THE ANCESTRY AND FAMILIES OF FORD MADOX BROWN

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As the nineteenth century recedes into the past it becomes possible and helpful to define with some exactness the genealogies of a number of significant Victorian figures hitherto given little scholarly attention. One such figure is Ford Madox Brown, the painter and close friend of Rossetti. His life is known chiefly through a biographical volume by his grandson, Ford M. Hueffer (later, Ford Madox Ford)\(^1\); he also appears many times in the publications of W. M. Rossetti concerning the Preraphaelite Brotherhood, D. G. Rossetti, and Christina Rossetti. An investigation of Ford Madox Brown's connections must be extensive, for he married twice—first his cousin, Elizabeth Bromley, and second, as a widower, Emma Matilda Hill. We must consider families named Brown (I), Madox (II), Bromley (III), and Hill (IV).

I

His paternal grandfather was that Dr. John Brown (1735-88) who propounded a system of medicine internationally famous in his century.\(^2\) He was born in the parish of Buncle in Berwickshire, the son of a common labourer who adhered to a strict sect called the Seceders. The son was given some education as a potential leader of the sect; but after he was sent to the University of Edinburgh he lost all confidence in their doctrines. He supported himself as a tutor until his skill in Latin prose attracted

\(^1\) Ford M. Hueffer, *Ford Madox Brown, a record of his life and works* (1896) cited below as Hueffer.

\(^2\) The account in the *D.N.B.* is based upon the three primary sources: (1) the biography prefixed by Thomas Beddoes, M.D., to his edition of Brown's own translation of the *Elements of Medicine* (1795; consulted in the edition printed at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, in 1803); (2) the memoir prefixed to his edition of his father's *Works* by William Cullen Brown (3 vols., London, 1804); and (3) T. J. Pettigrew, *Biographical memoirs of the most celebrated physicians, surgeons, &c, &c* (2 vols., 1839-40; vol. 2, fasciculi separately paged).
the notice of Dr. William Cullen, who employed him as a tutor in his own family and as his assistant in his teaching at the University.

According to one account, "Brown studied to perfect himself in anatomy and botany, with a view of qualifying for a chair in one of the colleges of America... Brown was, however, too useful to be permitted by Cullen to depart from Edinburgh. [Cullen] persuaded him to relinquish his design, and promised to exert his interest towards obtaining for him the first vacant chair at Edinburgh. There is but too much reason to believe that [Cullen] did not employ the influence he possessed in favour of his secretary and assistant; and, after more than one disappointment, Brown dissolved his connexion with his former preceptor and friend."¹ Brown was given to quarrels, perhaps because pugnacity is necessary to a man making his way alone. He began to lecture upon medicine independently, and at times attacked the accepted doctrines of the art. After the publication of his *Elementa Medicinae* (1780), he became openly scornful of the theories of Dr. Cullen—who, one must remember, had a European reputation. Though Brown sustained his position by a medical degree from the University of St. Andrews, he was plagued by numerous professional antagonisms, and to escape these he moved to London in 1786. He died there of an apoplexy in October 1788.

Brown has been called "the last teacher of a medicine not entirely divested of the medieval tradition".² A brief description may be quoted:

The Brunonian system was really very simple. Life, according to Brown, depended upon continuous stimulation. The stimulants were warmth, food, muscular movement, intellectual energy, emotion, etc. Disease was the result of excess of stimulation or, much more frequently, defect of stimulation. Acting upon this assumption, Brown classified all diseases as sthenic or asthenic. No other diagnosis was required and the treatment was obvious, consisting as a rule in large and even "heroic" doses of stimulating drugs.³

Contrariwise, cases of excessive stimulation were treated by depressants. Brown himself was accustomed while lecturing to take

¹ Pettigrew, op. cit. ii. 3.
alternative hearty swigs of whiskey and laudanum in order to attain the exactly suitable degree of stimulation. Because it was constructed of the notions and terms then central to physiological discussions, Brown's system caused violent controversy¹ in the 1780s; in the period from 1796 to 1808 more than two hundred books were published in Germany either attacking or defending him²; and throughout the first half of the nineteenth century physicians deferred to the name of "the celebrated Dr. Brown" —but since then his system has lain quietly among the curiosities of the past. In England his most significant follower was Dr. Erasmus Darwin, in his *Zoonomia* (1794).³

