

Fall 2012

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## Published In

Victorian Periodicals Review 45.3 (Fall 2012)

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# William Fulford, “The Set,” and *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*

PATRICK C. FLEMING

In the prologue to Tennyson’s *The Princess*, the narrator visits his friend “from college . . . with others of our set.”<sup>1</sup> *The Oxford English Dictionary* includes this quotation in its definition of “set”: “A group of persons having its own peculiar interests, fashions, and conventions.”<sup>2</sup> During the Victorian period, the word was commonly used in university settings, referring, as it does in Tennyson’s poem, to groups of college friends. Speaking of Cambridge in the “spring of the nineteenth century,” for example, Frances Brookfield identifies a “tendency of bright wits to recognize each other and to drift into sodalities more or less informal and undefined,” forming “‘sets’—that is to say, groups of friends united by nothing more than a community of likes and dislikes.”<sup>3</sup> Tennyson’s “set” would have included Arthur Hallam and the rest of the Apostles, but not all sets would become so famous. A quarter century after Tennyson left Cambridge, another set formed at Oxford, initially drawn together by a “community of likes and dislikes” but eventually developing a “definite object”: the production of a short-run periodical, the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*.

*The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* is familiar to Victorian scholars largely because its contributors included William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones (the most famous members of the set that produced the magazine) and because Dante Gabriel Rossetti published several poems there, including a version of “The Blessed Damozel” and the first printings of “The Burden of Nineveh” and “The Staff and the Scrip.” For the magazine’s first readers, however, its most important feature was not the identity of individual contributors but the fact that it was produced by college students. As T. C. Sandars, writing for the *Saturday Review*, puts it, “Having been written almost entirely, we believe, by undergraduate members of the Universities, it [the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*] affords a curious specimen of the kind of thoughts and language current among the young

men who are now preparing, at those seats of learning, to fill offices in Church and State.”<sup>4</sup> The magazine was a group project, produced not just by Morris and Burne-Jones but by their whole set. Morris’s and Burne-Jones’s contributions are well-known, and their biographies never fail to mention the magazine as a formative experience.<sup>5</sup> But it could not have been produced were it not for the other members of the set, especially William Fulford, who edited all but the first issue. By focusing on the now-forgotten members of the set, I hope to reveal the context in which the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* was produced and the “thoughts and language current among the young men” who produced it.

### The Magazine and the Set

The *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* ran from January to December 1856 and was published by Bell and Daldy. The twelve issues, each about sixty-four pages, consisted of stories, essays, poems, and reviews; when publication ceased, all twelve issues were bound together and sold as a single volume.<sup>6</sup> Bell and Daldy solicited advertisements for the magazine and included it in their own book lists and newspaper advertisements for 1856.<sup>7</sup> Several newspapers, including the *Guardian*, noted the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* during its publication, and the *Daily News* and *Examiner* announced each issue.<sup>8</sup> A lengthy review in the *Ecclesiastical and Theologian* lamented the “teaching of the imaginative writers of the day,” noting that religion is “put in abeyance” in favor of the “arena of politics, of late made more interesting by the war with Russia” and the “attractions of the poets and novelists of the day.”<sup>9</sup> This criticism captures the spirit of the magazine, which, in addition to original stories and poems, includes two essays about the Crimean War and several more about contemporary politics. Articles on Alfred Tennyson, Thomas Carlyle, and John Ruskin give the magazine an aura of hero-worship appropriate both to its age and to the ages of its undergraduate contributors. There are few jokes and no references to sport, perhaps a sign of the authors’ maturity.<sup>10</sup>

The magazine’s lasting fame is somewhat serendipitous. In the first issue, Burne-Jones makes a passing reference to Dante Gabriel Rossetti, calling Rossetti’s illustration for William Allingham’s “The Maids of Elfenmere” the “most beautiful drawing for an illustration I have ever seen” and asking, “Why is the author of the Blessed Damozel, and the story of Chiaro, so seldom on the lips of men? If only we could hear him oftener, live in the light of his power a little longer.”<sup>11</sup> Burne-Jones’s praise came to Rossetti’s attention, and he wrote to Allingham in March: “That notice in the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* was the most gratifying thing by far that ever happened to me—being unmistakably genuine.”<sup>12</sup> Rossetti would go on to contribute three poems to the magazine, and his friendship helped

launch the careers of Morris and Burne-Jones. But he also distracted them from the magazine. A letter from Burne-Jones indicates their changing interests: "Topsy [Morris] will be a painter, he works hard, is prepared to wait twenty years, loves art more and more every day . . . the Mag. is going to smash—let it go! It has had stupid things in it lately. I shall not write again for it, no more will Topsy—we cannot do more than one thing at a time, and our hours are too valuable to spend so."<sup>13</sup> For the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*, Rossetti was something of a mixed blessing, ensuring both its fame and its demise.

