



Journal No. 13 2004

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Selections from Richard Jefferies' 1876 Notebook

John Pearson

In the British Library, there are 15 numbered notebooks which once belonged to Richard Jefferies. Samuel J Looker transcribed them, as far as he could, and they were published as *The Nature Diaries and Note-Books of Richard Jefferies* in 1948. Much of the 1876 notebook, which is not numbered, is in Pitman's shorthand, and Looker was unable to decipher it. It too is in the British Library.

John G Pearson, assisted by Mr John Lewis of Malvern, a teacher of shorthand, deciphered a good proportion of the 1876 notebook, and it formed part of Dr Pearson's doctoral thesis: 'Richard Jefferies; an edition of newly discovered work' of 1980. It has never been published. The pages that follow are taken, with his permission, and that of the British Library, from Dr Pearson's thesis. It is hoped to publish further instalments, in the future.

A copy of the whole thesis was deposited in the Swindon Reference Library; on request it can be studied, and readers will have the extra benefit of the useful footnotes that have not been included here.

Inevitably, since this is a notebook, not a diary, the material is discontinuous, often obscure. Understanding is also hindered when the transcribers were baffled: square brackets indicate doubtful interpretation; a row of dots means that the writing (or shorthand outline) was indecipherable.

The whole, if persevered with, gives a good idea of Jefferies' determined efforts, in 1876, to launch himself on the London writing world and make his name. As we know, by February 1877 he was well on his way to doing so.

Notebook for 1876

Folio 74.

Time and I are two.

May 4th. *World*.

Ten per cent may be twenty-two hidden.

"A Morsel for a Monarch" - a beauty - paint a perfect picture (the morsel for the monarch) of the beauty, all day, the artisticness of the looking-glass and toilet, drooping eyes and lashes: notes. Taste in dress - blue, cold; red, life; yellow, warm; white, spirit. On yellow hair; Shakespeare's own Cytheria, the face in Titian's (use this instead of Bulky Beauty). Work up a picture to be painted. Sweet odour of the skin. White arms with blue veins - "These blue-vein'd violets" - *Venus and Adonis*.

Must be my own venture, stocking and keeping a regular book of translation with attitudes ...

How I wish I could do it at least. Write all articles for the future: use effort to pile up reputation.

yes blue three to two - the dark ladies ...

vanity of men - manuscript on personal evils. Few can resist the opportunity :o say or do a nasty thing to a friend or other. Nasty little ways of women. The spitefulness that may be shown, even during a carriage ride . . .

Folio 73.

"My System" - house cleaning nothing - or hateful usual system. Platonic - live together without sin... Make one good full novel. New Platonic love for the *World* - splendid idea ... at first by stress and as in original idea. For the *World* - studies literary on canvas. The abomination of "Brass" - hateful.

Character of women from manuscript. Derisively over us. Rising from nothing - proud of it - held up as so good and grand - examine it - it is a tissue of bias, lies, cheating, if not fraud, everything snobbish - analyse (sweat and drink) - such idiots the men I have known - all get on in life, books. Art of getting over people - persuading ... to keep and educate him, success in life depends on this in many cases - some have the gift of it. *Cornhill* -[preface] - when you [are] acquainted, those who do take your things on a full-scale ...

Folio 72.

CPG - misuse of cost in dress - double - twenty yards when ten used to suffice twenty years ago.

Sipping the Season? Royal Academy, levee - the first thing is to get rid of the idea of time - not to have to go to the Academy at any particular hour.

Worry just as much, ambition and success as wine - not enough for intoxication and enough success alike necessary to titillate the mental palate.

Sipping - the dresses too sombre.

Novel - crossing rail, two trains different ways ...

CPG. What did you do to the fowls to make them lay? The old story about them.

What I would do to those I have taken an affection to. Have idea, borrow - such as Miss More, 1000.

Novel - the man to be young, the hero or heroine be responsible but not young, they get the gazette, or first of all send a message by calling.

Folio 71.

Pay the gate - at first put down to supernatural intervention, but is really the work of a rich person who opens a turnpike gate . . . and looks like it all through the book, but at the end the heroine discloses the fact to her lover and he forgives her.

May 9th. HM. To make formal table of contents and write. First chapter, 100 -get formal agreement. Second (chapter) 100. On Thursdays they have a consultation. Share the big amount. Hunt. *Cassell's Magazine* - amount. *Live Stock Journal* at once. See joint stock and *Standard* notes about under-soil [enquiry]. See also influence of America on English agriculture.

Folio 70.

Queen's birthday, 24th May, Coronation 28th June - give money for *Manchester Guardian* - also can I send anything on the Prince's return on the same?

Dress and manner - Royal Academy in the carriage - how unnatural the pictures are. These are far more interesting. There are no pictures one would care to live with - you cannot imagine yourself walking to the Royal Academy with any of these pictured ladies accompanying you.

Folio 69.

Machiavelli and the Prince in India. The lessons etc., about Russia etc. Watch papers for the *World*. And inspect if possible. The fashion, style at home.

Book to read: ladies laughed at for reading novel backwards, but if you will do the same thing you will see how little effort there is in average novels and it will give you an idea of how the book is built up - tracing it backwards.

Whatever - simply an account and description and practical hints? Colour in dress - lack of it - '76 distinguished by kind of distinction - the fulness of a vacuum - sombre, no life in it. Reflection of '76, as in a mirror - recommend [splitting love]. Phryne.

Folio 68.

A la Carnot - organise for August.

Sit down and write your idea of women ..without any premeditation - just straight out and something will occur.

Latin quotation.

Quote letters - my soul - colouring matter of song.

Colouring matter of masters ...

Exchange dance etc., giving article at the end of a hymn??

Round the Globe.

Folio 67.

Book - time lost from want of system. A man may read a thousand books and yet retain no clear idea of anything he has read, or again, the only scrap of real knowledge, and all ever wanted of the search. The men of system. Armies of invaders will never be landed on the south coast because of the ease of concentration of troops by rail to meet them - will be less somewhere where troops cannot be brought by rail easily, as in Cornwall, where they can get well together up to the dock.

Ask Lock why he doesn't take in the *Graphic* in the morning... Best in the long run - it will pay you, especially the ladies on their own subjects.

Language concentration and the actor. Turn everything always to Brighton, which, if it costs more, it pays better in the end, and the end will come in time.

Registering shooting - Gilbert White.

Governess - in lighters from the girl [grill] - it used to give it an air of reality.

Folio 66.

The Upper "Tin" Thousand - plutocracy.

High dresses - none at opera as a rule. Spotting the Prince's return. Actually, the Berlin just enough to titillate the palate. Subject criticism: write out Platonic love and give it to me afterwards. Nothing in it - would not press for the above. Horses - bay and chestnut - out of fifty-four only three of a different colour. St James' Street on the 11th.

... the line of printing verges seeking the eye. With it, a pamphlet upon it, so get the name - press for the man to ring. Fairy tale - seventy pages for Marcus Ward? - ask Robert who would be the best person to send the cheque in to. *Figaro* - short article with note saying that the price is additional expense and never usual rates - price ten shillings - therefore better - is still sure to be good .. .price to us.

Folio 65. Pour la Retour.

1. Sola lemonade and gingerade, one of each, cigar.

2. Note to Hide [Hyde] of the *World*, thanking him and asking for still further aid.

List of plays for community stage.

List of hills.

The *Times* - write something for it and send it through Jones.

To write [All right] the first chapter of book, etc.

The days the chasers use - can we raise money on them?

Diamond pin to take back with me.

Joint stock Farm ...