Dr. Brown married Euphan (anglicé, Euphemia), daughter of John Lamond, merchant, in Edinburgh on 20 January 1765, when the bride was twenty-five.⁴ According to their eldest son, the couple had twelve children, of whom eight survived the father. The bereft family had many well-wishers, a circumstance probably related to Dr. Brown's Masonic connections. Only five children seem to have lived to maturity:⁵

(1) William Cullen Brown (b. 1776/7?), who attended the University of Edinburgh in 1792/3-1798/9, being admitted to all medical lectures gratis in honour of his father. He obtained his M.D. in 1802, and edited his father's *Works* with a prefatory memoir in 1804. He was appointed Surgeon, R.N., in January 1809. He died in Gun Street, Spitalfields, and was buried there at Christ Church on 6 January 1816, when his age was recorded as 39.⁶

(2) John Brown (b. 14 August 1778), who also studied gratis at the University of Edinburgh. He went to Egypt as a Hospital Mate under Sir Ralph Abercromby in 1800, became Assistant Surgeon in 1801, a Surgeon in 1805, and

³ Beddoes, op. cit. p. liv.
⁴ Francis J. Grant, ed., *Register of Marriages of the City of Edinburgh, 1751-1800* (Scottish Record Society, 1922), p. 86; Edinburgh Parish Register, baptismal entry for 29 May 1740.
⁵ Many of the following details have been drawn from two letters written (in 1825) by Elizabeth Cullen Brown and now held by the library of the University of Edinburgh. I am grateful for photostats, and much auxiliary information, afforded me by Charles P. Finlayson, the Keeper of Manuscripts. The naval careers of the brothers Brown have been traced for me by M. E. S. Laws, Lt.-Col. R.A. (ret.).
⁶ Surgeons Services, P.R.O. Adm. 104/7; *Gentleman's Magazine*, n.s. ix (April 1816), pt. i, p. 377; Burial Register, Christ Church, Spitalfields, Middlesex.
a Recruiting District Surgeon in 1808. He was placed on half-pay in June 1815, and died on 14 April 1816. 1

(3) Ford Brown (b. 26 November 1780), for whom see below.

(4) Edward Stevens Brown (b. 7 May 1782 ?), who joined the Royal Marines as a second lieutenant on 5 February 1798, rose to a captnacy in 1812, was placed on half-pay with effect on 1 September 1814, and died in 1822. 3

(5) Elizabeth Cullen Brown (1772 ?-1857), the eldest daughter. For some time she maintained herself as a governess; later she seems to have been aided by a subscription among her father's admirers. She published The Sisters of St. Gothard. A Tale (2 vols., 1819), an endearing absurdity, and Passion and Reason (4 vols., 1832), which is wonderful if taken a little at a time. She died on 23 June 1857 at 38 Charles Street, Hampstead Road, when her age was recorded as 85. 4

Returning to Ford Brown (1780-1842), he was appointed Purser, R.N., in 1800 and served almost continuously until 1814, when he was placed on half-pay. 5 He married Caroline Madox on 18 April 1815 in the church of St. Alfege, Greenwich. They lived mostly on the Continent, for reasons of thrift. Their daughter Eliza Coffin Brown was born in 1818/19; their son Ford Madox Brown was born on 16 April 1821 at Calais. 6 On 5 July 1834, from Dunkirk, Ford Brown submitted a report to the Secretary of the Admiralty to the effect that he was unable to serve afloat owing to infirmities caused by a paralytic stroke and gout, and applied for a recently instituted increase in half-pay. 7 His wife died at Calais and was buried there on 7 September 1839; their daughter died at Antwerp on 29 June 1840, when her age was recorded as 21. 8 Meanwhile the son, Ford Madox