The complete title of the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* claims that it was "conducted by members of the two universities," but the bulk of the work was done by Oxford men. As Fiona MacCarthy notes, "The Set, later expanded and referred to as 'the Brotherhood,' was already in place when Morris came to Oxford."<sup>14</sup> William Fulford had come to Oxford from King Edwards School, in Birmingham, with A. J. Whitehouse, and when the latter left school, "Fulford was left to preside over the 'Set' that grew up during the next two years."<sup>15</sup> He was joined first by Charles Faulkner and Richard Watson Dixon, and later by Burne-Jones and Cormell Price; they had all known each other at King Edward's School.<sup>16</sup> Burne-Jones introduced Morris to the group, which was later joined by Henry Macdonald and by Wilfred Heeley, another Birmingham friend who, as Sambrook points out, "was at Cambridge, but maintained a voluminous correspondence with Fulford."<sup>17</sup> Dixon is credited with first voicing the idea for a magazine, but Morris's financing made it possible.<sup>18</sup> Already socially conscious at twenty-one, Morris had been debating what to do with the inheritance he received when he came of age. For a brief period he and Burne-Jones considered founding a kind of monastery, a mixed community of religious and secular scholars, but the influence of other members of the set convinced him that a magazine was a better investment.<sup>19</sup> Georgiana Burne-Jones quotes an 1855 letter from her husband, indicating the excitement the group felt: "We have such a deal to tell people, such a deal of scolding to administer, so many fights to wage and opposition to encounter that our spirits are quite rising with the emergency."<sup>20</sup>

Morris and Burne-Jones largely determined the intellectual direction in which the group headed, and a history of the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* could be written by tracing their first contact with certain authors and works. Ruskin was especially influential to the young men's thinking. Morris was already familiar with *Modern Painters* when he came to Oxford, and his fervor for *Stones of Venice* soon convinced the others of the power of Ruskin's ideas.<sup>21</sup> Burne-Jones published two essays on Ruskin in the magazine—a review of the latest volume of *Modern Painters* in April, and in June a defense of Ruskin against an attack in the *Quarterly Review*; he most likely co-wrote the latter with Morris. When Ruskin was sent a copy

of the first issue, he responded with a vague suggestion, never fulfilled, that he would submit something to the magazine.<sup>22</sup> Ruskin's "Edinburgh Lectures" also introduced Morris and Burne-Jones to the work of Rossetti and the other Pre-Raphaelites, and eventually to the *Germ*, where Burne-Jones would have read "The Blessed Damozel."<sup>23</sup> *The Germ* was an important influence on the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*, which adopted an aesthetic program and visual layout similar to its predecessor's.

Morris is typically remembered as the leader of the set, but his leadership did not go unchallenged. F. W. Macdonald (whose older brother Henry was a member of the set) recalls, "In the early days of 'the Set' Fulford exercised a kind of intellectual primacy, partly due to his seniority, and partly to the early maturing of his powers."<sup>24</sup> Fulford recognized Morris and Burne-Jones as challenges to this "intellectual primacy." He was such a compulsive talker that "only Morris could stop him, and then virtually by force,"<sup>25</sup> and he once warned Cormell Price, "You men at Oxford must not let your love of Morris carry you away to admire such of his writings as don't deserve admiration."<sup>26</sup> Yet it would be wrong, I think, to picture Fulford as bitter or resentful. If he was beset by "cares, occupations, and interests unfavorable to further development, so that his early work remained his best," then chief among the "cares, occupations, and interests" was the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*.<sup>27</sup> Morris edited the first issue but in February turned the editorial duties over to Fulford. Editing the magazine proved to be a laborious project that would greatly benefit the careers of his friends—but perhaps at the expense of his own. Fulford and the other members of the set were destined to be "overtaken and passed" by Morris and Burne-Jones, but the magazine would not have existed without them.<sup>28</sup>

#### "Others of our set"

Besides Morris and Burne-Jones, Dixon was the member of the set who seemed most destined for lasting fame. He was himself a poet and published several volumes of poetry before his death in 1900. Along with Morris, he was considered a possible successor to Tennyson as Poet Laureate.<sup>29</sup> But this fame came later in his life. He published no poems in the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*, and his story in the January issue, "The Rivals," apparently met with less enthusiastic reviews than Burne-Jones's "The Cousins."<sup>30</sup> Dixon's story, which is at least partially autobiographical, boasts a narrator who is self-confessedly "not particularly remarkable for anything" and portrays a distrust of critics and reviewers that Dixon shared with the rest of the set.<sup>31</sup> The protagonists are young men just out of university, and the highlight of the narrative occurs when Arnetage, the narrator's best friend, has his first book of poetry harshly condemned by critics.

