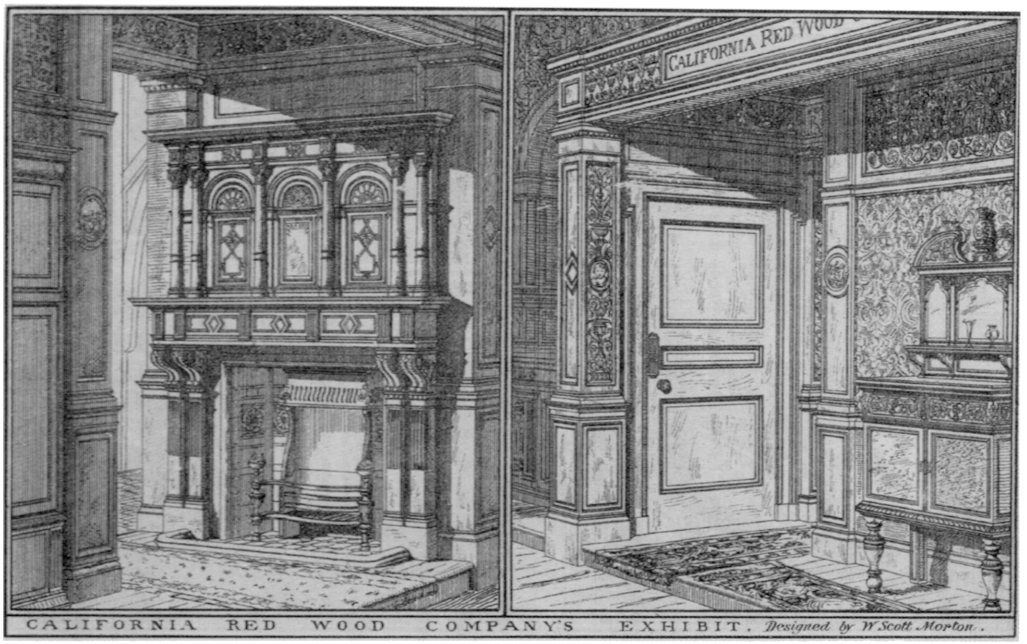
ROBERT LORIMER AND SCOTT MORTON & COMPANY

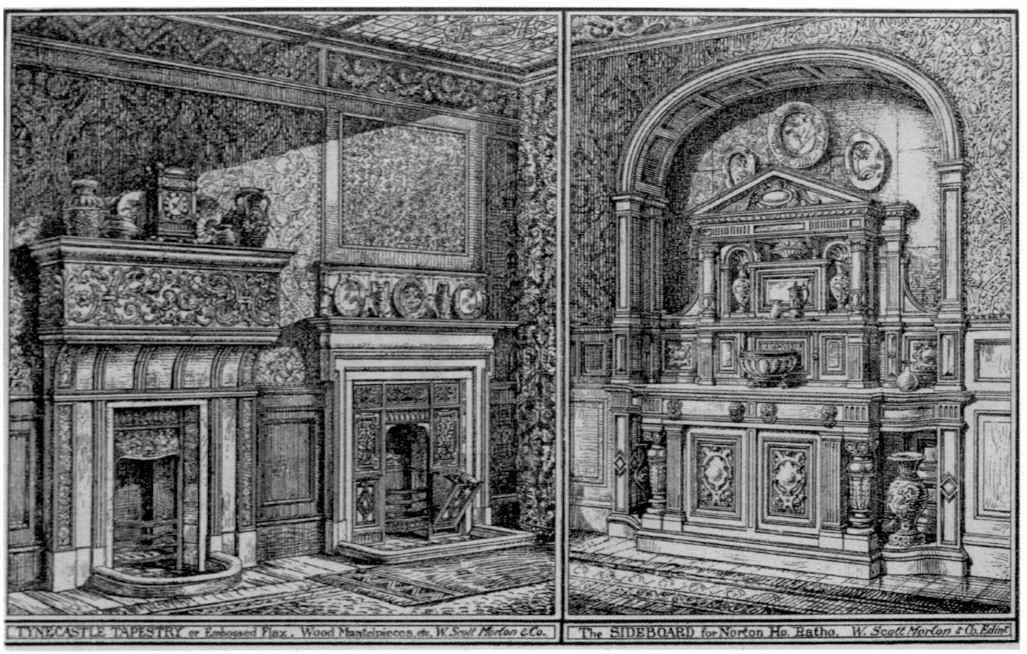
Christina M Anderson

In September, 1913, *Country Life* published an 'Architectural Supplement' devoted to the work of Sir Robert Lorimer in mid-career.[1] The special publication marked the height of his country house practice, soon brought to an end by the First World War, but more importantly, it revealed the importance to Lorimer's design process of skilled crafts people. The series of advertisements sprinkled throughout the *Supplement* reads as a veritable who's who of Lorimer's specialist collaborators. Among these, one finds the joinery firm of Nathaniel Grieve, wood carvers W. & A. Clow, sculptor/plasterer Thomas Beattie, wrought-iron worker Thomas Hadden, metal-workers of the Bromsgrove Guild, and cabinetmakers Whytock & Reid. This slender publication could be said to encapsulate the essence of early twentieth-century Scottish design, showing the interdependence of architect and craftsmen in the creation of furniture and interiors. One of the firms included in the *Supplement*, and most famous for their work with Lorimer, were furniture makers and woodworkers Scott Morton & Co, but the firm is also recognised in its own right for a unique contribution to Scottish interior design. They often accepted commissions for the furnishing of entire rooms or houses and worked not only with Lorimer, but with a number of the most well-known Scottish architects of the day. An exploration of the influences on, and work of, Robert Lorimer and Scott Morton & Co. reveals a catholic approach to design which, although germinated by English Arts & Crafts, emerged as a distinctly Scottish style at the beginning of the twentieth century. Through looking at the work of Sir Robert Lorimer in relation to that of Scott Morton & Co., and to a limited extent that of its competitors, it is hoped that a more comprehensive understanding of Scottish style at the beginning of the twentieth century can be achieved.

One of the earliest, and most potent, influences on Scottish furniture of the late nineteenth century was the Arts & Crafts movement, but it was less the style which developed in England than the principles behind it which were to have far-reaching influence in Scotland. Both Robert Lorimer and William Scott Morton, one of the founders of and an early driving force behind Scott Morton & Co., had been trained as architects, both also having spent time in London and coming under the influence of the ideals expressed by William Morris. Lorimer, born in 1864, had been apprenticed to the Edinburgh architect Hew Wardrop in 1884, in whose office he not only imbibed a sense of the importance of history to design but also came into contact with Robert Rowand Anderson, who had an infectious passion for antique furniture.[2] Lorimer followed this experience with a period in the London office of George Frederic Bodley, an Arts & Crafts architect who taught him one of the principal tenets of the movement: that it was a group of craftspeople working together as equals, rather than in a hierarchical structure, that led to the creation of the best buildings.[4] Bodley had awarded Morris &



1. The Scott Morton & Co. exhibit at the International Forestry Exhibition of 1884.



2. The Scott Morton & Co. exhibit at the International Forestry Exhibition of 1884.

Co., the company established by William Morris for the production of Arts & Crafts articles, their first commission and so provided Lorimer with excellent exposure to the English Arts & Crafts movement.[5] Born in 1840 in Carluke, Lanarkshire, where his father was a local joiner, William Scott Morton was a generation older than Robert Lorimer and had moved to London with his parents in the late 1850s. There he worked for the house furnishers Johnstone & Jeanes, New Bond Street, where he developed his skill as a designer, and learned how a large interior design firm operated.[6] Here too, he was exposed to the developing Arts & Crafts movement as it formed in the 1860s.[7]

Despite the contact of architects with Arts and Crafts designers in England,[8] the movement did not really exert any notable influence in Scotland, and in Edinburgh in particular, until the late 1880s. According to the art historian Elizabeth Cumming, it was the second congress of the National Association for the Advancement of Art and its Application to Industry, held in Edinburgh in October 1889, which really brought the Arts & Crafts movement to Scotland.[9] Nevertheless, this was already twenty-seven years after the 1862 London International Exhibition, when Arts & Crafts would already have been a familiar, and relatively established movement. This, perhaps, also explains why Arts & Crafts furniture and decorative objects were produced in Scotland only for a short period of time.[10] The prestige of the congress was reflected in its speakers among whom were included both William Morris and Lorimer's former mentor, Robert Rowand Anderson. Not only did it set an agenda for further discussion in Scotland of the rôle of architecture in relation to the decorative arts, but it also addressed the kind of training desirable for those working in both areas.[11] In terms of training, progress was already being made with the Edinburgh Social Union. Founded in 1884, it reached out to the more economically disadvantaged sections of the population and provided, among other things, classes in craftsmanship such as woodcarving.[12] This training nourished an emphasis in Scottish artistic education on traditional skills and accomplished craftsmanship. The Edinburgh Social Union also forged links with other bodies in Scotland and, as Cumming points out, membership of its decorative committee in 1888 included both William Scott Morton and George Reid, partner in the cabinet-making firm Whytock & Reid an outfit that made many of Robert Lorimer's furniture designs. In fact, it was the combined activities of the Union with more formal educational bodies such as the School of Applied Art and Heriot-Watt College in Edinburgh which really secured a foundation for excellence in craftsmanship in that city. William Scott Morton even went so far as to suggest, at the beginning of the 1890s, the formation in Edinburgh of a guild of art workers, demonstrating how important skilled craftsmanship had become.[13]