Times. Through Jones to Macdonald: when you have an idea, write it out and carry it to Jones and get it through him. May 15th. Beauty of Waste - at dinner if you have a new dress, to have a yard or two over, so as to have plenty.

Folio 64.

James Russell Mills - scythe makers, fifty hard-ground famous scythes - the curve of the handle curving round the hip, spliced, very curved - and the butt coming actually from the stem, so that it should not have to be stump-end round so far, and that it would stay upright. All that it had, it was not so tall as to common size in itself, and the steel mounting was brought down - and even on the common handle - because on the rubble good mowing was not so important. Pride in the toil.

Drock - or faggots in the furrows: stile, cow turning.

Straw was scarce. Calcutta wheat.

The Divine Third win - the Divine celebrated upon the course or something.

Goodwood Spectacular - Derby coming on, but why not do them all something. 31st Wednesday.

Folio 63.

Men and women monks and nuns used to live together in chastity - and

without scandal - *World?*

... build a house cheap and cheap goods sold in the shops. *World?* If I had a five pound note and could go out shopping all the afternoon ...

Derby Days of the Prince of Wales or any other princes - their contempt for the people and the race which they go through - a massive compound of contempt and utter soul laudation and belief in self: both utterly disgusting. *World?*

Education Act - education of agricultural children: *Pall Mall Gazette* redeems our daily case. Ask loan for education etc., on the approaching crops.

Anything - try the *Cornhill* again?

Folio 62.

The small novels under 100 (pages) - or two tales each? Was the railway sales for this [these]. Almost anything very urgently would do.

The domestic cat - its habits - you could pick up one foot, tenderly down, lift it up. It must wash, must eat mice - then if it cannot bear the man it declines a seat - because he has a pipe in his mouth, and so *ad libitum*.

Folio 61.

Figaro and *Manchester Guardian* - immediate.

Love Letters of Eminent Persons - edited by Chas. Mutel [Mutch].

London - William Lacy, 13 King William St., Strand. 1859 - they are quite good copy.

Average of twenty-five years racing *Times*? Favourites, or good as to chances. IIs/Id. Shaw and Sons, Fetter Lane, EC. *An Analysis of the New General Education Bill* - by Henry Jones Gibbs and John William Edwards.

Folio 60.

Almost any subject will do for the papers, especially the *Times* and *Pall Mall Gazette*, if we can put thoroughly - with special information and an idea, or with any other line.

The value of sketches or rejected manuscripts would be a very good plan indeed, for it seems as if to get anything but general recognition was in vain - one must have a speciality.

The Magazine - call "At the Present Day". With a sketch at the top front page of drawing-room, smoking room, rail station. "Our Time" - a good title for almost anything. Manufacture of Wit as *Bow Bells Journal*. Ruder than.

Folio 59.

Punch - who writes? They come up again. The History of Wit would be most interesting - Greek wit, Roman wit, Martial, Italian, French, German - where is it? English, Modern worst of all... very good idea.

Great secret of getting over other people for success – this

is to take an interest in what they are doing and have done. In the end it tells immensely. But you must not be in too great a hurry - you must build and lay out a la Byron...

Run by cheap people - would almost do for the *Saturday Review*.

Folio 58.

Joint Stock Farm - remember anything - try the *Times* with it at once. First proofs: it will become the pressing question. We think capital can be so invested in agriculture. Better go and see book on the farm at the Museum today.

My scheme for large farming at the end. Or later if I back my own other theories for little improvements.

Farms-gold.

Part III - farming school business.

Specialized farms - sheep special etc., etc., - will have to be more so. Old style of farming - self supporting.

Folio 57.

Alderman Nash built it. Lease granted 25th March 1757. Measuring five lugs, 250 square feet. Richard Jefferies bought it in 1793 - thirty-six years expired at £210. Sixty-three years to run. Ninety-nine year lease.

William Kemble died in 1798 aged eighty-two years.

R. Jefferies a great-grandfather of his died in 1825, aged eighty-seven. To be kept in good order and sufficient repair - tenantable plight and condition not to remove or carry away.

1876.

1793

83 years ago.

Twelve pounds a year quit rent.

Everything was to go down Mill Lane and Mill Lane kept in repair by the mill.

Folio 56.

Three Mills, Okers field and Windmill Row - hedge and cornfields, mill.

Gadds [Ladds] Mill.

313 Strand, May 27th. *World* and novel.

No sound was pleasant save for the jingling of a thousand [handless] bells.

Monday - a.m. meet Wilcox ... back in the afternoon.

1. Short letter on the model - many features in the *Daily News* short story.

2. Jones, if he will give me a column job on the ladies' dresses at the Derby like in the *World*.

Folio 55.

3. Even do something on the description again for the *Times* and send it through.

4. Do something of a more grave description, like the Jubilee in my novel, for the *Times* - an enormous crowd.

Daily News late. The unseen Egyptian.

Fund by hospital for stolen property - where the thieves can deposit the property and get

the money - get it sometimes - hence still have to be punished if caught - justice not interfered with. There is some justice in this, for the incompleteness of our justice at present is that half the lost property is not restored. How many thieves go to gaol - yet the owner gets not a penny back again - this would do for the first paragraph.

In this town - that men are forced to this by the impossibility of discussing things - (this for first paragraph). No one objects more than we do to the

Folio 54.

actual terms for the division - condoning felony: but still it is very hard that the owners should suffer - something of this kind seems the only resource. See at Chiselhurst? Then Eltham - 1/28,000th, about £40,000, 3/28 of lost proportion - when we add up the small sums never recovered they seem on the face of it punished - what an enormous amount it represents . . .tax . . .of £100,000 totals up in London alone in one year - where

do the jewels go to - to be reset in the Eastern harems? Crowd it with ideas.

Begin Income Tax calculation.

Tomorrow - pencilled on course and composed independent - [style] in old piece. Jones. First to give that piece on the *Daily News*. 2. If he will give me some employment - can he recommend any place for the Derby Day - something like the *World* sketch - to save my piece too?

Will he see, or let me ask Greenwood around to do it? Memo to Macdougall - does it happen now to him???

H ... To ask if that article is accepted and ask the most consideration.

To be continued.

This extract from BL Add. Mss. 58821 is published by permission of the British Library

Margaret Thomas, Sculptor of the Bust of Richard Jefferies in Salisbury Cathedral

Kedrun Laurie

The facts of Margaret Thomas's life sometimes seem obscure, sometimes wilfully obscured. Though she never married, for example, she was born Margaret Sarah Cook on 23 December 1842 in Croydon, to Thomas Cook, a mercer, and his wife Margaret.¹ No modern source gives the correct year for her birth, but on two out of three occasions when Thomas herself had to supply biographical data in her lifetime, to the *Dictionary of Australasian Biography* in 1892, and to *Who's Who* in 1897, she had omitted to do so. On the third, that of her entry to the Royal Academy Schools, her age was recorded as 26 when it was in fact 28.² Nor is the year of her birth given on her gravestone. Margaret Thomas either had reasons for concealing the date or, given the upheavals of her early life, simply did not know it.

