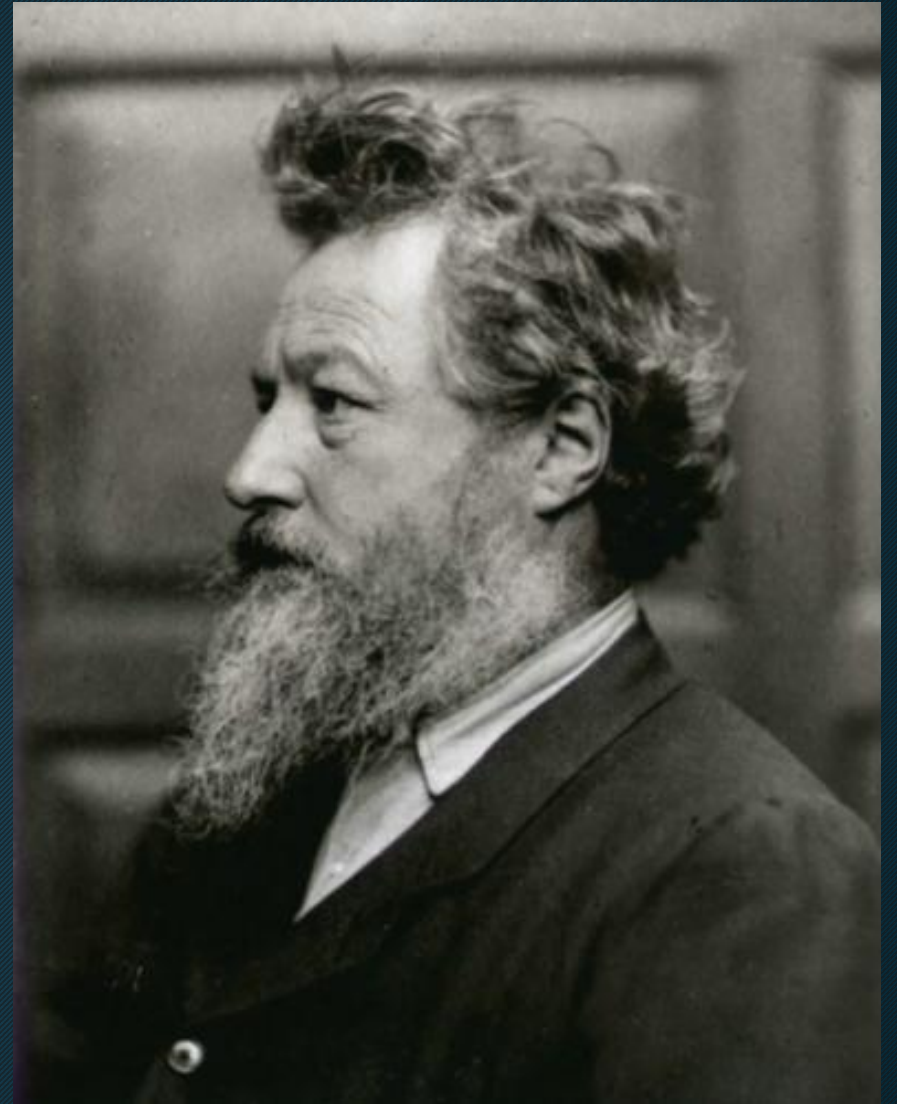
