

Introduction

Welcome to a new general issue of the *Australasian Journal of Victorian Studies*. The publishing of our issues has been more erratic than we would have liked - as is not without precedent during the pandemic. But look out for an announcement of a new special issue inviting contributions in a variety of formats.

This new issue contains a range of articles. There is a focus on poetry in the contribution of Patricia Rigg, who examines the work of John Addington Symonds and Arthur Symons. She demonstrates how both writers deal with what were for their period socially unacceptable sexual preferences: men rather than women for Symonds, and prostitutes and music-hall artistes for Symons. Their poetry deploys the trope of one version of the Virgin Mary, the Stella Maris, in order to come to terms with these preferences.

Two of the contributions concentrate on novelists, delving into little known aspects of their lives, and how these affected their fiction. Robert Jenkins considers the output of the popular late-Victorian writer for boys, G. A. Henty. He investigates Henty's practice of regular collaboration with a younger man, and how this impacted on the juxtaposition of story and historical material in the fiction, as well as on Henty's connection with his boy readers. Anna Koivusalo delves into a friendship that was entered into by Edward Bulwer Lytton in his old age. Drawing on unexamined correspondence, she explores how the friendship with a young and ambitious American couple, Louis and Marie de Rosset, influenced the novelist's later novels.

Extensive research into correspondence is also salient in the contribution of Paula Jane Byrne. She looks into the manuscript letters of Ann Rusden and her daughters in the social and religious context of Australia's Hunter Valley from the 1830s to 1860s. The Rusden women certainly believed that women's views and ideas were important, and expressed these in detail. Ann's granddaughter was the leading Australian feminist Rose Scott.

Finally there are two fascinating reviews, one by Jill Haley about women's photography of the Victorian period, and the other by Jessica Gildersleeve about the neglected Australian woman writer Helen de Guerry Simpson, who published supernatural fiction between the world wars.

Thanks to Alison Bedford, for her capable management of the Reviews section. I am grateful as well to Susan Murray and Nathan Grice from OJS for their technical assistance.

Joanne Wilkes

Editor

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