In 1852, when Margaret was nine or ten, Thomas Cook, attracted presumably by reports of the discovery of gold in Victoria, emigrated with his family to Melbourne.³ Various Australian sources give his profession as that of shipowner.⁴ If this is true, the ship on which his family emigrated was perhaps a cargo ship, which could explain why Margaret Thomas/Cook does not figure in either the Assisted or Unassisted Passenger Lists from British ports to Victoria.⁵

Then, by the time she first exhibits as a sculptor in 1857, at 14 years old, Margaret Cook has become Margaret Thomas, a combination of her mother's and father's first names. A book of verse, *A Painter's Pastime*, that she published in 1908, is dedicated to: 'Sacrae Matris Memoriae / Filia', and contains the lines: 'My soul is ill:/ 111 with the pain of hope too long deferred,/ With absence, with denial, with the still / Unconquered fear of a childhood stirred / By not a common sorrow.'⁶

Her youthful training in Melbourne with Somerset-born sculptor Charles Summers (1825-1878), earned her the distinction of being the first woman to study sculpture in Victoria. In 1862 her first bust, 'Dr A Barnett' and a plaster 'Napaea', were sent to the London International Exhibition, but critically ignored. Finally, in 1868: 'dissatisfied with the limited means of studying art afforded by so young a colony, she came to England, for the purpose of attending the South Kensington Schools'.⁷

It was probably just before leaving Australia that she met Henrietta Pilkington, an artist from Dublin, 'the sweetest soul that looked with human eyes'.⁸ From now on, with common purpose, the two lived, worked, and travelled everywhere together.

As soon as she returned to Europe, Thomas began exhibiting at the Royal Academy, from 1868 to 1873 giving her address as 18 Surrey Street, Croydon.

This was the home of Henry Wallis, a tailor, and presumably a relation of Thomas's mother, whose maiden name was Wallis. Thomas evaded the April 1871 census, although Henrietta Pilkington is listed as a visitor to the household. Henry, unmarried and 67 years old, lives alone with his sister and a servant. There is a butcher next door. This is not a grand or moneyed home.

The South Kensington Schools, in which so much hope had been invested, turned out a disaster. Deciding they were worthy of a mere ten months of her time, in 1868 or 9 Thomas left London for Rome, where Charles Summers had settled in a studio she described as: 'the finest in Rome ... employ[ing] latterly as many as twenty men.'⁹ Thomas spent two and a half years in Rome 'partly copying some of the works of the great masters, but more intent on seeing the wonders of the city than on hard work, since the visit was the realization of the hopes of many years.'¹⁰

In 1868, Summers's former master Henry Weekes became Professor of Sculpture at the Royal Academy, so bringing Thomas and Summers's provincial background into the artistic mainstream. Repositioning herself to take advantage, and sponsored by Charles Summers, Thomas registered at the Royal Academy Schools on 17 July 1871. She did well, becoming, in 1872, the first woman to receive a silver medal for a model from the antique, then, rather oddly, crowned her success in the sculpture schools by becoming a portrait painter. In 1874 six of her portraits were hung on the line at the Academy. According to Douglas Sladen, a close friend from the 80s onwards, her income from this line of work alone was sufficient to enable her in the nineties to retire 'with a competency'.¹¹ From 1874/5 to 1888 she had her own studio at 58 Hugh Street, Pimlico. In 1876 she featured alongside Louisa, Lady Waterford and Eleanor Vere Boyle, both future illustrators of Jefferies, in Ellen Clayton's *English Female Artists*. Clayton classified her as a professional artist (she had to earn her own living), the aristocratic ladies as amateurs.

In October 1878 Charles Summers died unexpectedly in Paris. By July 1879 Thomas had published a memoir of his life, *A Hero of the Workshop*. It marked an important new stage in her career, her association with R A Kinglake, to whom the book was dedicated. Robert Arthur Kinglake (1813-93), of Taunton, was 'a Liberal of very moderate views', but also a 'zealous Churchman', behind many schemes for the improvement of the conditions of the poor. It was through his duties as a magistrate that he must have become involved in the project for which he is best known: the creation of a 'Valhalla of Somerset Worthies', or commissioning portrait busts of Somerset's 'most celebrated sons' to adorn the vestibule of the new Shire Hall, Taunton.¹² When Summers died it was natural that Kinglake should ask the trusted pupil to execute his bust. Thomas's vigorous memorial was unveiled in 1880, and stands in a prominent position to the right of the stairs. For the next ten years she sculpted for nobody but Kinglake and he, for the completion of his Valhalla, used nobody but her.¹³

His next step was to ask her to commemorate Somerset-born novelist Henry Fielding. Here Thomas's problems with posthumous portraiture, problems that would resurface over the Jefferies bust, began. No portrait of Fielding was taken in his

lifetime, and all she had to go on was a posthumous pen-sketch by Hogarth. The bust, unveiled in 1883, is bizarrely unconvincing as a portrait, yet gave her almost as much publicity as that of Jefferies, publicity which she and Kinglake will have marshalled together, their interests now one.

At the time Jefferies died in 1887, Margaret Thomas's portrait painting career was stalling. She wrote to Sladen in April 1888 that a picture, probably her portrait of Sladen, had been rejected by the Academy.¹⁴ In the autumn things looked up when her bust of Dr Wilson Fox was unveiled in Taunton, but in winter, with nothing else on the horizon, Miss Thomas and Miss Pilkington decided to leave the country. 1888 is the last year in which she gives Hugh Street as her address.¹⁵ For the next few years, when in England, it will be either the address of her bankers, friends, or a lodging house.

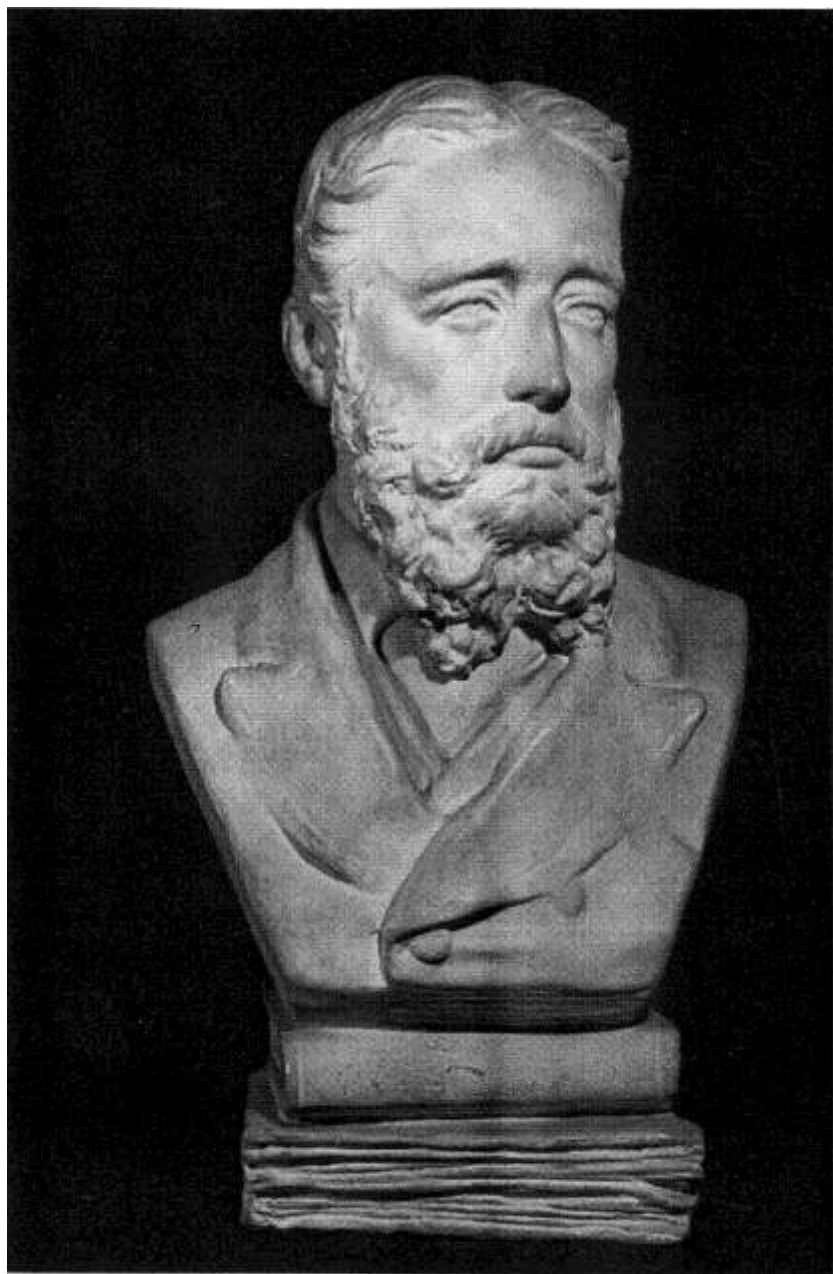
She and Miss Pilkington spent some time living in Brittany, and afterwards revisited Rome: 'the bright bohemian regions in which my soul delighted'. In May 1890 she wrote to Sladen, explaining what had brought her, reluctantly, back to the 'dismal fog-stained atmosphere' of London:

Sketching in the Roman Forum one day, we met some Australian friends with whom we came to England nearly 20 years ago, and had not seen, or scarcely heard of since. They were most anxious I should come to London and paint 5 portraits for them, so I came, and the pictures are now finished. Was it not extraordinary? Our movements are now uncertain except that we are going to stay with some friends in Devonshire in July; but in the winter we shall probably return to Italy, unless some more commissions keep me here. Unfortunately all our belongings are in Brittany and must shortly be removed.¹⁶

Shortly afterwards Thomas will have heard from Kinglake, whose idea it was, that a marble memorial to Jefferies was to be erected in Salisbury Cathedral, and that this important commission had been granted to her.¹⁷ Although she neither had a studio, nor any appetite for further detention in England, she accepted, for she honoured Mr Kinglake, and she honoured Richard Jefferies, as a 'distinguished author', and, in a description epitomising the mixture of Christian religiosity and nature worship she saw in him, 'the apostle of Nature'.¹⁸

When the appeal for public subscription to the bust was launched, in a letter issued by Kinglake in July 1890, Walter Besant and Charles Longman were named as his principal supporters, with the Bishop and Dean of Salisbury as adjuncts.¹⁹ Besant and Longman were then formally made honorary secretaries of the organising Committee and Kinglake himself the treasurer. He opened an account at Stuckey's bank in Taunton, sat back, and waited for subscriptions. Thomas recalled: 'The response to Mr Kinglake's appeal was not very ready, for though the public may buy Jefferies' works, read and praise them, it is a "far cry" from this to getting out a cheque book, and giving some substantial proof of appreciation.'²⁰

Apart from the five gentlemen listed above, the other committee members were Alfred Buckley, Andrew Chatto, Ambrose Goddard, H Rider Haggard, F G Heath, Andrew Lang, J W North, C C Osborne, Walter Pollock, C P Scott,



National Portrait Gallery, London

George Smith, and Mr Burdett-Coutts.²¹ Charles Churchill Osborne, editor until 1888 of the *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, was now secretary to Lady Burdett-Coutts. During his tireless assistance to J W North with the fund raised in 1887-8 for the relief of Jefferies' widow and children, North had introduced him to Kinglake, thus initiating the connection which may have led to the placing of the bust in Salisbury Cathedral.²²

"Social concerns were the preoccupation of many of this robust set of Jefferies supporters, his radical social journalism and sympathy for working people possibly what attracted them, rather than his mystical idealism. Baroness Burdett-Coutts was, like Besant, involved with philanthropic activity in the East End. J W North was remembered by his Somerset neighbours as a 'sturdy champion of the poor', keen to provide decent social housing for agricultural labourers.²³ Kinglake, writing to the Bishop of Salisbury a few days before the unveiling, pointed out that Besant and Longman in particular, must have been gratified that the subscription list included not only the Viceroy of India, but also some working men from the north of England.²⁴

The committee was characterised by a consensus which would not have united some of the more Bohemian subscribers to North's fund, which was that it saw no anomaly in a bust of Jefferies being placed in a cathedral. The dominance of Kinglake, Longman and Besant on the committee also predetermined the bust's conservative appearance. If Kinglake's taste in sculpture was self-evidently provincial, Longman had shown little aesthetic sophistication in rejecting 'Nature in the Louvre' for *Longman's Magazine* in 1884, with: 'I don't think the general public care much about statues - have a vague impression indeed that they are improper.'²⁵

But it was the presence of Besant which was the real sticking-point, kindly though his intentions were. According to Thomas, the difficulties of raising sufficient funds for the bust were eventually smoothed away 'by the generosity of Mr Walter Besant', which suggests that he made a sizeable personal donation to the total estimated cost of one hundred and fifty pounds.²⁶ This inevitably increased her dependence on his approval, and meant that the message of the *Eulogy*, that Jefferies died not an atheist but a Christian, became identified with the bust itself. This would certainly be the conclusion people could be expected to draw from its placing in a cathedral, as Besant must have realised. Finally, the *Eulogy* had used as its frontispiece the 1879 London Stereoscopic Co. photograph of Jefferies on which Thomas, merging herself still further into the Besant point of view, was obliged to base her sculpture.

1. The reliance on a photograph

Photography had long been considered a useful aid by naturalist painters, and a naturalist is what Margaret Thomas considered herself to be. Jefferies himself, in *The Open Air*, was distrustful of it, and it went quite against the grain of the increasingly dominant open-air painters with whom she must have associated in Brittany. Sculpture critic Edmund Gosse, however, was a friend of Douglas Sladen, and Margaret Thomas had probably read and been comforted by his advice:

There is one happy case in which the iconic sculptor can enjoy something of the freedom of the imaginative artist . . . This is when he receives a commission to execute some great statesman ... or poet of the past, and must take his impression from tradition and from existing portraits, tempered by his study of the life and action of the man—the living lips are not there to resolve his doubts, nor the living eyes to flash intelligence. In the absence of these it behooves him to employ all possible means to insure a moral and intellectual sympathy with his subject, and to let the soul shine through the mask of clay .. ,²⁷



Marble bust of Richard Jefferies in the north transept, Salisbury Cathedral, published by kind permission of the Dean and Chapter of Salisbury.

Her intention in her bust of Jefferies was undoubtedly to be suggestive, to: 'let the soul shine through the mask of clay'. Gosse, however, went on to warn that in portrait busts; 'the modern craving for realism has not been altogether beneficial'. It was in heeding this, perhaps, that Thomas deprived herself of her usual means of suggestion,

and tempered the florid naturalism of her Taunton busts in favour of the aesthete's version of neoclassicism, expressionless like a photograph.

Trying to circumvent the problem of reliance on a photograph, she met Jefferies' parents and his widow to gather: 'anecdotes of his life and habits.'²⁸ In the letter accompanying the presentation of her bust to the National Portrait Gallery, she asserted that it 'was modelled under the supervision of Mrs Jefferies and is the only authentic portrait of the author extant.'²⁹ Yet even Mrs Jefferies admitted that the sculptor's work had been 'extremely difficult'/almost impossible'.³⁰ In the end Thomas's hands were tied, her imagination stunted by the photograph on which her work had no choice but to be based.

