oversimplified. He now wishes to give fuller recognition to ‘the imaginative activity of the individual human subject’, to the importance of tradition in the arts and crafts as related to ‘certain “relatively constant” elements in our human being’, and to what he sees as the problem for the modern artist of working in a culture which lacks the ‘shared symbolic order’ provided in the Middle Ages by Christianity. He dislikes the kind of modern art which is the result of ‘a collapse into subjectivism and solipsism’, having in mind as a point of contrast the great Gothic cathedrals which ‘stand as perpetual monuments to that which we have lost culturally, along with the decline of Christendom’ (pp. xi–xii).

All this—together with an admiring account of Roger Scruton’s The Aesthetic Understanding—might lead one to think that Fuller is following the familiar Path to Rome. But on the contrary he insists throughout that he is an atheist, and (as his subtitle suggests) takes a reductive view of religion. The overall aim of the book, he argues, is to force ‘historical materialists’ like himself to admit how little ‘we’ understand ‘the positive role which such great and consoling illusions play in determining man’s ethical, cultural, and indeed his spiritual life’ (p. 311). In this context Morris—who is discussed in the final section of the book along with Ruskin and Gill—is seen as having placed himself in a paradoxical position by taking over the Ruskinian ideal of the Gothic while severing it completely from Christianity. This essay, which originally appeared in the volume published for the I.C.A. Exhibition in 1984 as ‘Conserving “Joy in Labour”’, is now called ‘William Morris: a Conservationist Radical’. In it Fuller argues that Morris was wrong in believing that Socialism would lead to the inauguration of ‘a new era of joyous labour’ (p. 287), but right in believing that such creative activity needs to be revived if the modern world is properly to serve human needs. Morris’s concern with ‘nature, conservation and peace’ is rightly seen as central to our times. Fuller ends with the suggestion that Morris’s ‘most significant political tracts may well turn out to be his Willow wallpapers, or his Honeysuckle chintzes’ (p. 290). This is surely too deliberately paradoxical: the value of Morris’s designs is great, but it is misleading to dissociate them from the social thinking that accompanied them. If Morris’s designs now satisfy us more than those of Owen Jones on the one hand or the characteristically elaborate concoctions of mid-Victorian popular designers on the other, it is because they embody Morris’s humanistic ideal of an art deriving from, and appealing to, our common humanity.

The book also includes a favourable review of Linda Parry’s William Morris Textiles, which Fuller claims ‘has opened the door for a radical new assessment of Morris’s achievement in textiles—one which is of great relevance to the debates
which are currently raging in *Crafts* journal and elsewhere" (p. 250). These debates are between upholders of the two extremes, of automated commercial production and fine art weaving: Fuller dislikes both extremes, and believes that Morris’s practice suggests a ‘third route’ in which an ‘aesthetic dimension’ of human work may be maintained without falling into ‘the silly fads and fancies which pass for “fine art weaving” today’ (p. 255). These sillinesses (which other articles here show Fuller discovering in other parts of the craft world) arise from excessive subjectivism. Morris’s commitment both to society and to nature (as a source of rhythmic energy in designing) is seen as preserving him from such extravagances. In this essay, Morris’s ‘imaginative study of nature and tradition’ (p. 255) is seen as embodying a well-balanced approach. We may want to argue that Morris’s attention to these sources of inspiration for his work as a designer constitutes his answer to Fuller’s problem of the loss of the ‘shared symbolic order’. In a world without religious belief, we must create values in relation to nature and to the human tradition, and this is what Morris consistently did. But Fuller remains disturbingly right in reminding us how far ideals of ‘joy in labour’ remain from the experience of the great majority of workers in modern industrial societies.

*Images of God* is a well produced paperback original, reasonably priced. It makes one look forward to the book *Theoria*, in which Fuller promises us a fuller account of his responses to Ruskin and Morris.

