



THE
LITTLE HOLLAND
HOUSE ALBUM

Edward Burne-Jones

WITH AN INTRODUCTION & NOTES BY
JOHN CHRISTIAN

PRESENTED TO
THE MEMBERS OF THE
THE ROXBURGHE CLUB

MMXXIV

THE LITTLE HOLLAND HOUSE ALBUM

was compiled by Edward Burne-Jones in about 1858–9 for Sophia, Mrs Dalrymple, the youngest of the seven celebrated Pattle sisters who played such an important role in mid-Victorian cultural life. Their centre was Little Holland House in Kensington where another of the sisters, Sara Prinsep, created an artistic and intellectual salon around her permanent guest, the painter G.F. Watts. Other habitués included Tennyson, Browning, Thackeray, Ruskin, Carlyle, Holman Hunt, D.G. Rossetti and Du Maurier. Many of them were brilliantly photographed by yet another of the sisters, Julia Margaret Cameron.

Burne-Jones was introduced to the circle by Rossetti, his master and hero, in 1857. Although only twenty-four and at the start of his career, he was quickly taken up by Mrs Prinsep, who found his combination of genius and poor health irresistible. In the intensely hot summer of 1858 she took him to stay at Little Holland House for several months, ostensibly to recover from illness but probably also to remove him from the ambience of Rossetti, whose influence on the younger artists of the group was mistrusted by Ruskin and Watts.

The album presented to Sophia Dalrymple, who became a close friend of the artist, dates from about this time. It consists of eight poems, all transcribed by Burne-Jones and illustrated by him with drawings and vignettes, together with separate designs on the endpapers. The poems – which include works by Rossetti, Browning, Tennyson and Keats, and the ballad *Sir Patrick Spens* – provide an illuminating cross-section of the circle's literary taste. The drawings are meticulously worked in pen and ink, Burne-Jones's favourite medium at this period, and are often closely related not only to better-known examples of his own early work but to contemporary designs by Rossetti. Altogether the album makes a major contribution to our knowledge of this fascinating phase of Pre-Raphaelite activity.

The album was first published in 1981 in an edition of 200 copies by the twenty-one-year old Robert Dalrymple. He has now prepared a revised and expanded edition for the members of the Roxburghe Club, which, more than forty years on, reflects both the advances in printing technology and his subsequent career as a celebrated book designer.



*O what can ail thee, knight at arms,
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge has wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.*

II.
*O what can ail thee, knight at arms!
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.*

III.
*I see a lily on thy brow
With anguish moist, and fever dew,
And on thy cheeks a fading rose
Fast withereth too.*

IV.
*I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful – a faery's child,
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.*

PUBLISHED FOR THE ROXBURGHE CLUB

Biographically speaking [the album] was an exciting rediscovery in that Burne-Jones's medieval images are also the pictures of that golden summer at Little Holland House. Scenes of young women lying languorously on the lawns; hints of decadence and weirdness, strange fruits and musky odours; the portrait of Sophia herself in floaty garments with a retinue of speeding lovebirds. The album for Sophia has unsettling undercurrents suggesting the richness of experience Burne-Jones underwent in that captive summer and the hint of danger.

Fiona MacCarthy in *The Last Pre-Raphaelite: Edward Burne-Jones and the Victorian Imagination*, 2011

150 copies have been printed, of which 75 are offered for sale, bound in quarter cloth with patterned paper boards, at £75.00

The Roxburghe Club, 2024 · 56pp · 305 × 212mm

ISBN 978 1 901902 19 8

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