

NOTES AND REVIEWS

PUNCH AND THE PRE-RAPHAELITES:
 GEORGE DUMAURIER'S "A LEGEND OF CAMELOT"

In its five issues for March, 1866, Punch magazine carried George DuMaurier's (1834-1896) five-part parody of Pre-Raphaelite painting and poetry called "A Legend of Camelot."¹ DuMaurier's biographer, Leonée Ormond, reproduced the five drawings and provides excellent commentary on them, but she simply summarizes DuMaurier's accompanying verse parody without reprinting it.² Therefore, it seems fitting to provide readers of The Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies with DuMaurier's delightful visual and verbal parody in its entirety.

In DuMaurier's doggerel verse, students of Pre-Raphaelitism will likely recognize, in comic exaggeration, some of the more obvious aspects of William Morris's poetry, as well as some shades of Tennyson's "The Lady of Shalott." In her analysis of the first two drawings, Ormond finds several details directly borrowed from the 1857 Moxon edition of Tennyson's poems, a volume illustrated by Millais, Hunt, Rossetti and others. The third and fourth DuMaurier drawings seem a bit less direct in their parody of Pre-Raphaelite subjects and techniques, but the raven, skull, spiral staircase, dark forest, and foliage surrounding the strangely dwarfed castle suggest some common motifs of Rossetti, Burne-Jones and others. In the fourth illustration, Ormond finds a suggested parallel with Charles Collins' Convent Thoughts, and in the fifth she sees an obvious reference to Rossetti's Rosa Triplex, the earliest known version of which is dated 1867, the year after DuMaurier's series appeared in Punch. Thus, DuMaurier, who was well acquainted with the Pre-Raphaelites, may have been having his "in joke" with them by burlesquing a painting yet unknown to the public.

Nonetheless, there is much in the series that could have been immediately recognized by Punch readers, and there is much that remains amusing for 20th century audiences.

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FOOTNOTES

¹The series appears in the 1866 issues of Punch for March 3, 10, 17, 24, and 31.

²See Leonée Ormond, George DuMaurier (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul and Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1969), 173-182.