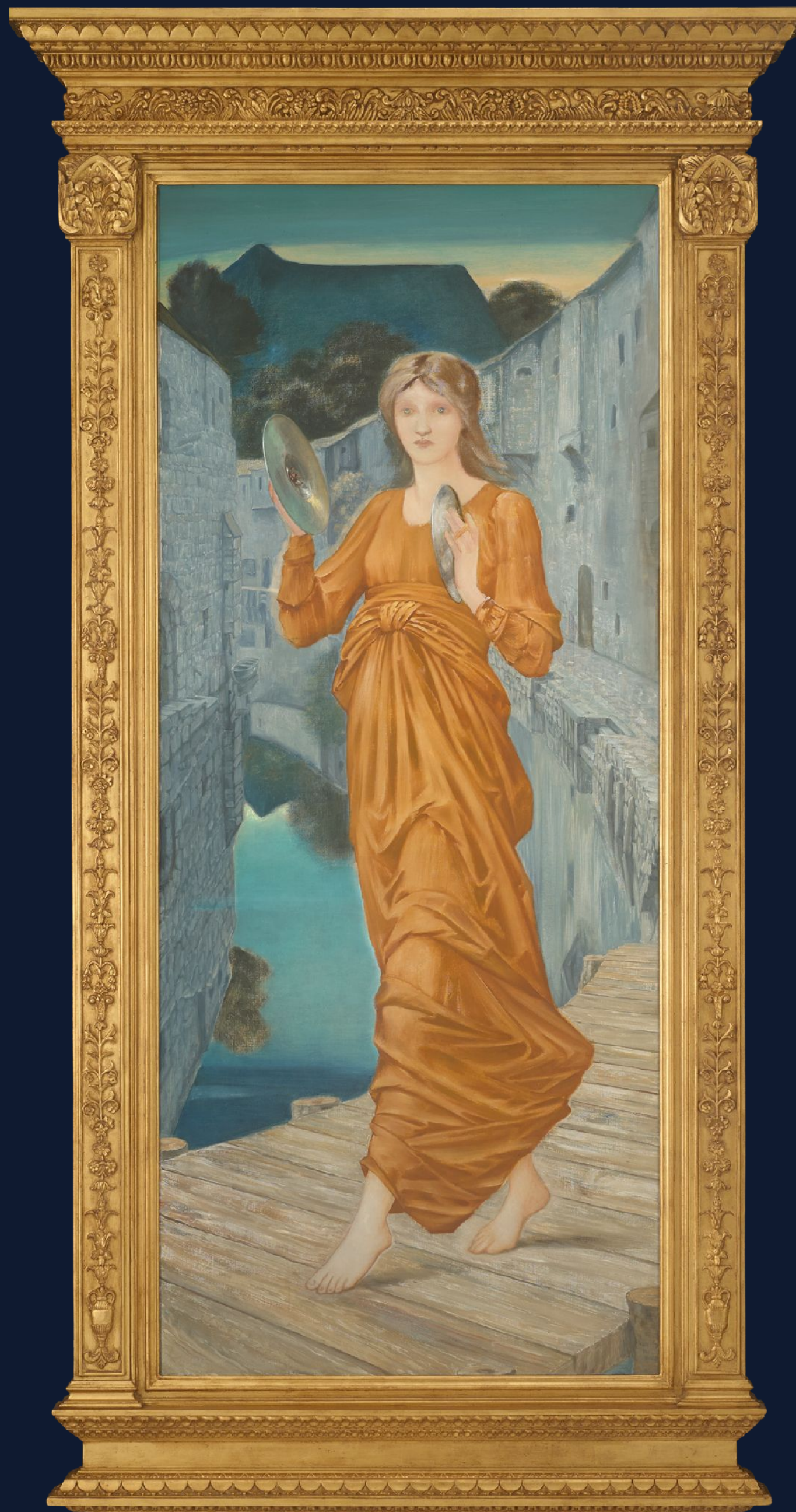




Aurora

SIR EDWARD COLEY BURNE-JONES, BT., A.R.A., R.W.S.

1833–1898 | BRITISH

Oil on canvas | Circa 1896

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“Only this is true, beauty never fails.”

— SIR EDWARD COLEY BURNE-JONES

Aurora

A MONUMENTAL PAINTING BY SIR EDWARD COLEY BURNE-JONES

Pre-Raphaelite masterpieces are among the most desirable works of art on the market. Sir Edward Burne-Jones stands as one of the movement's most celebrated and imaginative icons.

This treasure was kept in the artist's family for over 100 years and has only recently emerged. This is one of very few Burne-Jones still in private hands.

The painting entitled *Aurora* depicts the radiant goddess of dawn gracefully rising over a sleeping city. With its rich color and magnificent scale, the masterpiece has extraordinary presence—romantic, classically pre-Raphaelite and quintessentially Burne-Jones. The model for *Aurora*, Bessie Keene, was one of Burne-Jones' favorite models, loved by the artist as his "chief angel and nymph."

Most of his masterpieces are now in major museums around the world, including the Musée d'Orsay, the Met, the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC and the National Museums of Liverpool. The counterpart to *Aurora*, *Vespertina Quies* (*Evening Repose*), belongs to the Tate, and another, lesser version finished by the artist's son resides in the Queensland Art Gallery.

Burne Jones trained with his fellow Pre-Raphaelite Dante Gabriel Rossetti. He achieved rare international and Royal recognition in his lifetime, receiving France's Légion d'honneur and a baronetcy from Queen Victoria in 1894—an extraordinary honor for an artist. His stature is equally reflected in the market, where his works have achieved as much as \$22 million at auction, and comparable mythological subjects have realized \$3-1.4 million.