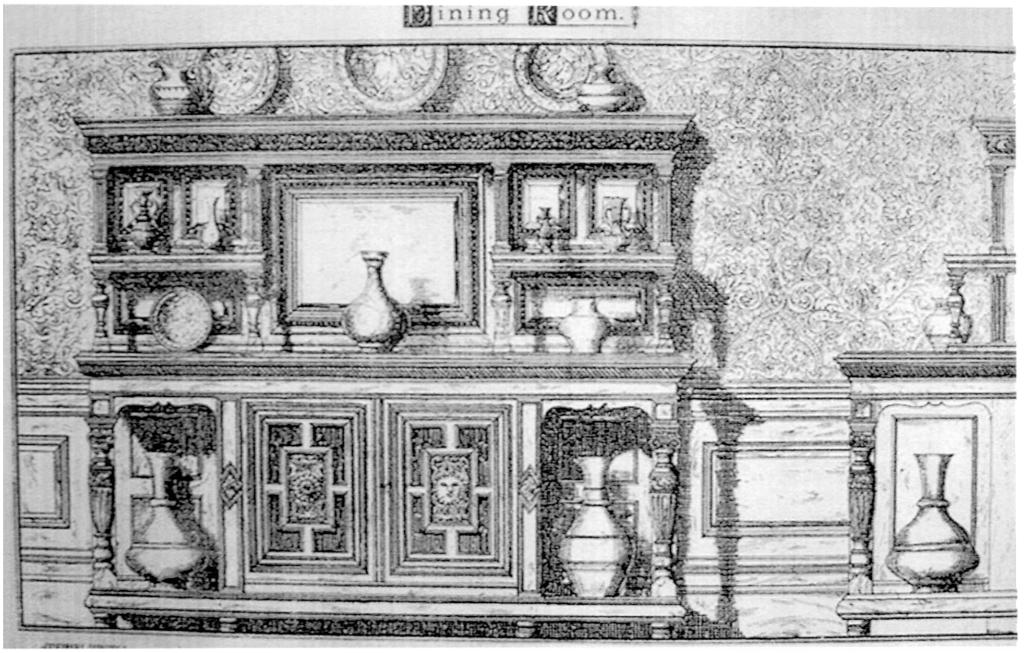
Although the furniture designed by William Scott Morton himself perhaps fits best into the 'Art Furniture' category,[14] his role in Edinburgh as a leader in promoting the decorative arts suggests that underlying his design were some very strong Arts & Crafts principles. He seems to have been a versatile and enterprising designer for he began selling designs for carpets and lace while still in his teens.[15] Together with his brother John, he decided, in 1870, to leave London and return to Scotland where they founded William Scott Morton & Co. in Edinburgh. William designed a great deal of furniture in the early years, and already possessed the resources to participate in the Philadelphia International Exhibition of 1876, only six years after founding the firm. A photo of the

William Scott Morton exhibit at the Philadelphia fair shows a monumental cabinet in 'art' style.[16] As with so many firms of the time, exhibitions became an important marketing measure, and other exhibitions in which the firm participated include the International Forestry Exhibition of 1884, held in Edinburgh, and the 1888 and 1901 Glasgow international exhibitions.[17] In all of these, it was principally the design work of William which was featured.[18] For the Forestry Exhibition, William created a Renaissance-style interior using California redwood. Along with the interior decoration he showed a sideboard made for Norton House, Ratho, carved wooden mantelpieces and, the speciality of the firm, Tynecastle Tapestry, a pressed canvas-like wall covering (Figures 1 & 2.) For the first Glasgow International Exhibition held in 1888,[19] Scott Morton & Co. exhibited 'The Parlour, Bishop's Palace' with furniture by William Scott Morton and a number of examples of Tynecastle Tapestry. *The British Architect* had this to say about the exhibit:

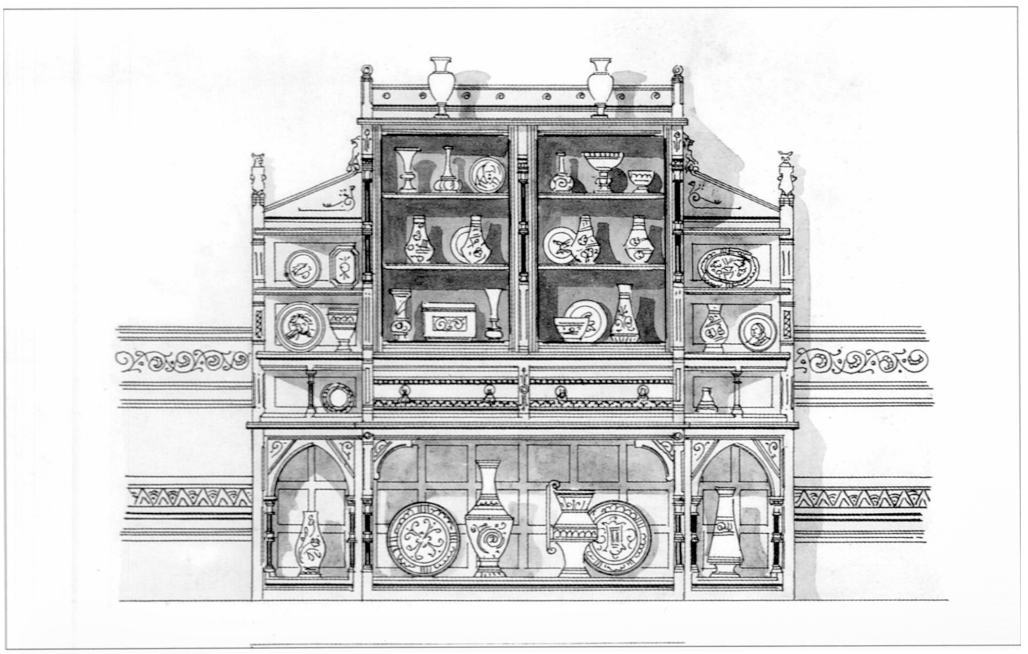
> *There are some exhibits of furnishing at the Glasgow Exhibition which appeal to us as architects, and to everybody who has furnished or will furnish and decorate a home with especial interest. First, we refer to the parlour in the Bishop's Castle, which is a charming example, the most perfect yet seen, we should say, of a genuine old Scotch room, as it might have existed in Jacobean times. Mr. Scott Morton, whose name is a guarantee of architectural quality, has produced in this apartment an effect of tone and colour which is primarily interesting, and in the execution of it has employed with great success his admirable invention of Tynecastle tapestry, now well known to all the profession.*[20]

This apparent ability to recreate 'a genuine old Scotch room' must be remembered when considering the later furniture and interiors of Robert Lorimer.

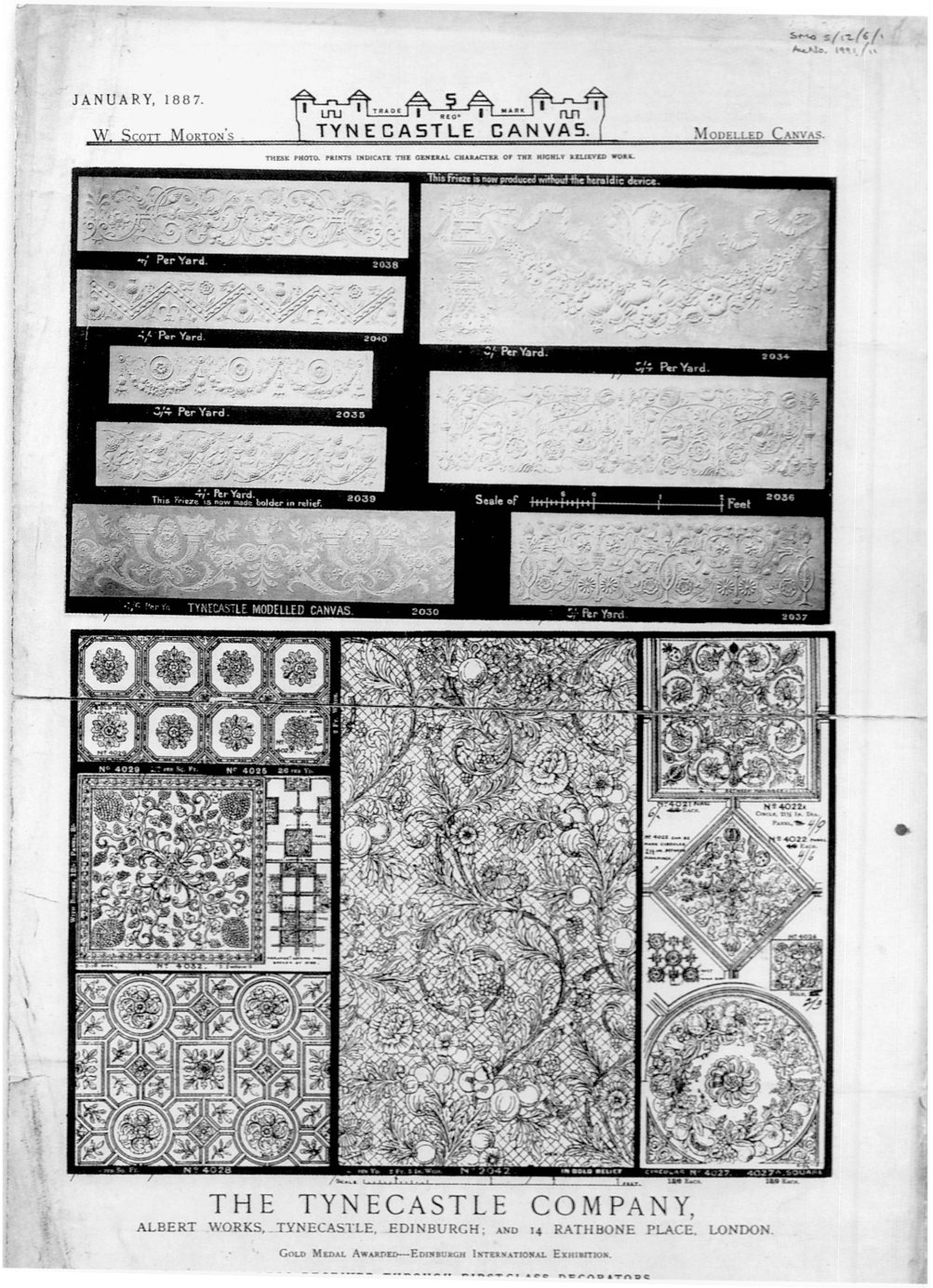
Scott Morton's reputation abroad must have developed quickly and have been considerable, for one of his designs was included in *Fashionable Furniture* of circa 1882, which was published as a kind of memorial to the designer Bruce J. Talbert.[21] Although Talbert's designs fill approximately half of the pages, one by William Scott Morton, a sideboard, is included in the section by other designers (Figure 3).[22] There is a drawing for another sideboard (Figure 4) among the Scott Morton papers which, although undated and unsigned, appears on the back of a drawing of 'Snowberries and Dogberries'. The sideboard seems to have been the archetypal showpiece of many late-Victorian furniture designers,[23] Scott Morton, as has been shown, demonstrated his preference for these both in exhibitions and in his other designs. With the true entrepreneurship characteristic of the period, Scott Morton moved into various other areas of interior decoration including carpets, which he had already been designing for Templetons during his London days, upholstery, stained glass, and wallpaper.[24] His company notably developed the innovative wall covering known as Tynecastle Tapestry already referred to above (Figure 5).[25] While William's brother John developed and oversaw the technique for producing Tynecastle Tapestry, William trawled through old journals, one of his favourites being the French *L'Art pour Tous*, and drawings made on his travels to generate the designs.[26] According to Elspeth Hardie, William's granddaughter and biographer, the original firm of Morton & Co. was eventually



