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## **Swinburne in Miniature**

John S. Mayfield  
*Syracuse University*

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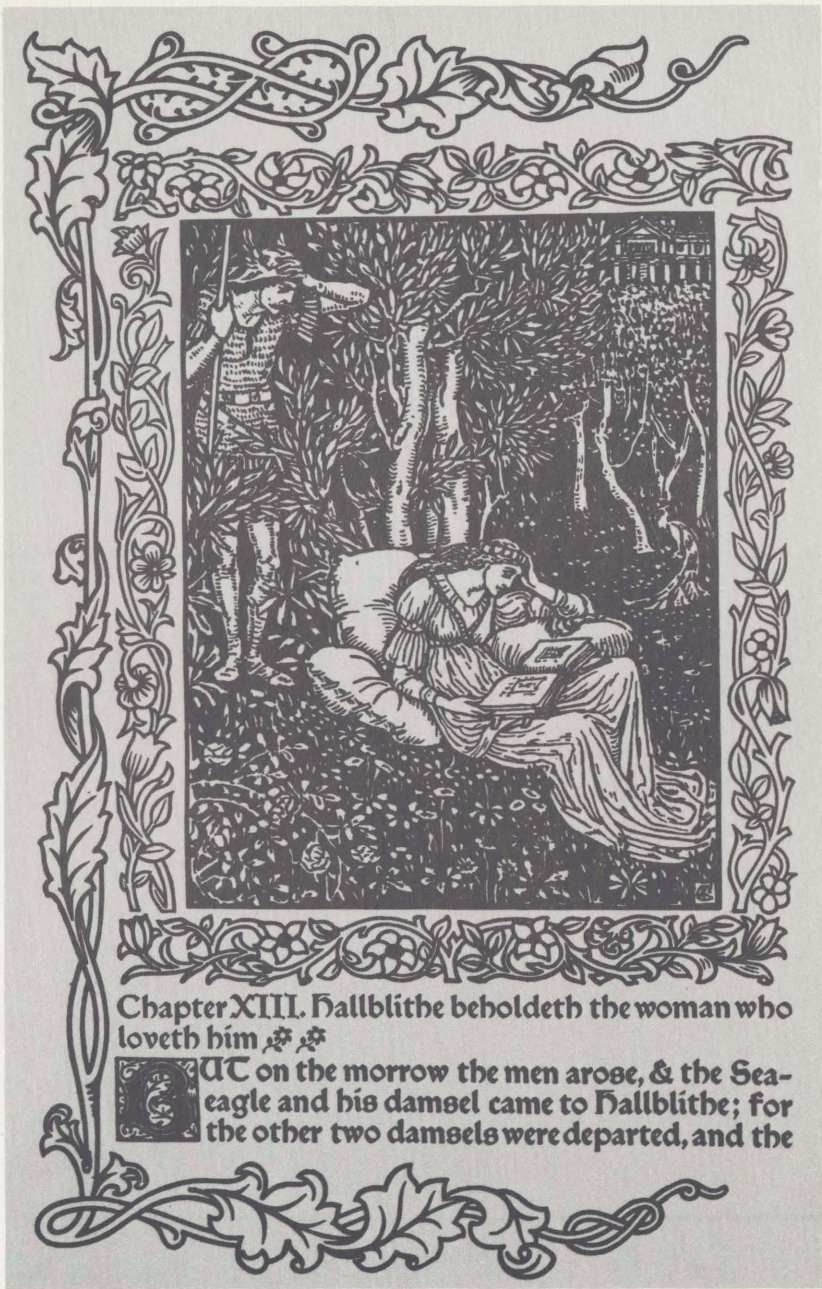
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Chapter XIII. Hallblithe beholdeth the woman who loveth him ❀ ❀

**W**AT on the morrow the men arose, & the Sea-eagle and his damsel came to Hallblithe; for the other two damsels were departed, and the

William Morris, *The Glittering Plain*, p. 84.

# THE COURIER

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## *Swinburne in Miniature*

by John S. Mayfield

Recently I acquired at a London auction the original of an hitherto unknown and unrecorded 182-page notebook kept by the famous English poet, A. C. Swinburne (1837-1909), when he was an undergraduate student at Oxford University during 1856-1859. It was filled with unpublished verse and prose all written in ink by him during that period. One of the items was a complete poem entitled "Shelley," which covered two full pages of the notebook with a galaxy of alterations, strike overs, revisions, interlineations, and such. When Dr. Terry L. Meyers, College of William and Mary, read the verses, he said: "The poem, of course, beyond being superb in itself, is doubly valuable since it is vivid proof of the depth of Swinburne's dedication to Shelley at Oxford, something one has been able to argue thus far only indirectly."