Dixon's other contributions to the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* were political rather than literary. He wrote two essays about the Crimean War, one in February and one in March. "The Barrier Kingdoms" patriotically portrays England as the protector of European liberties and Russia as an aggressor, distinguishing Russia's goal of domination from England's goal of restitution and arguing that "we are at war for the express purpose of undoing whatever Russia has been doing in Europe and Asia for the last fifty years."<sup>32</sup> Peace talks began before the article went to press, and an insert from the editor (which in February would have been Fulford) assures readers that this new aspect of the question will be taken up in the next issue. In "The Prospects of Peace" Dixon fulfills this promise, though he has mixed feelings about the peace treaty, arguing that since the "object of the war is to give a permanent check to Russian aggression," it might be more advantageous for England to continue the war.<sup>33</sup>

Although the original idea for the magazine was that politics were to be "eschewed" in favor of "tales, poetry, friendly critiques and social articles," Dixon's essays show that the group was not entirely uninformed about international affairs.<sup>34</sup> Nor were the authors unconcerned with problems on the home front, as Charles Faulkner and Cormell Price's essays demonstrate. Both had been day students at King Edward's, where their social consciences had been sparked by trips through slums and a general awareness of the poverty around them.<sup>35</sup> Faulkner—best remembered for his role in the firm Morris, Marshall, Faulkner, and Co.—was the only member of the set who did not come to the university with the goal of entering the clergy and was a bit of an outlier in the group. His interest in science and mathematics, not shared by the others, is evident in his only contribution to the magazine, an essay about the conditions of Victorian industrial workers, co-authored with Price. "Unhealthy Employments" argues that match and cutlery manufacture are needlessly dangerous and could be easily made safer by simple reforms. The authors criticize the lack of ventilation in public spaces, such as theaters, that leads to the spread of disease and infection. Faulkner's involvement in this essay is clear when one compares it with the other articles by Price, or indeed with any of the other articles in the magazine. "Unhealthy Employments" cites sanitary reports and chemistry journals in addition to literary and social essays, and the combination of scientific and theoretical argument is clear in the opening paragraphs: "That there exists among us at present a vast preventable sacrifice of human life there is no doubt, and it is to the unapplied resources of science, and a wider knowledge of physiology, that we must look for the power of removing the causes."<sup>36</sup>

Cormell Price returned to the problem of industrialism and poverty in an essay on *Mary Barton*, using Gaskell's novel to discuss poverty, overpopulation, and collective bargaining. The choice to use a novel as his primary evidence differentiates this essay from the one he wrote with Faulkner and

indicates the central role that literature played in the intellectual development of the magazine's contributors. Price concludes, "Comparing [*Mary Barton*] with authentic documents and our own experience, we can confidently assert we have never elsewhere read so veritable and unbiased exposition of both sides of the perplexing questions introduced."<sup>37</sup> He continues to address social questions in "The Work of Young Men in the Present Age," which commends the patriotic sense of duty he feels arose during the Crimean War. Price argues that the duty of young men is "to cure the wrongs immediately around, which is the work they can do best, because they know these wrongs best . . . to most men it is given only to heal the ills of a family, a profession, or at most a native place. So much, however, by precept and example all men may help to do."<sup>38</sup> This sense of duty, Price hopes, will outlast the war. His didactic tone and his choice of audience demonstrate his interest in education, one that would stay with him throughout his life. He went on to found the United Services College and to serve as headmaster there, a role immortalized in Rudyard Kipling's *Stalky* stories, which Kipling dedicated to him.<sup>39</sup>

Price's social criticisms are founded on a strong national identity, a concept that interested other members of the group as well. A national agenda underlies Dixon's two essays on the Crimean War and many of the other articles about contemporary life. Wilfred Heeley puts English identity in a historical context in his essay "Sir Philip Sidney," the first entry in the magazine, criticizing the nineteenth century's "whirl of conflicting principles [and] tossing sea of theories and anachronisms" and looking back to the Elizabethan period for a true English identity.<sup>40</sup> Heeley's essay on Sidney is one of several contributions that were planned to continue over multiple issues, but he never finished it. The two parts that ultimately appeared in the magazine cover only Sidney's boyhood, never mentioning any of his poetry. F. W. Macdonald, to whom Heeley gave a "small honorarium" for copying the second part for press, says of the essay that it was "laid out on a scale that would seem to require half a dozen others to bring it to completion."<sup>41</sup> But Heeley married in August, abandoning the magazine and leaving for India to work for the Civil Service.

The existing portions of the essay on Sidney demonstrate Heeley's interest in history, continued in his two other contributions to the magazine, essays on Thomas Macaulay and James Anthony Froude. In separate essays, Heeley discusses Macaulay's *History of England, from the Accession of James the Second* and Froude's *History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Death of Elizabeth*. While he does not draw explicit comparisons between the two historians, he almost certainly had some in mind, reviewing works of the same title within months of each other. Discussing Froude, Heeley examines the importance of historical writings in reference to contemporary life, particularly religious life and the declining belief in

Old Testament history; he excuses Froude for his comments on religion in his earlier novel, *Nemesis of Faith*. His opinion of Macaulay is slightly less favorable, not for Macaulay's historical inaccuracies but for his "rhetorical power, uncontrolled by reverence."<sup>42</sup> He finds Macaulay's rhetoric offensive for its reliance on "empirical rules" and "immediate gratification of the senses."<sup>43</sup> For Heeley, "All true art ha[s] its foundation deep in the principles of things, and [seeks] as its end the bettering of our moral nature," a sentiment consistent with the tenor of the magazine.<sup>44</sup>

### William Fulford, Editor

Based on their contributions to the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*, these four members of the set seem to fill certain roles: Dixon the political writer, Faulkner the scientist, Price the social critic, and Heeley the historian. Another member of the original set, Henry Macdonald, published a review of Longfellow in the January issue, but he was from the beginning only a provisional contributor to the magazine.<sup>45</sup> For variety of subjects, no member of the set matched William Fulford, whose writings show a wider range even than Morris's. Morris, after all, wrote only three essays, one on French churches, one on Alfred Rethel, and one on Robert Browning, and the balance of his contributions were poems and tales. Fulford also wrote both stories and poems, and his essays include studies of Shakespeare, reviews of contemporary poets, a defense of Victorian imagination, and an article on women's education.