3. William Scott Morton's design for a sideboard. included in *Fashionable Furniture*, c1882, p. 69.

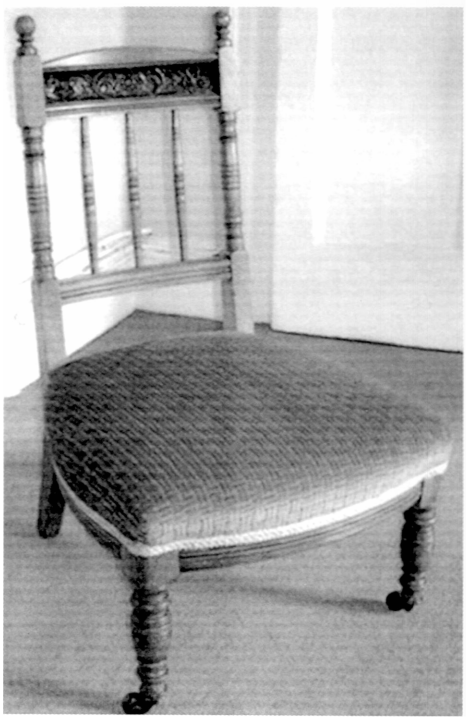


4. Design for a sideboard on the back of a drawing attributed to William Scott Morris. *RCAHMS*



5. A page from a brochure produced by the Tynecastle Company, January 1887. *RCAHMS*

6. Nursing chair made by Scott Morton & Co., c1880, with sunflower motif typical of 'art' furniture.
Private collection



7. Nursing chair made by Scott Morton & Co., c1890, with Tynecastle Tapestry decoration across back rail.
Private collection

separated into two distinct companies as the success of Tynecastle Tapestry grew and the nature of the firm's woodworking business shifted away from furniture towards panelling, staircases, and other fittings.[27] The Tynecastle Company was established for the manufacture of Tynecastle Tapestry and became the sister organisation to Scott Morton & Co. which retained responsibility for furniture and woodwork production.[28] Although the woodworking side of the firm changed, Scott Morton & Co. never abandoned cabinet-making. They continued to include smaller pieces of domestic furniture in their production. An example is the nursing chair seen in figure 7 which incorporates Tynecastle Tapestry across the back.

Along with his concern for skilled workmanship, Scott Morton's Arts & Crafts leanings can be seen in his socialist interests, which took the form of encouraging his workforce to pursue continuing education, among other things. He believed that men 'could only be good craftsmen if they were interested and involved in the work they were doing'.[29] His beliefs were set out in a speech from 1895 entitled 'The Possibilities and Limitations of the Decorator's Art':

> *I will attempt in a brotherly spirit to express some thoughts of a very general nature as to the possibilities and limitations of the decorator's work... it is noticeable that many connected with industrial art are socialistic in their ideas. While the spirit of Socialism seeks to lift all within its scope up to some ideal, there is at the same time an influence which suppresses individuality, and in the exercise of a skilful craft, or artistic aspiration, individuality must assert itself, and I am convinced that the best results can be achieved in your calling by conducting your businesses as much as possible as personal businesses...*
>
> *...The pass into the earthly paradise which many dream of, as to the happy co-operation between man and man, is the words 'Whatsoever ye would that man should do to you, do ye even so to them.'... it is the full exercise of this rule which will secure the best possible results, whether we consider the saving of time, the character of the work done, or the spirit which will animate the workmen, which is not a small consideration when your staff is under the casual observances of the client.*
>
> *... Judging by the successful businesses of which I know the inner workings, and in which the element of taste is an essential requisite, I have found that the awarding of a bonus to a limited number who are in a position to advance the interest of the business works well. In one commission under my care I was impressed by the diligence and the superior style of the men... and on inquiry I learned that all the workmen on the regular staff participated in the profits of the business - which was a private one...*

Of the relationship between decoration and architecture, Scott Morton reveals, in the same address, a similar point of view to that of William Morris:

> *... for all design that is in any way connected with buildings and decoration, I am convinced, after 40 years' steady work, that the architectural basis is the enduring one for the designer who is to weather all changes. Seeing that increasing interest is being shown by the Royal Institute of British Architects in artistic handicrafts, and that the*

decorative side of the profession is no more fully cultivated, it behoves decorators to encourage the architectural instinct by every possible means...[30]

William Stewart Morton, William Scott's son, was a deeply religious man and, according to his daughters, continued in his father's footsteps in his treatment of his employees as members of the firm's family, encouraging them to attend courses which upgraded their skills.[31] His reasons for doing so are perhaps best expressed by William Morris:

...That thing which I understand by real art is the expression by man of his pleasure in labour. I do not believe he can be happy in his labour without expressing that happiness; and especially is this so when he is at work at anything in which he specially excels. A most kind gift is this of nature, since all men, nay, it seems all things too, must labour...[32]

Like his father, William Stewart Morton was also interested in craftsmanship as William Stewart's son describes:

Stewart loved wood; he took a few pieces along in his pocket when asked to speak after luncheon at the Liberal Club, and hard-headed Edinburgh business men listened entranced to his stories about the discovery of a Roman screwnail in an old piece of timber, or a bullet from the '45 lodged in a bog-oak...
He liked the wood itself; but even more he liked the craftsmanship of the men who worked in wood. He was proud of his business because it kept alive in the fierce whirl of the machine-ridden age the free breath of the individual craftsman in the Middle Ages. For instance, when the work for the Chapel of Stowe School was in progress, initiative in the design of the pew-ends was left to each individual carver. One put a crouching mastiff on the top of his block of wood, another a monkey with panpipes, another a hare with ears laid back to fit the hand.[33]

The fertile ground for craftsmanship in Edinburgh, along with his own entrepreneurial spirit, must have encouraged William Scott Morton to expand his business overseas. His son William Stewart was sent to the United States in 1889 to develop the Tynecastle Tapestry market, where he succeeded in obtaining commissions from some of America's wealthiest inhabitants, among them Cornelius Vanderbilt and J. Pierpont Morgan, and in establishing agents for the further sale of the wall hangings.[34] A London Office was also opened in the prestigious Old Burlington Street. At this point, William Scott Morton moved to Highgate and, although he kept in touch with the family business, concentrated on his design work, lecturing and writing.[35] It was around the time of William's death, in 1903, that Robert Lorimer began his relationship with Scott Morton & Co.[36] Although the firm is best known for the woodwork they created for Lorimer, they also made furniture according to his designs, sometimes variations on pieces made by other cabinetmakers, or outright replicas of Lorimer furniture already made by another firm.[37]

Robert Stodart Lorimer was certainly more overtly connected with the Arts & Crafts movement than William Scott Morton had been. After his training in London, he sent

items to the 1893, 1896, 1899, 1903, 1912, and 1926 Arts & Crafts Exhibition Society shows.[38] He was also invited to join the Art Workers' Guild, which had been established in 1884 by architects with the aim of promoting good design.[39] Like William Scott Morton, Lorimer both admired and was influenced by the teachings of William Morris, and his first big commission, the restoration of Earlshall Castle in Fife, bears witness to an approach along the lines laid out by Morris.[40] The restoration of the castle was deeply sympathetic. Peter Savage points out that Lorimer's remarks on the ceiling of the Long Gallery, when he described how the distemper decoration was simply to be retouched, with gaps where no traces of decoration remained to be left blank, show 'a young architect alert to the dangers of restoration.'[41] Although the stained glass windows throughout the building exhibit Arts & Crafts ornamentation, such as quotations, heraldic symbols and birds in trees, we find here early evidence of Lorimer's 'layering', something that was to become an intrinsic feature of Lorimer's Scottish style. At Earlshall, we see this in the hall screen, copied from the sixteenth-century oak entrance screen of the chapel at nearby Falkland Palace.[42] Although the form of the screen copies that of Falkland Palace, at Earlshall Lorimer has decorated the lower panels with carved embellishments of birds, vines, flowers, and other elements so typical of Arts & Crafts decoration. Christopher Hussey described this ornamentation as 'the first fruits of Lorimer's apprenticeship to Bodley and Morris'.[43] Lorimer's layering of one style on top of the other was to become much more austere, but we already see in the Earlshall screen how it has a parallel in the way that one generation adds to and embellishes, sometimes taking away from or recycling, the legacy they receive from previous generations. (Figure 8)