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2 Edinburgh Parish Register.
3 Navy List (1798); P.R.O., Adm 37/4056; A List of the Officers of H.M.'s Royal Marine Forces (1822; and 1823). According to the Edinburgh Parish Register, this man was born on 7 May 1781, a date which is incompatible with that given for the birth of his elder brother Ford; the entry has been inserted in a different hand, probably in the wrong year.
4 Her brother Ford, writing to his son on 24 January 1839, calls her "your Aunt Bessy" (Hueffer, p. 8).
5 P.R.O. Adm. 36/13952, Adm. 37/3915.
6 The daughter's baptism has eluded search; for the son's, G.R.O., Somerset House, Miscellaneous Foreign Records, Register of Baptisms at Calais, 1819-47. Here and elsewhere in these pages I am happy to acknowledge the help of Miss V. J. Ledger.
7 P.R.O. Adm. 6/193/fo. 91.
8 G.R.O., Somerset House, Miscellaneous Foreign Records, Register of Burials at Calais, 1819-47; Register of Burials in the City of Antwerp in 1840.
Brown, had begun his apprenticeship to painting at Bruges, at Ghent, and for about three years at Antwerp; he moved to Paris, probably in 1840. On 10 June 1842, at Paris, Ford Brown made a will leaving all his property to his son;\(^1\) he was buried at Montmartre on 22 November 1842.\(^2\)

One result of the foregoing account is the knowledge that, except for his Aunt Bessy, Ford Madox Brown was the only surviving member of the Brown family after 1842.

II

Turning to the family of Ford Brown's wife, one may note that her father, Tristram Maries Madox of Greenwich, was a Gentleman-Pensioner, that is, one of the "forty gentlemen who act as guards or attendants to the sovereign on state occasions", in 1779-1801. His family had been settled in Kent since the first quarter of the seventeenth century.\(^3\) He married Sarah Taylor in the Church of St. Alfege, Greenwich, on 28 January 1774, and begot on her five sons and seven daughters. Their prosperity may be deduced from the husband's direction in his will to his wife, his sole heir and executrix, that she should advance £500 to any of their sons who, when adult, wished to set himself up in business. The four eldest sons seem to have died before their mother made her will in 1826, though all seven of the daughters were then alive. We need mention only the sixth daughter, Caroline (b. 1792), who became Mrs. Ford Brown, as mentioned above, and the third daughter, Mary (b. 1780), who became Mrs. Samuel Bromley. The fifth and last surviving son was James Fuller Madox (1789-1864), an attorney. When he made his will in 1858 his wife had predeceased him and their only child, Tristram Maries Madox [II], had been shipped off to Australia. In a codicil of 1860 James Fuller Madox directed that if in his

\(^1\) Somerset House, 1842, fo. 797. Hueffer (p. 21) predated the old gentleman's decease.
\(^2\) G.R.O., Somerset House, Miscellaneous Foreign Records, Register of Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials for the City of Paris and its environs, 1836 to 1844.
\(^3\) OED, sub "gentleman", 2b; The Times, 6 October 1801, p. 2, col. 6 (an obituary); P.R.O. E/407/2/132 (of 1779), E/407/2/160, 161 (of 1801 and 1802); Publ. of the Harleian Society, liv (1906), 101.
own lifetime his son were to die without issue, his estate should be divided between his three surviving sisters and his nephew Ford Madox Brown. But the son returned to England, inherited and dissipated his father's estate, and descended to a post in the engine-room of a steam-laundry at Ramsgate, where he died of senile decay and a heart attack on 3 March 1896.¹

Caroline Madox’s portion of her father’s estate consisted of a share in Ravensbourn Wharf at Greenwich and shares in several other properties and farms in Kent. All these descended to Ford Madox Brown, who with the aid of his Uncle Madox placed a mortgage of £500 on some one of them, probably the share in the wharf, in 1855. Nothing further concerning the properties seems to have transpired in print; Brown may have held them throughout his life.²

