The Scarlet Shawl

An Introduction by Andrew Rossabi to the Petton Books publication, August 2009

Richard Jefferies is best remembered for his nature essays such as 'A London Trout' and 'The Pageant of Summer'; for his books about the English countryside such as *The Amateur Poacher*; for a children's classic, *Bevis*; and a spiritual autobiography, *The Story of My Heart.* He is not primarily known as a fiction writer. Yet from the outset of his career to the end Jefferies strove to succeed as a novelist. This is hardly surprising. The Victorian age had witnessed the triumph of fiction as the most popular literary genre. Declared Anthony Trollope in 1870:

> We have become a novel-reading people. Novels are in the hands of us all; from the Prime Minister [Gladstone] down to the last-appointed scullery-maid... Poetry also we read and history, biography and the social and political news of the day. But all our other reading put together hardly amounts to what we read in novels.[1]

The novel was not only the dominant literary form of the age; it offered the aspirant the best chance of making his name and fortune.

Jefferies wrote fiction as soon as he began to write. An imaginative boy and a voracious reader, he displayed a precocious talent for concocting blood-curdling tales, with which he regaled his siblings and friends. Soon he began to write them down and as a concession to his literary bent an upper room next to the cheese room in the farmhouse at Coate was set aside for his use. Here he probably wrote his first full-length work, a fiction of some 75,000 words entitled 'Ben Tubbs Adventures'. Neatly copied in a plum-coloured stiff-backed exercise book and apparently composed in Jefferies' mid-to-late-teens, it shows signs of having its origin as an oral tall tale. An escapist fantasy, it recounts the adventures of the eponymous hero, a mischievous scamp of 15 who lives with his widowed mother in the West Country, is sent to boarding school and runs away with a friend called Ned. The boys find their way to America where after various adventures including hairbreadth escapes from hostile Comanche they reach the Californian goldfields.

This juvenile fiction may have been inspired in part by the tales of Jefferies' father, who at the age of 18 had worked his passage to America and stayed two years in New York State along the banks of the Hudson.[2] It may also have reflected (or anticipated) personal experience: in 1864, at the age of 16, Jefferies ran away from home with Jimmy Cox, an older cousin who lived across the way at Snodshill Farm. The boys went to France, intending to walk to Moscow and back. Neither speaking nor understanding French, they reached no further than Picardy and after a week or so reluctantly returned to England. Then, rather than go back home, they answered a newspaper advertisement offering a cheap passage to New York. They paid the sum required, which included free tickets to Liverpool. There they discovered that the tickets did not include the cost of bedding or provisions. To raise the money required, Jefferies tried to pawn their watches; the pawnbroker informed the police; and the boys were sent home in disgrace. Some of this escapade went also into *Restless Human Hearts.*

'Ben Tubbs Adventures' (the manuscript is in the Richard Jefferies archive in the British Library[3]) was never published. Jefferies' first published writings were such crudely sensational tales and short stories as 'Henrique Beaumont', 'Masked' and 'Who Will Win?', which appeared in the *North Wilts Herald,* the local Swindon paper he had joined in 1866. The last book Jefferies published was a novel, *Amaryllis at the Fair,* the end of which seems to promise the reader a sequel. As Edward Thomas observed,

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[1] Anthony Trollope, 'On English Prose Fiction as a Rational Amusement,' lecture delivered in Edinburgh on 28 January 1870, and reprinted in *Four Lectures by Anthony Trollope*, edited with notes by Morris L. Parrish (London: Constable, 1938), p.108.

[2] According to a note pencilled on p.260 of John Jefferies' copy of *Nelson's Festivals* (London, 1773), James Luckett Jefferies 'left for America in 1835'. The book has been loaned to The Richard Jefferies Society by member Andrew Lewis and is on display in the Museum. Information kindly supplied by the Society Secretary, Jean Saunders.

[3] Add. MS 58826 vol. XXIV. See George Miller and Hugoe Matthews, *Richard Jefferies: A Bibliographical Study* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1993), p.739.

> Each of the three later periods of his life is represented by a fiction or more than one, into which he put his best work and in a manner not always equalled by the books which everyone praises.[4]

Altogether during a career cut short by illness (he died aged 38) Jefferies published ten novels (including two children's books, *Wood Magic* and *Bevis*, and *The Rise of Maximin* which was serialised in the *New Monthly Magazine* but never appeared in volume form) and wrote at least four more ('Ben Tubbs Adventures,' 'Disinterested Friendship,' 'Only a Girl,' and 'In Summer Time') of which the last three survive only by their titles.

Of the published adult novels the *Scrutiny* critic Q. D. Leavis thought four (*Greene Ferne Farm, The Dewy Morn, After London* and *Amaryllis at the Fair*) had permanent worth and said 'the best parts are better and more mature than the best parts of most of Hardy's'. She praised two in the highest terms. She said that in *The Dewy Morn* Jefferies 'reaches out towards D. H. Lawrence' and

> goes further than any Victorian novelist towards the modern novel – I mean the novel that seems to have significance for us other than as a mirror of manners and morals; I should describe it as one of the few real novels between *Wuthering Heights* and *Sons and Lovers*.[5]

In *Amaryllis at the Fair,* where Jefferies at last found a form which freed him from the strait-jacket of the Victorian formula fiction, Mrs. Leavis unequivocally declared that he had 'produced a masterpiece'.[6]

The three early novels however – *The Scarlet Shawl, Restless Human Hearts* and *World's End* – have proved a stumbling-block even to the author's most fervent admirers and been dismissed as false starts. A typical response was that of Jefferies' first biographer, Sir Walter Besant, founder of the Society of Authors and himself a prolific and best-selling novelist, and thus qualified to speak with the authority of the successful practitioner:

> How could the same hand write the coarse and clumsy *Scarlet Shawl* which was shortly to give the world such sweet and delicate work, so truthful, so artistic so full of fine feeling?[7]

