lous railroad agents, the way to obtain the greatest value from two bits American, and the finer points of squatting atop a played-out silver mine. If misery toughened Stevenson's prose, poverty or the memory of it helped him decide what veins of fiction and nonfiction he would work for profit.

Barry Menikoff's edition of "The Beach of Falesá" restores to its original brilliance Stevenson's realistic short story, first published in 1892, of a white trader coming to terms with bigotry, cultural imperialism, religion, and superstition on a South Seas island. Menikoff has chosen an apt subtitle in "A Study in Victorian Publishing," because the publication of this single tale involved Victorian issues of authors' rights, serialization, multiple editions, censorship, and the marketing of an author's personality. Menikoff deftly elucidates the problems caused by Stevenson's living thousands of miles away from the publishing centers of London and New York; the tampering with the story's spelling, grammar, punctuation, and language by various compositors and printers; the substantive changes to the plot made by Stevenson's friend Sidney Colvin; Stevenson's acquiescence to alterations when he felt himself divorced from the marketing and distribution of his product; and Victorian publishers' unwillingness to deal frankly with the story's anti-imperialistic and sexual themes.

Menikoff's analysis is weak only when he moves beyond Victorian publishing and publishers to Victorian society in general. For example, Stevenson's publishers insisted on dropping or amending the story's sham marriage ceremony between the British trader, Wiltshire, and his native wife, Uma. The original version reveals that Stevenson was criticizing British cultural arrogance in the South Seas and that he was capable of handling sexual matters in his fiction. Not surprisingly, the publishers said the ceremony was unfit as written, and Stevenson silently agreed to their revisions. Menikoff's explanation is that the sham marriage cast doubt on marriage in general, "and [that] this is entirely too close to the fears and anxieties that preoccupied the late Victorian reader" (p. 89). The statement begs for evidence. What is needed is an explanation of how the editors at the *Illustrated London News*, Cassell, and Scribner's came to see themselves as arbiters of the public's politics and morals.

Menikoff analyzes clearly the personal conflicts that induced Stevenson to compromise his art. When the author wrote "The Beach of Falesá," he was only beginning to reconcile his desire to make [illegible] work as well as good works. Stevenson was also motivated, in part, by his desire for commercial success and financial security — accepting revisions would insure profits from the sale of serial and book versions. The irony, as Menikoff points out, is that this motive arose when Stevenson's art needed it least: the works he produced in Samoa reveal his mature insight into human experience and his extraordinary sensitivity to language. Finally, Menikoff's careful work in providing this definitive "Beach of Falesá" suggests that *The Ebb-Tide* (1894) and *Weir of Hermiston* (1896) also need the same rigorous restoration.

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William Morris, by Peter Stansky; pp. xii + 96. New York: Oxford University Press, 1983, $12.95.
A Book of Verse: A Facsimile of the Manuscript Written in 1870 by William Morris, introduced by Roy Strong and Joyce Irene Whalley; pp. x + 53. New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1982, $12.95.
The Ideal Book: Essays and Lectures on the Arts of the Book, by William Morris, edited by William S. Peterson; pp. xxxix + 134. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982, $45.00.
William Morris Textiles, by Linda Parry; pp. 192. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1983, £20.00.

PETER STANSKY'S NINETY-SIX-PAGE INTRODUCTION to William Morris's lifework for the Oxford Past Masters series surveys Morris's life and achievements as a designer, bookmaker, poet, socialist, and environmentalist. It is a helpful handbook, which does not replace Peter Faulkner's fuller 1980 survey, *"Against the Age": An Introduction to William Morris*, but will certainly guide some people toward the impressive man whose blurred computer-image graces its cover. The format of the series (no footnotes, little bibliography, and an opaque notation MS for "manuscript sources") may frustrate scholarly readers, and some of the book's interpretations are controversial — some glosses of Morris's personal life seem arbitrary, and dismissive remarks about the later poetry may be called into question.