MEDIUM

Oil on canvas

DATED

Circa 1896

DIMENSIONS

Canvas: 70 1/2" high x 30" wide (179.1 x 76.2 cm)

Framed: 88" high x 46" wide (223.5 x 116.8 cm)

Provenance & Literature

PROVENANCE

Georgiana, Lady Burne-Jones, the artist's widow, until 1920

Margaret Mackail, her daughter, by bequest, until 1953

Denis George Mackail, her son, by bequest

Clare Mackail, his sister, by gift, and thence by family descent

Private Collection, London

M.S. Rau, New Orleans

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Literature: Catalogue Raisonné



BURNE-JONES
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By and Studio of Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones, By Thomas Matthews Rooke

Aurora

oil on canvas
1892 - 1898
Dimensions: 178 cm x 76 cm

Collection Categories
Oils, tempera on canvas/panel and Mixed Media, The Studio, Assistants, Collaborators, Pupils (not objects, Morris nor solely Morris & Co)

Expertise

Provenance

Exhibitions

Bibliography

'I am Day, I bring again Life and glory, love and pain, Awake, arise from death to death, From me the worlds tale quickeneth.' William Morris

'I mean by a picture a beautiful romantic dream of something that never was, never will be - in a light better than any light that ever shone - in a land no one can define, or remember, only desire – and the forms divinely beautiful.' Sir Edward Burne-Jones

The scarcity of large oil paintings by Burne-Jones in private ownership, probably less than twenty, makes the re-emergence of *Aurora* an exciting moment, especially as it is in such wonderful condition and with an unbroken family provenance. Of the important pictures from his mature period most are in public collections around the world, including *The Beguiling of Merlin* of 1874 (Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight), *Laus Veneris* of 1878 (Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle-upon-Tyne), *The Golden Stairs* of 1880 and *King Cophetua* and *the Beggar Maid* of 1884 (both Tate), *The Wheel of Fortune* of 1883 (Musée d'Orsay, Paris), *The Marriage of Psyche* of 1895 in Belgium (Musées royaux des beaux-arts, Brussels) and his swan-song *The Last Sleep of Arthur in Avalon* (Museo de Arte de Ponce, Puerto Rico). In the last twenty years the only oil paintings by Burne-Jones sold at auction are *The Prince Entering the Briar Wood* (Christie's, London, 13 June 2001, lot 11), *The Sea Nymph* (Christie's, London, 15 June 2005, lot 34), *Hill-fairies* (sold in these rooms, 12 July 2007, lot 19) *Hero* (Christie's, London, 31 May 2012, lot 15) and a handful of portraits.

An ethereal figure of the Roman Goddess of the Dawn treads lightly over a wooden bridge amid towering buildings and a motionless river. The first light of the day is rising above the horizon to break the chill of night and reveal the recesses and apertures of the clustered houses along the quayside. In a radiant gown of saffron orange she strides forth resembling a dancing flame of the sun itself stepped momentarily into the mortal world from her celestial course across the sky. She raises two silver cymbals and heralds the coming day, breaking the silence of slumber as she wakes the townsfolk with her music and her illumination. The doors remain unopened, the window-shutters closed to ward off the perils of the night. There is a sense of suspended time as though *Aurora* were about to clash her cymbals for the first time and break the reign of silence. The painting is one of Burne-Jones' most powerful allegories, a personification of light and rebirth, power and grace. Free from the restrictions of conveying a narrative, *Aurora* is an example of Burne-Jones' Symbolist tendencies in his later work.

Aurora is the counterpoint to *Vespertina Quies* (*Evening Repose*) of 1893 (Tate). Whilst *Vespertina Quies* captures the silent somnolence of the last light of the day, with the reflective introspection of da Vinci, *Aurora* reflects Botticelli's graceful movement and the liveliness of waking hours. Both paintings depict the same young woman, a beautiful professional model named Bessie Keene (b.1878 or 1879) whose mother Annie had also posed for Burne-Jones many years earlier for *The Golden Stairs* (Tate). 'Bessie was an excellent sitter, though unfortunately in love with a heartless Mr Inwick, said to 'look like the heroes I paint, and I am rather kind, and take an interest.' (Burne-Jones quoted in Penelope Fitzgerald, *Edward Burne-Jones – A Biography*, London, 1975, p. 233) She is thought to have also been the model for the later version of *Love Among the Ruins* of 1894 (Bearstead Collection, on long-term loan to Wightwick Manor, National Trust). As the artist Graham Robertson noted; 'she succeeded her mother as chief 'angel and 'nymph'. (Graham Robertson, *Time was – The Reminiscences of W. Graham Robertson*, London, 1931, p. 282)

The present picture is a version of an identically sized painting, first exhibited at the New Gallery in 1896 and bought by Earl Cowper (now in the Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane). Burne-Jones often painted alternative versions of pictures, sometimes in different media. Examples of this include *King Cophetua* and *the Beggar Maid*, *The Annunciation*, *The Depths of the Sea*, *Wheel of Fortune* and panels from both of his great cycle of pictures illustrating the stories of *Perseus* and *Sleeping Beauty*. In the 1890s Burne-Jones had many ongoing, unfinished projects awaiting his attention in the studio, so many that he felt overwhelmed at times. He drew a poignant caricature of himself entitled *Unpainted Masterpieces c.1890* (British Museum, London), looking forlorn and surrounded by vast empty canvases threatening to engulf him. Of his last great work