Besant confessed himself unable to explain it but advised his readers to omit the early novels which 'belong to that class of book which quickly becomes scarce but never becomes rare'.[8] Besant acted with exemplary generosity in donating the royalties from his *Eulogy* (which went through four editions) to Jefferies' widow Jessie, left destitute with two children after her husband's premature death in 1887. But his scathing verdict set the tone and was echoed by all the early writers on Jefferies such as Oswald Crawfurd and Henry Salt (whose otherwise sympathetic study remains one of the most perceptive and readable). The first voice raised against the chorus of damnation was that of Edward Thomas, who was also the first critic to examine the early novels (which he remarked were 'never read and always condemned'[9]) in any detail. The chapter he devoted to them in his critical biography is a model of balanced and sensitive criticism. Thomas was not blind to the shortcomings of the early fiction. The *North Wilts Herald* tales and short stories displayed 'much facility and exuberance of trashiness'[10] and were 'probably the unconsciously insincere utterance of a truly romantic nature'.[11] Thomas went on however to make the crucial point:

> But insincerity is not disingenuousness, and that facile, expressionless fiction, useless as it is to us, was, in part, an indulgence to his not yet understood yearnings which they might otherwise have lacked. It was good for him to consider the language of emotion, even if he failed to utter his own; just as, later on, it was good for him to indulge in *The Scarlet Shawl,* because it satisfied and kept alive for the time being the spiritual something in his nature as competent articles on agriculture could not do. Even so may it be when one who has fallen in love polishes his boots to a particular brightness, though they never meet his mistress's eye. It is quite possible that, had there been no 'Henrique Beaumont' and 'Who Will Win?' there would have been no *Dewy Morn,* no *Amaryllis,* no *Story of My Heart.* Right through the early period of

[4] Edward Thomas, 'The Fiction of Richard Jefferies,' first published in *Readers' Review* (July 1908, vol.1, pp.83-5) and reprinted in the *Richard Jefferies Society Journal* No 4, p.17.
[5] Q.D. Leavis, 'Lives and Works of Richard Jefferies', *Scrutiny*, VI (March 1938), p.445.
[6] *ibid.*
[7] Walter Besant, *The Eulogy of Richard Jefferies* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1888), p.152.
[8] Besant, *ibid*.
[9] Thomas, *ibid.*
[10] Thomas, *Richard Jefferies: His Life and Work* [1909] (London: Faber and Faber, 1978), p.46.
[11] Thomas, p.47.

> Jefferies' life these two elements, the observing and informing, and the emotional and spiritual, remained side by side, usually distinct, but slowly gathering goodness from each other, until at last the boundary vanished in perfectly aesthetic expression.[12]

The Scarlet Shawl (1874) was the first novel Jefferies published but not the first he wrote (which was almost certainly 'Ben Tubbs Adventures'). His cousin Joseph Hall recalled him as 'a tall, slim youth of 20 or so, with long, light brown hair and intellectual, aquiline features' and a 'somewhat patronising' manner touting his Swindon relatives and acquaintances for a guinea subscription to a novel he had just finished called 'Disinterested Friendship'.[13] This was probably in June 1867.[14] The novel was never published and no trace of it remains. The next novel of which we hear, 'Only a Girl,' was offered to Tinsley in May 1872. Jefferies said its leading idea was 'the delineation of a girl entirely unconventional, entirely unfettered by precedent, and in sentiment always true to herself.'[15] The setting was in Wiltshire and the characters, though disguised, were drawn from life. Jefferies told Tinsley that he had

> worked in many of the traditions of Wilts endeavouring, in fact, in a humble manner to do for that county what Whyte Melville has done for Northampton and Miss Braddon for Yorkshire. [16]

Tinsley however rejected 'Only a Girl' which Jefferies then submitted to Longmans and then in February 1873 to Richard Bentley & Son, who rejected the manuscript, as Jefferies reported in a letter of 7 May probably to his Aunt Ellen. The letter is something of a *cri de coeur.*

> I have just had a great disappointment. After keeping the manuscript of my novel more than two months, Mr. [Bentley] has written to decline it. It really does seem like Sisyphus – just as one has rolled the stone close to the top of the hill, down it goes again, and all one's work has to be done over again. For some time after I began literary work I did not care in the least about a failure, because I had a perpetual spring of hope that the next would be more fortunate. But now, after eight years of almost continual failure, it is very hard indeed to make a fresh effort, because there is no hope to sustain one's expectations. Still, although I have lost hope entirely, I am more than ever *determined* to succeed, and shall never cease trying till I do.[17]

Jefferies was doing no more than state the truth. In May 1873 his career was at a low ebb and his situation fairly desperate. He had no regular employment, having that month quit the *Wilts and Gloucestershire Standard,* the Cirencester paper for which he worked as chief reporter and Swindon correspondent after leaving the *North Wilts Herald.* His departure from the *Standard* followed a dispute with the editor G. H. Harmer, probably over Jefferies' chronic unreliability and occasional act of high-handedness. He was engaged to Jessie Baden, the daughter of a neighbouring farmer, but had little hope of marrying her in his state of near penury. He was still living at home, on an encumbered farm foundering in a sea of debt, and relations with his parents were often strained. His father had once threatened to turn him out. Moreover Jefferies was plagued with chronic ill-health, subject to fainting fits and periods of weakness and prostration – the first symptoms of tuberculosis, although no-one realised it at the time. After eight years he had precious little to show for his efforts, apart from the sensational stories in the *Herald* and the laborious histories of Malmesbury, Swindon and Cirencester serialised there and in the *Wilts and Gloucestershire Standard.* His novels had all been rejected, as had his book 'Fortune: the Art of Success,' a primer on the art of making friends and influencing people, although Disraeli, to whom Jefferies sent an outline as the acknowledged master of the art of climbing the greasy pole, had replied with some words of polite encouragement, saying he thought the subject 'of the highest interest'.

Six months earlier Jefferies had scored his one undoubted success. On 14 November 1872 *The Times* published a long letter by him on the Wiltshire labourer. In May that year the first National Agricultural Labourers' Union had been formed with Joseph Arch as

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[12] Thomas, p.48.
[13] Joseph Hall, 'A Personal Reminiscence of Richard Jefferies,' *Country Life* (18 December 1909), vol.26, pp.870-1.
[14] Hugoe Matthews and Phyllis Treitel, *The Forward Life of Richard Jefferies: A Chronological Study* (Oxford: Petton Books, (1994), p.24.
[15] Quoted in Besant, p.154.
[16] Quoted in Besant, p.155.
[17] Quoted in Besant, pp.92-3.

president and in the following months the farm workers, particularly in the eastern and the low-paid southern counties, stepped up their pressure for higher wages and improved conditions. It was against this background of agitation and strikes that Jefferies' letter appeared in *The Times.* He painted an unflattering picture of the Wiltshire labourer and claimed that the union had made little or no impact upon a county where, as a whole, the farm-workers were well-paid and adequately housed. Though partisan and supportive of the farmer against the labourer, the letter was fluent, well-informed, and clearly and forcibly argued. It aroused much debate and controversy. *The Times* devoted a leader to it. There was editorial comment in the *Spectator* and *Pall Mall Gazette,* while the *Liverpool Mercury* ('Agriculture in Kid Gloves') attacked Jefferies for regarding the labourer

> much as a dandy-naturalist might approach an unclean animal... He puts on, as it were, his kid gloves, and eyes the creature at a distance through his eye-glass.