*Peter Faulkner*

*The Romance of William Morris*
Carole Silver, Ohio University Press, Athens, Ohio, 1982
ISBN 0 8214 0651 5, pp.xviii + 233, $20.95

Whatever unease the title of this book may cause is soon set at rest when one discovers that it is a thoughtful and clearly written account of Morris’s development as a writer of poetry and fiction, with restrained biographical elements. Its thesis is that Morris began with a dedication to the ideal of individualistic romantic love (the negative as well as positive aspects of which are dramatised in the poems of *The Defence of Guenevere* volume), came to find this unreliable and unsatisfying (in *The Earthly Paradise* and *Love is Enough*), and went on to develop a broader conception of love, involving friendship and fellowship. His visits to Iceland (the 1871 and 1873 *Journals* are perpectively discussed and contrasted) encouraged a stoical acceptance of the limits of human existence, and his conversion to Socialism provided a way forward which culminated in the satisfying harmonies of the late romances, in which divisions of both self and society are overcome and integration—one of the key ideas of the book—is achieved.

No one is likely to dissent from this overall view of Morris’s development: it clearly acknowledges the central facts, and gives an opportunity for Dr. Silver to provide numerous sensitive and thoughtful readings of particular poems and fictions. I particularly enjoyed the accounts of the early poems, the linking lyrics of *The Earthly Paradise*, and the late romances. The approach is primarily a psychological one, influenced by Jung, and so it is not surprising that, although
Morris’s Marxism is acknowledged, the political dimension is not illuminated. The National Liberal League was not ‘a working class group’ (p. 120), nor was there a ‘London Radical Club’ (p. 126). It is tendentious to say that News from Nowhere ‘shows past, present, and future converging in the timeless, ageless realm of dream’ (p. 141). This is to ignore the historical element so obvious in a chapter like ‘How the Change Came’ and consorts awkwardly with the view quoted from the Communist Manifesto that ‘man’s ideas, views and conceptions, in one word, man’s consciousness, changes with every change in the conditions of his material existence, in his social relations, and in his social life’ (p. 147). Indeed, if the book has a weakness, it is an occasional tendency to an intellectual blandness that ignores the incompatibility of certain basic assumptions with each other. I find this in a phrase like ‘a Marxist Ragnarök’ (p. 147), though others may find this a witty coinage.

However, I would rather emphasise the book’s positive qualities, especially its illuminating scholarship and its responsiveness to the varying tones of Morris’s writing. The scholarship comes out in the helpful and unshowy references to many of the sources used by Morris; in particular I was impressed by the accounts of the relevance of W.H. Hudson’s A Crystal Age to News from Nowhere, of the ideas of Max Müller about solar mythology to Sigurd, and of the Irish stories and references lying behind the late romances. Indeed, the final chapter on the romances is a most satisfying conclusion to the book in its enthusiasm and clarity. The account of The Well at the World’s End is full and convincing. For Dr. Silver, ‘The joyous ending of The Well . . . marks the imaginative flowering of Morris as a writer of romance’ (p. 181), which is what her book is primarily concerned with. I take it that the Romance of her title is partly that of Morris himself. Her reading of his life through these imaginative works is a highly attractive one; it plays down the continuing tensions of his last years to restore to us the figure of Yeat’s ‘The Happiest of the Poets’.

Peter Faulkner

Morris Embroideries: The Prototypes
52 pages including 29 pages of black and white and colour illustrations.

Richard Dufty’s admirable account of the early Morris embroideries though dealing with a limited subject, is undoubtedly one of the most important studies of the work of Morris and his circle to appear in recent years. Although a number of the early embroideries have been seen and discussed in the ‘William Morris and Kelmscott’ exhibition at Farnham and the Birmingham exhibition of Morris textiles, both held in 1981, this is the first time the whole corpus has received a detailed, scholarly analysis. The well-illustrated text, with carefully annotated footnotes, patiently put together from many sources, should clear up a number of mysteries and misconceptions.

A general introduction puts the embroideries in their historical context and is followed by a catalogue dealing firstly with repeating patterns, followed by the
embroideries and cartoons with human figures. The booklet should appeal not only to Morris enthusiasts but also to anyone interested in embroidery for the technique of each work is described, accompanied by a detailed illustration to show the actual stitchery.

The first item discussed is the unique ‘If I can’ hanging, now at Kelmscott Manor, in which Morris, with his own hands, sought to re-create a mediaeval tapestry-like decoration. His adopted motto of ‘If I can’ or ‘Si je puis’, taken from Van Eyck, was probably as a result of his visit to the Low Countries with G.E. Street in 1856, and the source of the design (like that of the ‘Daisy’ hangings) may have been a wall hanging depicted in the Froissart MS.