Literature: Catalogue Raisonné

crude unpainted masterpieces (1896) (British Museum, London), looking toward and surrounded by vast empty canvases threatening to engulf him. Of his last great works, many remained incomplete, including The Wizard (Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery), The Sirens (The John and Mabel Ringling Museum of Arts, Sarasota), The Last Sleep of Arthur in Avalon (Museo de Arte de Ponce, Puerto Rico), The Car of Love (Victoria & Albert Museum, London), The Troy Triptych (Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery) and his great cycle of paintings The Perseus Series (Southampton City Art Gallery). Burne-Jones would begin versions of pictures before one was finished, sometimes working on two simultaneously with multiple patrons in mind or intending to retain one version for himself. On 6 April 1896 Burne-Jones' studio assistant Thomas Rooke recorded that he had been 'laying in a replica of Aurora on a new canvas' (Mary Lago (ed.), Burne-Jones Talking – His Conversations 1895-1898 Preserved by his Studio Assistant Thomas Rooke, 1981, p.90), indicating that Rooke traced the composition of Aurora from the finished painting to the present canvas, which was subsequently painted by Burne-Jones himself. Another young artist visiting the studio in 1893 described Burne-Jones' painting technique at this time; 'He began by drawing the figure in raw umber. I think that was done before I came. Then he modelled the face in white and raw umber, lightly putting a little red on the lips, nostrils and eyes ... all the strong colours were painted in sweeping strokes of full colour. He used a mixture of spike [lavender] oil and turpentine as a medium.' (Maud Beddington, quoted in Martin Harrison and Bill Waters, Burne-Jones, 1973, p.158) The 'sweeping strokes' of orange in Aurora's dress have a wonderful luminosity and expression of confidence but the painting was put aside, like so many others. There is a photograph of Burne-Jones studio at The Grange in Kensington which shows one of the versions of Aurora in a preliminary state on an easel beside The Marriage of Psyche and The Arming of Perseus. On 20 April 1896 Burne-Jones returned to the two paintings of Aurora and made changes to the width of the bridge in the version exhibited at the New Gallery, following several comments from friends that the bridge was too narrow. At the same time he described making the same changes to the present picture 'I did it on the other one first – that's the good of having two pictures, one to wash the other, as Mr Morris says of having two shirts.' (op.cit. Lago, p.98) The present version of Aurora remained unfinished at the time of the artist's death which meant that it escaped the changes made to the other version suggested by Burne-Jones' son Philip. Several of the artist's friends thought these changes were detrimental. Although Philip Burne-Jones was a professional artist of modest success and lived in the shadow of his father's reputation, he occasionally influenced his father's work in later years. Graham Robertson felt that when the exhibited Aurora (Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane) was 'all but finished' it suffered from Philip's poor taste in colours; 'When Phil had finished with her, her robes were colourless, her face pale, and her hair almost grey.' (Kerrison Preston (ed.), Letters from Graham Robertson, London, 1953, p.442) The present version however retains the effect of 'a radiant figure clad in the rose and gold of dawn, with flushed cheeks and golden hair.' (ibid p.442) In her biography of her husband, Georgiana Burne-Jones recalled that he had made a sketch in Oxford in 1867 of a 'canal-bridge in a poor quarter of the city, which nearly thirty years afterwards he developed into the background of his "Aurora." The main outlines of building and canal are preserved in the picture, and Aurora with her cymbals comes lightly stepping along a waterside path from which in the original sketch a woman stoops to bathe her baby, but the canal has changed into the arm of a river and the houses have welded into the long, low storage-places of a wharf, crowned by a great church lifted up against the sky.' (Georgiana Burne-Jones, Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones, London, 1904, 2 volumes, vol.I., p.304) Georgiana also recalled that; '... one day as he was working at "Aurora" he did a very unusual thing, for the humour seized him to think aloud, and he spun out a whole story of the place. "You see the city gets poorer as it gets towards the church," he said, "which makes it more interesting – the rich people have gone to live further off. It has had many epochs: first the Roman – you may see remnants of that in the foundations: then was an oligarchic government, following on a time of anarchy and disaster, that put up many fine buildings, and some of them still remain. Then came an epoch of trade, capricious and varying in locality, that produced the strangest results on its architecture, one part of the town cutting out another by setting up nearer the sea further down the river, then being driven back again for reasons that can't be found out now – traces of prosperity and decay succeeding each other.'" (ibid p.305)

It is interesting that around the time that Burne-Jones designed Aurora, he used the same dancing musician for Miriam a design for a window in the north transept of the Albion Congregational Church at Ashton-under-Lyme in 1895 (the chalk cartoon is Northampton Central Museum and Art Gallery).

Aurora was the ultimate example of a series of allegories of times of the day made throughout his later career from the 1870s onwards. The series includes Day and Night painted in 1870 (both in The Fogg Art Gallery, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts), Vesper of 1872 (also known as Hesperus, The Evening Star, private collection, a version from 1870 sold Christie's, London, 12 December 2013, lot 53 for £506,500), Luna of 1872 (sold Christie's, Paris, 23 February 2009, lot 91, from the collection of Yves Saint Laurent and Pierre Bergé for €1,095,500) and The Hours of 1882 (Sheffield City Art Gallery). Aurora can also be viewed in a wider context of allegories by exponents of the Aesthetic Movement such as Albert Moore, J.A.M. Whistler, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Lord Leighton, who painted women as representations of music, flora, seasons and times of the day. A pertinent example for comparison is George Frederic Watts' Aurora of 1887 (also known as Dawn, private collection), which depicts the same subject but is treated in a more statuesque and classical way (Watts made a marble of the same figure) with a rather solid looking goddess in comparison to Burne-Jones' light-footed maiden. Perhaps we can also draw an analogy between Burne-Jones' depiction of dawning light and Leighton's famous hymn to sunlight Flaming June (Museo de Arte de Ponce, Puerto Rico) painted only a year before and striking for the bright golden hue of the woman's dress. Burne-Jones and Leighton were responding to a modern vogue for painting pictures symbolic of time, perhaps reflecting the fact that the dawn of the twentieth century was approaching. In the 1890s Burne-Jones repeatedly drew and painted women dancing or flying, taking the elongated figures of his stained-glass designs and allowing them to float just above the ground, as Aurora does. These glimmering apparitions of other worldliness found their most experimental and modern form in the remarkable series of drawings in gold gouache on dark-blue tinted papers from the mid-1890s (example sold in these rooms, 19 November 2013, lot 4 Dancing Girls).