This variety, however, may have been a result of necessity. From the beginning, Fulford had trouble soliciting contributions from the others: most of Heeley's essay on Sidney never materialized, and Macdonald wrote only one piece, in the first issue, and then nothing more. In August, Burne-Jones commented that the magazine had "stupid things in it lately," and refused to keep writing;<sup>46</sup> the next month Fulford complained, "Topsy and I are the only ones of the set that write at all regularly. Ted [Burne-Jones] won't write."<sup>47</sup> He was right: other than those by Morris and Fulford, only five works from the set were published after the April issue, and only one, Price's "The Work of Young Men in the Present Age," was published after July.<sup>48</sup>

Granting his desire to keep the magazine running, Fulford faced two possible solutions: he could solicit contributions from those outside the set, or he could write more himself. He did both. The first outsider joined the magazine before it even began, when it was determined toward the end of 1855 that Macdonald was "only a complement."<sup>49</sup> Burne-Jones wrote in a letter to his cousin, "When we have filled our staff to completion [Macdonald] will retire, and two giants come in his place."<sup>50</sup> The "giants" to whom Burne-Jones refers are Faulkner, already a member of the set and a



well-decorated mathematical scholar, and a “great Cambridge man named Lushington, to whom I have not yet been introduced.”<sup>51</sup> Lushington is an interesting character in his own right: a law student at Cambridge in the 1850s, he had served in the navy and was, like Tennyson, a member of the Apostles.<sup>52</sup> Heeley had introduced Lushington to Morris as early as 1854, and Lushington is credited with first introducing Burne-Jones to Rossetti at a meeting of the Working Men’s College in 1855.<sup>53</sup>

Lushington wrote one of the magazine’s two essays on the fine arts, a study of Rossetti’s *Dante’s Dream on the Day of the Death of Beatrice* and Ford Madox Brown’s *The Last of England*. Though the set, especially Morris and Burne-Jones, had an interest in painting, Lushington’s essay is the only one of its kind.<sup>54</sup> He was also responsible for the longest piece in the magazine, a five-part essay on Thomas Carlyle. He began the essay anticipating it to be in three parts, the same format as Fulford’s essay on Tennyson. Sequential parts appeared in April, May, and June, and Lushington finishes the last of these by referring to his project as “a thing of the past.”<sup>55</sup> Likely at Fulford’s request, though, Lushington resumed his work on Carlyle, extending his essay to five parts, the last two appearing in November and December, the magazine’s final two issues. After completing the final part, he wrote to Carlyle in December 1856, offering his services as secretary and editor. The offer was accepted, and Lushington was a regular visitor to Carlyle’s house in Cheyne Walk throughout the late 1850s and ’60s.<sup>56</sup> As David Taylor has demonstrated, Lushington became a major figure in the latter half of the century, promoting Augustus Comte’s positivism and maintaining relationships not only with his college friend Morris but also with other Pre-Raphaelites, including William Michael Rossetti, with whom he traveled to Italy in 1860 to meet the Brownings and Holman Hunt.

The other contributors Fulford brought in were not as prolific as Vernon Lushington, who even convinced his twin brother Godfrey to publish an essay in the magazine (“Oxford,” in the April issue). Other writers Fulford commissioned included Bernard Cracroft, who graduated from Cambridge in 1853; Georgiana Macdonald, Henry’s sister, who later married Burne-Jones; Annie Scott Hill, who collaborated with Fulford on two of the Shakespeare studies; and John Nichol and William Aldis Wright, both of whom contributed only one essay to the magazine but became fairly successful scholars later in the century. The most famous contributor was of course Dante Gabriel Rossetti, whose contact with the magazine is well-documented.