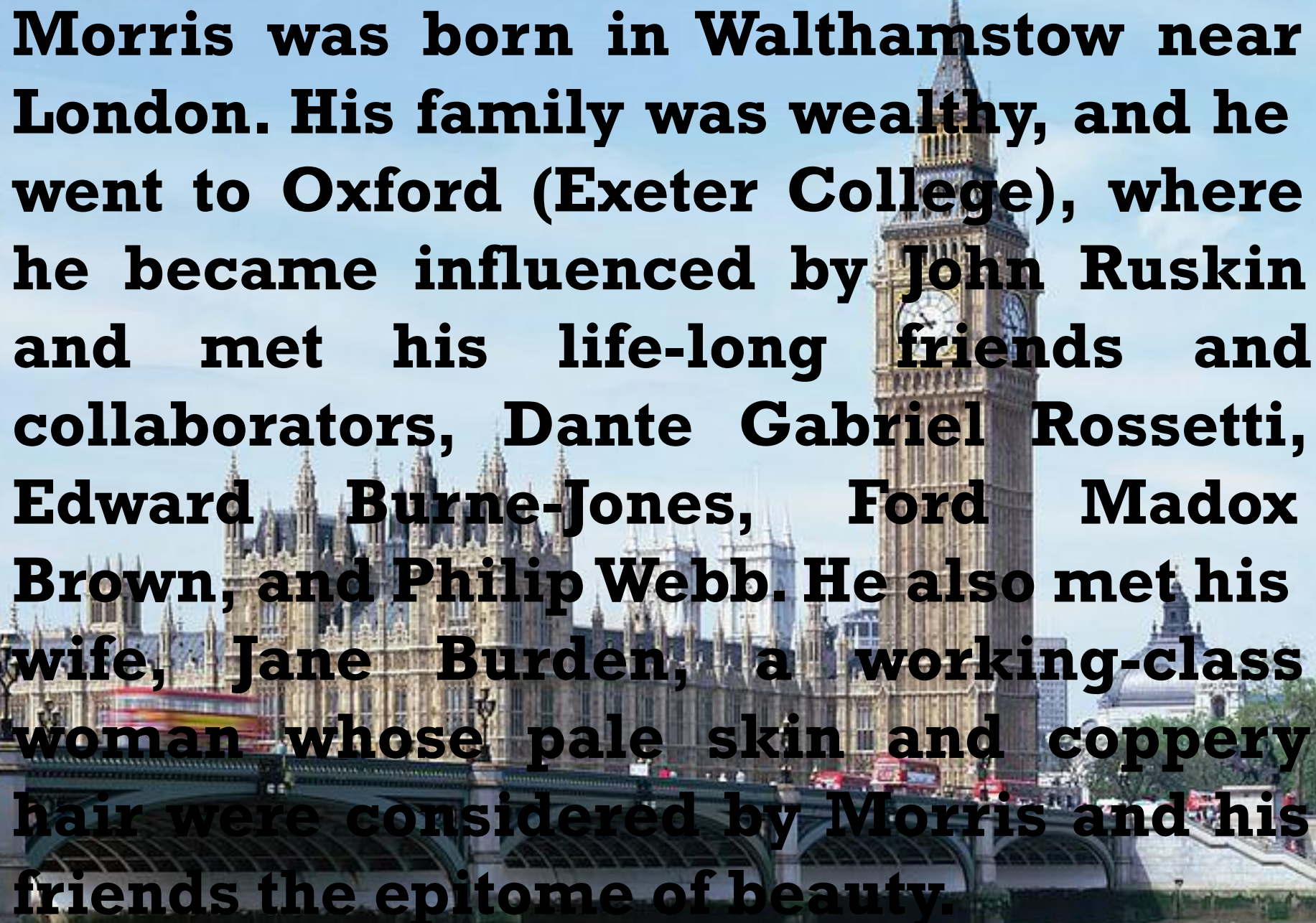


