



Natasha Moore. *Victorian Connections: The Literary and Artistic Circles of William and Helen Allingham from the Collections of Grolier Club Members*

Natasha Moore. *Victorian Connections: The Literary and Artistic Circles of William and Helen Allingham from the Collections of Grolier Club Members*. New York: The Grolier Club, 2015. Distributed by Oak Knoll Press. 62p., ill. ISBN 9781605830599. US \$25.00.

From its location in New York City, the Grolier Club fosters the collecting and appreciation of books and works on paper, as well as the study of their art, history, production, and commerce, partly by holding quarterly exhibits, offering educational programs, and producing books and exhibit catalogs. From March 15 to May 25, 2015, the Grolier Club mounted an exhibition with the title “Victorian Connections: The Literary and Artistic Circles of William and Helen Allingham from the Collections of Grolier Club Members,” for which the title under review is the exhibit catalog. Works in the exhibit, principally centered around William and Helen Allingham as suggested by the title, came from the collections of Grolier Club members, which are largely devoted to books and the graphic arts. William Allingham (1824-1889) was an Anglo-Irish poet, diarist, and editor; his wife, Helen (1848-1926) was one of her age’s most successful women artists. Some of their own work was in the Grolier Club show, both individual pieces and their collaborations with other writers and artists. On display were, for example, William Allingham’s commonplace book (containing a transcription of the first letter from D.G. Rossetti to Robert Browning), the Allinghams’ copies of works by Percy Bysshe Shelley and Walt Whitman, the baby book for the couple’s son Gerald (with unpublished, on-the-spot accounts of Alfred Tennyson, Thomas Carlyle, and George Eliot), Mark Twain’s annotated copy of William’s 1907 diary, D. G. Rossetti’s original design for William’s *Day and Night Songs*, watercolors and a sketchbook by Helen, rare photographs by Julia Margaret Cameron and Lewis Carroll, and drawings by Kate Greenaway, Edward Burne-Jones, and John Butler Yeats. Items on display showed the persons who made up the Allinghams’ professional and social circles. What an interesting way to study the lives of creative people!

The catalog of the exhibit contains paragraph-length descriptions of the displayed items. There are 24 pages of images, including both front and back covers of the catalog. The images are portraits, book covers, copies of text pages, and artwork. The Allinghams’ early connections, links with the Pre-Raphaelites, their Irish and American connections, their relations with other artists and writers, their family bonds, and inclusion of their work in



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publications after they passed away may be studied in the entries. The exhibit catalog's author, Natasha Moore, has also written a recent monograph on this time period, *Victorian Poetry and Modern Life: The Unpoetical Age* (2015). According to our catalog record for this work, she is a research fellow at the Centre for Public Christianity in Australia. I recommend *Victorian Connections* for academic and public libraries, or special libraries in the humanities, with in-depth interests in Victoriana and, especially, the book arts of the Victorian period.

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