III

Turning next to the family of Bromley, it seems to have gained most lustre from Sir Thomas Bromley, a Lord Chancellor (1579-83). In the expansive fashion of his day Sir Thomas claimed descent from an ancient house established in Staffordshire since the time of King John, and begot four sons and four daughters, for most of whom he arranged alliances with other rising families.³ A direct descent from Sir Thomas through his third son, Gerard, was claimed by or for James Bromley, who on 4 June 1794 was appointed assistant (and resident) Surgeon to H.M.’s Chest at Chatham—that is, he became the physician to examine disabled seamen who applied for relief to the ancient and royal foundation. In 1805, when the administration of the Chest was transferred to the Greenwich Hospital, James Bromley

¹ Wills: Tristram Maries Madox [I], P.C.C. 1801, Abercrombie, fo. 86; Sarah Madox, P.C.C. 1828, Sutton, fo. 662; James Fuller Madox, P.R. 1865, fo. 262. Information kindly furnished by the Rev. Ernest E. Turner, Rector of Foots Cray, co. Kent, and by Mrs. Rossetti Angeli. All the children of the marriage were baptized in the church of St. Alfege.
² Hueffer, pp. 22-23; W. M. Rossetti, ed., Præraphaelite Diaries and Letters (1900), pp. 8 (note), 85, 166, 179.
³ D.N.B., sub Sir Thomas; according to a chart by J. P. Rylands, now held by the Society of Genealogists, Sir Thomas was eleventh in descent from Geoffrey de Bromley, ob. 1272.
was given two years' salary (£140) in compensation for the loss of his position.\(^1\)

James Bromley's son, Samuel Bromley, was appointed Surgeon, R.N., in 1800. On 8 July 1809, in St. Alfege's Church, he married Mary, third daughter of the late Tristram Maries Madox, Esq., of Greenwich, as has been recounted above. James Bromley took his bride to live in Butt Lane, Deptford, and the baptismal register of St. Paul's Church, Deptford, records their five children: Samuel Fuller Bromley (b. 15 May 1810); Mary Robinson Bromley (b. 17 December 1811); Richard Madox Bromley (b. 11 June 1813); Augustus Frederick Bromley (b. 19 February 1815); and Elizabeth Bromley (b. 10 September 1818). No further record has been found concerning the elder daughter. Much later, on 13 May 1848, administration of the goods, etc., of Samuel Fuller Bromley, a Surgeon belonging to the South Sea whaling ship *Gypsey*, who had died at sea, was granted to his widow. In the meantime Samuel Bromley, the father, had died in Greenwich Road on 15 January 1835, leaving his property to be divided among his second and third sons and his younger daughter.\(^2\)

These three heirs may be clearly accounted for. Richard (later Sir Richard) Madox Bromley (1813-65) was educated in the Grammar School at Lewisham and entered the Admiralty department of the Civil Service in 1829. He soon exhibited unusual efficiency and imagination in his work, and after 1845 was assigned a series of confidential tasks by the Admiralty and Exchequer. In acknowledgment of his services he was made K.C.B. in 1858. He possessed a handsome estate at Foots Cray, co. Kent. In 1863, when he retired because of ill-health, he was appointed a Commissioner of Greenwich Hospital. In 1843 he had married Clara Moser, and when she died in 1891

\(^1\) *Gentleman's Magazine, 4th ser., 1* (February 1866), 277-9 (henceforth cited as G.M.), an obituary of Sir Richard Madox Bromley contributed by a colleague in the Admiralty; this is the basis for the entry in *D.N.B.* P.R.O. Adm. 80/75, 80/95; information from the Maritime Museum.