Fulford’s search for contributors raises difficulties in determining the authorship of some of the essays since nearly all were published anonymously.<sup>57</sup> Bringing in other writers also changed the tone of some of the entries. The original plan for the magazine, according to Cormell Price’s

diary, was to have “no shewing off, no quips, no sneers, no lampooning,” and the authors tried to stick to this mantra.<sup>58</sup> Fulford wrote in his review of Alexander Smith, “Had [my opinion] been adverse, this review would not have been written,”<sup>59</sup> and Burne-Jones, in his defense of Ruskin, remarks, “It is a miserable thing to read, an unkind spiteful review, though more miserable to write if one only knew it.”<sup>60</sup> Heeley’s essay on Macaulay is perhaps the most critical in the first few issues of the magazine, but later issues are not so free of “lampooning”: Nichol’s review in December begins with a lament at the quality of recent plays and dramatic poems, before going on to review Sydney Dobell and George Macdonald. Even Fulford himself grew more critical as the year progressed. His review of Alexander Dyce’s *Recollections of the Table-Talk of Samuel Rogers* claims that a “more unentertaining book was never written” and that the “publication of it was an evil.”<sup>61</sup> This style differs from the generally laudatory tone of the earlier issues.<sup>62</sup>

### William Fulford, Author

When he couldn’t convince other members of the set to write and couldn’t find enough outside contributors, Fulford wrote entries himself. In the early works, he seems excited about his subjects. His first contribution was a three-part study of Tennyson, begun in January. He sent the poet laureate a copy of the magazine’s first issue, to which Tennyson responded positively, though he politely refused to comment on Fulford’s essay because “to praise it [might seem] too much like self-praise.”<sup>63</sup> In 1856 Tennyson was six years into his tenure as poet laureate and at the height of his popularity; Fulford’s essay would likely have excited more interest than any of the other essays in the January issue.<sup>64</sup>

Fulford’s method probably had more impact on the magazine than the content of his essays. His devotion to Tennyson was one of his most prominent characteristics, so much so that Dixon describes him as “absolutely devoured with admiration for Tennyson,” claiming that his leadership in the set was “due to . . . his Tennysonianism, in which we shared with greater moderation, and in different ways.”<sup>65</sup> This “Tennysonianism” had begun at King Edward’s in the early 1850s, where, as Sambrook notes, his “enthusiasm for this poet, before he became the bard of Victorian society and the revered oracle of his age, was wild and uncritical. Tennyson was their literary idol and Fulford was his high priest.”<sup>66</sup> Yet Fulford shows restraint in his Tennyson essay, presenting himself as an “interpreter between [Tennyson] and the public” and ensuring his readers that “whatever I shall advance will have been carefully weighed, and will be the result of several years’ almost uninterrupted reading of the Author. Would that every reviewer of a great writer could say as much.”<sup>67</sup>

Fulford's reading of Tennyson leads him to reflect on art in general. He discusses at length the "musicality" of "The Lady of Shallot," referring to the poem as a "painting in words" and remarking, "There is a mysterious sympathy between the different branches of Art, which binds them all into one closely connected whole."<sup>68</sup> Burne-Jones, Lushington, Morris, and Price, who followed Fulford's lead in enthusiastic admiration tempered with careful study, would express a similar belief in the unity of different artistic mediums; in his review of Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, for example, Burne-Jones refers to "poetry, sung or painted."<sup>69</sup> The set met and read together so often that it is perhaps difficult to credit Fulford entirely with outlining their aesthetic program, but he was the first to voice their shared beliefs, and his Tennyson essay established the tone for the rest of the magazine.

Fulford's admiration for Tennyson is evident in his other essays as well. In "Woman, her Duties, Education, and Position," he bases his thoughts primarily on "Lectures to Ladies on Practical Subjects," a collection of essays published the previous year, and on Anna Brownwell Jameson's "Sisters of Charity abroad and at Home," but includes "as a third text-book . . . Tennyson's *Princess*, containing, as it does, the truest conception of woman's duty and position, and some of the most practical advice concerning her education, that I have ever met with, in verse or in prose."<sup>70</sup> The tone of the essay is quite earnest: discussing moral duties, Fulford writes, "No one, of either sex, and of whatever age, can be unaware that an enormous mass of ignorance, crime and misery, in their most revolting shapes, exists in this civilized country."<sup>71</sup> He also seems genuinely concerned with the period's neglect of female education, lamenting that a woman's education stops "at the age of sixteen or eighteen, at the very age when her brother, destined for Oxford or Cambridge, first really begins to 'read.'"<sup>72</sup>

Fulford's social consciousness connects this essay to those by Price and Faulkner, but his tone now seems almost comical in its earnest naïveté. He divides, for example, women's "intellectual pursuits" into two headings: "understanding, appreciating and assisting their male friends (especially wives their husbands) in their intellectual pursuits" and the "duty of teaching."<sup>73</sup> The irony of such statements coming from a man barely in his twenties was not lost on his contemporaries. Sandars writes, "It is strange how those who are just learning burn to teach, and think all idiots and fools who will not listen to them . . . That an undergraduate should think it a sacred duty to tell other young men that they must be diligent and patient, and to tell young ladies that they should take care of their health and read poetry, betrays a singular conception of his general position in the world. But this is the way of youth."<sup>74</sup> While Fulford's essay on women may have held some sway among the other members of the set, he is clearly more comfortable addressing aesthetic questions than social ones.<sup>75</sup> His other

essays in the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* include three essays on Shakespeare (co-written with Annie Scott Hill) and a review of contemporary poet Alexander Smith.

