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LECTURE BY DR. O. L. TRIGGS

The lecture upon "William Morris and His Art," announced in the November *Bulletin*, was duly delivered on December 8 by Dr. O. L. Triggs to a thoroughly interested audience. The slides proved to be excellent, and, if only their interpreters be as well informed in the letter and as congenial with the spirit of the great Morris as Dr. Triggs showed himself to be on this occasion, future exhibitions of them will greatly promote the movement for which the Morris Society stands. The slides are at the disposal of any member of the Morris Society for one week at a charge of five cents per slide.

LECTURE BY GEORGE WHARTON JAMES

On December 15 the Morris Society was so fortunate as to secure another lecture upon Morris, this time from Mr. George W. James, so widely and favorably known as editor of *The Craftsman*. The lecturer devoted himself expressly to the personal aspect of the great poet, craftsman, and reformer; and thus showed in most interesting fashion the entire mental soil out of which the superlative traits of Morris could grow. The lecture will appear in full in the coming

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issue of *The Craftsman*, and is given below in condensed form by kind permission and assistance from Mr. James himself. Though the summary can hardly show this, the full article makes it quite clear that Mr. James has caught the vital spark of enthusiasm for art and humanity that made Morris great. Now for the summary :

“Famous as William Morris has become in his professional aspects, he is yet upon the human side almost unknown except to a limited number. Morris was born well-to-do, but his conviction that manhood was impossible without work led him to train as an architect. As a mere youth he had become well versed in the archæology of his home neighborhood, and continued the same interest at Marlborough School and Oxford University. Ruskin's ‘Stones of Venice’ and a holiday spent in visiting the churches of Northern France and Belgium confirmed this taste for architecture. Another trait in Morris appears from his membership in the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, so devoted to sincerity and purity in all art.

“But there were three prominent qualities of Morris which showed throughout his life and in whatever he turned to. Morris loved beauty, he loved humanity, and whatever he did he did intensely. He studied architecture because he loved the glorious old churches and other buildings of England, and later of the world; he wrote poetry because he loved a beautiful story well told; and he practiced the crafts because of the same devotion to beauty.

“But Morris loved man also, as he showed by his passionate pleas for the happiness of every worker and by his chivalric devotion to the cause of socialism.

“The intensity of Morris was instinctive and unconscious, and was with him from childhood to the grave. So he never forgot a landscape, building, flower, or other object which had once been seen in his intense fashion. Also his impetuosity at single-stick was so great that frequently a table was interposed between him and his opponent. When Morris had lost his temper he would beat his own head fiercely with his clenched fist, in order ‘to take it out of himself,’ as he phrased it. This temper was the chief thing that his schoolmates at Marlborough remembered about Morris, and he

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never quite outgrew it. 'I lost my temper in the dye-house for the first time this afternoon; they had been very trying, but I wish I hadn't been such a fool; perhaps they will turn me out tomorrow morning, or put me in the blue vat.' Once, as director of a certain corporation, Morris was persuaded into wearing a silk hat; but at the end of this directorate he walked rapidly home, put down his hat, and, with evident pleasure, sat down on it, never again to insult his head by conventional gear.

'This intensity made Morris do everything decisively, whether well or ill, and led him to hate vagueness as something even immoral. It also showed in his rare power of concentration, which enabled Morris to master a subject within a time that to other men seemed impossible; and such mastery in turn made the versatility of Morris possible to him. It also made him seem unsociable to most men, just because they are more interested in frivolities than in truth.

'With such intensity and temper, it can well be imagined that Morris was direct in speech! And this, with his other qualities, made him a master of pure English, for he did not aim at style or fine diction. Thus he could write: 'To adopt this plan [of promoting architecture] would show that we were too careless and hurried about life to trouble ourselves, whether we were fools (and very tragic fools) or not.'

'Finally, I would revert with chief emphasis to Morris' love for humanity. When he saw his fellows slaving and toiling for a mere pittance, when he saw commercialism making of human beings nothing more than machines, and every good and noble thing in manhood sacrificed at the shrine of mammon, his very soul was roused to rebellion. His comment upon the terrible demoralization of the English workman was: 'If I were to spend ten hours a day at work I despised and hated, I should spend my leisure, I fear, in drinking.' And accordingly Morris took upon himself, with sublime self-effacement the burdens of the common people, the problem of giving to poor folk the pleasures and the hopes of men. Is that really impossible? 'Since I wish to live, and even to be happy, I cannot believe it is. I know by my own feelings and desires what

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these men want, what would have saved them from this lowest depth of savagery: employment which would foster their self-respect and win the praise and sympathy of their fellows, and dwellings to which they could come with pleasure, surroundings which would soothe and elevate them, reasonable labor, reasonable rest. There is only one thing that can give them this, and that is art.'

"For years Morris worked toward these ends, and it was, in the hope of urging on the happy day he longed for, that he became a socialist. 'I could never forget that, in spite of all drawbacks, my work is little else than pleasure to me; that under no conceivable circumstances would I give it up, even if I could. Over and over again have I asked myself why should not my lot be the common lot?' "Even though it *seemed* to fail, Morris' work for humanity succeeded, is successful, and will continue to develop."

#### COMING LECTURE

An engagement has been made with Mrs. Lou Wall Moore, well-known as a sculptor in Chicago, to address the Morris Society sometime in January 1905 upon the topic of artistic dress. Members will be notified of time and place by postal card.

3. The Society will co-operate also in the sale of Joseph Twyman's "Essays on Art" and Dr. Triggs's "The Changing Order," and "Chapters in the History of the Arts and Crafts Movement;" it will publish the Monthly Bulletin, study-programs, and pamphlets as heretofore. As a gift from Professor Moulton each member will receive a copy of the syllabus on "William Morris as the English Homer." The Council has voted to present to the members the volume entitled "Chapters in the History of the Arts and Crafts Movement," by Dr. Triggs.

4. The Society will prepare an exhibition of Joseph Twyman's designs and art products for both the Art-Crafts and the Architectural exhibitions at the Art Institute. A special room will be assigned for this purpose.

5. The Society has invited May Morris to visit America and give lectures on topics relating to art and the crafts. Miss Morris is a talented artist and crafts-worker and an interesting speaker. It is expected that she will come in the spring and will offer lectures on the following topics: "Mediæval Embroidery," "Jewels," "Costume," "Pageantry and the Masque," "Mediæval Womankind," all except the last named being illustrated by stereopticon slides. While no definite dates can at present be assigned, Dr. Triggs will be glad to correspond with art institutes and clubs desiring one or more of these lectures. It is also expected that Miss G. Atomi, a leading artist of Tokyo, Japan, who was commissioned by the Japanese government to report upon art at the Louisiana Exposition, will lecture before the Morris Society some time this fall upon the technic of art in Japan.

6. The Morris Society has proposed to the Chicago Art Institute that it co-operate in establishing the Morris Museum originally contemplated. It is intended to gather a complete collection of the designs and works of Morris and of related artists and craftsmen, such as Burne-Jones and Walter Crane.

7. The Council has ordered the preparation of 100 stereopticon slides illustrating Morris and his group and the general Morris movement. These slides will be used by the Society's lecturers and loaned to members for a small fee. The list of subjects when completed will be printed in the BULLETIN.

8. The Society offers to the public a number of lectures as named below. For information as to dates and fees address Mr. Edmund Buckley, 301 E. Fifty-sixth Street, Chicago.

Edmund Buckley: "Analysis of Decorative Art," illustrated by material; "Japanese Decorative Art," illustrated by material; "The Art of Walter Crane," illustrated by material or by slides.