

EDWARD
BURNE-JONES

*THE HEART OF
THE ROSE*

AGNEWS

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6 St James's Place · London SW1A 1NP
Telephone +44 (0)20 7491 9219

ANTHONY CRICHTON-STUART
ANNA CUNNINGHAM

*For further information please contact
anna.cunningham@agnewsgallery.com*

www.agnewsgallery.com

Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones Bt ARA RWS

BIRMINGHAM 1833–1898 LONDON

The Heart of the Rose

Signed with initials
and dated 1889
Oil on canvas
38 × 51½ in. (96.5 × 131 cm)

PROVENANCE

William Connal, 23 Berkeley Square, by 1898 (probably bought from the artist).
His sale, Christie's, London, 14 March 1908, lot 35 (£525 to Sampson).
Prince Ranjitsinhji Vibhaji, Maharaja Jam Sahib of Nawanagar, and by descent to the Maharajah of Jamnagar, until 1980.
Anonymous sale, Sotheby's, Belgravia, 9 April 1980, lot 61.
With Roy Miles, London.
Private Collection, Ireland, until 1993.
With Peter Nahum at The Leicester Galleries, London.
Private Collection, USA.

LITERATURE:

F. Khnopff, 'In Memoriam: Tribute from Belgium', *Magazine of Art*, London 1898, p.522.
M. Bell, *Sir Edward Burne-Jones*, London, 1895, p.58 (illustrated facing p.58).
R. Howard Russell, *Pictures of*

Romance and Wonder, New York, 1902, reproduced with related poetic text.
F. de Lisle, *Burne-Jones*, London 1904, pp. 114–16.

EXHIBITED

Liverpool, Walker Art Gallery, *Autumn Exhibition of Modern Pictures*, 1893, no.251.
London, New Gallery, 1893, no.66.
London, Peter Nahum, *Burne-Jones: A Quest for Love*, 1993, no.38.
Takamatsu, Musée Municipal des Beaux-Arts de Takamatsu; Tokyo, Musée des Beaux-Arts Bunkamura; Himeji, Musée Municipal d'Art de Himeji, *Symbolisme en Europe*, November 1996–March 1997, no.47.
New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Edward Burne-Jones, Victorian Artist-Dreamer*, June–September 1998 (ex-catalogue).
London, Peter Nahum at The Leicester Galleries, *Pre-Raphaelite. Symbolist. Visionary*, May–July 2002, no.18.
Madrid, Fundación Juan March, *La Isla del Tesoro. Arte Británico de Holbein a Hockney*, 5 October 2012–20 January 2013, pp.222–3, no.105 (illustrated).





*The ending of the tale ye see;
The Lover draws anigh the tree,
And takes the branch, and takes the rose,
That love and he so dearly chose.*

WILLIAM MORRIS, 1874

THIS PAINTING AND ITS COMPANION, *The Pilgrim at the Gate of Idleness* of 1884 (fig.2), together with the larger painting, *Love and the Pilgrim* of 1896–7 (fig.3), form a trilogy on a Romantic theme loosely based on parts of Geoffrey Chaucer's poem 'Romaunt of the Rose'. Around 1872 Burne-Jones and William Morris collaborated on designs for a wall hanging inspired by the poem, with Burne-Jones supplying the figures and Morris the briar background. The narrative sequence, consisting of many scenes, was embroidered by the wife and daughter of Sir Lowthian Bell, 1st Bt, an industrialist, and hung as a frieze in the dining room of his newly built house, Rounton Grange. Rounton Grange, in North Allerton, North Yorkshire, was designed by Burne-Jones's friend Philip Webb and built in 1872, but unfortunately is now demolished although the stables and some cottages survive. The embroideries, *The Pilgrim* and *The Heart of the Rose*, which date from 1874 to 1882, are in the William Morris Gallery, Walthamstow. Both the present painting and its companion are based on the artist's original designs for the wall hanging. The Gallery's collection also includes a chalk drawing of *The Heart of the Rose*, which is almost identical in size and composition to the painting (fig.1).