Along with Lorimer's combination of pared-down styles and the use of craftspeople whom he had 'trained up' himself to be able to interpret his ideas,[44] is the very plain, yet nevertheless innovatory, use of materials in his furniture and buildings. Layer upon stripped-down layer, his decoration reveals an intense interest in the various historical influences on Scottish decorative arts. This can be seen, among other things, in his use of marquetry. At Earlshall, for example, Lorimer 'coached up' William Wheeler, a joiner from the local village of Arncroach, to make several of Lorimer's earliest pieces, including a dresser with an inlaid panel showing a hunting scene.[45] Lorimer cleverly composed the landscape by allowing the natural variations in the colour and grain of the various woods used to convey the different elements of the scene. The addition of the inlaid panel to the Earlshall dresser was one of many uses by Lorimer of marquetry, especially in his early furniture designs. The panels reputedly were made by Whytock & Reid, and Lorimer is thought to have had a supply of them which could be incorporated into a piece of furniture as and when needed.[46] Interestingly, these panels also testify to some degree to the international character of Scottish decorative arts during this period, showing that Lorimer was not an 'isolated genius' but rather connected with the Continent, not as part of British or English design, but as a uniquely Scottish designer.[47] At the same time that Lorimer was using the grain and natural colour of wood to create pastoral scenes, the School at Nancy in France was doing the same. This did not, in fact, go unnoticed at the time, as R. Davis Benn remarked about the articles shown at the Paris international exhibition of 1900:

8. The Hall screen at Earlshall,, Fife, coped from the Chapel screen at Falkland Palace, and embellished with Arts & Crafts decorative carving.
Country Life

With regard to the question of marquetry, it must not be passed with simply a brief reference, as here again a complete change has come about, and one, moreover, which I regard as being in a right direction, though extravagances are being indulged in here as in other fields. For many years we have been accustomed to the delicate inlay of the class which originated in Italy during the period of the Renaissance, and, up to a comparatively short time ago, no effort was made to get away from it, with the exception of the ordinary commercial 'Dutch Marquetry', which is, generally speaking, unworthy of serious notice.

I need hardly say that the Italian inlay to which I have referred consists principally of fine scrolls, flowers, and foliations, of a most delicate – almost 'wiry' – description, and, good as it may be, its constant repetition becomes monotonous. But it occurred to some designers that breadth of treatment, both in form and colour, might with advantage be cultivated by the marquetry cutter, though whether the movement originated in this country or on the Continent it is impossible to say with any degree of certainty. The work shown by Mr. Lorimer at the 'Arts and Crafts' some years ago was among the first of the kind seen in England, but then the same, or practically the same, treatment was being cultivated contemporaneously at Nancy.[48]

Lorimer's independent philosophy of the Scottish interior further included a taste for plainness, something which may stem from his childhood experiences. In 1878, Lorimer's father took out a thirty-eight year lease on Kellie Castle in the East Neuk of Fife. The castle, with its wonderful plasterwork ceilings, was in need of a long-term plan of renovation and care, one which the family pursued, although always keeping their own impact on the building's decoration minimal. Even today, the castle has a plainness subtly permeated by various stylistic influences. Combined with this early first-hand experience of his native architecture, Lorimer's love of travel meant that the historical decoration of the Netherlands, Germany and France also made itself felt in his work. At the Hill of Tarvit, or Wemyss Hall, Fife, for example, which Lorimer converted from a seventeenth-century building into an early twentieth-century showcase for the collections of Frederick Bower Sharp, one sees the effects of Lorimer's refined layering. The Hall, which is panelled in dark oak with eighteenth-century French provincial motifs, is meant to provide a Baronial setting for Sharp's sixteenth-century Flemish tapestries. Just off the Hall, however, is the Drawing Room, which was intended to house Sharp's collection of French furniture. Lorimer, however, kept decoration to a minimum, sparsely utilising eighteenth-century French decorative motifs in the plasterwork and woodwork which was painted a light cream colour. This same combination of Baronial and French can be found at Hallyburton, Perthshire, where the hall is again dark and Baronial, but this time it is the French style which enhances the space intended for the display of French tapestry.

It is not only in the room decoration, however, but in the furniture he created for these settings that Lorimer best demonstrates his almost ascetic approach to ornament. Monzie Castle, Perthshire, for example, and Kellie Castle were both endowed with eighteenth-century French-style bookcases. However, while Lorimer has kept the shape, the usual floral marquetry decoration was omitted and instead replaced by a very basic kind of parquetry.[49] Monzie was furnished with a small repertoire of severe French interpretations by Lorimer such as a Louis-Quinze bureau, again without any marquetry,

a cane chair and settee.[50] At Kellie can still be seen one of a number of benches designed by Lorimer with legs and stretchers based on an eighteenth-century settee in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.[51] David Learmont used the term 'pastiche' when describing Lorimer's style,[52] but it may be more accurate to say that Lorimer drew on historic examples, peeling away their layers of decoration until only the most basic forms remained, in order to then re-layer these various bare French, Dutch, German and Scotch forms in a new composition.

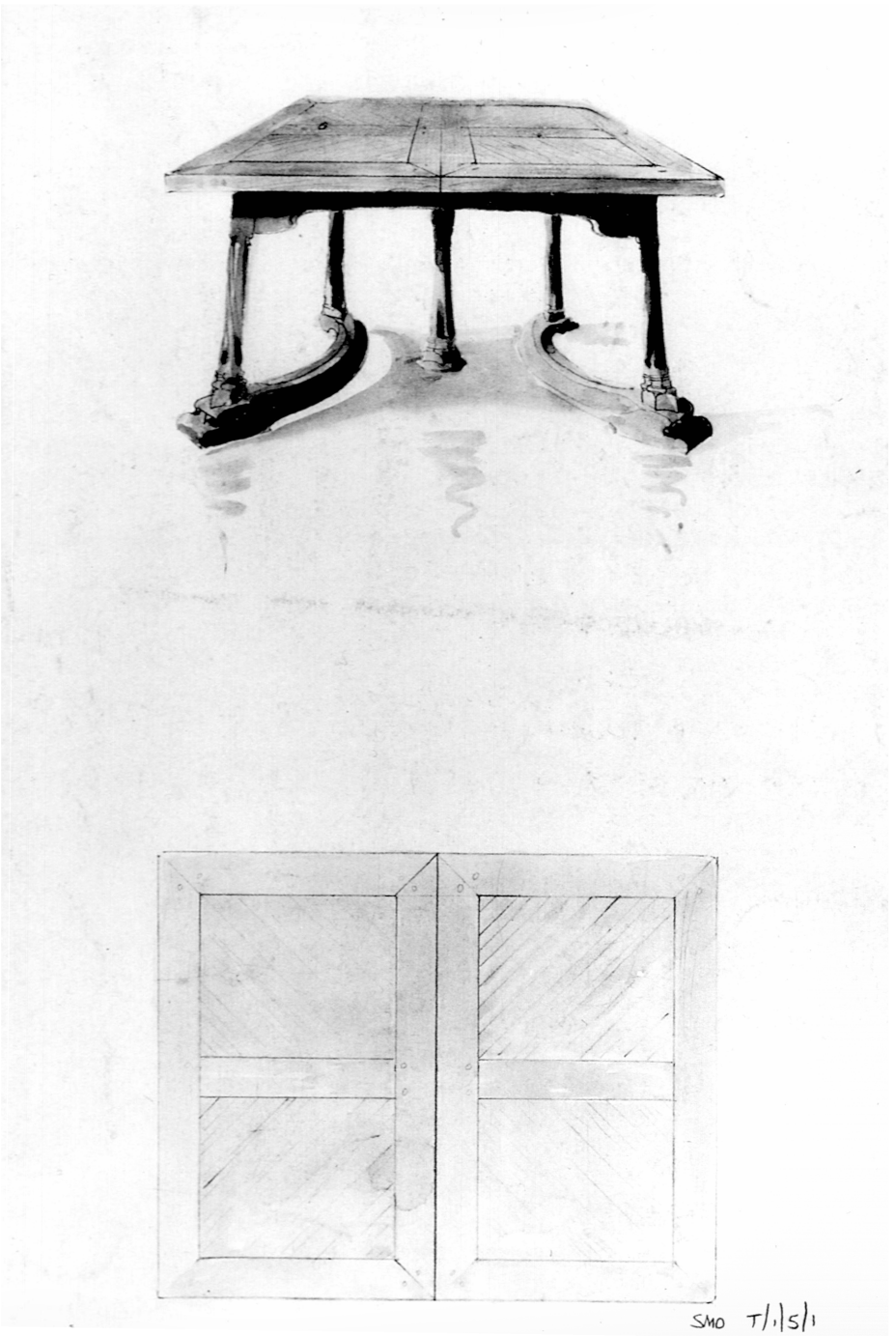
Perhaps Lorimer's most enduring decorative motif is the 'slow' or 'Nuremberg' twist. It probably derives from a Gothic table which Lorimer saw at the Germanisches National Museum, Nuremberg.[53] Both Whytock & Reid, who created much of Lorimer's furniture, and Scott Morton and Co. would have had experience of this twist, for Lorimer used it not only on tables and sideboards, but in staircases as well. In fact, among the Scott Morton archives at the National Monuments Record for Scotland are several interpretations of tables using this type of leg (Figure 9). Although it is not clear whether these drawings were made for Lorimer or someone else, they do support the thesis put forward by Peter Savage that Lorimer worked with the artisans in such a way that the finished product was a result of both parties' input. Through this process, Lorimer's designs often came to 'belong' just as much to the firm who realised them as to the architect.[54] Cabinetmakers could continue to reproduce the 'Lorimer' pieces for their own clients or could interpret them in their own manner, resulting in the potential for a design to be used over many years, making it difficult not only to date but sometimes also to trace the origin of a particular object. Whytock & Reid, in fact, were still producing Lorimer designs up until 2004, their showroom in 2003 sporting a reproduction of what had been known within the firm as 'Lorimer's Drawing Table', the original of which was in a back office (Figure 10).[55]