The ‘Daisy’ and ‘Sunflower’ hangings dating from c.1860, were, on the evidence of the 1934 Centenary Exhibition Catalogue and earlier references, made for Red House. Both of these were thought to have disappeared following May Morris’s death in 1938, but were discovered in 1962 bundled into an old chest at Kelmscott Manor. An interesting sidelight on the ‘Daisy’ hangings is that in a previously unknown painting by Peter Paul Marshall, entitled ‘Scenes from Clerical Life: The Rich Cleric’, exhibited at the Fine Art Society in 1979, a piece of the ‘Daisy’ hangings covers the table. The painting, with its companion ‘The Poor Cleric’ is signed but not dated but both bear the address 26 Queen Square on a back label. It therefore seems likely that Morris gave a piece of the ‘Daisy’ hangings to Marshall when he left Red House in 1865, the same year as the move to Queen Square.

The ‘Sunflower’ design has certain affinities with the painted sunflowers on the inside of the St. George’s Cabinet, although the latter are spikier and more stylised. The St. George’s Cabinet was shown at the 1862 Exhibition and it is tempting to suggest that the ‘Sunflower’ (and possibly the ‘Daisy’) hangings were included in the Firm’s exhibit. Both certainly tally with Christopher Dresser’s description as ‘a series of quaint fabrics that have the pattern wrought upon them in thick worsted thread of many colours that is sewn to the surface’.

The figure embroideries present a more complex problem but Mr. Dufty seems to have made an irrefutable case for linking a number of them to the Red House series. According to tradition these were based on Chaucer’s ‘Legend of Good Women’ but as Mr. Dufty points out Morris seems to have selected his own heroines, both sacred and profane. Although intended as a substitute for tapestry, he suggests that a possible source of inspiration, particularly for the coiling stems in the background, may have been the late 13th century ‘Windmill’ psalter, now in the Pierpont-Morgan Library, New York.

All the Red House figures were worked on a coarse holland material and cut out to be applied to a blue serge background previously embroidered with coiling stems bearing leaves and flowers. The three figures now mounted on the Castle Howard screen, ‘Queen with a Sword’, ‘Hippolyte’ and the ‘Flamma Troiae’ are the only ones that have this blue serge background, described both by Janey and Mackail. The ‘St. Catherine’ embroidery, now at Kelmscott, has its accompanying tree, although both tree and figure have been mounted on a velvet background. This was at some time given or lent to Burne-Jones as it appears as a portiere in a painting of The Grange, Fulham, his home from 1867. The ‘Penelope’ hanging is
mounted on green serge, and the 'Guenevere' is unfinished, but both correspond to early stained glass designs by Morris. A rather crude oil painting by Morris, his only known attempt at a nude female figure, corresponds with the unfinished embroidery of 'Aphrodite' or 'Venus'. It is perhaps worth noting that the background of the oil painting is the same as that on some of the early 'Good Women' tile panels, notably 'Alcestis' and 'Dido', which have the same blue sky with a foreground of sand strewn with sea shells.

The figures in the foregoing panels are all, on both documentary and stylistic evidence, by Morris himself but Mr. Dufty also discusses the early designs for figure embroideries by Burne-Jones. A similar scheme to the Red House one was a double row of figures based on the Arthurian cycle which Burne-Jones designed for the decoration of 62 Russell Street, his London home from 1858–67. The scheme was not completed although some unfinished pieces remain. In the same period, 1863–4, Burne-Jones embarked on another scheme, this time for Ruskin, with figures based on Chaucer's 'Good Women.' His original sketches show a rose trellis in the background, some of the ground being powdered with daisies, some of sand and shells, as in the tiles. An unfinished embroidered figure of 'Phyllis' is now on loan to the Victoria & Albert Museum, and the more finished cartoons by Burne-Jones, with mediaeval buildings in the background and a foreground of flowers, were used as designs for stained glass. Although these Burne-Jones figure subjects have at times been confused with the Red House series they are, as Mr. Dufty rightly points out, entirely different.

In his postscript Mr. Dufty quotes Janey's reproof to Mackail—'I think you have not given quite enough prominence to the revival of old embroidery that was entirely due to him (Morris)'—and hopes that she would not have thought the same of his study. Although we are aware that Morris was not alone in promoting the revival, and that the later embroideries sold by the Firm were probably more influential, the figure embroideries of Selwyn Image, Phoebe Traquair, Ann Macbeth and others, seem to have drawn their inspiration from these early efforts of Morris and his circle.