There was a dramatic, melancholic force to Burne-Jones' later work in which the experience of a lifetime of painting was distilled into his series of pictures of fragile princesses and valiant knights, heroes and angels – romantic visions of youthful, beautiful men and women whose tall lithe bodies are perfected as though seen through the veil of a dream. Beauty continued to be his main concern and in these last paintings there was also a silent tension of suppressed emotion. In his last years Burne-Jones sought to bring into focus the visions that had haunted him for almost half a century and were now threatened by an advancing modern, mechanical age. The image of a beautiful girl's face gazing out with an expression of regret, defiance and inward thought would be his greatest legacy. Whether she be Andromeda, Sleeping Beauty, Danae or Aurora she represented the sylph-like vision of pale, statuesque femininity that he made his own.

Aurora has remained in the possession of the artist's family and has never been seen by the public as it has not been offered for sale or exhibited before. It is a rare re-appearance of a lost work by one of the most remarkable artists of his generation.
Sotheby's 2019

Sotheby's London (Sotheby & Co)
15/11/2019

Note: The version of Aurora that appears on the easel in the Grange Home Studio in The Strand Magazine p. 25, is of the cartoon of Miriam for the Albion Congregational Church, Ashton-under-Lyne in 1895.

The monochrome orange dress stresses the unfinished state of the painting, as Burne-Jones never allowed a single colour to dominate at this date. The brush strokes of the under-painting of the flesh, which was preparatory work made by T M Rooke, over-lap the dress at Aurora's neckline. This suggests that the orange drapery was made first with assistants working from the cartoon and first version, rather than the usual practice of over-painting a nude study and therefore an assistant was working from a fully formed image which already existed. The pentimenti around Aurora's right arm and lower body also betray the fact that the laying in was from a draped figure. The reference in Rooke's conversation for 6th February 1896 clearly states "'I (laying in a replica of Aurora on a new canvas)" Lago p 90, makes clear that T M Rooke was responsible.

The state of this canvas, its crude finish, scumbled brush work, pentimenti and exposed areas of canvas are not typical of Burne-Jones direct hand. From the evidence of other canvases that are known to be the work of T M Rooke, the majority of this painting is from his hand to be further finished by the Master. This is an opportunity to comprehend the Studio System and the point at which Burne-Jones began to work on a highly under-painted canvas.

Bibby's Annual 1917 Phillip Burne-Jones writes "Often he would put aside large oil paintings, well on their way to completion, because of some technical shortcoming which he knew he could improve upon, and begin them again from the very beginning. The designs for "The Garden of Pan", "Merlin and Nimue" and "Aurora" are all foreshadowed upon canvases that were for some reason or other dis-guarded in the course of production; and these remain, in their incompleteness - too finished to destroy, yet far too imperfect for public exhibition."

William Waters
25/11/2019

A small pocket-book at this time (1867) contains a note made by Edward from a canal-bridge in a poor quarter of the city, which nearly thirty years afterwards he developed into the background of his "Aurora".

Lady Georgiana Burne-Jones
11/01/2022

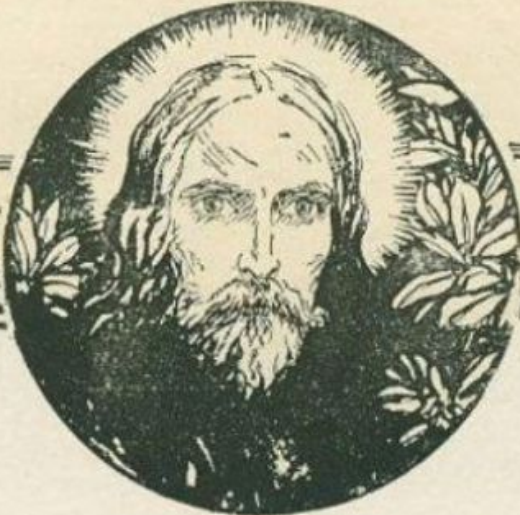
Literature: Bibby's Annual

Bibby's Annual, by John Hartley Grundy Bibby, 1917. List of illustrations, with *Aurora* mentioned.