An example of this relationship with his craftspeople can be found in one of Lorimer's notes to David Ramsay, chief designer for Scott Morton & Co.:

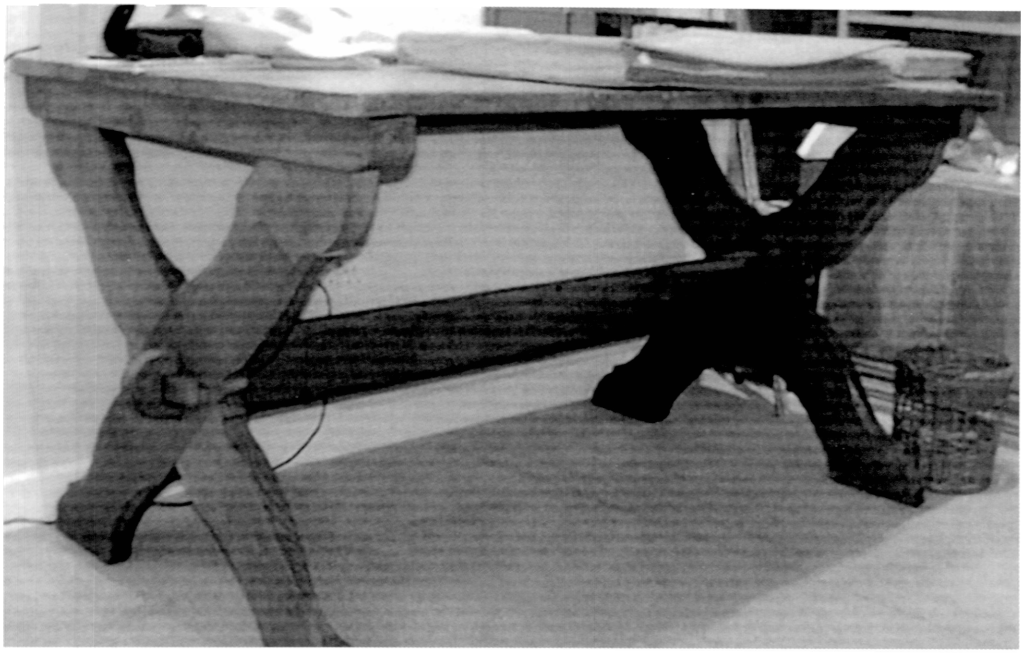
> *Dear Ramsay*
>
> *Could you make me a rough perspective sketch – same sort of thing that you did the last time – from enclosed scribble – they have about 140-£150 to spend on the lectern – throughout the last design wasn't well enough & want a St. George & Dragon introduced – also the whole thing to be up on an oak step – Better send the sketch c/o Clerk of Works Office Stowe School Chapel – Buckingham to wait arrival. I will be there next Thursday – Hope all goes well we hope to be home on Friday evening the 7th & I'd better run out to your place on Saturday morning – to see all that you have got ready for dispatch – I wd like to see one complete set put together.*[56]

Although Lorimer clearly had craftspeople whom he trusted and on whom he depended, the catalogues of the London Arts & Crafts exhibitions also suggest that he was somewhat fickle about assigning commissions to particular craftspeople, especially in the early years of his career. It is not clear how or why Lorimer distributed his assignments, whether he chose according to the quality he desired in the finished project, the expediency with which he needed a design to be executed, or some other criteria.

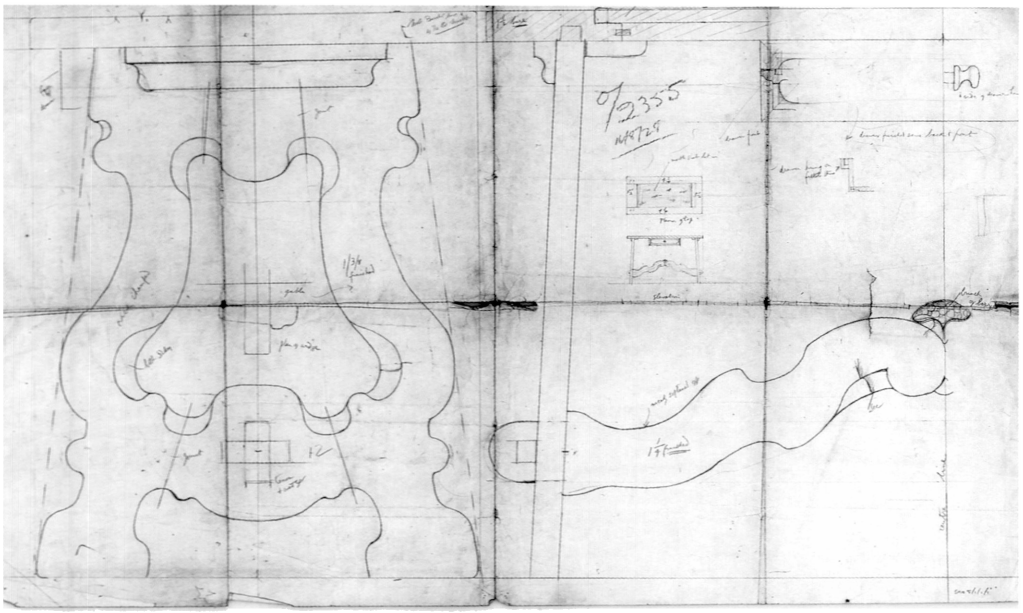
For example, one finds in the 1893 Arts & Crafts exhibition catalogue an 'oak bureau



9. Drawing for a table in the Scott Morton archive showing Lorimer's 'Nuremberg' twist. *RCAHMS*



10. 'Lorimer's Drawing Table' made by Whytock & Reid, Edinburgh.
Whytock & Reid

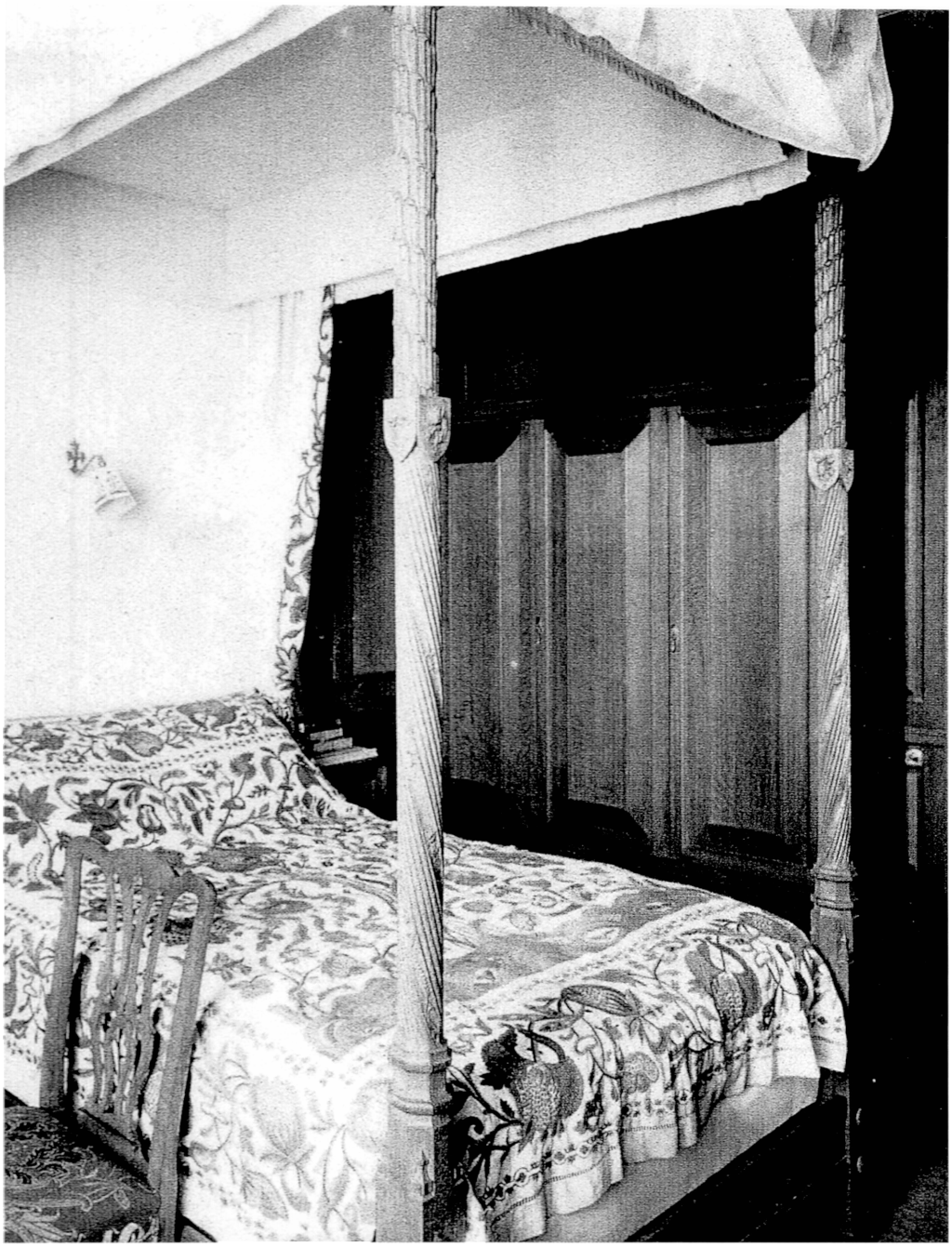


11. Drawing of a table resembling one in the National Museum of Scotland, and one from Glencruitten, sent by Lorimer to Scott Morton & Co. who executed the design.
RCAHMS