Barbara J. Morris


After the day's work was over, George would drop in at Mr. Pease's, to talk over the progress of the survey (for the Stockton-Darlington Railway) and discuss various matters connected with the railway. Mr. Pease's daughters were usually present; and on one occasion, finding the young ladies learning the art of embroidery, he volunteered to instruct them. 'I know all about it,' said he, 'and you will wonder how I learnt it. I will tell you. When I was a brakesman at Killingworth, I learnt the art of embroidery while working at the pitmen's button-holes by the engine fire at nights.' He was never ashamed, but on the contrary rather proud, of reminding his friends of these humble pursuits of his early life.

This incident, communicated to the author by the late Edward Pease, has since been made the subject of a fine picture by Mr. A. Rankley, ARA, exhibited at the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1861.
In June 1984, European Architectural Heritage Year and the 150th anniversary of the RIBA were celebrated by the latter's Teesside Branch with a lavish exhibition in Middlesbrough. This publication derives from that occasion, providing both a catalogue of the exhibition and an extended text on Webb’s practice in Inverness-shire, Cumberland, Northumberland, Durham and the North Riding. This comprised some twelve major locations, providing a typical cross-section of almost all years of his career along with several unique commissions. Rosemary Curry’s catalogue is neither detailed nor descriptive, being confined to a bare list of exhibits and their lenders. The two lone illustrations in this section, both general views of the gallery, fail to do any justice to the furniture, carpets, wallpapers and hangings shown in the exhibition: it had included three special commissions—a Morris and Co screen (designed by Webb) for Washington Hall, Morris’s ‘Artichoke’ wall-hanging complementary to Webb’s 1876 Smeaton Manor, worked by their client’s wife, and the ‘Redcar’ carpet of 1879–81, reputedly the largest made by the Company at Merton Abbey. The catalogue section, therefore, will be appreciated mainly as an aide mémoire by those fortunate enough to see the exhibition; anyone buying this book on the strength of its subtitle, ‘The Architecture of Philip Webb and Furnishings by William Morris’, will be disappointed.

The text section is more lavishly illustrated, though two line drawings—the rejected design for New Street Newcastle (1866), and for the now-demolished Port Clarence Ironworks—are only reproduced in pallid half-tone. Some photographs of the buildings are more successful than others: it is a pity, for example, that Sheila Kirk’s exciting discovery of a forgotten Webb commission, Hill House near Greatham (South Durham/Cleveland), is so indifferently illustrated. Exteriors, rather than interiors, are concentrated upon. The illustrations of the Port Clarence offices, of Rounton Grange (lamentably demolished in 1954), and of the fundamentally altered Arisaig House near Fort William, are particularly valuable. Each building, the background to the commission, and its subsequent history are described by Sheila Kirk with care and attention to details.

Where Philip Webb in the North leaves one with a sense of unease, however, is in its treatment of Webb’s other interests—or rather non-treatment. ‘Webb’s political activities are not covered ... because they did not change his architecture’, we are informed—a proposition which if true (in itself highly debatable) would seem to demand some explanation. In fact the author seems rather uncomfortable at the thought that so mild a man as she believes Webb to have been could even have given politics a second glance. He was ‘modest’, ‘a loyal friend’, a ‘sympathetic friend’, had ‘a good sense of humour’, ‘seldom complained’, was ‘always ready to help a needy friend’, and ‘loved children’. But ‘he lost his restraint ... somewhat surprisingly in the Socialist cause’. Restraint abandoned, Webb is nevertheless portrayed as ‘hating every active minute’ of politics, and being ‘extremely relieved when Morris, somewhat disillusioned, retired from the fray’. As a description of
the treasurer of the Socialist League this is wide of the mark; nor does it square
with Morris’s view of Webb as ‘the man who introduced me to Socialism’ (a
comment made to the latter’s follower and biographer, William Lethaby). Reserve
of character is no indicator of political mildness: ‘what seems paradox in Webb’s
mouth in his seems convincing sense’, wrote Rosalind Howard, wife of one of
Webb’s northern patrons: but she was left in no doubt as to the political resolve of
either Morris or Webb.1 ['his' refers to William Morris]