**WILLIAM
MORRIS**

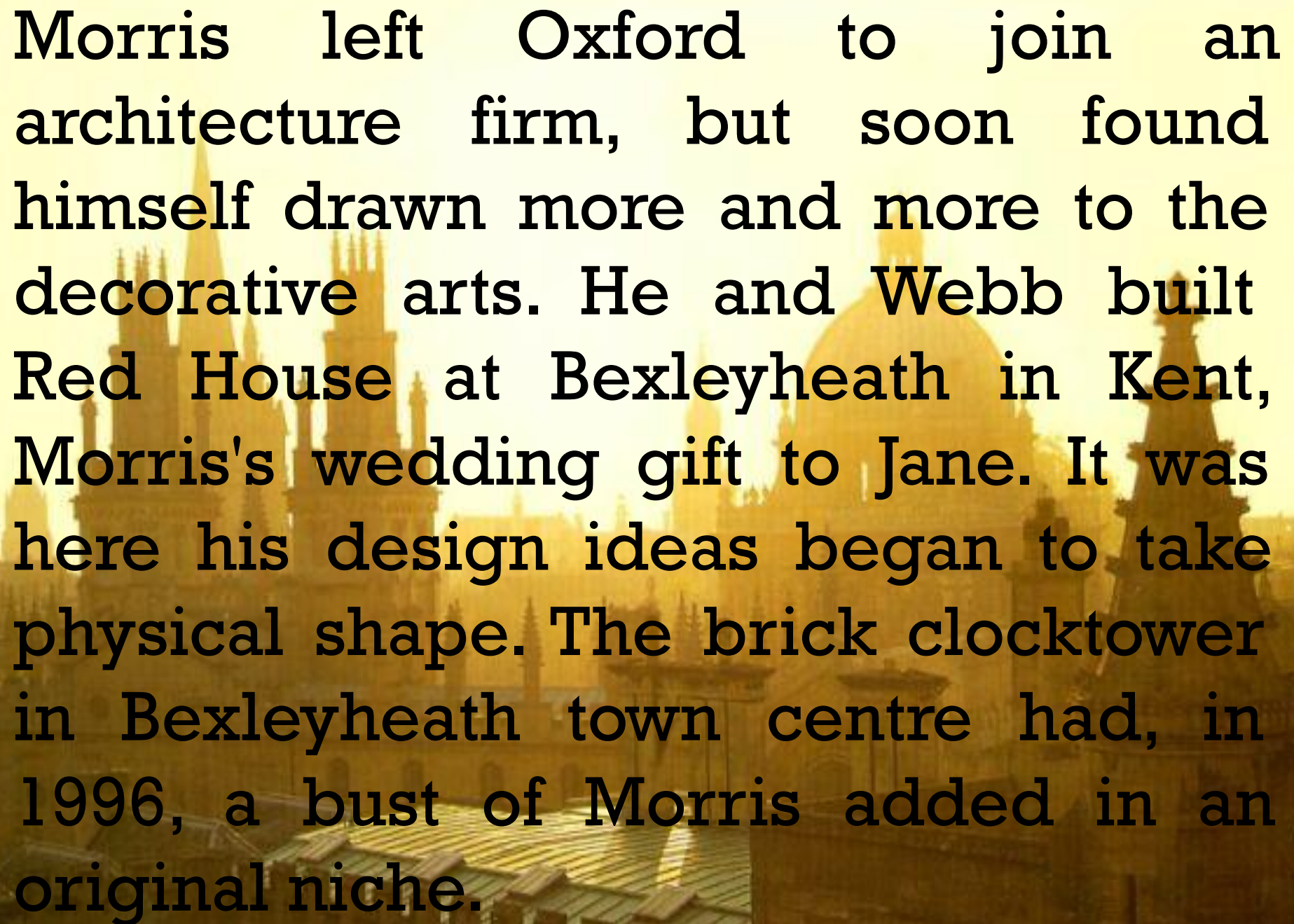


William Morris (March 24, 1834 - October 3, 1896) was one of the principal founders of the British Arts and Crafts Movement and is best known as a designer of wallpaper and patterned fabrics, a writer of poetry and fiction, and an early founder of the socialist movement in Britain.