Fulford wrote three stories, including the three-part semi-autobiographical “Cavalay. A Chapter of a Life,” about a group of young men in their last year at Oxford. But he seems to have considered himself more a poet than an author of fiction. Eight of the seventeen poems in the magazine are Fulford’s, and this count does not include the poems embedded in his stories “Cavalay,” “The Two Partings,” and “Frank’s Sealed Letter.” He was the most frequently contributing poet, if not the best. Morris contributed only five poems, Rossetti three, and Georgiana Macdonald one. Published in July, Fulford’s “To the English Army before Sepastopol” builds on the themes of patriotism and current events evident in the articles by Heeley on the Crimean War and by Price on the duties of young men. Fulford wrote the poem in 1855, when the English army had been laying siege to Sebastopol for almost a year. It was no doubt influenced by Tennyson’s “The Charge of the Light Brigade” (1854), which Fulford mentions in his Tennyson essay, quibbling with a reviewer in *Fraser’s* as to whether anapestic meter would have served Tennyson’s purposes better than the dactyls he uses and arguing that the poem’s “popularity must be attributed in some degree to the subject itself.”<sup>76</sup> The July issue, in which “To the English Army” appears, was the sixth edited by Fulford, and as an editor he may have taken a less pejorative view towards the popularity of a poem’s subject than he had earlier in the year.

Tennyson’s poem ends with the lines, “Honor the charge they made! / Honor the Light Brigade, / Noble six hundred!”<sup>77</sup> He narrates the attack in third person, turning outwards to the reader only in the last stanza. Fulford reverses this grammatical emphasis. Written in tetrameter couplets, his poem addresses the “noble army, proved and true, / Long tried, whom nothing can subdue”<sup>78</sup> but turns toward the duties of citizens back in England:

O valiant soldiers, tried and true,  
 What foes your valour shall subdue!  
 Not foes alone in fort and field,  
 But different, mightier powers shall yield.  
 Think you we look’d on coldly, we  
 Who dwell in safety o’er the sea?<sup>79</sup>

The “mightier powers” are the hearts and minds of Englishmen dwelling “in safety.” Like Tennyson, whose poem was stimulated by an article in the *Times* and who published his poem in the *Examiner*, Fulford was inspired by newspaper coverage of the war, which he references directly in

the poem: "All our blood / Was moved to read that noble story; / Hearts beat heroic to your glory."<sup>80</sup> The poem establishes the siege as a moral lesson, repeating the image of the fast-beating heart: "Not all unused by me, / Your lesson comes across the sea; / My heart beats stronger while I read, / Beats strong to follow where you lead."<sup>81</sup> The call to patriotism gives the poem a more optimistic tone than Tennyson's, emphasized by the spondaic substitution in the poem's final line: "Cast down again, and yet again, but victors still."<sup>82</sup> The stress on "victors still" reflects the moral optimism predominant in the magazine.

"To the English Army" is exceptional both in its treatment of contemporary events and in its tone. Most of Fulford's poems are more conventionally melancholy, dealing with themes like death and loss. The speaker of "Remembrance" claims that memory "when the past / Outshines the present, is but grief,"<sup>83</sup> while the young woman of "In Youth I Died," written in 1851 and probably the first poem Fulford wrote,<sup>84</sup> embraces death and returns to listen to her mourners who shall "triumph, when they learn / Heaven's solemn mysteries."<sup>85</sup> Perhaps the most interesting of his poems, "Fear," interprets original sin—"the primal curse / That blasted Paradise of old"<sup>86</sup>—as an emotional legacy: "Terror,—not awe, that is the seal / By God upon his creatures set, / That man through all the world may feel / The hand he would so fain forget."<sup>87</sup>

As Macdonald has noted, Fulford was the "first of 'The Set' to feel, or at least to yield to, the impulse of writing."<sup>88</sup> He hoped for a literary career and published a few volumes of poetry between 1859 and 1865. Roger Simpson has defended Fulford's place in the Pre-Raphaelite circle and among nineteenth-century poets in general, examining his later works and finding Fulford a committed poet who took the Arthurian mythology in a different direction than Morris or Tennyson. But most readers agree with Macdonald's assessment that while Fulford "showed promise as a poet," his "early work remained his best."<sup>89</sup> Mackail writes, "By the time [Fulford] left Oxford his friends had already taken his measure, and sighed over an extinct brilliance."<sup>90</sup> Likewise, Fiona MacCarthy remarks that although Fulford was at first "the Set's chief literary figure . . . he seems to have had the precocious sort of talent that quite rapidly burns itself out."<sup>91</sup> As Sambrook puts it, "Although at Oxford he was the leader of a group of highly gifted men, some of whom were later very distinguished, his undergraduate superiority did not foreshadow any lasting achievements of his own, and he faded into obscurity soon after leaving Oxford."<sup>92</sup> The story each of these critics tells is of a promising young poet who never amounted to much.