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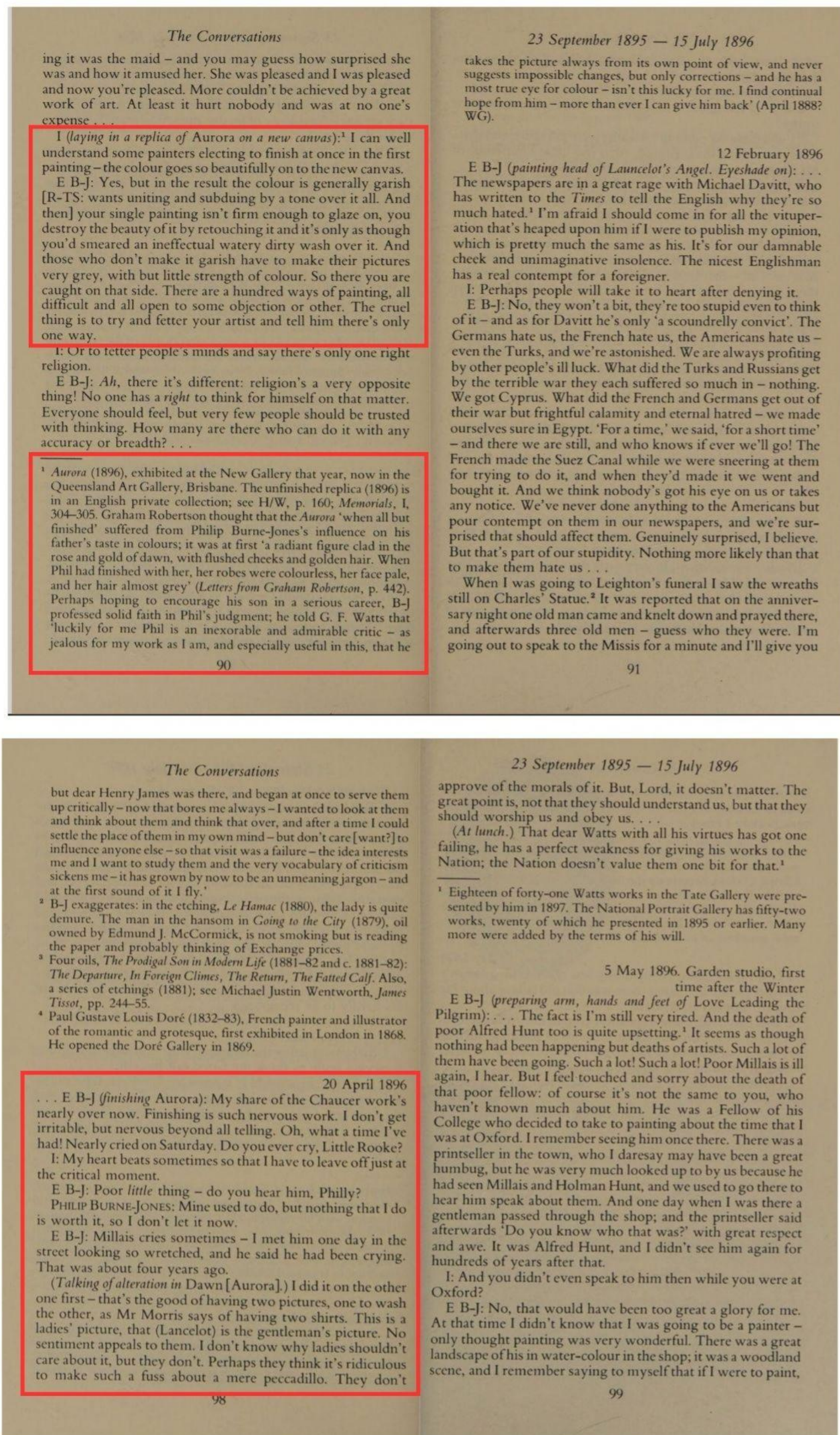
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Burne-Jones Talking: His Conversations 1895–1898 Preserved by His Studio Assistant Thomas Rooke, by Professor Mary McClelland Lago, 1981, pp. 90 and 98.



Literature: Munsey's Magazine

Edward Burne-Jones, Munsey's Magazine, by Royal Cortissoz, February 1907, p. 580.

580

MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE

one of the most famous of his pictures, the 'Aurora.' As a study of form it is flatly indefensible. The height of the figure is exaggerated almost to absurdity,

suggests anything save a transcript from life.

Burne-Jones must have worked from a lay-figure, you say, when he painted



CUPID AND PSYCHE

From a photograph by Hollser, London, after the painting by Burne-Jones

and in length of limb this personification of the Dawn inclines the beholder to reflect, in a state of acute bewilderment, upon the painter's indifference to proportion as it is studied in the schools. The arrangement of the drapery, too,

this picture—a lay-figure especially elongated to suit his conception of female beauty. He must have arranged the drapery, you add, in the still air of the studio and with absolutely no thought of what movement would do to the light

Literature: Munsey's Magazine

"Edward Burne-Jones," *Munsey's Magazine*, by Royal Cortissoz, February 1907, p. 581.

EDWARD BURNE - JONES

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THE PILGRIM AT THE GATE OF IDLENESS

From a photograph by Hollyer, London, after the painting by Burne-Jones

folds of a woman's garment as she walked rapidly before us. Yet the glamour is there, the sense of something poetic and beguiling, the sense of a figure and a scene created with true imaginative instinct. We criticize, but we value, a work of art like this.

GOODNESS AND ART

There is in it, too, a quality which it is necessary to touch upon with some discretion, for it is a quality to give a handle to the irreverent if not clearly stated. To say bluntly that an artist is a good man is to risk the retort of the scoffer that his private virtues have nothing to do with his art. "It is no comfort to me, if a man paints bad pictures," says the critic, "to be told that he is kind to his mother." No; but it sometimes occurs that the sweetness of a man's nature will be so constant a force in his life that it will color everything he does. It is impossible to study the life and work of Burne-Jones without perceiving that the traits developed in the one had their influence in the other. Lady Burne-Jones has told us that when she first shared in the talks of her hus-

band and his friends they made her feel that their love of beauty "included the whole world and raised the point from which they regarded everything." After the painter's death, she talked of the subject with a lady who, in her youth, had excited the frantic admiration of Burne-Jones, Morris, and Rossetti. She describes the episode in this wise:

She and I sat and talked for an hour about them and the days when we were all young, and I found that she kept the same feeling that I do about that time—that the men were as good as they were gifted, and unlike any others that we knew. She had lost sight of them long ago and lived abroad and seen many people since then, but her regard for the young artists she remembered was still fresh, and she loved to dwell on their memory. "I never saw such men," she said; "it was being in a new world to be with them, and they were different from every one else I ever saw. And I was a holy thing to them—I was a holy thing to them."

Does not this little passage illuminate for us, not only the "Aurora," but all of the pictures that Burne-Jones painted? It is true that his refinement passes into weakness, looked at from one point of

Literature: Edward Burne-Jones: A Biography

Edward Burne-Jones: A Biography, by Penelope Fitzgerald, p. 233.

BRIAR ROSE: BURNE-JONES IN THE NINETIES

can tell you it was an exciting moment when he first opened my portfolio and looked at my first drawing . . .

'All this from the greatest living artist in Europe', as Beardsley says in his letter. Burne-Jones decisively admired the drawings, but clearly thought of them as sketches for large-scale paintings. He suggested a course of study with Frederick Brown at the Westminster School of Art. Then he showed Beardsley the Mantegna prints round the drawing-room walls and suggested that he should go to see the originals at Hampton Court. He had divined that the real point of sympathy between himself and the nineteen-year-old boy was the processional and ritual nature of their art.