In answer to the ensuing correspondence Jefferies wrote two further letters. Support for his position came from Lord Shaftesbury, while 'The Son of a Wiltshire Labourer' was stung to reply to Jefferies' slur on the labouring class.

The following year on 15 October 1873 Jefferies had a fourth letter published in *The Times.* Entitled 'The Future of Farming' it was accompanied by an editorial which referred to the author as 'an eminent Agriculturalist'. In December an article under the same title (an expanded version of the arguments contained in *The Times* letter) was published in *Fraser's Magazine,* Jefferies' first to appear in a national periodical. He followed it up with others, contributing in all a dozen papers to *Fraser's.* In some, such as 'John Smith's Shanty', he used the quasi-fictional form he was to employ so successfully in several chapters of *Hodge and His Masters* (e.g. 'A Bicycle Farmer' and 'A Modern Country Curate') and later essays like 'One of the New Voters'. Not all the articles in *Fraser's* discussed farming topics. Two proposed measures to prevent railway accidents, while in 'The Story of Swindon' (1875) Jefferies gave a graphic account of a visit to the GWR works together with a shrewd assessment of their effect on traditional patterns of rural employment. His connection with *Fraser's* lasted until 1878. William Allingham, who edited the magazine from June 1874, later wrote that his articles for *Fraser's* were 'as good as anything he afterwards wrote but no one took any notice'.[18]

The promising vein opened up by the success of *The Times* letters kept Jefferies busy as an agricultural journalist during the middle years of the 1870s but fiction remained the main focus of his endeavours. The second half of 1873 saw some improvement in his position. In June his *Reporting; Editing & Authorship* handbook of practical advice for the beginner was published by John Snow. In August Jefferies privately published his *Memoir of the Goddards of North Wilts.* A. L. Goddard was the chief landowner of Swindon, Lord of the Manor, MP for North Wilts, J.P., Deputy Lieutenant of the county, Chairman of the Bench of Justices, and Major in the North Wilts Yeomanry. His seat was The Lawn in Old Swindon, the house now demolished like the mill once owned by Jefferies' grandfather and great-grandfather and most of the adjacent church of Holy Rood, of which but the chancel and six pillars and two arches of the nave arcades remain. In Jefferies' day the Goddards still wielded more than a vestige of their former feudal power, silent and unseen. Another, senior, branch of the family was ensconced in the picturesque village of Clyffe Pypard, where church, rectory, manor-house and pond lie nestled beneath a thickly-wooded westward-facing scarp of the Marlborough Downs. H. N. Goddard was vicar. His nephew E. H. Goddard succeeded to the living which he held for 52 years. He was one of those scholarly divines with an interest in the natural history and antiquities of his parish of which Gilbert White was the exemplar. Educated at Winchester and Oxford, he kept a nature diary of interest, compiled the still valuable *Wiltshire Bibliography* (1929), and was secretary and librarian of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society whose magazine he edited between 1890 and 1942. The architectural historian Sir Nikolaus

[18] William Allingham, *A Diary*, edited by H. Allingham and D. Radford (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1907), p.370. The full entry reads:

> Richard Jefferies (August [1887]) – I never saw him, but had much correspondence with him (then quite unknown) when I edited *Fraser*. I put in various pieces of his, as good as anything he afterwards wrote, but no one took any notice; save indeed that Barbara L. S. B. [Allingham's friend Madame Bodichon] was struck with the truth of his picture or photograph of women in the farming classes ['Field-Faring Women'].

Pevsner and his wife Lola are buried in Clyffe Pypard churchyard, where the gate bears their initials on brass plates.[19]

In September 1873 Jefferies read a paper on the antiquities of Swindon to the Wiltshire Archaeological Society, which was later reprinted in their magazine.[20] Among the notables in the audience was A. L. Goddard, and Jefferies ended what Thomas called 'a lifeless and disjointed lecture' with 'another facile piece of Goddardism'[21] – a piece of Tory flag-waving on Goddard's behalf for what Jefferies deemed an imminent election. In October *Jack Brass, Emperor of England,* a pamphlet of jaunty political satire, was published by T. Pettitt & Co.

In February 1874 Jefferies submitted the manuscript of *The Scarlet Shawl* to William Tinsley. In his report the firm's reader described it as

> a remarkable and original book. It is unlike almost all novels ever written, – studies of character and incident without dialogue. The more intellectual few will admire it, but it is not likely to become popular.[22]

Tinsley requested £60 towards the cost of publication to safeguard himself against loss. Jefferies objected to the amount proposed, saying:

> I mean to become a name sooner or later. I shall stick to the first publisher who takes me up; and, unless I am very much mistaken, we shall make money. To write a tale is to me as easy as to write a letter, and I do not see why I should not issue two a year for the next twelve or fifteen years. I can hardly see the possible loss from a novel.[23]

Bound in red cloth, the novel was published in one volume by Tinsley Bros on 16 July 1874. It bore a fulsome dedication to Ellen Harrild and Jefferies' bibliographers reasonably suggest that she may have put up the £60.[24] Among the titles listed at the back among Tinsley's cheap two-shilling editions was '*Under the Greenwood Tree.* A Rural Painting of the Dutch School by the author of "Desperate Remedies" etc.' – i.e. Thomas Hardy whose first three novels *Desperate Remedies* (1871), *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872) and *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1873) were published by Tinsley just like Jefferies'. The choice of Tinsley by both writers at the outset of their careers was significant.