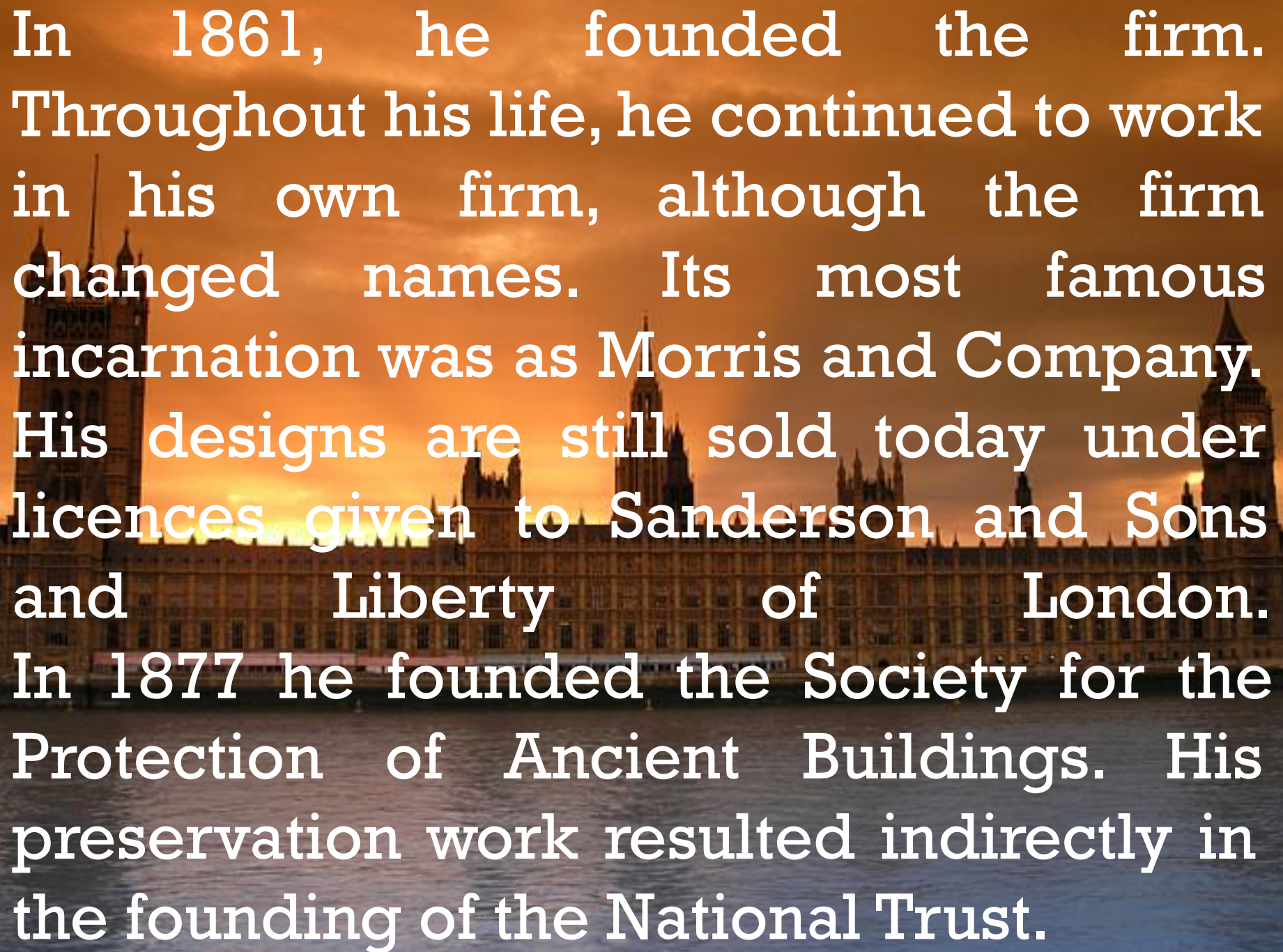




Morris was born in Walthamstow near London. His family was wealthy, and he went to Oxford (Exeter College), where he became influenced by John Ruskin and met his life-long friends and collaborators, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Edward Burne-Jones, Ford Madox Brown, and Philip Webb. He also met his wife, Jane Burden, a working-class woman whose pale skin and coppery hair were considered by Morris and his friends the epitome of beauty.