2. The 'Christianizing process'

Thomas cannot have been unaware of the controversy which raged in the press throughout 1891 over Jefferies' religious views, of the furious attempts by Henry Salt to obtain a recantation from Walter Besant for the claim in the *Eulogy* that Jefferies had died a Christian, or even of Salt's moral victory in October 1891, though he did not make it public at the time. On the 17th of this month Besant admitted to Salt in private correspondence that he had felt constrained to emphasise the death-bed conversion because of: "'the consolation this little memory affords to his widow and others... .But you are, I am convinced, quite right. When a man gets as far as Jefferies did - when he has shed and scattered to the winds all sacerdotalism and authority - he does not go back."³¹

Salt felt that Besant had been/somewhat incautious in adopting without reserve that version of the story which at the time commended itself to Jefferies' family, but was not likely, as the years went on, to commend itself so fully to the wider family of his admirers.³² Still seething, he wrote many years later that the affair illustrated: 'a Christianizing process which is often carried on with boundless effrontery by "religious" writers after the death of freethinkers.'³³

In this context it is of the first importance to note that the plaster version of the Jefferies bust at the National Portrait Gallery bears the inscribed date '90'. In a letter to the Gallery dated 27 April 1897, Thomas called this bust, wrongly on two counts: 'a reduced replica of my marble bust of Richard Jefferies erected by public subscription seven years ago in Salisbury Cathedral.'³⁴ The Cathedral bust is actually dated 1891, and had of course been erected not seven, but five years before.³⁵ The NPG plaster bust is therefore not a replica but a first version. Thomas was adjusting the true chronology in order to justify the inscription '90' and thereby convince the Gallery that it was acquiring a genuine copy of the Cathedral bust, which it was not at all.

Why? The answer can only lie in the fact that, in one crucial difference from the Cathedral bust, and from the only other extant plaster copy, the NPG bust rests, in silent acknowledgement of Jefferies' free-thinking admirers, on a copy of *The Story of My Heart*.³⁶ The modifications made to the Cathedral version, presumably after consultation with the committee, and, one imagines, with Mrs Jefferies and Besant in

particular, were therefore not part of Margaret Thomas's original concept. She seems to have reasoned that if *The Story of My Heart* were best excluded from a sacred setting, she would at least ensure that in the secular National Valhalla, Jefferies would be linked to the book. She would do this even if it meant that she had to be less than honest about the relationship of the Portrait Gallery bust to the one in Salisbury.

For Salt, the conclusion of *The Story of My Heart* that 'no deity has anything to do with nature' was more convincing than Mrs Jefferies' account of a dying man's return to Christianity.³⁷ Besant, however, despite having devoted a whole chapter of his *Eulogy* to the subject of *The Story of My Heart*, always sounded faintly embarrassed by it: 'In Jefferies' "Story of My Heart" we have a tale half told. You may read in it, if you will, the abandonment rather than the loss, of his early faith; you cannot read in it, but you shall hear, if you persist to the end of this volume, how he found it again.'³⁸ When, in 1889, even Mrs Jefferies had wondered whether the book might not be reprinted, he equivocated, presumably to protect her from adverse public reaction. It was left to C J Longman, the original publisher, to bring out a new edition in 1891, with an expressive etching of the London Stereoscopic Co. photograph by William Strang, an artist known for his 'sympathy for people who are broken down with work - people who are chained to it', as the frontispiece.³⁹

The Salisbury Cathedral bust is, as we have noted, dated 1891.⁴⁰ By July 1891 Thomas was in Paris, free. In August, tellingly, she wrote in an article entitled 'Paris Art Schools and Australian Art Students': 'The Australians themselves say they are much more *en rapport* with French than with English Art.'⁴¹ She is scarcely able to contain her delight in the work being done by young art students, studying models from the life and then in summer departing for the country to paint out-of-doors: 'the revolution now going on among artists of all nations'.⁴² Where was all this in the Jefferies bust?

December found her in Spain with Henrietta Pilkington, preparing her first travel book, the lively *A Scamper through Spain and Tangier*.⁴³ It would be published in the same year as the unveiling of the bust, 1892, with a preface by Arthur Patchett Martin in which he refers to both the Fielding and Jefferies busts and declares of Thomas: 'I have heard her speak with *respect* of the training she received in the Royal Academy,... but always with *enthusiasm* of Paris.'⁴⁴

At one point in her book Thomas defiantly offers a statement of sympathy with Salt in his well-known capacity as founder of the Humanitarian League: 'A branch of the Humane Society, or stringent laws for the suppression of cruelty to animals are greatly needed throughout the whole of Spain.'⁴⁵ Yet it would be wrong to assume that she shared Salt's religious scepticism. In her books she makes plain her Protestant Christianity. She was simply intelligent and clear-thinking enough to perceive that the entire tendency of Jefferies' writing was towards a religion of his own making.

3. The unveiling ceremony

The unveiling ceremony took place on Wednesday 9 March 1892 at noon. It was a stormy, gloomy day, with only brief intervals of sunshine, which the *Salisbury and Winchester Journal* thought emblematic of Jefferies' life.⁴⁶ The congregation was scanty, the organisers having failed to communicate the time of the ceremony. Kinglake was too ill to attend, and Margaret Thomas, typically of this elusive woman, was not there either. According to the *SWJ*: 'Miss Thomas, the artist who executed the bust, unfortunately arrived too late for the opening ceremony, not having known the hour fixed for the unveiling.'⁴⁷ She made a rather lonely visit later in the afternoon. In the article on the bust she wrote for *Literary Opinion*, she cleverly gives the impression she *was* there:

The ceremony of the unveiling was rendered particularly interesting by the excellent addresses delivered by the Bishop and the Dean. The Bishop,... while acknowledging that 'Jefferies could not be counted as one who was a devoted, strong Churchman, yet recognised in him a gift of insight into the beauty of Nature which was given him by God, and which it is right we should recognise in this place.'⁴⁸

This she must have put together from newspaper accounts. I quote it to show that neither she nor the Bishop were afraid to allude to the religious issue, and to point out that the article is part of her own publicity campaign for the bust, a campaign in which she was happy to make herself highly visible. The appearance of a photograph of it as frontispiece to *The Toilers of the Field* is part of this campaign.⁴⁹ The letter she sent to the National Portrait Gallery on 16 April from a Cambridge Street lodging house, rather peremptorily offering them a plaster 'replica' of the bust, is another.⁵⁰ The Gallery refused under the ten year rule; she put the date in her diary, and in May 1897, ten years after Jefferies' death, sent it the version it still has.

The making of plaster copies for sale was an important part of Thomas's revenue from the commission.⁵¹ That this was a commercial proposition reflects how much of a cult figure Jefferies had become. There is evidence of at least four plaster replicas, with the fifth being the slightly different version at the NPG. There may once have been more.

Alfred Graves (1846-1931), a pioneering collector of Irish and Welsh songs and ballads, and a friend of Edward Thomas's father-in-law James Ashcroft Noble, began his career as an Inspector of Schools. It was in this capacity that he spent 1882 to 1894 in Taunton. Graves's uncle had become curate of Windermere through the influence of his friend William Wordsworth the poet, making Graves a link between Kinglake and Salisbury Cathedral, for the Bishop of Salisbury was also a Wordsworth. Graves writes in his memoirs: 'A near neighbour was Arthur Kinglake, the eccentric brother of the author of *Eothen*- he was a good scholar, and, like his brother the historian, had a fine taste for good prose. Richard Jefferies, whose bust he gave me, was a special favourite of his.'⁵²

Richard Garnett states in his entry on Jefferies for the *Dictionary of National Biography* that a bust was placed on his death in the Shire Hall, Taunton.⁵³ This must have been an idiosyncrasy of Kinglake's. He had claimed in 1867 that the criterion for inclusion in Shire Hall was 'connection] by birth or residence with Somersetshire', but this is to stretch a point in Jefferies' case, and the bust cannot have been allowed to stay there very long.⁵⁴