One can only speculate, though, whether Fulford faded into obscurity because he lacked the talent to keep up with his more gifted friends or

because the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* diverted his attention away from working on his poetry. In the absence of contributions from other members of the set, Fulford was called upon to write for the magazine rather more than he probably wanted to. His editorial duties took their toll, and several of his essays seem included only to fill pages. This begins as early as March, in the second issue he edited. "A Few Words Concerning Plato and Bacon" has little to say about either Plato or Bacon and feels less like a well thought-out investigation and more like a spontaneous defense of the nineteenth century as an age of artistic production, not just scientific and mercantile progress. A reviewer complained that the essay "settles the philosophical position of Plato and Bacon in a page and three quarters. It is naively assumed, here as elsewhere, that any passage which the writer has come across in his first perusal of a famous work is unknown to the rest of the world."<sup>93</sup> We can, however, attribute at least some of Fulford's hasty essays and conventional poetry to the effort he put into his editorial duties. For Morris and Burne-Jones, the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* was an entry point into the artistic and literary society of Victorian London, and Fulford's influence helped them gain access. The magazine also helped establish Lushington's relationship with Carlyle, connecting him to the Victorian intellectual scene. But if the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* helped Fulford's friends achieve success, its effect on Fulford was quite the opposite. It introduced him to the drudgeries of publication as he struggled to fill the pages of the magazine.

Were it not for Fulford, it is unlikely that the magazine would have run for more than a few months. Rossetti, it should be remembered, first published a poem in August, and we might not remember the magazine at all had it not reached that issue. The other members of the set had different career goals: Price went into education, Heeley into civil service, Dixon into the clergy. For them, the magazine was a fond memory with few direct ties to their later careers. Fulford's interests were, from the beginning, literary, and the interest never left him: he continued to write and publish poetry for the next decade. From his perspective, the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* was perhaps a hindrance rather than a boon. Dixon admitted that "Fulford's influence [on the set] was for good," and as Sandars noted in the *Saturday Review*, the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* affords us a view into the minds of undergraduates at mid-century, revealing the early interest in contemporary art and politics that would characterize the subsequent decades.<sup>94</sup> One can't help but sympathize with the man whose efforts helped launch his friends' artistic careers but who, whether through the twists of fate or his own inadequacies, never achieved equivalent fame himself.

## NOTES

1. Tennyson, *The Princess*, lines 5–8.
2. *The Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. “set,” accessed April 13, 2012, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/176794>.
3. Brookfield, *The Cambridge “Apostles,”* 3.
4. Sandars, “Undergraduate Literature,” 196. Thomas Carlyle had a similar reaction, telling his brother John that the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* “is chiefly worth looking at in the prophetic way; as an indication of the sense and nonsense working in the heads of those young fellows, who will be Legislators &c in a few years, and endeavouring to execute what they think.” Campbell, *Collected Letters*, 31:85. And a reviewer for the *Ecclesiastical and Theologian* refers to the “(apparently) very young gentlemen now engaged upon the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*. The chief importance of such a periodical, of course, consists in its being a sign of the times. It cannot take a high rank upon the score of its intrinsic merits.” “The Teachers and the Taught,” 189.
5. With one exception, all of Morris’s poems from the magazine were reprinted in *The Defense of Guenevere* (1858), and his poems and stories were reprinted in 1903. Burne-Jones’s later reputation was as an artist more than as a writer, but two of his stories from the magazine, “The Cousins” and “A Story of the North,” are reprinted in Weeks’s *The Dream Weavers: Short Stories by the Pre-Raphaelite Poet-Painters* (1980).
6. “Undergraduate Literature,” Sandars’s article in the *Saturday Review*, advertises the compilation.
7. In their book lists, Bell and Daldy printed a blurb from the *Guardian* review: “The ‘Oxford and Cambridge Magazine’ is a very remarkable publication. The critical articles on Tennyson, ‘Hiawatha,’ and ‘The Newcomes’ sound, to our ears, as if Mr. Carlyle, having become a good Christian and donned a cap and gown, were discoursing upon modern literature in an atmosphere redolent of Aristotle.” “*The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*,” 9. The *Rossetti Archive* edition of the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* includes page images of the advertisements.
8. The *Daily News* advertised issues of the magazine on January 30 and February 29, 1856; the *Examiner* on March 31 and October 4. Advertisements included the issue’s table of contents.
9. “The Teachers and the Taught,” 180, 179.
10. F. W. Macdonald, whose brother was a member of the set, emphasizes this point. *In a Nook with a Book*, 220–21.
11. Edward Burne-Jones, “The Newcomes,” 60.
12. Rossetti, *Correspondence*, 2:100–101.
13. Quoted in Mackail, *Life*, 108.
14. MacCarthy, *William Morris*, 59.