The sons of a Hertfordshire gamekeeper, William and Edward Tinsley had a reputation among their professional colleagues for being somewhat vulgar and pushy: they did not conform to the image of the gentleman publisher. They had made their fortune with the publication in 1862 of *Lady Audley's Secret* by M. E. Braddon, a story of bigamy and murder which became a runaway best-seller and is now regarded as the prototype of the Victorian 'sensation' novel. The Tinsleys paid £250 for the copyright and made so much money from the novel that Edward built himself a house at Putney which he called Audley Lodge. Another good investment was Ouida for whose début novel *Held in Bondage* they paid £80 in 1863. In their heyday Tinsley Bros published most of the big guns of the circulating libraries: Miss Braddon, Ouida, Sheridan Le Fanu, Walter Besant and James Rice, W. H. Ainsworth, Mrs. Henry Wood, Edmund Yates, Jean Ingelow, Mrs. Oliphant, Wilkie Collins *et al.* – the Jeffrey Archers, Catherine Cooksons, Frederick Forsyths and Stephen Kings of the day. By 1867 the firm had an impressive backlist which it reprinted in cheap yellowback editions for the railway reader. Fiction was Tinsleys' forte and the firm had a reputation as publishers of highly commercial novels on the light and sensational side.[25]

Throughout his life William Tinsley retained his country accent and imperfect grammar (he had been educated at the local dame's school). Hardy once told him he was an architect

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[19] On Pevsner and Clyffe Pypard see Ken Watts, *Exploring Historic Wiltshire*, vol. I: North (Bradford on Avon: Ex Libris Press, 1997), pp.104-5.

[20] On Jefferies as local historian, with particular reference to his relations with the Wiltshire Archaeological Society, see John Chandler, 'An Uncomfortable Antiquary: Richard Jefferies and Victorian Local History,' *Richard Jefferies Society Journal* No 5, pp.14-24.

[21] Thomas, p.70.

[22] The report is reproduced in Miller and Matthews, p.94.

[23] Letter quoted in Besant, pp.155-6.

[24] Miller and Matthews, p.92.

[25] The information on Tinsley Brothers is taken from the article by John Sutherland in the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, vol. 106, *British Literary Publishing Houses, 1820-1880*, edited by Patricia J. Anderson and Jonathan Rose (Detroit and London: Gale Research International Ltd., 1991), pp.299-303.

by profession and received the reply, 'Damned if that isn't what I thought you wos!'[26] George Moore recalled William Tinsley coming into the Gaiety bar, his favourite watering-hole, carrying a bag 'containing fish for the family and a manuscript novel'.[27] Both brothers had a reputation for conviviality and consorted with journalists in the Strand and Fleet Street pubs near their offices in Catherine Street. All their energy went into commissioning. There was no editorial department. It was routine for novelists to send their manuscripts straight to the printer without the publisher seeing them. Moore described the Tinsley office as a permanent shambles:

> There was a long counter, and the way to be published by Mr. Tinsley was to straddle on the counter and play with a black cat.[28]

Most of the office work was done by an Irishman behind the counter,

> who for three pounds a week edited the magazine, read the manuscripts, looked after the printer and binder, kept the accounts and entertained the visitors.[29]

Tinsley's profited from the spending war conducted by the circulating libraries in the first half of the 1860s. After the death in 1866 of Edward, the abler of the two brothers, the firm's lustre began to fade. They lost many of their star authors to other publishers; *Tinsley's Magazine,* modelled on the *Cornhill,* proved a failure; and in 1878 the firm went bankrupt with losses of £33,000. Hardy described William Tinsley as 'shrewd' in his dealings with young authors but Moore, who knew him only late in life, ascribed his downfall to his want of business acumen:

> he conducted his business as he dressed himself, sloppily; a dear kind soul, quite witless and quite *h*-less. From long habit he would make a feeble attempt to drive a bargain, but was duped generally.[30]

This then was the publisher of Jefferies' début novel. Jefferies harboured no illusions. He wanted first to be published, then to make money. Fiction he regarded as the most likely road to success, the most promising bolt-hole from his state of chronic penury. He saw his novel as an investment and was prepared to pay to have it published. Although Tinsley's star had waned over the past decade, he was exactly the sort of no-nonsense commercial publisher whom Jefferies (who had a shrewd eye for the realities of the market-place for all his reputation as a lanky dreamer) thought could best sell his novel. Jefferies regarded fiction as a trade, as did Hardy, who on 18 February 1918 told Edmund Gosse, 'For the relief of my necessities, as the Prayer Book puts it, I began writing novels and made a sort of trade of it.'[31] *The Scarlet Shawl* then was a pot-boiler, and Jefferies frankly regarded it as such. But being by Jefferies, it also became something a little more.

In his *Reporting; Editing & Authorship* handbook[32] the previous year Jefferies had mentioned four Tinsley authors – Miss Braddon, Wilkie Collins, Ouida and Mrs Wood. He noted that each publisher had his speciality, 'a name for a certain class of publications'[33], and advised the neophyte 'to ascertain what publisher issues a class of works similar to his, in general style'. If all else failed, the aspirant should be prepared to publish 'wholly, or partly' at his own expense. Jefferies claimed it was almost impossible for the unknown author, unless he had 'a most extraordinary genius', to get a work published otherwise.

> As a rule it is preferable to at once resolve to incur a certain amount of expenditure than to spend years in a fruitless and disheartening attempt to dispose of manuscripts.[34]

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[26] Florence Hardy, *The Early Life of Thomas Hardy, 1840-1891* [1928], (London: Studio Editions Ltd., 1994), p.116.
[27] George Moore, *Confessions of a Young Man* [1888] (Leipzig: Berhard Tauchnitz, 1905), p.257.
[28] *ibid.*
[29] *ibid.*
[30] *ibid.*
[31] *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, edited by Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate (7 vols., Oxford, 1978-88), vol. V, p.253.
[32] Sub-titled 'Practical Hints for Beginners in Literature' it was published at the author's expense in 1873 by John Snow & Co. It was reprinted in two parts in the *Richard Jefferies Society Journal*, Nos 2 and 3.
[33] *Richard Jefferies Society Journal*, No 3, p.5.
[34] *ibid*., pp.5-6.

Jefferies was speaking from bitter experience of years of rejection letters. So in paying Tinsley his entrance-money, so to speak, he was only practising what he preached. Besant thought he was misguided but this was precisely what Jefferies lacked at this time – someone to advise him, a mentor such as Hardy found in Leslie Stephen (his career took off with the serialisation of *Far From the Madding Crowd* in the *Cornhill* edited by Stephen, with whom Hardy formed a close working relationship) and such as Jefferies later found in Frederick Greenwood, editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette,* and the publisher C. J. Longman. And his reasoning was logical enough. He had realised the Catch 22 of the unknown author. One needs a name in order to be published, and to be published to make one's name.