Plaster replicas were also very popular with Salisbury businessmen. J L Veitch's lecture on Jefferies at the Salisbury Museum on 5 February 1894, was illustrated 'by a statuette, a reproduction of the bust in the Cathedral, kindly lent by Mr Bloom.'⁵⁵ Thomas Bloom was the owner of a drapery business at 1-3 New Canal, Salisbury.⁵⁶ Frederick Sutton, later an Alderman and Mayor of Salisbury, at the time of the 1891 census had a confectionery shop at 11-13 High Street. He too owned a copy of the bust. In 1925 he presented it to the local council and it remains *in situ* to this day, in a purpose-built niche in the Committee Room of the Salisbury District Council Offices. Although unsigned, it is nevertheless the only known surviving replica of the cathedral bust.⁵⁷

4. Critical reaction

Most critics failed to see the 'soul' in the statue. The *Salisbury Times & South Wilts Gazette* declared that it: 'lacks expression, giving the spectator the idea rather of a classical scholar or well-to-do gentleman than of the man whose face spoke of struggle, anxiety, poverty, doubt, distraction.'⁵⁸ The *Salisbury and Winchester Journal* offered only muted praise:

Miss Margaret Thomas, an artist of acknowledged ability ... has produced a fine, though perhaps slightly idealised, likeness of the gifted and unfortunate subject. Whether in the treatment of the head, refinement has not been studied at some little sacrifice of expressiveness is a matter of opinion..⁵⁹

Some critics disliked the inscription more than the bust, and even the loyal Margaret Thomas felt obliged to emphasise that this was entirely the work of Mr Kinglake.⁶⁰ Edward Thomas, for example, went to look at the bust in the course of the cycle ride from London to Somerset described in *In Pursuit of Spring* (1913). He took a less diplomatic line on the religious controversy than in his 1909 biography of Jefferies, coming down firmly in the Salt camp with:

I saw, too ... the bust of Richard Jefferies, -
'Who, observing the works of Almighty God
With a poet's eye,/ Has/
enriched the literature of his country,/ and/
won for himself a place amongst/ those/
who have made men happier,/ and wiser.'

If Jefferies had to be commemorated in a cathedral, it was unnecessary to drag in Almighty God. Perhaps the commemorator hoped thus to cast a halo over the man and

his books; but I think "The Story of My Heart" and "Hours of Spring" will be proof against the holy water of these feeble and ill divided words.⁶¹

It is surprising that a fine literary critic like Edward Thomas does not notice it, but Mr Kinglake's words, 'feeble and ill divided' though they may be, reflect by their very awkwardness the difficulty of his task, which was not to be partisan, but to achieve a careful compromise between the two schools of thought on Jefferies' religious views.

The most thoughtful response was perhaps W H Hudson's. Staying at the Nelson Hotel, Salisbury in 1905, he wrote to Edward Garnett:

I just now had a look at that Richard Jefferies bust in the cathedral and dislike it worse than ever. The expressionless face of it! But the poor artist had nothing but a photograph or two to work from. If Watts had painted him we should have had him as he was doubtless seen by some - a very few perhaps - who loved and were in sympathy with him and saw him in his rare best moments. If Whistler had painted him there would have been a good picture, but not a face with *The Story of My Heart* in it.⁶²

The common link between those opposed to the cathedral bust, a sort of badge of honour for free-thinkers, is that first established by Salt: admiration for *The Story of My Heart*.

The Salisbury bust was the last work of sculpture Thomas produced, although she obviously had aspirations to produce more, as witness a campaign which she now waged to extend the idea of Kinglake's Valhalla to public buildings throughout Britain. This began with a letter sent from a lodging house in Bath on 12 April 1891 to 'my dear Mr Kinglake', and appended to his *Somerset Worthies: some account of the Valhalla of Somerset Worthies in the Shire Hall Taunton* (1891). Her account of public sculpture from Ancient Egypt to 'the little towns of remote Brittany' ends with an eloquent panegyric on the Capitol at Rome, pausing only to note that neither religious opinions, nor sex, made any difference there to the title of admission.

Thomas's subsequent career need only concern us briefly, although in many ways her fifties were the most fulfilled years of her life. From March 1895 she was in Palestine and Syria for two years. This resulted in another of her splendid travelogues for single lady artists on a budget, illustrated by herself, and dedicated to Walter Besant, *Two Years in Palestine and Syria* (1900).

In 1899 she contributed a 'sketch' about Charles Summers, and a poem, 'To My Cigarette' ('Upward, like thy fumes ascending,/ All my soul with nature blending,/ May I pass without regret,/ Cigarette, O cigarette.') to an Australian anthology, *By Creek and Gully!*⁶³ June 1900 found her in Denmark preparing *Denmark Past and Present* (1902). She and Miss Pilkington stayed in Mission Hotels ('clean and cheap'), and in the sandy desert near Skagen she thought of Jefferies: 'Richard Jefferies found Nature cruel even in the soft southern counties of England; he would have thought her unspeakably so in this remote, unfertile part of the peninsula on Jutland.'⁶⁴ In 1906 she published her first art primer, *How to Judge Pictures*, dedicated to Douglas Sladen's assistant, Norma Lorimer, and in 1908 was chosen by A & C Black to illustrate the

Revd. John Kelman's *From Damascus to Palmyra*, in the splendid Colour Book series to which Edward Thomas contributed his volumes on Wales and Oxford.⁶⁵ In 1911 she dedicated her second primer, and her last book as author rather than illustrator, to Sladen. *How to Understand Sculpture* includes some tender mentions of Jefferies in connection with the 'Venus Accroupie'.

With this, aged 69, Margaret Thomas decided finally to settle down, moving to a newly-built cottage, 'Countryside', in Croft Lane, Norton, Letchworth Garden City. In 1913 she and Miss Pilkington built a studio in the garden, and in 1914 she illustrated Norma Lorimer's own travel book, *By the Waters of Germany*.

Henrietta Pilkington died on 14 April 1927, aged about 83, and Thomas on 24 December 1929, one day after her 87th birthday. She left £25 and all her manuscripts to Norma Lorimer. Two pictures were left to Miss Lydia Gay, probably the sculptor and medallist who exhibited at the R A from 1887 to 1903. A number of her paintings were left to the Letchworth Museum and Art Gallery, where they may still be seen by appointment.⁶⁶ She was buried in the same grave as her friend of sixty years, just to the right of the lych-gate in Norton churchyard.

References

Place of publication London unless otherwise stated.

1. Birth certificate at General Register Office, Croydon Local Studies Library, letters to author, 30 March and 2 June 2000.
 2. The Royal Academy archivist notes that ages are often recorded incorrectly in their register 'because the student was not completely sure, or because the convention for recording age varied, or because the clerk recording the information was not particularly competent.' Letter to author, 20 July 2000.
 3. 'Margaret Thomas' in Bede Nairn, ed., *Australian Dictionary of Biography 1851-90*, (Melbourne University Press, 1976) and J Kerr, ed., *Dictionary of Australian Artists* (Melbourne O.U.P., 1992) p 791.
 4. The earliest I can find is William Moore's note in 'From My Scrap Book: An Australian Sculptress', *New Triad* (Sydney) 1 November 1927, p 16.
 5. Other explanations for her absence are that she travelled steerage, via a foreign port, or another state, or else in the care of an adult who was not her parent. Research into the lists in Public Record Office, Victoria undertaken for me by Wendy Baker.
 6. Margaret Thomas, *A Painter's Pastime* (Gre & Ung, 1908) XXIII.
 7. Ellen C Clayton, *English Female Artists*, 2 vols (Tinsley, 1876) II, p 259-60.
 8. 'artist . . . from Dublin' according to the 1871 census of Surrey Street, Croydon. 'sweetest soul' is the inscription placed by Thomas on Pilkington's gravestone.
 9. Margaret Thomas, *A Hero of the Workshop and a Somersetshire Worthy, Charles Summers Sculptor. The Story of His Struggles and Triumph* (Hamilton, Adams, 1879).
 10. Clayton 1876, II, p 260.
 11. Douglas Sladen, *Twenty Years of My Life* (Constable, 1915) p 249. Sladen (1856-1947) writer and editor of *Who's Who*, nephew of former Prime Minister of Victoria. He corresponded with Jefferies about Australia.
 12. 'Death of Mr R A Kinglake of Taunton', *Somerset County Gazette*, 9 December 1893.
- Thanks to David Bromwich of the Somerset Studies Library and T W Mayberry of the Somerset Archive and Record Service.