\(^2\) G.M.; P.R.O. Adm. 104/12/fo. 99; Samuel Bromley's will, Somerset House, P.C.C., Gloster, fo. 277. The Baptismal Register of St. Paul's, Deptford, is L.C.C., P 75/PAU/2, 3 and 4; disposition of the goods of Samuel Fuller Bromley, P.R., Adm. 13 May 1848.
Augustus Frederick Bromley (1815-43) in 1841 was living on his leasehold of Milliker, a farm then of 154 acres near Meopham, co. Kent, with his wife Helen (née Weir) and their small children Helen, Augustus, and Louisa. A fourth child, Elizabeth Clara, was born to them in 1843. Augustus Frederick died in December 1843 of a heart-disease; his three eldest children died in 1855, 1845, and 1846 respectively. Elizabeth Clara Bromley married Samuel Cooper, an Opium Officer in India, and died of an apoplexy while on a visit to England in 1875. Helen Bromley, the mother, kept a school for small girls and boys at Gravesend from 1846 to about 1881, and died, aged 84, on 10 June 1886 at Stroud, co. Kent.

Elizabeth Bromley (18 September 1818–5 June 1846) inherited a third of her father's estate. She married her cousin Ford Madox Brown at Meopham on 3 April 1841; the groom was 19, the bride was 22 years of age. Afterwards Elizabeth’s brother Richard by generous accounting managed to settle £900 upon her. Her only child, Emma Lucy, was born at Paris on 19 July 1843. Elizabeth died in Paris, on a journey back from Italy to England, on 5 June 1846; her remains were buried in Highgate Cemetery (Grave no. 1865, square 43). Her daughter, Emma Lucy, was to spend some childhood years at Helen Bromley’s school at Gravesend, and then entered the Rossetti household as a boarder, to be taught by Mrs. Rossetti. She married William Michael Rossetti on 3 March 1874.

Ford Madox Brown, married secondly, in St. Dunstan-in-the-West, Fleet Street, on 5 April 1853, Emma Matilda Hill,
daughter of Thomas Hill, deceased. The witnesses to the marriage were Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Thomas Seddon. The couple’s first child, however, had been baptized in the church of St. Pancras a year before, on 18 April 1852:


The irregularity evident from these dates was naturally obscured by the family, and it is possible that Ford M. Hueffer believed his account of the marriage to be largely true. He wrote that in 1849 during a visit . . . to Stratford-on-Avon, [Brown] became acquainted and fell in love with a young girl of the name of Emma Hill, then aged only fifteen. She was the daughter of a Herefordshire farmer who . . . had so involved his estate, that when suddenly carried off by apoplexy, he left his widow with little more means of subsistence than a Chancery suit, which remains to this day unresolved.

In spite of her lack of means, Mrs. Hill regarded Madox Brown’s suit with disfavour, laying almost more stress on the disreputability of his profession than on her daughter’s early age or his smallness of fortune. Determination on the daughter’s side led to the inevitable harshness and the almost equally inevitable elopement. After a honeymoon spent at Pegwell Bay, Madox Brown settled down with his wife in a tiny house at Hampstead. Here the not very placable Mrs. Hill eventually joined them.¹

Though the girl may have been born in Herefordshire, the other statements in these paragraphs all seem fanciful.² For it is possible to ascertain a certain number of facts about the Hills. The John Rylands Library holds the deeds to two plots in St. Pancras Cemetery, Finchley, which were bought by Ford Madox Brown.³ According to the records of the cemetery, the first plot contains the graves of Brown, his second wife, and their two sons: it will be discussed below. The second plot (Grave No. 97, Section 12R) contains the graves of the following:

(a) Catherine Hill, who is described on her tombstone as the “relict of the late Thomas Warne Hill”. She died at 12

¹ Hueffer, p. 39.
² Persistent search for the Chancery suit has been in vain. The diary of Brown for 1847-56 exhibits, in its partially published form at least, no trace of Mrs. Hill as a member of Brown’s household (W. M. Rossetti, op. cit.). Hueffer did not know of the existence of this early diary when he wrote his volume (ibid., pp. 60-61).
³ Rylands English MS. 1235, folder F, leaves 10 and 11.
St. Paul’s Terrace, King’s Road, on 7 March 1877, at the age of 84; her death was registered by “E. Gandy, daughter”.

(b) Henry Gandy, aged 22, schoolmaster, whose death from tuberculosis at 12 St. Paul’s Terrace on 24 May 1878 was registered by Eliza Gandy, his mother.