> In literature a name is everything. The public will read any commonplace clap-trap if only a well-known name be attached to it. Hence any amount of expenditure is justified with this object. It is better at once to realise the fact, however unpleasant it may be to the taste, and instead of trying to win the good-will of the public by laborious work, treat literature as a trade, which, like other trades, requires an immense amount of advertising.[35]

Ironically Jefferies published the book which made his reputation – *The Gamekeeper at Home* (1878) – anonymously. Thereafter he became known as 'the author of *The Gamekeeper at Home'*. The Tinsley novels, by contrast, were published under his name.

Some other remarks in the *Reporting; Editing & Authorship* manual are relevant. Jefferies advised the beginner:

> to study the existing taste, and so cast the story that it may suit the fashion of the day: for a fashion there is in novels as in everything else. Nothing more plainly demonstrates this than the fact that an author no sooner attains a celebrity in a work than ten other writers issue books which are weak dilutions of the same thing.[36]

Among the examples he cited was Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White*, after which 'there came out a host of women in various colours. And all of these seemed to be read.' The title of *The Scarlet Shawl* clearly nodded in the direction of Collins's bestseller. Again, he noted Miss Braddon's genius for catching 'the indescribable *tone* of the hour, the taste of the public' and observed 'at this day that taste is leaving the natural, and fast drifting towards the artificial, and the ultra extraordinary both in sentiment and incident'.[37] He went on:

> For this the public has a strong plea. All the plain sentiments of love, all the ordinary plots, are familiar to the veriest schoolgirl now, in this period of cheap literature. Something fresh is wanted... after the railway rattle and dust of life, it is an inexpressible relief to many minds to peruse a novel which amuses them, with something original, startling, out of the common in its action, deed, and thought. We know so much now, we are so used up, we need something new. This then must be the tone of an author's works who wishes for success.[38]

If this was true in Jefferies' day, it has become even truer of our own time. There is much evidence of his striving after the *outré* 'both in sentiment and incident' in the Tinsley triptych (the chapter on the colour scarlet and the cliff-hanger ending in *The Scarlet Shawl;* Georgiana's trial marriage, Carlotta's transvestism, and the episode of the cobra in *Restless Human Hearts*; the labyrinthine convolutions of the Baskette claim case, the sensational announcement of Jason Waldron's murder, and Marese's infernal machine in *World's End*).

Of course this did him no good. 'Something fresh is wanted.' It was when Jefferies wrote something fresh and natural (as opposed to artificial and faintly decadent), when he opened his readers' eyes to the richness and beauty of the world immediately about them, the common sights and sounds of nature, and instead of writing about wicked lords and pantherine *femmes fatales* depicted the life of quiet country people, that he achieved success. But Jefferies was not to find himself for a few years yet and the writing of the Tinsley novels was a crucial stage on that voyage of self-discovery as Edward Thomas, another writer who took a long time to find himself and went through a similarly 'decadent' period, had the sagacity to realise. Indeed the writing of the Jefferies biography was an

[35] *ibid.,* p.6.
[36] *ibid*., p.4.
[37] *ibid*.
[38] *ibid*., pp.4-5.

important stage on Thomas's journey of discovery of himself as a poet and seer, for it was as a poet that he finally saw Jefferies.

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The Scarlet Shawl was published on 16 July 1874, eight days after Jefferies' marriage to Jessie Baden at Chiseldon Church. The reviews ranged from the lukewarm through the sarcastic to the sniffily dismissive. They could have been worse. The *Graphic* thought the novel 'by no means dull, or without some power in character-drawing' but found it in places 'slightly – perhaps more than slightly – vulgar'. The *Examiner* enjoyed an easy laugh over the wording of Jefferies' dedication. According to the *Westminster Review* Jefferies showed a power of describing character; some of his touches were 'very happy'; but 'all is surface'. The only distinctly hostile review came in the *Athenaeum*, which found the story slight, the protagonists uninteresting, and the subsidiary characters commonplace. The *Globe* made the novel the occasion for some unkind remarks about contemporary fiction generally.

The Scarlet Shawl was priced 10/6 and the print run probably 500.[39] The novel was a commercial as well as a critical failure. Jefferies' bibliographers state

> It is apparent from the number of variants and secondary versions that Tinsley had some difficulty in disposing of the stock of the first edition, and part of it was probably remaindered.[40]

Nevertheless in 1877 Tinsley issued a second impression of 5000 copies – a yellowback edition with pictorial cover priced 1/- for the railway reader.[41] And as a yellowback – the Victorian equivalent of a pulp fiction – the novel seems to have found its niche.

The reviewers were more lenient than later critics who wrote with the benefit of hindsight regarding Jefferies' subsequent development and by whom the novel was almost universally vilified. 'A worthless book' (Besant)[42]; 'a book which surely sounds the lowest depths of dullness and inanity' (Salt)[43]. Even the usually sympathetic Edward Thomas was hard-pressed to find a good word for *The Scarlet Shawl* which he thought 'remote from the real Jefferies' and called 'this most vulnerable book'.[44] Q. D. Leavis considered the Tinsley novels 'negligible'.[45] In his critical study W. J. Keith made a number of pertinent general observations but did not discuss the early novels in any detail. He classed them as juvenilia; thought they were no worse and possibly better than the majority of Victorian novels; and said they contained nothing of interest that was not presented 'more subtly and more clearly in the later work'. Keith made the fair point that

> when the early novels are read today (which is seldom) it is because of Jefferies' authorship rather than for any intrinsic interest in the books themselves.[46]

Their chief weakness was 'the imperfect relation between characters and plot'.[47] To my knowledge, apart from the chapter in Thomas the only at all detailed discussion of the Tinsley novels is that contained in the excellent chapter on Jefferies in Roger Ebbatson's *Lawrence and the Nature Tradition 1859-1914.*[48]

It would be absurd to claim *The Scarlet Shawl* is a good novel or even a particularly interesting specimen of a bad one, let alone a neglected masterpiece. Its faults are too glaring. But it does have its moments, particularly in the second half, and though the slightest of the trio is at least short by comparison with the three-decker *Restless Human Hearts* and *World's End* which followed.