The Oscar Wildes took the Beardsleys home in their carriage, and Burne-Jones provided introductions to Leyland and Puvis de Chavannes, and a good deal of further advice. Nevertheless, it seems that it was Mabel—'the pretty red-haired sister', as he called her to Rooke—who had caught his eye and induced him to ask the young creatures back to The Grange. He was no less distracted than he had always been by a charming face.

On the verge of old age, he drew as studiously as ever from the model. Bessie Keene came as her mother had done; she sat for *Aurora* and for the *Vespertina Quies*. Bessie was an excellent sitter, though unfortunately in love with a heartless Mr Inwick, said to 'look like the heroes I paint, and I am rather kind, and take an interest,' Burne-Jones wrote.* He was haunted by the type he had himself created. A lady called under the assumed name of Pomeroy,

saying that when her hair was brushed forward over her forehead she was considered to look like the Madonna 'and that's your type, Sir'. Respectability still prevailed. Kate Dolan (a favourite model of Millais') came, and Miss Tueski, who only 'sat for the hands', because she had had reverses. Burne-Jones liked Jewish models. 'When they have beauty it is real beauty . . . nothing I like so much in the way of work as drawing out their hidden expressions and wondering what their lives are like.' A little girl from Houndsditch came for the *Sponsa di Libano* to screw up her face and blow like the wind. Another Jewish model 'was too proud to look at my drawing; when she was putting on her hat to go I showed it and said, 'Is it beautiful?' She said, 'No, it's lovely, not beautiful.'*

Male models were harder to find, and nineteenth-century male costume unpaintable; only plumbers in corduroys, with string round

Literature: Edward Burne-Jones: A Biography

Edward Burne-Jones: A Biography, by Penelope Fitzgerald, p. 260.

EDWARD BURNE-JONES

What could he do for Morris? 'His soul is in the Chaucer—he thinks of nothing else . . . it would be hard on him if it wasn't finished . . . he must have risked much money with it—five or six thousand pounds.* The printing went forward, held up by faults in paper and typefaces, but still it went forward. Ned put aside part of each day for the last drawings and took his friends round to the Kelmscott printing-room, though he stopped doing this after Lady Rayleigh, 'seeing the immeasurable care and toil of the printing, asked if it couldn't be more easily done by machinery' and Morris was in danger of exploding.* To the expense of the *Chaucer* was added the heavy purchases of 'painted books'. For a year past Ned had wanted to save 'so that [Morris] might not be bothered about money . . . it's the only thing I can think of now to help him with.* He set himself to review his assets—the unfinished work in the studio.

In hand were *Psyche's Wedding* (finished that April), *Aurora*, *The Fall of Lucifer*, *Love and the Pilgrim*, *Venus Concordia*, *The Car of Love*. These last four all went to the New Gallery and came back unsold, although he painted on them or painted duplicates the next year.

Love and the Pilgrim, the old haunting design from the *Romance of the Rose*, was to be a dawn picture in monotone, 'a rich black and silvery picture'. Worry over the placing of the figures made Ned dream that he had painted a barrel of spirits, with labels, round Love's neck, like a St Bernard. The immense *Car of Love*, on a canvas specially made at Roberson's, was now dedicated to Mrs Gaskell, and 'IN GLORIAM DOMINAE MEAE will be written very small somewhere'.* Phil thought it colourless and suggested pink nipples and knee-caps. *Aurora* went forward more easily. The background was taken from the sketches he had made at Oxford in 1867, though the view from the canal bridge where he had drawn a woman bathing her baby was 'all gone, every bit', he told Rooke.* Meanwhile *The Dream of Launcelot*, with the threatening forest round him, was in its first stages, but he felt it looked 'like a park, not the strange, wild place it ought to be'.

Burne-Jones could not be sure of getting ready money, if it should be needed, for any of these paintings, but neither now nor ever would he change his ideas to suit other people. From the firm he could still count on about £700 per annum, and there was £1,000 for the Stanmore tapestry designs. But Phil only worked occasionally, and had to be supported. Out of the £15,000 for *Briar Rose* he still had £14,000, but that was invested and he paid his life insurance out of the

Literature: Edward Burne-Jones: A Biography

Edward Burne-Jones: A Biography, by Penelope Fitzgerald, p. 275.

ROTTINGDEAN AND 'AVALON'

declared that he had nothing to do with it—was written that summer at Rottingdean. It was thrown into the wastepaper basket, rescued by Professor Norton's daughter Sallie who was staying with the Kiplings, and referred to Aunt Georgie, who took it up to London that evening and despatched it to *The Times*.

If Kipling expressed his deepest feelings for his uncle anywhere, it was surely in *Kim*. Who else is the old lama, whose life is a quest which others do not understand, who can draw with pen and ink in a way that is almost lost to the world, who shows Kim his art 'not for pride's sake, but because thou must learn', and who tells stories that hold him spell-bound? When he leaves the lama to discover his own identity, Kim reminds himself that 'roads were meant to be walked upon, houses to be lived in . . . men and women to be talked to . . . they were all real and true—solidly planted upon the feet—perfectly comprehensible', but he leaves behind him the unworldly quest of his master, who has had a sign that his remaining time on this earth will be short. In fact, Kipling returned to the manuscript of *Kim* immediately after Burne-Jones's death. But if he thought that his uncle's art had little connection with his real life, then he did not altogether understand Burne-Jones.

As far as daily work was concerned, there were two things that really mattered now to Burne-Jones, the *Life of William Morris* and *Avalon*. The biography had been entrusted to Jack Mackail. Although Mr Philip Henderson has shown that Mackail had an ordinary human curiosity (telling Mrs Coronio, for instance, how extraordinarily interesting he could make the story of M.Z. 'if one were going to die the day before it was published'), he was still felt by the family to be reserved and austere. Rooke noted that the Master 'didn't like' to ask Mackail how he was getting on with the *Life*.^{*} Ned himself was supposed to be preparing notes, but kept losing them, attributing this, as most of us do, to the 'malignity of matter'. He wrote, however, a delightful account of the years at Oxford and the time at Red Lion Square.