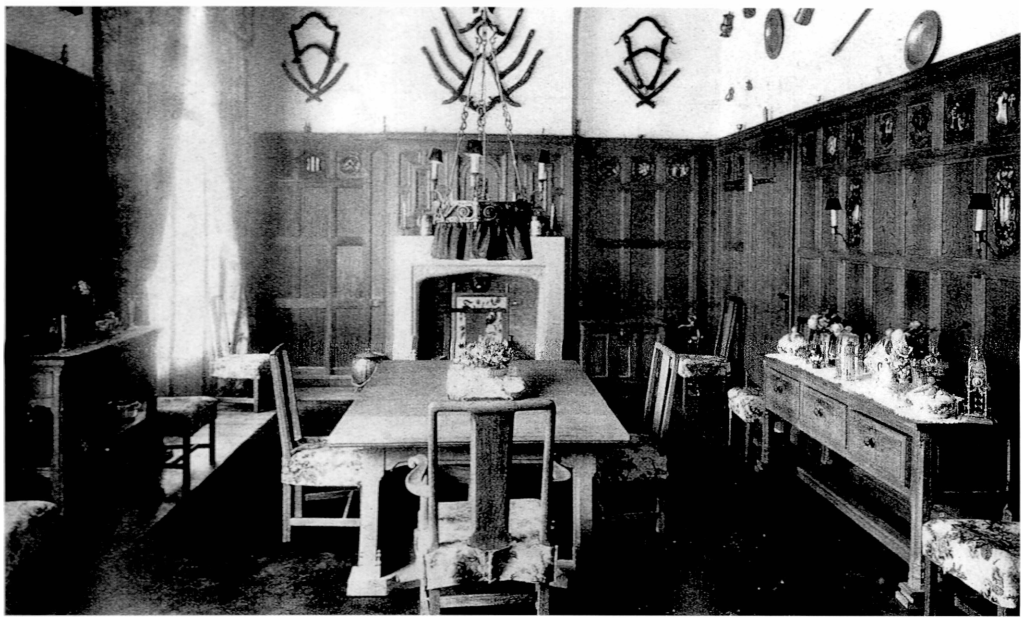
adapted from an old design' by William Wheeler,[57] as well as an 'inlaid walnut linen press' carried out by A. Paterson of Morrison [sic] and Co.,[58] another leading furnishing company in Edinburgh. Intriguingly, while these two pieces appear quite distinct in design, Lorimer also used different craftspeople for similar, or the same, designs. One of Lorimer's later sources of inspiration was the Italian Renaissance style, which is especially prevalent among the furniture made for Glencruitten, Oban. The Glencruitten furniture was executed by Whytock & Reid,[59] yet among the papers of the Scott Morton archive is a design for a table very closely resembling one made for Glencruitten and addressed to Scott Morton & Co. in what appears to be Lorimer's own hand (Figure 11). It is unclear whether this drawing among the Scott Morton papers is a design drawn to scale by Whytock & Reid when they executed a similar table for Lorimer or whether Lorimer had the design made up in his own office. This latter possibility is, however, unlikely as all the information in existence on Lorimer's working methods suggests he only drew sketches, never working designs.[60] The finished table was later photographed as part of Scott Morton's catalogue, where it is written on the back of the photograph that it was completed for Sir Robert Lorimer.[61] Although Whytock & Reid appear to have been Lorimer's cabinet-makers of choice, he did not, apparently, work with them exclusively and did not hesitate to ask two different firms to realise the same design.

An explanation for the choice of Scott Morton to make this table might be found in an analogous case where Scott Morton was replaced by Morison and Co., the Edinburgh cabinet-making and decorating firm mentioned above. Scott Morton were originally contracted for the furnishing of Ardtornish House, Argyll, under the direction of the architect John Kinross. The firm had worked with Kinross at Manderston, Berwickshire, in providing neo-classical Adam-style decorative details, images of which can be seen in the Scott Morton photo album preserved at Edinburgh University.[62] Kinross had begun work with Scott Morton & Co. at Ardtornish around 1907 or 1908, but it has been suggested that, due to their other commitments, the firm could not meet the strict time schedule established for the renovation work.[63] Correspondence between Kinross and the local Factor, Evan Tweedie, show that Morison & Co. took up the commission after Scott Morton & Co.[64] Clearly, architects were very important at this time in choosing cabinet-makers for decorating commissions, and the fact that Scott Morton made a point of advertising their work carried out with the association of an architect shows just how important this relationship was to the cabinet-maker.[65] Thus, just as Kinross may have suggested the change from Scott Morton & Co. to Morison & Co. for Ardtornish, so Lorimer may have felt it exigent to ask Scott Morton & Co. to execute the renaissance-style table discussed above.

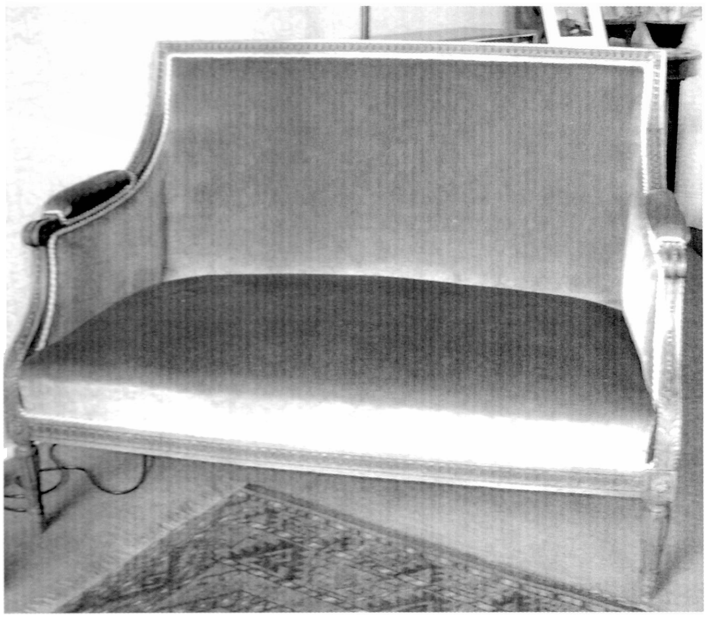
Morison & Co., in fact, provides an interesting parallel to Scott Morton & Co. Founded by Mathew Morison at the end of the eighteenth or very beginning of the nineteenth century in Ayr, but brought to prominence by his son, James Morison, the firm eventually expanded to Glasgow and, finally, Edinburgh.[66] Upon James Morison's death in 1862, William Reid, who had been working for the firm, took over the company, at which time it became known as Morison & Co.[67] Commissions received through architects were as important to Morison and Co. as to Scott Morton & Co.[68] Just as Scott Morton & Co. became famous for furnishing ocean liners, particularly with Tynecastle Tapestry,[69] Morison & Co. enjoyed international recognition for their luxurious outfitting



12. Bed created by Scott Morton & Co. for Frank Jay Gould's villa at Maisons Lafitte, early twentieth century.
Edinburgh University Library



13. **Dining Room created by Scott Morton & Co. for Frank Jay Gould's villa at Maisons-Lafitte, early twentieth century.**
Edinburgh University Library



14. **Copy of a settee from the Petit Trianon, Versailles, executed by Scott Morton & Co., early twentieth century.**
Private Collection

of the interiors of train carriages under Reid's son, William Robert Reid.[70] W. R. Reid had benefited from an artistic training and,[71] with his involvement in the family cabinet-making firm, he became caught up in the re-awakening throughout Great Britain of interest in English eighteenth-century furniture. W. R. Reid, in fact, filled the house he purchased in 1902, Lauriston Castle, with examples of this antique furniture. Morison & Co., like Scott Morton & Co., became expert in the production of high-quality replicas of English Georgian furniture.[72] Although this furniture did not simply reproduce known antique pieces, but rather was created from a mixture of various known eighteenth-century designs and styles, it lacked Lorimer's original treatment. Nevertheless, these reproductions, displayed, for example, in Morison's showrooms in the 1890s,[73] may simply have been the result of both companies' more commercial output, as opposed to their commission work for architects and wealthy clients, and been made simply to meet popular demand. Aside from the discussion about the originality of design, however, these reproductions, still required traditional cabinet-making skills and would certainly have kept them well-honed throughout the Edinburgh firms. (Figure 12)

Not only was eighteenth-century design to permeate Edinburgh furniture making at the beginning of the twentieth century, but, through involving craftspeople in the design process, Lorimer inevitably witnessed the spread of his ideas and 'style' throughout the Edinburgh cabinet-making community. One might say that a kind of 'Edinburgh style' developed in furniture design during Lorimer's career. The work of Scott Morton & Co bears quite dramatic witness to this phenomenon, particularly among the pieces they realised for the villa of the American railway magnate Frank Jay Gould at Maisons-Lafitte, near Paris. An image of Gould's bedroom, for example, shows an interpretation of Lorimer's slow or Nuremberg twist, which, in Gould's bedposts have become narrow ridges adorning the essentially round form of the posts (Figure 12). There is certainly a more feminine and less austere treatment here than with Lorimer's furniture, showing how subtle the pervasiveness of Lorimer's style could be. More dramatically, however, the dining room at Maisons-Lafitte, while not sporting the Nuremberg twist, reminds one of Lorimer's dining room furniture at Rowallan, Ayrshire, in both the form and proportions of the sideboard and dining table (Figure 13). Scott Morton & Co. did work at Rowallan for Sir Robert and, intriguingly, the Scott Morton archive contains detailed drawings for the Rowallan dining room furniture.[74] Thus, it is not surprising that there are similarities between the two commissions.