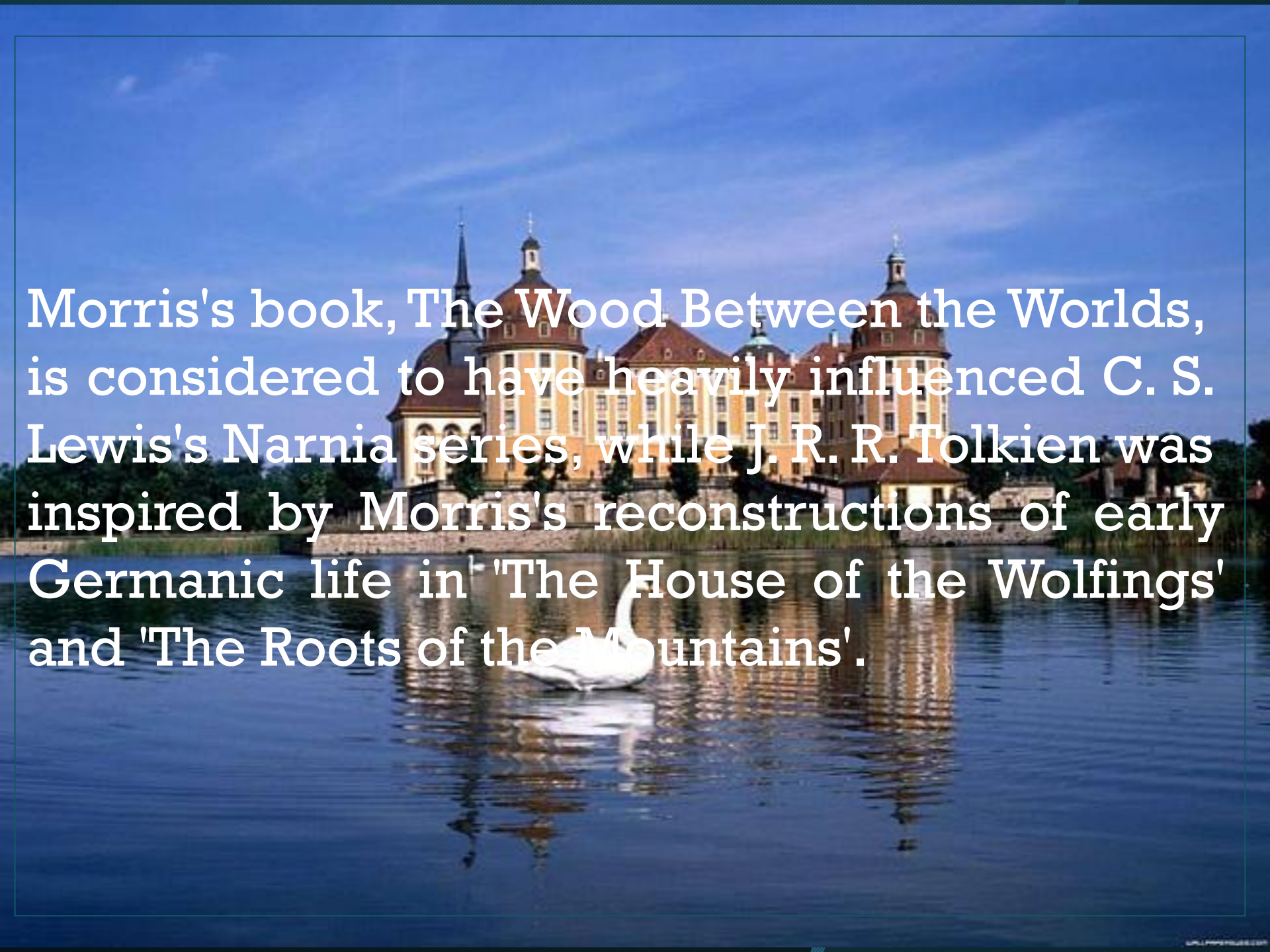
Morris left Oxford to join an architecture firm, but soon found himself drawn more and more to the decorative arts. He and Webb built Red House at Bexleyheath in Kent, Morris's wedding gift to Jane. It was here his design ideas began to take physical shape. The brick clocktower in Bexleyheath town centre had, in 1996, a bust of Morris added in an original niche.



In 1861, he founded the firm. Throughout his life, he continued to work in his own firm, although the firm changed names. Its most famous incarnation was as Morris and Company. His designs are still sold today under licences given to Sanderson and Sons and Liberty of London. In 1877 he founded the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. His preservation work resulted indirectly in the founding of the National Trust.



In 1883 he joined the Social Democratic Federation, and in 1884 he organised the Socialist League. One of his best known works, *News from Nowhere*, is a utopian novel describing a socialist society. This side of Morris's work is well-discussed in the biography (subtitled 'Romantic to Revolutionary') by E. P. Thompson. Morris and Rossetti rented a country house, Kelmscott Manor near Lechlade, Gloucestershire, as a summer retreat, but it soon became a retreat for Rossetti and Jane Morris to have a long-lasting affair. To escape the discomfort, Morris often travelled to Iceland, where he researched Icelandic legends that later became the basis of poems and novels.



Morris's book, *The Wood Between the Worlds*, is considered to have heavily influenced C. S. Lewis's *Narnia* series, while J. R. R. Tolkien was inspired by Morris's reconstructions of early Germanic life in 'The House of the Wolfings' and 'The Roots of the Mountains'.



**William Morris died in 1896
and was interred in the
churchyard at Kelmscott
village in Oxfordshire.**

Literary Works

The Defence of Guinevere, and other Poems (1858)

The Life and Death of Jason (1867)

The Earthly Paradise (1868-70)

The Story of Sigurd the Volsung and the Fall of the Nibelungs (1876)

Love is Enough, or The Freeing of Pharamond (1872)

A Dream of John Ball (1886)

The Roots of the Mountains (1889)

News from Nowhere (1890)

The Story of the Glittering Plain (1890)

The Well at the World's End (1892)

The Wood Beyond the World (1892)