The *Avalon* came near to breaking Ned's heart. Face to face with the vast canvas he found, now when he needed it most, his old certainty of design deserting him. For two or three years past he had fallen into the dangerous habit of consulting other people—Lady Lewis was asked about the *Car of Love*, the path in *Aurora* was widened because 'several people had mentioned it', he considered painting the wings crimson in *Love and the Pilgrim* when it came back

Literature: Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones

Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones, by Lady Georgiana Burne-Jones, 1904, vol. I, pp. 304–305 (top) and vol. II, pp. 277–278 (bottom).

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[1867

glad to welcome him. When he came to us, he and Edward generally took a walk on the Sunday afternoon if it was fit weather, and sometimes I was with them. On one of these walks we saw for the first time the house to which we were next to remove and where the rest of our life together was to be spent: I am glad to remember that it attracted our notice and indeed made a strong impression upon us as it stood there empty and waiting.

Meanwhile, whatever else happened, work never stopped. Illustrations for *The Earthly Paradise* went on steadily, and twenty subjects from the *Hill of Venus* were designed this year. Also, with help, the last four pictures of "St. George and the Dragon" were finished: the other three were already in place. This was the first time that Edward called in aid to carry out his designs, and in his assistant he was fortunate beyond expectation. Mr. Charles Fairfax Murray was then a mere youth, but one whose intellectual and artistic power was visible at first sight. He soon became a trusted friend, in whose work Edward took great interest.

June, 1867, found us still in Kensington Square, but the house had been sold during our tenancy, and as the new owner refused to extend our term, we were compelled for the third time in seven years to seek another home. Before this fresh upheaval we had one more holiday, which was our last with the Morrises; and the place and time chosen for it was Oxford in the Long Vacation. We, with our children, took some undergraduates' rooms in St. Giles', while the Morris family lodged in Beaumont Street: Faulkner was in college, but we met every evening, and then Morris read what he had written or the men played whist—without practical jokes now. I remember noticing how beautifully Faulkner shuffled the cards with his skilful fingers.

A small pocket-book of this time contains a note made by Edward from a canal-bridge in a poor quarter of the city, which nearly thirty years afterwards he developed into the background of his "Aurora." The main outlines of building and canal are preserved in the picture, and

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EDWARD BURNE-JONES

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Aurora with her cymbals comes lightly stepping along a waterside path from which in the original sketch a woman stoops to bathe her baby, but the canal has changed into an arm of a river and the houses have been welded into the long, low storage-places of a wharf, crowned by a great church lifted up against the sky. He enjoyed making up stories to himself about his backgrounds, as he painted them; and one day as he was working at "Aurora" he did a very unusual thing, for the humour seized him to think aloud, and he spun out a whole history of the place. "You see the city gets poorer as it gets towards the church," he said, "which makes it more interesting—the rich people have gone to live further off. It has had many epochs: first the Roman—you may see remains of that in the foundations: then was an oligarchic government, following on a time of anarchy and disaster, that put up many fine buildings, and some of them still remain. Then came an epoch of trade, capricious and varying in locality, that produced the strangest results on its architecture, one part of the town cutting out another by setting up nearer the sea further down the river, then being driven back again for reasons that can't be found out now—traces of prosperity and decay succeeding each other."

We kept Edward's birthday on the 28th of August, by all going down the river as far as Wallingford, and stayed on at Oxford till after St. Giles' Fair—a fine treat for the little ones, but Edward was restless to be back in his studio. "Tell me how your work prospers—mention Mantegna to me: I am doing nothing—can't in lodgings with the noise of children," he wrote to Mr. Murray. Indeed it always surprised me that a man of his nervous temperament was able to work as he did amongst the inevitable noises of a household; but they seldom seemed to fidget him, and any distraction they caused was less than he would have felt in going through the streets to a separate studio. Morning was the time when he arranged all his work, and he liked to rise quietly from the breakfast table, carrying his second cup of coffee with him straight to the painting-room.

I.

X

CHAPTER XXVI

1896

Franklin, my loyal friend, Ohone, Ohone!

WITH the beginning of 1896 came a menace of change. Hear it in this whisper of dismay: "Last Sunday, in the very middle of breakfast, Morris began leaning his forehead on his hand, as he does so often now. It is a thing I have never seen him do before in all the years I have known him." And from this time Edward knew that the force which had directed his friend's life was failing.

The day had been when this would have overwhelmed him, but now he was himself a traveller that hasted to his rest, and his first thought was of completing their work. "I am getting very anxious about Morris and about the Chaucer," he said. "He has not done the title-page yet, which will be such a rich page of ornament with all the large lettering. I wish he would not leave it any longer." By the end of February it was splendidly finished, but on the 23rd of that month I find in my diary, "No Morris to breakfast"—nor did he ever come again in the old way. Before long Edward wrote: "Morris has been ill again—I am very frightened—better now, but the ground beneath one is shifting, and I travel amongst quicksands."

There was the yearly pressure of work for exhibition this spring, and "Launcelot's Dream" and "Aurora" were finished for the New Gallery. About a week before they went in Edward made an alteration to the background of "Aurora," by widening a waterside pathway along which the figure comes forward. The reason he gave for this was that, though he did not himself feel it to be too narrow,

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[1896

yet, as several other people had mentioned it, there must be something about it that took their attention. "If there is anything that interferes with people's thoughts of it as they look at a picture I would always like to do something to prevent that, and when the alteration does not interfere with my idea and will pacify them, I do it directly; if it did interfere, I would not give it a moment's consideration."