After the First World War, ecclesiastical commissions became increasingly important to both Scott Morton & Co. and Robert Lorimer. Interestingly, it is here that the Arts & Crafts style seems to have persisted the longest, the reasons for this are complex and probably having something to do with the traditional association of the Gothic style with religious institutions, and the Gothic revival roots of the Arts & Crafts style. According to Elspeth Hardie, Scott Morton & Co. practically relied on church commissions to continue the firm after her father's death in 1933, an area of business which he had developed.[75] (Figure 15) Numerous illustrations exist, for example, of Minister's chairs flanked by two Elders' chairs in the Scott Morton archives. For Lorimer, ecclesiastical commissions not only played an important financial role in his practice, but were one of the most important elements cementing his reputation. Possibly Lorimer's greatest church commission, although perhaps not his most original project, was the Thistle Chapel, an

extension to St. Giles's Cathedral, Edinburgh, built circa 1909-1911 and designed by Lorimer in the Gothic style. It was not only a very large and magnificent creation, but also served to bring him outside of the aristocratic arena in which he had been working. Along with his work on war memorials following the First World War, the Thistle Chapel established Lorimer's public reputation.

Robert Lorimer was arguably the most 'Scottish' of the architects working at the beginning of the twentieth century. Not only did he embody the importance of architects to interior decoration in Scotland at this time, but his influence, in his catholic use of historical styles and austerity in decoration was felt throughout the cabinet-making community of Edinburgh. Although the Arts & Crafts movement was to influence both William Scott Morton and Robert Lorimer, it is the way they and other Scottish architects and cabinet-makers moved beyond this, to create a uniquely Scottish style which has driven this investigation. Their work continues to provide inspiration for contemporary designers and decorators and, in many senses, paved the way for the minimalism of the present day.

Among the Scott Morton papers held by the Royal Commission is a lengthy list of houses furnished by the firm, as well as a list of projects carried out 'under the supervision of eminent Architects' which is reproduced below and which, although undated, probably formed part of the publicity materials of the company during the first quarter of the twentieth century.

A selection of houses furnished wholly or partially by Scott Morton & Co.

33 Moray Place, for the Hon. Lord Johnston
34 Drumsheugh Gardens, Edinburgh, for Geo. A. Clark Hutchison Esq.
9 Rothesay Terrace, Edinburgh, for James Pringle Esq.
25 Learmonth Terrace, Edinburgh for Arthur Sanderson Esq.
25 Glencairn Crescent, Edinburgh for W. B. Hardie Esq.
33 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh, for Sir James P. Gibson Bart., M.P.
5 Calton Terrace, Edinburgh, for F. Sanderson Esq.
7 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh, for the Rev. Alex. Whyte D.D.
Tor, Murrayfield, Edinburgh, for James Ainslie Esq.
Westerlea, Murrayfield, Edinburgh, for J. J. Cowan Esq.
St. Michaels, Musselburgh, for R. C. Menzies Esq.
Tusculum, North Berwick, for James Edward Cree Esq.
Abbey View, Kelso, for R. Mather Esq.
Norwood, Aberdeenshire, for James Ogston Esq.
Kinnaird House, Larbert, for Robert Orr Esq.
Glenbervie, Larbert, for James Aitken Esq.
Cardean, Meigle, for Edward Cox Esq.
Megginch Castle, Errol, Perthshire, for Capt. Drummond
Brewlands, Glenisla, Forfarshire, for J. Ivory Esq.
Torrisdale Castle, Carradale, Argyllshire, for Capt. Hall
Eriska, Ledaig, Argyllshire, for Geo. A. Clark Hutchison Esq.
Cassillis House, Ayrshire, for J. Strain Esq.
Lockerbie House, Lockerbie, Dumfriesshire, for Colin Dunlop Esq.

Lintmailing, Galashiels, Selkirkshire, for G.D. Gibson Esq.
Pavilion, Melrose, Roxburghshire, for the Hon. Lord Johnston
Whitmuirhall, Selkirkshire, for Charles Dunlop Esq.
Pitreavie, Dunfermline, for H. Beveridge Esq.
Redlands, 4 Lancaster Crescent, Glasgow, for G. B. Crookston Esq.
Clarence House, Renfrew, for Fred. Lobnitz Esq.
House, Park Lane, London, for the late W. Whittaker Wright
House, Queensgate, London, for J. H. Wicks Esq.
Cranleigh, Surrey for L. M. Cassella Esq.

A selection of contracts carried out in whole or in part, under the supervision of eminent Architects, by Scott Morton & Co.
6 Heriot Row, Edinburgh, for Alex. Maitland Esq.; R. S. Lorimer A.R.S.A., Architect
Restoration of Parliament Hall, Edinburgh Castle; H. J. Blanc R.S.A., Architect
5 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh, for the Most Noble the Marquis of Bute; A. F. Balfour Paul, Architect
The Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh; A. F. Balfour Paul, Architect
Harmeny, Balerno, Midlothian, for W. J. Younger Esq.; R. S. Lorimer A.R.S.A., Architect
Carle Kemp, North Berwick, for James Craig Esq.; John Kinross R.S.A., Architect
Glasclune, North Berwick, for Mrs. Cross; Jas. B. Dunn F.R.I.B.A., Architect
Briglands, Clackmannanshire, for J. Avon Clyde Esq., K.C., M.P.; R. S. Lorimer A.R.S.A., Architect
Restoration of Falkland Palace, for the late Marquis of Bute; John Kinross R.S.A., Architect
Wemyss Hall, Cupar, Fifeshire, for F. B. Sharp Esq.; R. S. Lorimer A.R.S.A., Architect
Leslie House, Fifeshire, for the Hon. Lord Rothes; R. S. Lorimer A.R.S.A., Architect
Strathendry House, Fifeshire, for W. Tullis Esq.; H. F. Kerr F.R.I.B.A., Architect
House, Aboyne, Aberdeenshire, for J. Herbert Taylor Esq.; R.S. Lorimer A.R.S.A., Architect
Kinfauns Castle, Perthshire, for the late Earl of Moray; F. W. Deas F.R.I.B.A., Architect
Ardkinglas, Argyllshire, for Sir Andrew Noble Bart., K.C.B., F.R.S.; R. S. Lorimer A.R.S.A., Architect
Ardtornish, Argyllshire, for J. Craig Sellar Esq.; John Kinross R.S.A, Architect
Rowallan Castle, Ayrshire, for A. Cameron Corbett Esq., M.P.; R. S. Lorimer A.R.S.A., Architect
Skeldon House, Ayrshire for Adam Wood Esq.; Jas. Miller F.R.I.B.A. (of Glasgow), Architect
Pollok House, Renfrewshire, for Sir John Stirling-Maxwell Bart.; A. F. Balfour Paul, Architect
Manderston House, Duns, Roxburghshire, for the late Sir James Millar Bart.; John Kinross R.S.A., Architect
Braehead, St Boswells, Roxburghshire, for the late J. Cuthbert Spencer; F. W. Deas F.R.I.B.A., Architect
Monksford, St Boswells, Roxburghshire, for Alex. Mitchell Esq.; E. Simpson (of Stirling), Architect

Kingsknowes, Galashiels, for Mrs Reid; H. O. Tarbolton F.R.I.B.A., Architect
The Glen, Innerleithen, Peebleshire, for the late Sir Charles Tennant Bart.; R. S. Lorimer A.R.S.A., Architect
The Peel, Clovenfords, Selkirkshire, for W. P. Ovens Esq.; John Kinross R.S.A., Architect
West Lodge, Darlington, for the late Sir David Dale Bart.; J. Malcolm (of London), Architect
Pattishall, Towcester, Northamptonshire, for Frank H. Burn Esq.; H. O. Tarbolton F.R.I.B.A., Architect
The Grange, Cheltenham, for J. M'C. Reid Esq.; F. W. Deas F.R.I.B.A., Architect
Ivanhoe Hotel, London, for Cranstons Ltd.; T. Duncan Rhind A.R.I.B.A. Architect
Monzie Castle, Perthshire, for C. M. Makgill Crichton Esq.; R. S. Lorimer A.R.S.A.,, Architect

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Scott Morton & Co., collection of records, photos and drawings, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, Edinburgh.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author is greatly indebted to the following for their help and advice: Elspeth Hardie, Beatrice Morton, David Reid, David Jones, Caroline Hirst, Paul and Josine Veenhuijzen, Janice Rothwell, Maureen Whewall, Veronica Steele, Ian Gow and especially the Regional Furniture Society for their support.