The warmth of friendship between the two men is not a sufficient explanation of
Webb’s political activism, and it is at odds to with the unsympathetic view of
Morris Mrs Kirk reveals (for example, other engagements prevented Morris attend­
ing many Anti-Scrape meetings, ‘fortunatley for architecture’). It is woeful that
such prejudice prevents even the work of Morris as a designer in partnership with
Webb from receiving anything but the most cursory of glances, even though this
was a notable objective, admirably fulfilled, of the original exhibition. It is all the
more to be lamented because the work of both men in the buildings here described
raises, arguably in its acutest form, the tension between political principle and
commercial practice. The author herself emphasises that Webb’s ‘only executed
church, industrial buildings and large commercial premises were built in the
North’. No less than four major domestic commissions in the region were at the
behest of members of the Bell family, Teesside ironmasters and leading northern
industrialists. The family’s progress over three generations from Cumberland
yeomen to industrial plutocrats reached a typical and exuberant apogee in
Rounton Grange near Northallerton in the North Riding. The five-storied grange
stood at the centre of an estate complex all designed by Webb (including coach
house, home farm, bachelor workers’ hostel, and a convalescence bungalow for
injured ironworkers). Sir Isaac Lowthian Bell, who commissioned Morris to
decorate the house Webb had built for him, provided in a letter to Lethaby one of
the most vivid and poignant illustrations of Morris the socialist at work for
capitalism:

He heard Morris talking and walking about in an excited way, and went to
inquire if anything was wrong. ‘He turned on me like a wild animal—“It is
only that I spend my life in ministering to the swinish luxuries of the rich”.’2

As a commemoration of a notable event in Architectural Heritage Year this publi­
cation is most useful. To anyone interested in the English Domestic Revival, the
later Victorian country house, or the architectural history of the north, it will be an
indispensable handbook. A rounded appraisal of Philip Webb, however, both as an
architect and a person is still needed. This book is an opportunity missed.

Malcolm Chase

2 W. R. Lethaby, William Morris as Work-Master (1901), p. 94.
This valuable book sets out to retrieve the real lives of the women we have only known in the long shadow of Rossetti. Not conceived as art history, it helps to fuller understanding of the paintings in which they first appeared a hundred and thirty years ago as well as contributing to women's studies. Its price would have been more than doubled had more paintings been shown, in colour and in detail. We get, in rather limp halftone, thirty eight drawings and paintings with eleven photographs. They are not used as works of art but to subvert the tradition created by the paintings and supplement a discussion based on verbal sources. This implies a considered choice, for it is these portrayals that create the myth and whose examination would develop a whole other argument. Colour has been used in one case—the reproduction on the jacket of Rossetti's 'The Bower Meadow.' An excellent choice. Far from being one of his masterpieces, it was put together as a potboiler using the big canvas on which, still under Hunt's tutelage, he had begun a landscape background. On it he set an array of some familiar studio properties: most conspicuous among them, four half-length female figures making faint music, a fifth floating distantly by. It is from this degraded status that Jan Marsh rescues the Sisters while unfolding the relation to real life of their symbolic function. More such studies, including one of Jane and May Morris, are to come from Dr. Marsh. This short notice will be extended in our next issue: space does not allow of more here.

R.W.

The Kelmscott Manor volume of Italian Writing-books

William Morris owned a volume, bound in red morocco and now preserved in Kelmscott Manor, which contains copies of four early printed Italian writing-manuals of the sixteenth century, i.e., La Operina and Il modo di temperare le Penne by Vicentino (Arrighi), Lo presente libro by G.A. Tagliente, and Thesauro de Scrittori by Ugo da Carpi. This article depicts the technical and social environment in which Italian writing-manuals originated, traces the complex printing history of the works mentioned above, and identifies the editions and dates to which they belong. It then shows how the 'Kelmscott' volume influenced the contributions of Morris, Emery Walker, Edward Johnston and, more recently, Alfred Fairbank in the fields of manuscript copying, type-design, and italic hand-writing.

Alfred Fairbank, who died in 1982, was for many years a member of the William Morris Society, and the publication by the Society of Antiquaries of this paper by A.S. Osley gives an opportunity to pay tribute to one of Morris's most effective followers. Little as Fairbank cared for his politics, he did more than anybody else but Edward Johnston to carry forward this aspect of his pioneer work: it is too often forgotten that calligraphy was one of the many arts in which Morris led the way. Margaret Horton, friend and colleague of Fairbank for fifty years, will tell in a later Journal who he was and how he came to take his foremost place in this field.

R.W.