13. The Shire Hall Valhalla was noticed by Malcolm Baker in *Return to Life: a new look at the portrait bust* (Henry Moore Institute, 2000) but Thomas, whose works outnumber those of any other sculptor in it, is not mentioned.
14. Douglas Sladen, *My Long Life* (Hutchinson, 1939) p 179. Margaret Thomas to Douglas Sladen, 14 April 1888, Sladen Collection, Richmond Local Studies Library (henceforth Richmond).
15. October 1888 is her final entry in the Rate Books as a ratepayer. By March 1889 there was a new householder. Westminster City Archives.
16. Margaret Thomas to Douglas Sladen, 25 May 1890, Richmond op cit.
17. Margaret Thomas, 'Richard Jefferies in Salisbury Cathedral', *Literary Opinion* (April 1892) p 12, (henceforth Thomas RJSC). Thanks to Hugoe Matthews for this article.
18. Margaret Thomas, *How to Understand Sculpture* (Bell, 1911) pp 50-51.
19. P Anderson Graham, 'Richard Jefferies', *Murray's Magazine*, 8 (September 1890) p 421. Dean Boyle was involved with the East London Mission in the 1880s.
20. Thomas RJSC, p 12.
21. George E Dartnell, 'Richard Jefferies', *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine*, 67 (June 1893) pp 69-99.
22. J W North to C C Osborne, 14 September 1887, MS 465 Books and Special Collections Division, McGill University Libraries, Montreal.
23. J W North, 'Rural Housing', letter to editor, *Daily News*, 26 December 1903. Thanks to Steve Milton for this. Herbert Alexander, 'John William North, ARA, RWS.', *The Old Water-Colour Society's Club 5th Annual Volume* (1927-8) p 36.
24. Arthur Kinglake to the Lord Bishop of Salisbury, 9 March 1892, *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, 12 March 1892.
25. C J Longman to Richard Jefferies, 14 March 1884. BL Add. MS 58817 XV.
26. Besant's 'generosity' alluded to in Thomas RJSC, p 12. Estimated cost of bust given in 'The Richard Jefferies Memorial. Unveiling in the Cathedral. Eloquent address by the Dean', *Salisbury Times & South Wilts Gazette*, 11 March 1892
27. Edmund Gosse, 'Living English Sculptors II', *Century Magazine*, XXVI (June 1883) pp 39-40.
28. Thomas RJSC, pp 11-12.
29. Margaret Thomas to the Secretary, National Portrait Gallery, 5 May [1897], NPG, Registered Packet for NPG 1097 (henceforth NPG).
30. Jessie Jefferies, 'Richard Jefferies memorial', letter to editor, *The Times*, 8 March 1892 and letter to Bishop of Salisbury, 7 March 1892, *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, 12 March 1892.
31. Besant's letter is dated 17 October 1891. Henry S Salt, *The Faith of Richard Jefferies*, (Watts, for the Rationalist Press Association, 1906) p 10.
32. *Ibid.*, p 11.
33. Henry S Salt, *Seventy Years among Savages* (Allen & Unwin, 1921) p 116.
34. Margaret Thomas to the Secretary, NPG, 27 April 1897. NPG op cit. Thanks to Dr Tim Moreton of the NPG for examining their bust. He informs me that the books are moulded in one piece with the rest of the bust.
35. Verification of the inscription of 'Margaret Thomas 1891' on the cathedral bust was made in August 2001 by Bruce Purvis, Salisbury Local Studies Librarian.
36. There are other slight differences. The Cathedral bust has broader shoulders and lapels to the jacket, and a more elaborate beard. Samuel Looker used a photograph of the NPG rather than the Salisbury bust as frontispiece to his edition of *The Story of My Heart* 1947.

37. Henry Salt, 'The Gospel according to Richard Jefferies', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 15 November 1888, pp 2-3.
38. Walter Besant, *The Eulogy of Richard Jefferies* (Chatto and Windus, 1888) p 274.
39. Frederick Wedmore, 'Frank Short and William Strang', *English Illustrated Magazine*,[^] (1890-1) p 459. Strang's etching first commissioned by Walter Besant for *Field and Hedgerow* (1889), George Miller and Hugoe Matthews, *Richard Jefferies: a bibliographical study* (Aldershot: Scolar, 1993) p 343.
40. Mrs Jefferies, writing to the Bishop of Salisbury, expressed how pleasantly surprised she had been by the speed of the project. *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, 12 March 1892.
41. Margaret Thomas, 'Paris Art Schools and Australian Art Students', *Literary Opinion* (August 1891) p 51.
42. *Ibid.*
43. Margaret Thomas, *A Scamper through Spain and Tangier* (Hutchinson, 1892).
44. *Ibid.*, p x. English-born Patchett Martin (1851-1902), spent 1852-83 in Melbourne. In London he became a regular contributor to the PMG and was active in Liberal Unionist politics.
45. *Ibid.*, p 198.
46. Editorial, *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, 12 March 1892.
47. 'Unveiling the Memorial to Richard Jefferies', *ibid.*
48. Thomas RJSC, p 13.
49. Richard Jefferies, *The Toilers of the Field* (Longmans, Green, 1892). Longman refers to Thomas by name in his preface. In June 1892, James Owen of Salisbury was paid one guinea for permission to reproduce his photograph of the bust, and in the same month 1025 copies of the photograph were ordered from the Autotype Company, presumably for distribution to Jefferies' admirers. Miller and Matthews 1993, pp 554-5.
50. Margaret Thomas to G Scharf Esq. CB, 16 April 1892. NPG op cit.
51. 'Until photography became common and inexpensive, portrait busts were in great demand. Often, plaster casts of a small cabinet bust were made and given to one's friends as one now distributes photographs. Busts of great men were also welcome, not only as public monuments but in little replicas for the library.' Margaret Farrand Thorp, *The Literary Sculptors* (Durham, N C: Duke University Press, 1965) p11.
52. Alfred Perceval Graves, *To Return to All That* (Cape, 1930) p 216. *Eothen*, by Alexander William Kinglake, was published in 1844.
53. R G, 'Richard Jefferies', *Dictionary of National Biography* (1892) pp 265-6.
54. Robert Arthur Kinglake, *Somersetshire Worthies* (Hotten [1867]) pp 3-4.
55. *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, 10 February 1894, p 6. Veitch was a friend of Charles Churchill Osborne, and wrote novels under the pseudonym of Leith Derwent. He was present at the bust unveiling ceremony, as were Mr and Mrs Bloom.
56. Bloom was 54 at the time of the 1891 Census, RG12/1620 fol.16 r-v. His business was well-established by the 1890s, having been founded sometime before or during 1875, *Kelly's Directory for Wiltshire* (1875). It remained in being until 1976/7. Research on Mr Bloom kindly undertaken by Bruce Purvis, Salisbury Local Studies Librarian.
57. Phyllis Treitel, 'Salisbury: Celebration of the 150th Anniversary of 6 November 1848', *Richard Jefferies Society Newsletter* (Spring 1999) pp 8-9. I am very grateful to Steve Milton for researching the Salisbury District Council bust.
58. 'The Richard Jefferies' Memorial. Unveiling in the Cathedral. Eloquent address by the Dean/, *Salisbury Times & South Wilts Gazette*, 11 March 1892.
59. 'Unveiling the Memorial to Richard Jefferies', *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, 12 March 1892.