A transcription of "Shelley" with a brief introductory note was sent to Mr. Achille J. St. Onge of Worcester, Massachusetts, who is known throughout the American and English literary world for the beautiful miniature books he has produced during the past thirty years. He was enthusiastic about publishing the poem and rushed the material over to his printer, Joh. Enschedé en Zonen, in Haarlem, Holland. Proofs were sent back, checked and returned, and everything seemed to be in order.

The next word Mr. St. Onge received from overseas was that the package containing all the printed sheets for the entire edition had been lost in the mail on its way to the binder, Reliure du Centre S.A., in Limoges, France. After a frantic search of three weeks, it was finally found, and forwarded on to its destination. By that time all the Reliure employees had gone on their regular vacation, and the bindery was closed down for a month. Nothing has ever interfered with a Frenchman's scheduled vacation.

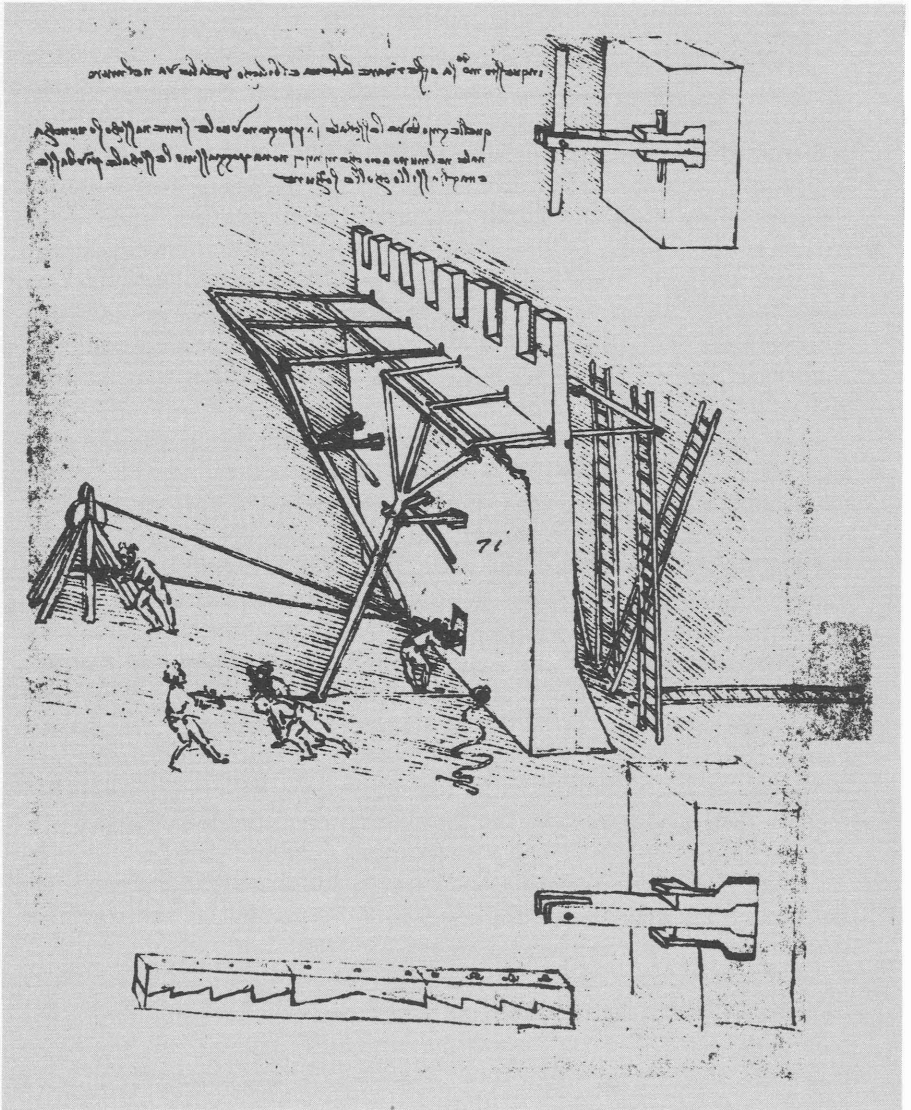
After what seemed to be an interminable and unconscionable delay, the finished copies were finally sent over to Worcester by air mail, and the announcement of the new publication made public.

This Swinburne first edition was printed on handmade all rag paper from handset Romanée and Spectrum type, bound in full revolutionary red (a most appropriate color for Shelley and Swinburne) nigerian oasis, decorative endpapers, all edges gilt, stamping on front cover in pure gold, 1-3/4 by 2-1/2 inches, 24 pages, in an edition of 500 copies.

Mr. St. Onge recently wrote that only a few copies remained on hand.

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*John S. Mayfield* is Curator Emeritus of Manuscripts and Rare Books and George Arents Bibliographer in Swinburne Studies, Syracuse University. His volume of bibliographical essays entitled *Swinburneiana* will be published in August.



Leonardo da Vinci, *Codex Atlanticus*, Vol. 2, p. 139.<sup>f</sup>