(c) Harriet Gandy, aged 44, wife of John Gandy, engine cleaner, who died on 14 February 1896, at 70 Twisden Road, Kentish Town, of heart failure. The cause of her death was certified by the London coroner.

The clues attached to the first two entries lead to the record of the marriage, in St. George’s, Hanover Square, on 4 January 1846, of John Gandy, bachelor and architect, son of Michael Gandy, draftsman, of South Street in that parish, and Eliza Hill, spinster, of Silver Street, daughter of Thomas Hill, bricklayer. One witness to the marriage was Matilda Hill. Going still further back, to the Census of 1841, one discovers that there resided in Essex Street in the parish of St. Pancras a family consisting of Thomas Hill, aged 60, bricklayer; his wife Caroline (not Catherine), aged 49; and their daughter Matilda, aged 12. None of the three had been born in the parish. Despite the wrong baptismal name given the mother, and the absence of her daughter Eliza, these are probably the people we seek; the Census of 1841, being the first, was plagued by small errors. The age of the mother is consistent with other data: if she was 49 in 1841, she could have been 84 at her death in 1877. Also, if (Emma) Matilda Hill was 12 in 1841, she would have been about 19 when Ford Madox Brown sketched her as a young woman, certainly more than 15 years of age, at “Xmas ’48”.

To clear up the other burials in the plot, one may discover in the St. Pancras Register of Births a series of children born to John Gandy and his wife Eliza, née Hill; the first and third are as follows:

1 Hueffer, p. 61, reproduces the drawing, with its date clearly visible. Mrs. Rossetti Angeli has kindly told me that W. M. Rossetti, in his diary on 16 May 1890, recorded that it was the birthday of his wife’s stepmother, i.e. Emma Matilda Madox Brown.
John Thomas Deering, b. 30 November 1846 at 6 Pratt St., Camden Town, to John Gandy, French Polisher, and Eliza Gandy, formerly Hill.

Henry Joseph, b. 18 May 1856 at 148 Bayham St., Camden Town, to John Gandy, French Polisher, and Eliza Gandy, formerly Hill.

The second of these men was of course the young schoolmaster buried in Brown’s plot in 1878; the first of them was probably the husband of the Harriet Gandy who was buried there in 1896. Their father, John Gandy, French Polisher, died in the Workhouse of St. Pancras, aged 45, on 26 August 1857.

When Ford Madox Brown and his second wife moved to Finchley in September 1853, their family consisted of their daughter Catherine Emily, aged about three. Oliver, their first son, was born at Grove Villas, Finchley, on 20 January 1855; he was baptized on 25 November 1855 in the parish church of Kentish Town, for the family had moved in the interval to 13 Fortress Terrace. A second son, Arthur Gabriel, was born on 16 September 1856, baptized on 14 July 1857, and died a week later, on 21 July, of an “inflammation of the brain”. The heavy-hearted father purchased a burial plot (Grave No. 9, Section 12R), for the interment of his second son. The elder son, Oliver, died on 5 November 1874 and was interred a week later, on 12 November. Much later, their mother died, on 11 October 1890, and was buried on 16 October—for some reason, in Ford Madox Brown’s other plot (Grave No. 97, not 9, in Section 12R); her coffin was exhumed on 5 November and then interred in plot No. 9. The painter himself was to die on 6 October 1893 and to be buried on 11 October.

To complete the data concerning the family one may add that Catherine Emily, the daughter of the second marriage, was herself married in the Registry Office of St. Pancras on 3 September 1872 to Franz Xavier Huffer (i.e. Hueffer). The first child of this marriage was registered by his proud father as Ford Hermann Hueffer, born on 17 December 1873; the son was to end his
days under the name of Ford Madox Ford. A second son (Oliver) and a daughter (Juliet, later Mrs. David Soskice) were born in due time. The father died on 19 January 1899, aged 43, and was interred in St. Pancras Cemetery, Finchley (Grave No. 150, Section 12Q). His widow died on 3 June 1927. Her ashes were deposited in the Golders Green Crematorium; a memorial tablet exists in the East Cloister, Bay "X".