A letter to Mr. Ellis, in reply to one about the completion of the Chaucer, belongs to April 24th:

"What a nice letter to have brought one at breakfast time—the first restful breakfast for months, for work is finished and I am off to the sea. So it came well-timed and gave me real happiness, that you should feel so strongly about my share of the Chaucer. I have worked at it with love, and was almost as sorry as glad when the work was done; but, as you say, what praise shall be given to Morris, and who else could have carried it through, and who else have designed it as he has? A few more weeks now and it will be out, and I almost believe—so childishly hopeful am I—that as many as seven people will be delighted with it. I put it at a high number, but then I feel exhilarated."

To another friend he said later on: "When Morris and I were little chaps at Oxford, if such a book had come out then we should have just gone off our heads, but we have made at the end of our days the very thing we would have made then if we could. It does look Beautiful, and why should I deceive you? and I may say it, for my share in it is that of the carver of the images in Amiens, and Morris's that of the Architect and Magister Lapidaria. We have given one to Swinburne, between us, and writ his name in it, from us both, and I expect he will be pleased." He spoke of the book altogether as being a type of the life he should most love, "a centre of Beauty so surrounded with Beauty that you scarcely notice it—scarcely notice it, take it for granted—where the lowest is as worthy as the highest, and yet the King is there."

Though the Chaucer was not issued to the public be-

Literature: Strand Magazine

Strand Magazine, 1895, vol. 10, p. 25, with Aurora shown in the artist's home studio.

SIR EDWARD BURNE-JONES.

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From a

ENTRANCE HALL—THE GRANGE.

[Photograph.]

success never comes; but where, to that subtle thing called genius, is added the indomitable spirit of persevering toil, the result is assured.

There are few painters more popular than Sir Edward Burne-Jones is at the present day. Not only in England, but in most continental towns we see reproductions from his beautiful pictures. He has worked for far more than fame; he has endeavoured to add

and after earnest talk and consultation, the young men determined to throw aside all other considerations and devote themselves heart and soul to the service of Art.

They came to London, where they met Rossetti, and other men of what was to be eventually the great pre-Raphaelite school.

From that moment Burne-Jones never turned aside from the real bent of his genius. He was twenty-three years of age when he really adopted Art as his profession. He had, therefore, much to learn, finding himself, to quote his own words, at five-and-twenty where he ought to have been at fifteen.

Perseverance and genius, however, overcame all obstacles, and, step by step, the great master ascended the steep Hill of Difficulty, until he finally reached his present lofty eminence.

In a paper like this, it would take too long to go minutely into the story of his life. To acquire any real success in Art is the work of a lifetime; to many patient workers

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fresh beauty to the world, and to raise the art which he loves to a high place in every home in the land. But fame has also in a large measure come to him; he meets it with quiet dignity, and in his country home in the heart of London, allows it to trouble him very little.

For the purpose of writing this article, I went to visit him there last winter. When he first took possession of "The Grange," twenty-seven years ago, the house was truly in the country. It stood in the midst of fields, on the borders of London. This old,



From a

THE HOME STUDIO.

[Photograph.]

Literature: Strand Magazine

Strand Magazine, 1895, vol. 10, p. 26.

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THE STRAND MAGAZINE.

red-brick house was celebrated even before its present occupant took possession of it, for Richardson wrote his famous novels there, and Dr. Johnson and Hogarth were often to be seen under the old roof. "The Grange" now stands somewhat lonely in the midst of poor streets and small houses, but it still has its leafy trees and sheltered garden, and flowers are yet to be found there uninjured by London smoke. The painter finds his happiness in the old place, and has no apparent wish to change his quarters. In the summer he does much of his work in his beautiful garden studio; but when I last saw him he was in the home studio, where his winter work is principally carried on.

"I shall be glad to give you any information in my power," he said, in his genial way, "but I can't consent to a regular interview. My public life belongs to the nation, and I will gladly answer any questions you like to ask about it. My private life, on the other

hand, I regard as my own. I do not care to have the curtain drawn aside from it. It puzzles me much," he continued, with a sigh, "to know what special interest the public can take in the ordinary domestic life of a man, whether he is well known in his public capacity or not. My pictures are for the people—my inner life for myself and my friends."

In this brief account, therefore, of our great painter, I have been obliged to speak more of his works than of his special and delightful individuality. It is possible, however, that those who study his canvases may by so doing catch something of his spirit.

He has been a hard fighter on the side of Truth against Shams. Looking on Art as almost a religion, he has lived up to his high ideal. Believing in the power of beauty as the most important lever in the true education of the Race, he has done his utmost to add to the Beauty of the World.



From a)

THE GARDEN STUDIO.

[Photograph.

Museum Comparable



Musée d'Orsay, Paris

La Roue de la Fortune

1875-1883 | Oil on canvas | 78.74 x 39.37 in. (200 x 100 cm)

Museum Comparable



The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

The Love Song

1868-77 | Oil on canvas | 45 x 61.38 in. (114.3 x 155.9 cm)

Museum Comparable



Lady Lever Art Gallery, Liverpool

The Beguiling of Merlin

1873-1877 | Oil on canvas | 73.23 x 43.70 in. (186 x 111 cm)

Auction Comparables



The Prince entering the Briar Wood

1869 | Oil on canvas | 42.13 x 72.05 in. (107 x 183 cm)

Christie's London. Old Masters Evening Sale, Lot 15. July 8, 2021

\$3,334,939



A sea-nymph

1881 | Oil on canvas | 48.11 x 48.11 in. (122.2 x 122.2 cm)

Christie's London. Important British Art, Lot 34. June 14, 2005

\$2,037,564



Luna

1872-1875 | Oil on canvas | 39.76 x 27.95 in. (101 x 71 cm)

Christie's Paris. Yves Saint Laurent et Pierre Bergé, Lot 9. February 23, 2009

\$1,401,125