

extensively, the graphic account of the hero's adventures and reactions and concerns generates strong emotional appeal. And the sundry ironies that flavor the story augment the pleasure of reading *The War of the Worlds*.

Gail-Nina Anderson and David Longhorn

Mr Wells's Goblins

Ages ago, thousands of generations ago, man had thrust his brother man out of the ease and the sunshine. And now that brother was coming back – changed! (*The Time Machine*, Chapter 7)

One of the most powerful images in H.G. Wells's fiction is that of the Morlocks. This race of subterranean beings, the Time Traveller speculates, was originally the working class, driven underground by the ancestors of the Eloi who constituted the ruling class in a ruthlessly stratified world-state. In the darkness the Morlocks evolved into lemur-like creatures that eventually begin to emerge at night to prey upon the decadent and weak descendants of their former oppressors.

Over a century after *The Time Machine* was first published, the image of the Morlocks remains a disturbing one, not least because they represent an ingenious modern variation on a familiar theme. Folklore provides numerous examples of ugly and malevolent creatures dwelling underground. In fairy tales such creatures of darkness emerge at night to subject innocent people to various forms of unpleasantness. Trolls and suchlike were often portrayed as eaters of human flesh, and such monsters may have provided Wells with the most horrific aspect of the Morlocks' behaviour.

George MacDonald (1824-1905), a Scottish Congregational minister turned full-time writer, was the author of three children's classics and two poetic novels for adults (*Lilith* and *Phantastes*). It is in the second of his children's novels, *The Princess and the Goblin*, that MacDonald introduces what amounts to a new species

that has evolved from a race of humans forced underground many generations earlier. Unsurprisingly, given his audience, MacDonald never uses the word evolution, but he expresses the concept clearly enough:

Now in these subterranean caves lived a strange race of beings, called by some gnomes, by some kobolds, by some goblins. There was a legend in the country, that at any one time they lived above ground and were very like other people. But for some reason or other, concerning which there were different legendary theories, the kind had laid what they thought were too severe taxes upon them, or had begun to treat them with more severity, in some way or another, and impose stricter laws; and the consequence was that they had all disappeared from the face of the country. According to the legend, however, instead of going to some other country, they had all taken refuge in the subterranean caverns, whence they never came out but at night, and then seldom showed themselves in any numbers, and never to many people at once. (*The Princess and the Goblin* Chapter 1. 'Why the Princess has a Story about Her')

Of course, in *The Time Machine*, the option of 'going to some other country' could never have been available to the oppressed workers who were driven underground. But in other respects the passage resembles the hypothesis advanced by the Time Traveller to explain the Morlocks' evolution, as a rereading of Chapters 5 to 7 of *The Time Machine* will show. But does this similarity imply direct influence?

*The Princess and the Goblin* first appeared in serial form in 1871, in *Good Words for the Young*, an edifying periodical for juvenile readers edited by MacDonald. The novel was illustrated by Arthur Hughes, an associate of the Pre-Raphaelites. It is tempting to speculate that the young H.G. Wells read this popular and much-reprinted fairy tale at some time, not least since MacDonald's morally uplifting message would seriously have appealed to Wells's pious mother. Indeed, if the young Bertie was a voracious reader it is hard to image him being unaware of MacDonald's work.

So, were MacDonald's evolved goblins the precursors of the more interesting and sinister Morlocks? If they were, it does not detract from the originality and power of Wells's achievement. MacDonald ingeniously incorporated into his fairy tale a theory that was 'in the air' at the time. Wells went much further in applying the ruthless, amoral principle of Darwinian selection to the human race as a whole.

David C. Smith

A Plea for Assistance

Many of you will remember that, just over two years ago, Pickering and Chatto published four volumes of *The Correspondence of H.G. Wells* under my editorship. During the period of collection of these letters, and well after the physical make up of the work had been developed, it became clear to me that there were other letters written by Wells, some in private hands, and others in obscure archives, which should be part of a collected edition of his correspondence. Archivists and other colleagues came forward with knowledge of still more letters once the four volumes were published.

I have undertaken a very serious search for these missing letters. I have located about 600 more over the last three or four years. I believe now that there are in the world fewer than 40 remaining Wells letters available for publication. Of these, 25 or so are post cards to unknown persons, mainly setting down plans to meet, to have lunch and such like matters. A few others have disappeared since they were first noted, often as long as fifty years ago. There are letters left to copy of which I know the whereabouts and contents well enough to know they are useful additions.

I have edited these letters into a fifth volume, and intend to add the significant ones still uncollected when I am in England in the Autumn. This book is ready to go once copy editing and indexing are finished, a work of but a few days.

Pickering and Chatto have informed me that they have no interest in this fifth volume. In fact they have said that they do not want to look at the manuscript. They do say, however, that they are interested in publishing a related work, also completed,