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[39] Miller and Matthews, p.97.
[40] *ibid*., p.93.
[41] *ibid*., pp.99-101.
[42] Besant, p.149.
[43] H. S. Salt, *Richard Jefferies: His Life and His Ideals* [1894] (London: Arthur C. Fifield, 1905), p.12.
[44] Thomas, p.87.
[45] Q. D. Leavis, p.444.
[46] W. J. Keith, *Richard Jefferies, A Critical Study* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965; London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p.123.
[47] *ibid.*
[48] Roger Ebbatson, *Lawrence and the Nature Tradition: A Theme in English Fiction 1859-1914* (Brighton: The Harvester Press Ltd., 1980), pp.138-143. The chapter on Jefferies: pp.127-164.

The story is a trivial blend of romance and morality tale. An aura of unreality surrounds the whole thing, particularly in the opening chapters where Jefferies' clumsy handling of basic fictional technique is most apparent. Neither protagonist has much substance. Nora is a beautiful but bad-tempered flirt who gets her comeuppance when she is pressured into becoming engaged to a man she does not love; Percival a conceited jackass who believes he has a mission to become a new religious teacher of mankind and whose head is turned by a coquette. The minor characters are even more shadowy and stereotyped. Aunt Milly is the pious old maid and interfering matchmaker; Herbert Spencer the coarse ageing *roué*, 'bloated and blotched'; Gerard Wootton the vain, cynical, scheming old beau; Master George the chivalrous loyal friend and devoted admirer; Sir Theodore the refined, charming, icily immaculate politician. Even Pauline Vietri, the siren with the naughty Italian name (which like Carlotta's in *Restless Human Hearts* Thomas thought reflected Jefferies' early reading of Swinburne's *Poems and Ballads*)[49], never comes alive. She is described almost entirely in similes which, as Thomas complained of Swinburne's, 'are carried so far that the matter of the simile is more important in the total than what it appeared to intensify'[50] – in other words, the illustration becomes more important than the thing illustrated. Thus Pauline is compared to one of those rare summers which come 'once or twice in a cycle of years', when the sky remains blue from May to October,

> but, like those years too in this, their beauty withers up all that approach it, drying up the streams of pure emotion, starving the heart with unreal, intangible hopes (p.40-1)[51]

and to a succulent pear growing on the south wall of a garden, fair to the eye but rotten within, 'a pear of the Dead Sea'.

However what we retain from such luxuriant comparisons is not any clear picture of Pauline herself, but the image of the pitiless blue sky (which will recur in Chapter 2 of *Wild Life in a Southern County*), and the beautiful but rotting pear. Similarly in Chapter XI Jefferies, dilating on the mysterious fascination of the colour scarlet, evokes Tyre, Zidon, and the Great Whore of Babylon, and traces Pauline's descent from a long line of scarlet women through history, suggesting that priestesses dedicated to the service of the pagan gods still emerge at dusk in the London streets:

> And here at any time of the night, but chiefly when the evening falls, and the roseate hues of sunset are still lingering in the sky, while the crescent moon rises and mingles her pale light with the last rays of the sun – here stalk abroad figures of women clad in scarlet... dedicated to the service of Baal and Astarte. (p.26)

All this is very well, if somewhat flowery and *fin-de-siècle,* but doesn't help us see Pauline clearly as an individual, only as a vague incarnation of the Scarlet Woman. And Jefferies rather vitiates his effect by wanting to have his cake and eat it. On the one hand Pauline is presented as a *femme fatale*, exemplar of the destructive Eternal Feminine, who counts married men among her admirers ('*That* never speaks well for any feminine individual'), on the other she is 'scrupulously moral' (p.92) and 'unstained – pure' (p.123). Presumably Jefferies felt constrained by the fear that the reviewers would take him to task if he emphasised Pauline's immorality too strongly (the *Graphic* in fact complained of the 'fastness' of the heroine Nora) and the novel not sell as a result.

Nor are the characters placed in any context; they have no background and the novel is curiously (in view of Jefferies' later development) lacking in any sense of place. None of the chief locations, St. Leonards, London or Brussels (which Jefferies visited in 1870), is realised with any particularity. The action takes place in a kind of vacuum. For the most part, the characters are observed purely externally and never begin to live from within, to acquire an autonomous life independent of their creator. Or, in the case of Percival, they too transparently act as the mouthpiece for the author's ideas and aspirations. Jefferies cannot make the characters reveal themselves through dialogue or action: he can only tell us what they are thinking or feeling, saying or doing. They remain largely static, and the reader

[49] Thomas, p.85.
[50] Edward Thomas, *Algernon Charles Swinburne, A Critical Study* (London: Martin Secker, 1912), p.90.
[51] Page numbers in brackets refer to this Petton Books edition.

finds it difficult to identify or empathise with them. He remains acutely conscious that he is reading a novel. There is no willing suspension of disbelief.

Equally serious is the failure in tone. In a novel whose theme (if it can be said to possess one) is the primacy of the true, natural, vital feeling self, largely instinctive and unconscious, over the false self demanded by social convention, it is disconcerting to find Jefferies writing with such a degree of self-consciousness and artificiality, in the early chapters at least, where he aims at a light, ironic, amusing touch but comes across as jaunty, spry, often insufferably complacent. What he says of Percival might apply to his creator: 'He never could screw himself down quietly into kid-gloves and dress-coats.' (p.2) It soon becomes apparent that Jefferies is uncomfortable in his rôle of society novelist. The authorial persona does not ring true. Jefferies adopts what he thinks is the voice of the leisured classes ('up at Rye', 'a bore', 'the apotheosis of puppyism') but succeeds only in sounding arch and affected. He would have us believe he is the sophisticated man-about-town, slightly blasé and world-weary. The early chapters are peppered with foreign words and phrases *(la haute venerie, dolce far niente, posé, distingué, distrait, canaille)* and abound in cynical maxims about women. 'A true woman is always slow to trust her own sex.' (p.32) 'It is a singular fact in physiology that if a woman is neither very beautiful nor very attractive, nor in any way likely to get married herself, she is pretty sure to dote on her brother.' (p.55) 'The flattery of a handsome woman is never so dangerous as when she is older than the man.' (p.79) 'There is always a spice of the milliner in a woman's nature.' (p.73) These are the sort of clever-sounding but hollow apothegms the aspirant complacently enters in his notebook. Sometimes the writing descends into banality: 'But the finest finesse in the human game at whist is continually defeated by the run of the cards.' (p.26) For all the determined show of worldliness one is struck by the naïveté and gaucheness unwittingly revealed by the author.