60. Thomas RJSC, p 12. See Richard Le Gallienne's criticism of the inscription in *Travels in England* (Grant Richards, 1900) pp 117-8.
61. Edward Thomas, *In Pursuit of Spring* (Nelson, 1914) pp 138-9.
62. W H Hudson to Edward Garnett, 17 April 1905, in Richard Curie, ed., *Letters from W H Hudson to Edward Garnett* (Dent, 1925) p 68.
63. Lala Fisher, ed., *By Creek and Gully: stories and sketches mostly of bush life* (Fisher Unwin, 1899).
64. Margaret Thomas, *Denmark Past and Present* (Treherne, 1902) p 78.
65. Revd. John Kelman, *From Damascus to Palmyra* (Black, 1908).
66. Will of Margaret Thomas, dated 24 January 1929, proved 25 January 1930. Copy at Letchworth Museum and Art Gallery. I am very grateful to Rosamond Allwood, the curator, for her help.

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Kisses of the Sun

Jo-Anne Smith

Some of Richard Jefferies' best prose has a jewel-like quality that invites the reader to preserve it in a special way: perhaps calligraphy, or a hand-printed, hand-made book. The following article describes a small book, hand made in New Zealand in 1908; it uses part of Jefferies' essay 'Golden-brown' (The Open Air) published in August 1884 in The Pall Mall Gazette.

Jo-Anne Smith, who wrote the article, is Curator of Manuscripts, Canterbury Museum, Christchurch, New Zealand.

The works of Richard Jefferies feature in library collections all over New Zealand and he was widely read in the nineteenth century. In New Zealand, he is not usually associated with art objects. The exception is 'Kisses of the Sun', a hand-made book purchased in 2001 by the Canterbury Museum, Christchurch, New Zealand.

Purchased because of its association with Ettie Rout, one of New Zealand's famous women of the early twentieth century, further research has also suggested its design was strongly influenced by the Arts and Crafts Movement. Because of this, it is a significant art object in its own right.

Ettie Rout is more famous for her work during World War I as a campaigner for safe sex practices to protect soldiers from venereal disease, than her creative abilities. Born in Launceston, Tasmania on 24 February 1877, Ettie, with her family, arrived in Wellington, New Zealand at the end of 1884. After the family moved to Christchurch, Ettie attended Charles Gilby's shorthand and typing classes. In 1904 she set up as a shorthand writer and typist, one of the first women to operate a business of this nature in Christchurch.

Not only was she running a successful business, (commonly working a 17-hour day), as a committed socialist she became involved in the labour movement. During this period up to World War I, she also set up the New Zealand Shearers' Union's extremely influential newspaper the *Maoriland Worker*, in addition to writing articles for the major evening paper, the *Lyttelton Times*.

Ettie was a freethinker and physical culturist. She attended Fred Hornibrook's physical culture school, (and later married him in 1920), training in the Sandow regime and performing gymnastic routines with him. At that time, the dress reform movement was agitating against women wearing restrictive corsets. As well as not wearing corsets, Ettie went a step further by wearing short skirts, men's boots and occasionally trousers. This belief in the beauty of the natural body resonates in her choice of 'The Kisses of the Sun' to be the text for her book.

During World War I, it was the high rate of venereal disease affecting New Zealand soldiers that she turned her attention to. In contrast to the prevailing view of the day, she saw this as a medical problem, not a moral one. Ettie left New Zealand in 1916. She campaigned for prophylactic kits to be issued to the soldiers, and produced her own kit which she sold through the New Zealand Medical Soldiers Club at

Hornchurch, England. Although her kit was adopted in 1917 by the New Zealand Expeditionary Force, she received no credit.

In 1920 she moved to London and continued campaigning about protection from venereal diseases and about contraception. Friends included H G Wells. Fred and Ettie became estranged, and she seems to have lost much of her renowned energy and vitality as the 1930s dawned. She died in Kara tonga in 1936. Her obituary omitted to mention the work she had done in connection with prevention of venereal diseases, and implied she was one of the 'best known of New Zealand women' for her typing speed.

Certainly her typing ability can be in no doubt after careful examination of 'The Kisses of the Sun'. The soft brown suede cover has a small watercolour decoration glued to it, painted by Christchurch artist Raymond McIntyre. McIntyre's major works during this period were landscapes. He was particularly keen on the Art Nouveau style, and his work of this time is characterised by an interest in silhouette, the contrast of black and white, close-up intimate scenes and with little sign of human occupation.

This watercolour encapsulates these characteristics in miniature: the curving arabesque lines of the poplar trees and cloud portrayed in silhouette, the choice of only three colours, and a small scene, empty of any signs of human habitation. The watercolour is also appropriate to the essay extract inside. The sun setting in the corner of the watercolour is referred to in the title Ettie created for the extract. Trees are mentioned in the essay, as are the sun's rays. In the artwork, the rays are implied by the soft pinky-orange of the cloud - 'the sunset crimson, flaming bright, or delicately gray and scarlet...' writes Jefferies.

Inside, the marbled endpapers include the same pinky-orange sun colour of the artwork on the outside, and are delicately tinged with colours of sunrise and sunset - orange, greens, pinks, and greys. The book measures 31cm x 21.5 cm and is 5 cm thick. The pages and the suede cover are tied together with a green silk ribbon, the whole designed to lie flat, not stand up on a shelf.

The essay is carefully typed on heavy, light brown art paper. The title uses two different tab settings on the typewriter and the first letter of each line is red. Remembering to depress the lever to raise the ribbon for the red letter requires intense concentration. At first glance, the body of the essay looks like a poem. First letters in sentences and key words are in red, developing some capitalisation that Jefferies did not have in his original essay. By using a typewriter Ettie had to carefully count the number of characters and spaces in the text, to create lines of approximately the same length.

Ettie chose to begin the book part way through Jefferies' essay, sub-titling the work 'The Fruit Pickers of Kent' which sums up the subject of the extract. She starts with Jefferies' words: 'Their faces glowed with a golden-brown, and so great is the effect of colour that their plain features were transfigured.' She ends the

selection at: 'till the silent stars at silent midnight shone in the cool summer night, and on and on till the cock crew and the faint dawn appeared.'

Ettie ends the book with a note - "This Book is the Handwork of Ettie A Rout, Whose office is at No 5 Chancery Lane, Christchurch, N Z, 1908.' Green sealing wax is dabbed on the page, and Ettie's initials pressed into it.

Later, in 1912, she hand-inscribed and gave the book to her friend James Drummond. He was a fellow journalist on the *Lyttelton Times* newspaper and, like Richard Jefferies, wrote columns and essays about natural history. Ettie made a point of giving her hand-made books to people for whom the essay would have relevance.

A small number of Ettie's hand-made books remain in private hands. This is the only one known to be in a public institution in New Zealand. 'Kisses of the Sun' was exhibited in the Canterbury Museum for the first time during June 2003 to coincide with the Books & Beyond Festival.

I am indebted to Simon Coleman for locating the extract from Jefferies' essay 'Golden-brown' which Ettie Rout has used to create 'Kisses of the Sun'.

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