The theme of the 'Romaunt of the Rose' occupied Burne-Jones intermittently for over twenty years. The present painting was begun in 1889 and created as a pendant to the earlier *Pilgrim at the Gate of Idleness*. Both paintings remained in the studio and were taken up again by the artist in 1892,

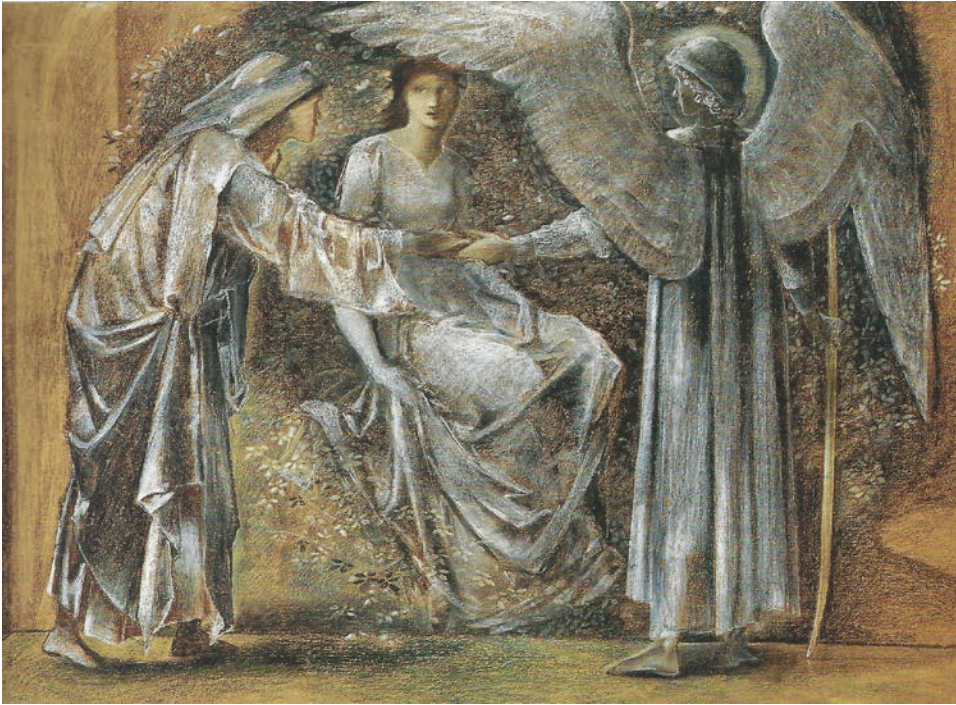


Fig.1: Edward Burne-Jones, *The Heart of the Rose*
WILLIAM MORRIS GALLERY, WALTHAMSTOW

following a period of illness, and completed in time for the New Gallery exhibition in 1893. *Love and the Pilgrim* was begun in 1877 and finally completed in 1897, the date of its exhibition at the New Gallery.

The three paintings are conceived as a sequence. The first is *The Pilgrim at the Gate of Idleness*, in which the Pilgrim meets Idleness personified as a beguiling maid. Having escaped that temptation, the Pilgrim is led by Love through a briar thicket, depicted in the Tate painting. The final scene is represented in the present painting, in which a winged figure, perhaps Love, leads the Pilgrim to the Rose, personified as a beautiful woman within a rose bush.

A large drawing with a composition related to the present painting and also entitled *The Heart of the Rose* is in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (fig.4). A solitary figure on



Fig.2: Edward Burne-Jones, *The Pilgrim at the Gate of Idleness*
DALLAS MUSEUM OF ART, TEXAS



Fig.3: Edward Burne-Jones, *Love and the Pilgrim*
TATE BRITAIN, LONDON



the left, similar to the Pilgrim, touches the edge of a gigantic rose, at the centre of which is a woman's face in profile. The drawing appears to be a tapestry design for Morris's craft works at Merton Abbey. Two versions of the tapestry were made around 1901; one in a private collection was exhibited in the Burne-Jones exhibition at the Hayward Gallery, London, 1975-6, no.231, and the other, sold at Sotheby's, London, 7 June 1972, is now in the Badisches Landesmuseum, Karlsruhe.

William Connal was the first owner of the two paintings, *The Pilgrim at the Gate of Idleness* and *The Heart of the Rose*, and probably acquired them from the artist. Connal's sale at Christie's in 1908, occasioned by his move from London to Glasgow, shows him to have been a serious patron of the Pre-Raphaelites. In addition to the nine works by Burne-Jones, he sold many other Pre-Raphaelite paintings, notably *Pretty Baa-Lambs* by Ford Madox Brown (1851-9; Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery).



Fig.4: Edward Burne-Jones, *The Heart of the Rose*
MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON



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