In this respect it is instructive to compare *The Scarlet Shawl* with Thomas Hardy's equivalent début novel *Desperate Remedies,* which was also published by Tinsley (three vols, 1871); also an attempt at a commercial fiction by an ambitious and impoverished young writer with his roots in the country; also a first novel whose publication was subsidised by the author (Hardy contributed £75, which, to Tinsley's surprise, he handed over in person in Bank of England notes[52]). *Desperate Remedies* is far from flawless; after the rejection of *The Poor Man and the Lady,* Hardy, taking George Meredith's advice, went for a more complicated plot and rather overdid the Gothic and sensation-novel elements, particularly in the second half, where he seemed to be trying to outdo Harrison Ainsworth and Wilkie Collins. But the impartial reader cannot but be impressed how much more mature and technically sophisticated Hardy's début is. Not only is the craftsmanship superior but the characterisation richer, the story more gripping, the setting and social context more firmly realised, the exploration of feminine psychology more profound. Hardy provides an intricate story which for all its inherent implausibilities is meticulously worked out, as Macmillan's reader John Morley was forced to acknowledge, 'the plot being complex and absolutely impossible, yet it is worked out with elaborate seriousness and consistency'.[53] Hardy put his local and professional knowledge to effective use in the Dorsetshire setting, in the masterly description of Knapwater House, in the delightful cider-pressing episode which drew praise from the reviewers, in the account of the fire which destroys the Three Tranters Inn, in the amusing 'below-stairs' scene in the kitchen, in a variety of small touches such as the details of the country postman's round and the clue to the fugitive Aeneas Manston's progress furnished his pursuers by a shepherd:

> He said that wherever a clear space three or four yards wide ran in a line through a flock of sheep lying about a ewe-lease, it was a proof that somebody had passed there not more than half-an-hour earlier. At twelve o'clock that day he had noticed such a feature in his flock.[54]

In short Hardy was writing out of what he knew and the Grand Guignol melodrama at the end cannot obscure the solid observation and unaffected naturalism of the best scenes. *The*

[52] Florence Hardy, p.110.

[53] Charles Morgan, *The House of Macmillan (1843-1943)* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1943), pp.93-4.

[54] Thomas Hardy, *Desperate Remedies* (London: Tinsley Bros, 1871), vol. III, p.212.

Scarlet Shawl, by contrast, is not rooted in the author's experience but in some never-never land visited only by purveyors of novelettish fiction.

Did Jefferies read *Desperate Remedies,* by the way? The plight of Cytherea and Nora is remarkably similar: after a contretemps with their lovers, both become engaged to men for whom they feel a mingled attraction and repulsion but whom in their heart of hearts they do not love. Both women are described as sinking into apathy and inertia, as passive victims being led to the matrimonial altar, as drifting like rudderless boats. Manston plays the organ to Cytherea in the mouldering old manor-house while a thunderstorm rages outside: Wootton teaches Nora to play the organ in a back-room of Aunt Milly's immense mansion (no Freudian interpretations there, I hope). Edward Springrove takes an unchaperoned Cytherea rowing round Budmouth Bay: Spencer takes Nora sailing in a regatta at St. Leonards. Such parallels should not be pressed, they are doubtless coincidental, but even in their faults Hardy and Jefferies have something in common. Jefferies' social insecurity, manifest in his penchant for French *mots* and what Thomas called 'a flimsy cynicism and assumption of worldliness'[55], has its equivalent in Hardy's ponderous quotations from Virgil and strained artistic allusions, born of the exhibitionism of the provincial autodidact sensitive to his lack of formal education and over-compensating as a result. When Manston looked into the rainwater-butt, 'the reflection from the smooth stagnant surface tinged his face with the greenish shades of Correggio's nudes'[56].

But if Jefferies perchance did read Hardy he should have learned from him and finally it is the differences rather than the similarities which stand out. In *Desperate Remedies* one is impressed by the rapidity of the action: we are taken a considerable distance in the space of a few chapters. Even at this early stage in his career Hardy shows himself a master of narrative suspense: we become involved with his characters and want to know what happens to them. We are soon hooked, and the pages keep spinning. The scene where Cytherea's architect father plunges to his death from the church spire is worthy of Hitchcock. Jefferies' plot is threadbare and he gets into difficulties over the simplest act of stage-management, with letters constantly winging their way between the estranged Percival and Nora, and the unlikely chapter of accidents to ensure the cliff-hanger end, culminating in the nifty ruse by which Master George postpones the wedding, as if none of the characters apart from Sir Theodore – vicar, bridesmaids, *et al* – possessed a watch showing the correct time. At this point one begins to ask if Jefferies is not writing tongue-in-cheek, sending the novel up by the palpable absurdity of his inventions. But it is more likely, one feels, to be the result of boredom, carelessness and indifference. He just wants to get the thing over. A similar sense of fatigue is evident at the close of *Restless Human Hearts* and *World's End.*

Is there then nothing to be said in favour of *The Scarlet Shawl?* Is it as hopelessly inept as Besant and Salt have claimed? Ought we to draw a discreet veil over it and hurry on to discuss the work of Jefferies' maturity? Perhaps a few points can be made in its defence. Firstly it is what it was intended to be, a pot-boiler tailored to suit Tinsley's list. With hindsight it is easy to criticise Jefferies for aping fashion but it is unfair to berate him for doing what he did not set out to do. He may have been false to himself when he wrote *The Scarlet Shawl* but he had not yet discovered that self and the novel (which is all about just that, an adventure in consciousness leading to the finding of the true self) was an important and necessary stage on that tortuous path to self-knowledge, as Edward Thomas had the sense to realise.

And the novel is by no means a total disaster. It gathers strength as it proceeds and Jefferies shakes off the awkward self-consciousness that mars the early chapters, and his personality begins to dominate. There are several passages of power and beauty, even if they are not always properly integrated into the story and merely sound themes explored more fully in the later work, as W. J. Keith observed.[57] For example, the glowing description of the sunrise, which comes literally out of the blue, as Percival, after a night tramping the streets, kicks his heels on London Bridge while waiting for the first train to take him to the country:

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[55] Thomas, p.87.

[56] Hardy, *op.cit*., vol. II, p.163.

