Audley evoke "the entire erotic register of the sensational" (161) as do male villains in other tales: Count Fosco, Uncle Silas, Dracula. Sensation is a literary mode which undermines the naive empiric assumptions of realism where the ordinary and the everyday has its hidden other side and seeing can no longer mean believing.

Through close, careful readings of Stevenson and Gissing, William Morris and H.G. Wells, Brantlinger draws together these threads, by producing a fine exploration of *News from Nowhere* (1891) and Wells's *The Time Machine* (1895) as texts which in themselves are analysing print culture at the end of the nineteenth century, invoking worlds without books in complex Utopian and dystopian fantasies. In the end it seems that the novel is a form which develops out of, and even in spite of, anti-novel rhetoric tightly tied to that all-powerful, but still relatively unexplored figure, the Reader.

Judith Johnston

***Struggle and Storm: The Life and Death of Francis Adams*, by Meg Tasker. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2001.**

As the subtitle of Meg Tasker's new biography of the English and Australian writer Francis Adams makes clear, one of the most compelling aspects of Francis Adams's short life was his manner of leaving it. Having suffered from tuberculosis for many years, he eventually shot himself to avoid the final ghastly struggles against suffocation. His wife (or supposed wife) was with him when he died and Adams's final moments were later investigated in some detail, to determine whether criminal charges should be brought against her. Hence rather more is known about Adams's death – including some rather gruesome details involving false teeth – than about much of the previous thirty years of his life.

Tasker has, however, spent a good many years of hers researching what there is to discover about Francis Adams. But, as she makes clear towards the end of her book, her aim has not been to write the sort of biography which is often hard to distinguish from fiction:

> To anyone who expects biography to re-create the living man, I'm afraid my Francis Adams will appear a sorry simulation, with creaky joints and too much visible stitching. On the other hand, it would be misleading to hide the stitches, deny the long labour of reconstruction, and pretend that this interesting chap had just strolled in from the nineteenth century, ready to explain himself to the citizens of the next millennium. (213)

One of the most obvious indications of Tasker's wish to make more visible the speculation often concealed beneath the smooth surfaces of conventional biographies, is her decision to use two different type faces. The standard type used for most of the book presumably represents her attempt to tell the story of Francis Adams and his

work with appropriate "scholarly rigour and accountability." The alternative type is used for passages where she wishes to make "off-the-record comments," as in the section quoted above. Reading her book, however, I found that the differences between the scholarly and the off-the-record voices was not as great as this terminology might suggest. One often finds speculation, and use of a more informal style, in the "scholarly" sections and very interesting and significant material in the "off-the-record" ones. The two type faces therefore become little more than an annoying distraction; I believe her book would have read much better if Tasker had not worried at all about the pros and cons of writing in an academically correct manner but just told Adams's story as entertainingly and accurately as she could.

For it is, as she claims, "a bloody good story." Living as we now do at a time when many young people are barely finished their university studies by the time they are thirty, it is amazing to consider how much Francis Adams had managed to get done before his death. He had published ten books, ranging all the way from social and political commentary, through revolutionary poetry to crime fiction; a further five were published posthumously, including what he seems to have considered his major literary work, *Tiberius, A Drama*. (Tasker implies that it is about as interesting as all those other closet tragedies that Victorian writers delighted in – the cult of Shakespeare has a lot to answer for!) For most readers today, as for those during his life, Adams's fame rests on his stylish essays, especially those written during his years in Australia, and his *Songs of the Army of the Night*, originally published in Sydney in 1888.

Like other nineteenth-century writers who managed to produce a staggering number of works and words before early deaths – Marcus Clarke being the most obvious Australian example – Francis Adams wrote so much partly in order to live. His years in Australia, from 1884 to 1890, prompted by a search for a healthier climate, forced him to turn much more to journalism. As he wrote to James Brunton Stephens from Jerilderie in 1885: "No literary life is here possible except that of the journalist – *Laboremus!*" (80). Without this necessity, however, we would not have had his memorable insights into life in Australia in the lead up to Federation.

Adams's time in Australia also strengthened his socialist beliefs, possibly as a result of the influence of William Lane with whom he had contact in Brisbane. While Tasker has not been able to find any evidence of direct involvement by Adams in the foundation of the Australian labour movement during the late 1880s, *Songs of the Army of the Night* presented in a very compelling and dramatic way the need for social and economic change, and was clearly an inspirational work. As late as 1953, Mary Gilmore was writing: "No one today knows the way Francis Adams swept the feeling, young and just-awakening minds of Australia when he wrote. I wd. say that ninety percent of the revolutionary verse & feeling (social &, from it, otherwise) sprang from Adams" (98). Adams's influence, as Tasker notes, is apparent not only in Gilmore's own poetry, but in that of Bernard O'Dowd, Henry Lawson and many lesser writers. Since his poems are not particularly well known now, however, a fuller discussion and analysis of *Songs of the Army of the Night* would have been useful. We are told that: "Rather than attack Adams for his political views, the most conservative reviewers

focused instead on the poor grammar and poetic technique of the poems, refusing to see that these were part of the book's aim to create an authentically revolutionary proletarian voice in verse" (107). But we are not given any examples of this "revolutionary proletarian voice" and there is little attempt to compare Adams's works with that of other contemporary poets.

Though Tasker has chosen not to try to revivify Adams for the reader, it is clear from her evocation of his effect on most of those who met him, as well as from the striking photographs included in her book, that Adams's youth and physical beauty contributed to the impact of his ideas. Like others of his ilk, his conversation was apparently even more enthralling than his writing. A casual acquaintance recalled being "entranced, bewitched, with the marvellous power of the man. The earth ceased to be earth: all was emotion" (153). One can only speculate on what Francis Adams might have accomplished had he lived longer. Perhaps, as Tasker suggests, knowledge that his time on earth would be short influenced both his hectic output and his iconoclasm. The book's title appropriately comes from Adams's epitaph, taken from his own *Poetical Works:*

> Bury me with clenched hands
> And eyes open wide
> For in storm and struggle I lived
> And in struggle and storm I died. (214)

Elizabeth Webby

***Florence Fenwick Miller: Victorian Feminist, Journalist and Educator*, by Rosemary T. Van Arsdel. Nineteenth Century Series. Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2001.**

Although Rosemary Van Arsdel states in the first paragraph of her introduction that "nearly every book on nineteenth-century British feminism published over the last 20 years cites her [Florence Fenwick Miller's] contributions to the movement," one could be forgiven for asking Florence who? In fact I've been through my own library and have found only a couple of very fleeting references to her daughter Irene, a militant suffragette (she called herself Irene Miller, rather than Ford, her father's name) and one to Florence herself in connection with the journalism of Isobel Somerset (dealt with at some length in the present book). However, when we set aside Van Arsdel's quite justified attempt to puff her biography, it is possible to view this project as an important one, for Fenwick Miller (named after Florence Nightingale) is a fairly typical example of the many largely unknown (at least to posterity) women who did break the bounds of Victorian domesticity, and it is salutary to be reminded of the numbers of women who defied public opinion to speak in public, lecturing, as Fenwick Miller did and often for pay, on subjects as diverse as education, medical training for women, birth control, prostitution, and the suffrage. While her name has