The volume's strengths lie elsewhere: it sketches ably and concisely the historical context of Morris's endeavors, corrects some persistent errors, and quotes well from some of the anonymous "manuscript sources." The remarks on Morris and Company are especially precise and knowledgeable. The author also

respects Morris's social and environmental vision, and his presentation gathers smoothness and force as it proceeds. His final remarks are apt: "After the Second World War, it appeared that modernisation, centralisation, industrialism, rationalisation — all the faceless movements of the time — were in control and would take care of the world. Today, when we have a keen sense of the shambles of their efforts, the suggestions which Morris made in his designs, his writings, his actions and his politics have new power and relevance."

A Book of Verse reproduces a beautifully wrought manuscript of short original works which William Morris created in 1870. Scholars have always known of its existence in the Victoria and Albert Museum, but the work now has the wider audience it deserves. Whalley's three-page introduction comments on the manuscript's illuminations, and she includes as an appendix Morris's own acknowledgement of all who contributed to the volume. Each of Morris's fifty-one pages delicately traces a different ornamental pattern, and the volume's twenty-two poems are garlanded with intricately varied leaves, flowers, medallions, and ornamented letters, whose minute detail, cheerful abundance, and luminous color counteract the pensive melancholia of many of the lyrics (resolved in part by the volume's last poem: the triumphantly sensuous "Praise of Venus," from the final tale of *The Earthly Paradise* [1868-70]).

Some of these poems were later published by Morris in *Poems By the Way* (1891), and by May Morris in the *Collected Works* (1910-15) and *William Morris: Artist, Writer, Socialist* (1936), but four may not have appeared elsewhere. Three of these express regret for a lost love, and May Morris may have preferred to print poems which celebrated fulfilled love, rather than others which wistfully mourned its absence. She usually followed her father's preferences, however, and it may be that she simply did not have this manuscript at hand.

In any case the book's physical beauty counterpoints the poems' sheer melody, idealism, and restrained eloquence. Those who believe that *The Defence of Guenevere* (1858) and the lyrics of the months from *The Earthly Paradise* are Morris's only poetry of high quality should consider this modestly radiant volume. At £4.95 in paperback, it is a surprisingly inexpensive gift and an appropriate text with which to introduce students to Morris's work.

In The Ideal Book: Essays and Lectures on the Art

added an introduction, useful brief notes, and relevant appendices; many illustrations of the manuscripts, books, and ornaments to which the essays refer; and an especially interesting transcription of Morris's forceful answers to questions addressed to him after a lecture in 1892. Peterson's introduction relates Morris's ideas and practices of book design to contemporary theories and later modifications, comments on the social and moral purposes that underlay his work, and argues that several of Morris's basic principles influenced, through Stanley Morison, the design of twentieth-century mass-produced books. The volume also provides a reminder of the need for a collected edition of Morris's essays, which were devoted to an extraordinarily wide range of political, social, and artistic topics.

Morris's comments on bookmaking include many blunt judgments ("It was reserved for the founders of the later eighteenth century to produce letters which are *positively* ugly," p. 62), as well as common-sense descriptions (see, for example, his account on page 72 of what happens when a book does not lie flat on a page). He also sets forth lucid principles of manuscript coloration, argues the need for shifting interrelations between story and ornament, and vigorously defends his idiosyncratic belief that medieval art was not religious, but "art, acting on assured belief" (p. 4).

Morris's artistic work was inspired above all by his lifelong desire to recover destroyed or vanishing traditions of craft and history, among them that of the "ideal book": "If all the other art of the early Middle Ages had disappeared, they might still claim to be considered a great period of art on the strength of their ornamented books" (pp. 11, 12). His essays on printed books reveal a remarkable ability to measure specific examples against subtle but exacting standards. Morris did not copy medieval antecedents, but reflected on what he considered the best aspects of their design and created his own. His essays breathe much learning and no pedantry and manifest his conviction that the creation of fully ornamented books is not only an art form, but "one of the very worthiest things towards the production of which reasonable men [*sic*] should strive" (p. 73).