[57] W. J. Keith, p.123: 'The early novels… contain nothing of interest that is not presented more subtly and more clearly in the later work.'

> The sky overhead was of a rich azure colour, faintly tinged with purple – the hue that is only seen a short space before the sun appears. Down the old river seawards there was a flush, and the turrets of the Tower had a glow upon them, though the great ball of light was not yet visible to him. A cock crew somewhere – probably in some back court. Instinctively Percival paused and gazed over the parapet. He forgot himself for a moment. The grandeur of the mighty city, silent, and yet awaking round him – the very sternness and practical look of the buildings, impressing the mind with a sense of subdued power – drew back the littleness of his soul out of sight for an instant or two.
>
> His eyes fastened on the horizon drank in the glorious dawn of the light, as the glowing sun revealed itself – a visible archangel. The azure sky, the roseate clouds, the glittering water, filled him with a sense of a higher life. If he could only drink in this beauty always he should be immortal. Alas! it was only for a moment. There was the shriek of an engine and the tramp of a policeman. Percival returned to himself, and turned to go, shrugging his shoulders instinctively. (p.83-4)

The faint echo of Wordsworth's Westminster Bridge sonnet should not blind us to the truth and beauty of the passage, which has the romantic, almost religious intensity of a landscape by Caspar David Friedrich and foreshadows similarly exalted descriptions of the dawn sky in *Greene Ferne Farm, Bevis* and *The Story of My Heart.* In Chapter XIV there is another heightened passage on the theme of the god-like potential of man, contrasted with the narrowness of the circle of ideas in which we habitually move, 'circumscribed by absurd prejudices and acquired habits' (p.109), which will become a major theme of the autobiography.

But the best parts of the novel are the passages describing Nora's gradual subjection to the icily immaculate Sir Theodore, who was 'endlessly engaged in stroking her down as a man would stroke a cat' (p.110); her sinking into a torpor akin to a living death; and her awakening to her true feelings one night of full moon and spring tide when the sound of the surf enters her bedroom. Suddenly the book becomes alive, begins to roll. Here Jefferies displays his mastery of the chronicle or *récit* to provide a sensitive and beautifully modulated record of Nora's feelings. The fluid yet grave cadences of the prose, the easy play of emotion, the detached yet compassionate viewpoint, remind one of D. H. Lawrence. It is done entirely by narrative; there is no dialogue. Feminists will relish the irony of Nora's situation. When she sinks into apathy and inertia, everyone thinks her much improved. Sir Theodore, previously worried by her natural wildness, is relieved. Nora 'so gentle, so ladylike, so unselfish' now conforms to his ideal of womanhood:

> So quiet and gentle, so lady-like and subdued! In good truth, it was sheer apathy. Nora had no life left in her, no animation. Everything was so monotonous. Sir Theodore with his talent, his criticism, his severe eye, his refined ways, and delicate subtle touches, had driven her into a narrow circle. He had circumscribed her – tied her as it were to a stake – and told her to go round and round, and feed on that one ring of grass for ever, never daring even to lift her glance to the rolling prairies of freedom afar off. And she felt no desire to break through. There was the secret. These threads that bound her would have snapped like cobwebs had there been a will upon her part. But there was none. It was like sitting by a fire continuously, till the brain grew drowsy, and the limbs helplessly idle, and the breath feeble, and the heart slow in its action, till all thought even of starting up and rushing out into the keen frosty air was gone. (p.105)

Sir Theodore himself, though largely a negative presence, is the novel's best-drawn character and foreshadows the life-denying Godwin in *The Dewy Morn:*

> There was an exactness in Sir Theodore before, now there was precision in everything he did. His letters were folded to a hair's-breadth; the stamp upon the envelope was in its proper place, with the head of the Queen upright; the address was clear, minute to a fault. In the very motions of his body there was a precision. The gesture of his hand went thus far, and no farther; his step was measured, his attitudes more decided. Insensibly the increased importance and confidence of the man filtered down into the minutest actions of daily life. Nothing was trivial to him. (p.106)

Though the novel overall must be counted a failure, odd images obstinately stick in the memory, where they glow with lustrous rainbow hues, that dream-like luminosity which is the hallmark of Jefferies' prose at its best and sets him, in this respect at least, among the symbolist poets and painters – the white of the snowdrop; the two milk-white horses drawing Pauline's carriage in Hyde Park; the moonlit surf Nora hears in her bedroom at

night; the scarlet and royal Tyrian purple; the azure of the dawn over London Bridge and of the endless summer sky that is blue from May to October; the intense blue of the May morning as Nora sets off tight-lipped to church with her deaf, doddering uncle. Nor is the book lacking in examples of Jefferies' ironic humour: the jaded, cynical, weltschmerzy Wootton in the midst of his ennui idly picking up the Bible in Aunt Milly's library ('it attracted him as something so entirely novel') and finding the caricature of himself sans wig, false teeth and make-up drawn by Sir Theodore, left and forgotten there by Nora. The novel also has biographical value and interest. Percival's experiences in London whose hurrying crowds inspire thoughts of the Anima Mundi or World Soul as he feels himself 'carried... onwards as if upon a stream of magnetic ether' (p.34), his Brussels trip, his thoughts about marriage and religion and general world-view, reflect those of his creator and it is remarkable how much of the full-fledged Jefferies the novel contains in embryo. Percival speaks for Jefferies and offers a shadowy prospectus of *The Story of My Heart* when he refers to:

> The unconscious cerebration which had been going on in his mind, excited by the perception of the glories and beauties of nature – of the stars, the sea, the flowers, of art – which perception in him was peculiarly acute... He could no more have written down that stream of unconscious thought than he could have turned sensation itself into material shape; but he conceived the idea of doing so.' (p.137)

Finally, we may note the important role played by the sea which acts as a *leitmotif,* a symbol of the unconscious emotions, and the countervailing mood of pre-Raphaelite languor which pervades much of the novel. As Thomas observed, 'his characters are persons with much leisure for passions'[58], and both Percival and Nora seem locked in a struggle between the life and death instincts, with the former winning out in the end. There is a similar tension in the writing and one feels that Jefferies matures as the book progresses. Significantly the awakening of both Nora and Percival comes through nature (the sunrise, the snowdrop, the sea). Nature will prove the means by which Jefferies realises his true self also.

Andrew Rossabi
25 July 2009

[58] Thomas, p.85.