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2. Peter Savage, *Lorimer and the Edinburgh Craft Designers* Edinburgh: Paul Harris Publishing, 1980), p. 6.
3. Ibid., p. 7.
4. C Gere and M Whiteway, *Nineteenth Century Design: from Pugin to Mackintosh, London, 1993*, pp. 96 & 292. Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co. was re-christened Morris & Co. in 1875.
5. Elspeth Hardie, 'William Scott Morton' in *Antique Collector*, March 1988, pp. 70–71.
6. *The Art Journal Illustrated Catalogue of the International Exhibition* (London: James S. Virtue), 1862, p. 207, shows a sideboard exhibited by Johnstone and Jeanes and 'designed and executed by artists and artisans of the establishment...' Although it is not clear whether William Scott Morton was working for Johnstone and Jeanes in 1862, the firm, at least, was present at the exhibition, where the Arts & Crafts movement is credited with having formally begun.
7. Richard Norman Shaw, John Begg and Roger Kitsell are some of these with whom Lorimer associated in London. See Savage, p. 7.
8. Elizabeth S. Cumming, *Arts & Crafts in Edinburgh 1880–1930*, exhibition catalogue, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh College of Art, 1985), p. 1.
9. Of Robert Lorimer's commissions, for example, only his original designs at Earlshall are clearly in the Arts & Crafts style.
10. Cumming, p. 1.
11. Ibid., pp. 2–3.

12. Ibid., pp. 3–4.
13. Art furniture, generally, is that produced in Britain during the 1860s and 1870s by large, comprehensive cabinet-making firms to designs by professional designers, often originally trained as architects.
14. Hardie, 'Morton', p. 70.
15. The photograph, held by the Free Library of Philadelphia, is reproduced in Max Donnelly, 'British Furniture at the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition, 1876' in *Furniture History*, vol. XXXVII, 2001, p. 114.
16. Hardie, 'Morton', p. 79 and publicity material of Scott Morton & Co., Scott Morton Collection, The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, Edinburgh.
17. William was the creative brother, while John was the 'practical' one. See Hardie, p. 74.
18. A view of Scott Morton's Bishop's Parlour, exhibited at the 1888 Glasgow exhibition is reproduced in Save, Figure 74, p. 81.
19. *The British Architect*, 15 June 1888. This quotation is included in what appears to be a publicity flyer printed by Scott Morton & Co. to accompany their exhibit and held within the Scott Morton Collection, RCAHMS.
20. Bruce Talbert (1838–81), a Dundonian, was one of the most important architect-designers of the 1860s and 1870s and a major designer of art furniture. He enjoyed an international reputation and was responsible for some of the most innovatory pieces of furniture shown by major London furniture manufacturers such as Holland and Sons and Gillow at the international exhibitions of the period.
21. *Fashionable Furniture: a collection of three hundred and fifty original designs representing cabinet work, upholstery and decoration* (New York: J. O'Kane, 1882), p. 69.
22. Bruce Talbert's most famous work, for example, all exhibition pieces, were also all sideboards: the Pericles sideboard shown by Holland and Sons in Paris in 1867, the Pet sideboard shown by Gillow in 1871, and the Juno cabinet shown by Jackson and Graham in 1878.
23. Although the professional designer was much in demand in the 1860s and 1870s, by the 1880s, economic recession and a shift in the balance between comprehensive manufacturing firms, such as Holland and Sons, and production by the sweating system disintegrated the power of the professional designer. Because William Scott Morton was not only a professional designer, but also owned his own company, he was probably better able to resist a change in his status than many other professional designers. However, his firm was not unaffected and, as this article points, did experience in shift in the type of article it produced.
24. Scott Morton had become interested in Spanish and Italian gilt leather wall hangings and sought to emulate these in a less costly material which would still be elegant and able to convey colour. Colour was an especially important design aspect for Scott Morton, unlike Lorimer, who was not a colourist. Composed of canvas, Tynecastle Tapestry, named after the area of Edinburgh where the factory was located, was embossed and could be treated with a variety of finishes.
25. Hardie, 'Morton', p. 74.
26. Interview of Elspeth Hardie by the author, July, 2003, Edinburgh.
27. Hardie, 'Morton', p. 77.
28. Ibid., p. 73.
29. Delivered at the First Annual Convention of the National Association of Master Housepainters of England and Wales on 16th October, 1895, this talk was printed in *The Journal of Decorative Arts*, November 1895, pp. 265–267.
30. Interviews of Elspeth Hardie and Beatrice Morton by the author July and September 2003, Edinburgh.
31. *The Art of the People* (1879), reproduced in Christine Poulson, ed., *William Morris on Art & Design*, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), p. 179.
32. W. Scott Morton, *William Stewart Morton 1868–1933*, (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd Ltd., 1943), pp. 46–47.
33. Elspeth Hardie, 'Tynecastle Tapestry in the United States' in *Antique Collector*, May, 1989, pp. 114–115.
34. Hardie, 'Morton', p. 78.
35. Savage, p. 80.
36. The most famous of the Scott Morton designers to work with Lorimer were David Ramsay and Peter Miller. The latter went to work for Whytock & Reid until his retirement, after Whytock & Reid bought the goodwill of Scott Morton & Co. when it closed in 1966.
37. *The Arts & Crafts Exhibition Society: catalogues of the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, tenth, thirteenth catalogues* (London: Arts & Crafts Exhibition Society).

38. Savage, p. 126.
39. Morris pronounced, in *The Lesser Arts of Life* (1882) that 'Simplicity is the one thing needful in furnishing, of that I am certain; I mean first as to quantity, and secondly as to kind and manner of things...' See Poulson, p. 129.
40. Savage, p. 9.
41. Thomas Puttfarken, Christopher Hartley, Robert Grant and Eric Robson, *Falkland Palace and Royal Burgh* (Edinburgh: The National trust for Scotland, 2000), p. 19 and Savage, p. 10.
42. Christopher Hussey, *The Work of Sir Robert Lorimer* (London: Country Life Limited, 1931), p. 19.
43. This has been explored in depth by Peter Savage, specifically in the chapter 'The Edinburgh Craft Designers', pp. 65–88.
44. Savage, pp. 66–67.
45. Ibid., p. 67.
46. This does not mean that Lorimer should not be seen in a British context, or had no contact with English, Irish or Welsh designers. This statement merely points out one element of his design distinct from that of other British designers.
47. R. Davis Benn, 'Furniture and Woodwork at the Paris Exhibition' in *The Paris Exhibition* 1900 (London: The Art Journal Office, H. Virtue and Company, 1901), p. 132.
48. The Kellie piece is illustrated in Lindsay Macbeth Shen, *A Comment on Tradition; Robert S. Lorimer's Furniture Design* (Perth: Red Peroba Publishing, 1992), p. 21.
49. These are illustrated in Savage, plates 129, 131, 134.
50. See Macbeth Shen, pp. 14 & 15.
51. Lorna Blackie and David Learmont, *Hill of Tarvit Manshionhouse* (Edinburgh: The National Trust for Scotland, 1994), p. 6.
52. Illustrated in Lindsay Macbeth, 'The Nuremberg Twist and the Amsterdam Swing. Continental Influence on the Furniture Designs of R. S. Lorimer' in *Scotland and Europe. Architecture & Design 1850–1940. St. Andrews Studies in the History of Scottish Architecture & Design II*, 1991, Fig. 4, p. 46.
53. Savage, p. 68.
54. Interview of David Reid by the Author, July 2003, Edinburgh.
55. Letter from Robert Lorimer to David Ramsay, dated 31st May 1929, Scott Morton Collection, RCAHMS.
56. Savage, p. 66.
57. *Arts & Crafts Exhibition Society: catalogue of the fourth exhibition, 1893*, (London: New Gallery), p. 34.
58. Shapes Fine Art Auctioneers & Valuers, Edinburgh, *Glencruitten House*, 6 September, 2003, p. 34.
59. Interview with David Reid.
60. RCAHMS, SMO T/1/7/8.
61. Special Collections, Edinburgh University Library, and *Manderston* (Banbury: Norman Hudson & Co., n.d.), p. 11.
62. Sarah A. Kingston, *James Morison: Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer, Ayr, Glasgow and Edinburgh* unpublished senior honours dissertation, Department of Art History, University of St. Andrews, 1989, p. 42.
63. Letters between John Kinross and Evan Tweedie, quoted in Kingston, p. 43. Although an estimate from Morison & Co., 78 George Street, Edinburgh, to Gerald Craig Sellar of Ardtornish is clearly dated September, 1909, (see Kingston, plate 39), John A. Fairley writes that the George Street premises of Morrison and Co. were sold in 1902 to the Professional and Civil Service Supply Association, Ltd. And Morison and Co. itself to Turner, Lord & Co. of London. It is unclear, then, how Morison and Co. could have been working at Ardtornish in 1909–1910. Details of the final history of Morison and Co. still need to be uncovered. (See John A. Fairley, *Lauriston Castle: The Estate and its Owners* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1925), p. 195.)
64. See the list of Scott Morton & Co.'s commissions reproduced at the end of this article.
65. Kingston, pp. 4, 22.
66. Fairley, p. 193.
67. In fact, James Morison cultivated a relationship with one of the most eminent Scottish architects of his time, David Bryce, who was commissioned to add a saloon to the Morison premises in George Street. See Fairley, p. 193.
68. Hardie, 'Morton', p. 77.
69. Fairley, p. 194.
70. Ibid., 194.

71. Kingston, p. 39.
72. See, for example, Kingston, plates 33 & 34.
73. RCAHMS, SMO S/20/9/1 from 'Sketch Book 13'.
74. Hardie interview, July, 2003.