Linda Parry's book *William Morris Textiles* astutely guides the reader through a vast subject. Chapters on "Embroidery," "Printed Textiles," "Woven Textiles," "Carpets," and "Tapestries" ex-

and levels of difficulty of each form of work, retracing the economic and practical details involved in creating and marketing the objects the Firm produced.

Also interesting are Parry's accounts of the Firm's day-to-day operations and of the careers of individual designers such as May Morris (for many years head of the Embroidery Division), J. H. Dearle (a young Merton Abbey apprentice, who later became the Firm's chief designer), and the many other managers, weavers, embroiderers, and furniture makers who contributed significantly to the Firm's success. Aside from design and execution, sheer administration was an exhaustive undertaking, which required thousands of decisions of policy and taste. The book's accounts of the struggle of each division of the Firm to survive after Morris's death are especially dramatic.

Parry's analyses are clearly based on a thorough knowledge of Morris's life and writings on decorative art, and her final chapter, "Interior Design and the Retail Trade," surveys the decorative effects Morris achieved. The book's illustrations are lavish; many are in color, and all are carefully labelled and contribute substantially to the text. Among other things she provides a list of extant Morris and Company interiors, an illustrated appendix, "Dating Morris Textiles," and a "Catalogue of Repeating Textiles" which annotates and beautifully illustrates Morris and Company's 144 known designs. *William Morris Textiles*, in short, provides in definitive and readable form all the background needed for an appreciation of its topic and fully documents its author's belief that Morris was the nineteenth century's "single most important figure in British textile production," and "a pattern-maker of genius" (p. 6).

Morris was a literary, political, and artistic polymath; the four books reviewed testify not only to the range of his gifts, but also to his unusual ability to realize them, in tangible, readable, and usable ways.

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Silk Town: Industry and Culture in Macclesfield 1750-1835, by Gail Malmgreen; pp. xii + 259. Hull: Hull University Press, 1985, £8.95; Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1985, $18.50.

TOWN HISTORIES SUCH AS THIS ARE NOW RARE. IT is fashionable rather to produce thematic reinterthe role of entrepreneurs, migration, family life, or local politics. Gail Malmgreen is far from ignoring these aspects — her book is not to be numbered amongst those old-fashioned antiquarian narrative histories which clutter the shelves of municipal libraries — but she comments on a range of academic debates using local evidence rather than peddling novel interpretations. Trade societies were "limited and largely defensive. . . . There is little evidence for the maturing of class consciousness" (p. 71). Politics conformed to D. C. Moore's model of "interest" communities: "it was a town which recognised a single over-arching interest, the well-being of the silk trade, and which was inclined to look to a few industrial magnates for leadership" (p. 117). Tantalizing references to electoral behaviour reveal that Patrick Joyce's "system of political clientage with an industrial base" was present a generation before the "new paternalism" which spawned it had become evident (p. 116). Malmgreen's views on the standard-of-living debate and the question of whether Methodism controlled or was controlled by the working class are models of concise consideration. Both areas are dogged by inadequate data and the questions traditionally asked are probably the wrong ones. Dependence on wage indices ignores the existence of casual, even illegal earnings and the survival of barter. Some measurements of religious growth, especially chapel building, do show a positive correlation with economic factors, but only because, as voluntary organizations, most denominations did not have the money for erecting permanent places of worship during slumps. The spiritual solace and release provided by religion could well have been greater during those years of depression, or even at certain stages of the life cycle.

The description on the book's cover then is substantially correct: "This study will interest all students of economic, religious and social history. . . and to local historians it offers an example of a sophisticated as well as a highly readable historical analysis." Yet Malmgreen's approach, commendable in so many respects, has its drawbacks. This is national history in microcosm, illustrating general trends without stressing local, possibly unique variations, and it consequently lacks depth of explanation on specific areas. The anomaly of Macclesfield's success, for example, as that of an ancient chartered town reliant on continuing government fiscal protection, meant that it differed in many respects from other northern textile towns. The implications of this for middle-class ideology are touched upon ("the Macclesfield Whig was apt to be the sort who