15. Sambrook, *A Poet Hidden*, 14.
16. King Edward's had a growing reputation even before the set arrived. Writing in 1851, Charles Astor Bristed, who attended Cambridge in the 1840s, notes, "The King Edward VI School, Birmingham, had a great reputation which began . . . after I entered the University." *Five Years in an English University*, 338.
17. Sambrook, *A Poet Hidden*, 14.
18. Mackail, *Life*, 68.
19. *Ibid.*, 62–63.
20. Burne-Jones, *Memorials*, 121.
21. Mackail, *Life*, 38.
22. *Ibid.*, 89–90.
23. *Ibid.*, 38–39.
24. Macdonald, *In a Nook with a Book*, 212.
25. Fitzgerald, *Edward Burne-Jones*, 26–27.
26. MacCarthy, *William Morris*, 100.
27. Macdonald, *In a Nook with a Book*, 212–13.
28. *Ibid.*, 212.
29. MacCarthy, *William Morris*, 77.
30. Dixon said of Burne-Jones's story, "We were all as if dumb at the end of it. I felt the commanding beauty and delicate phrasing, and also the goodness of heart that the writing shewed." Burne-Jones, *Memorials*, 125.
31. Dixon, "The Cousins," 34.
32. Dixon, "The Barrier Kingdoms," 69.
33. Dixon, "Prospects of Peace," 185.
34. Quoted from Cornell Price's diary, Mackail, *Life*, 81.
35. MacCarthy, *William Morris*, 63; Mackail, *Life*, 64.
36. Price and Faulkner, "Unhealthy Employments," 265.
37. Price, "Lancashire and 'Mary Barton,'" 451.
38. Price, "The Work of Young Men," 562.
39. Kipling likely knew of the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* since its contributors included not just his headmaster but also his aunt and uncle, Burne-Jones and Georgiana Macdonald. One of the Stalky stories—"The Last Term"—centers on a school magazine, a possible reference to the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*.
40. Heeley, "Sir Philip Sidney," 1.
41. Macdonald, *In a Nook with a Book*, 219.
42. Heeley, "Mr. Macaulay," 176.
43. *Ibid.*
44. *Ibid.*
45. Burne-Jones, *Memorials*, 123. Macdonald's chief historical importance is having introduced his sister Georgiana to Burne-Jones; the two were engaged in June 1856 and married in 1860. Georgiana wrote a story and a



poem for the magazine. "The Porch of Life," in the December issue, bears her initials, one of only two attributed contributions.

46. Mackail, *Life*, 108.
47. *Ibid.*, 90.
48. Price's essay appeared in September, and even this article has at times been attributed to Fulford. See my commentary in the *Rossetti Archive* edition of the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*, <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/Price003.raw.html>.
49. Burne-Jones, *Memorials*, 123.
50. *Ibid.*
51. *Ibid.*, 123.
52. Taylor, *Vernon Lushington*, 87.
53. *Ibid.*, 57.
54. The only other essay on painting, Morris's short piece on Alfred Rethel, is descriptive rather than critical.
55. Lushington, "Carlyle, Part III: Another Look at His Lamp for the Old Years," 352.
56. Taylor, *Vernon Lushington*, 120, 137.
57. For disputed authorship of contributions to the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*, see Houghton, "The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine," 723–31; Eugene Lemire's commentary in Morris's *The Hollow Land*; and my commentary in the *Rossetti Archive* edition of the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*, <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/ap4.093.raw.html>.
58. Mackail, *Life*, 81.
59. Fulford, "Alexander Smith," 549.
60. Burne-Jones, "Ruskin and the Quarterly," 354.
61. Fulford, "Rogers' Table Talk," 642, 644.
62. Sandars found the negative tone more prominent than the positive, claiming, "Nothing is more striking throughout the whole book than the scorn in which the world is held. No epithets are abusive enough for it. Divided from it by a year, perhaps, of coming to college life and fifty miles of railway, these youths look with the loftiest abhorrence on the sphere in which their fathers and uncles and elder brothers are content to move." Sandars, "Undergraduate Literature," 196.
63. Gordon, "Critical Selection," 84.
64. *Ibid.*, 78.
65. Mackail, *Life*, 42, 44.
66. Sambrook, *A Poet Hidden*, 10.
67. Fulford, "Alfred Tennyson," 7.
68. *Ibid.*
69. Burne-Jones, "Mr. Ruskin's New Volume," 214.
70. Fulford, "Woman, her Duties, Education, and Position," 463.
71. *Ibid.*, 465.

72. Ibid., 469.
73. Ibid., 464.
74. Sandars, "Undergraduate Literature," 196.
75. See Kestner, "Edward Burne-Jones and Nineteenth-Century Fear of Women."
76. Fulford, "Tennyson," 144-45.
77. Tennyson, "Charge of the Light Brigade," lines 53-55.
78. Fulford, "To the English Army," lines 1-2.
79. Ibid., lines 21-26.
80. Ibid., lines 32-34.
81. Ibid., lines 49-53.
82. Ibid., line 60.
83. Fulford, "Remembrance," lines 21-22.
84. See Mackail, *Life*, 42; and Macdonald, *In a Nook with a Book*, 213.
85. Fulford, "In Youth I Died," line 48.
86. Fulford, "Fear," lines 3-4.
87. Ibid., lines 33-37.
88. Macdonald, *In a Nook with a Book*, 213.
89. Ibid., 212, 213.
90. Mackail, *Life*, 37.
91. MacCarthy, *William Morris*, 60.
92. Sambrook, *A Poet Hidden*, 14.
93. Sandars, "Undergraduate Literature," 196.
94. Sambrook, *A Poet Hidden*, 45.

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- . “A Few Words Concerning Plato and Bacon.” *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* 3 (March 1856): 189–91.
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