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Craftsman, Writer and Social Reformer

By Oscar Lovell Triggs

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WILLIAM MORRIS

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

"Morris," said some one recently, "is in the air." There is everywhere a widespread curiosity about the man and his works. Calling one summer upon one of Morris's associates in London, I met travelers from Germany and from France intent upon the same mission as myself: here were representatives of four nations drawn together by a common interest.

Connected with this general curiosity is a feeling that Morris's true proportions have not yet been revealed to the world. Like a great mountain, he looms larger the farther we are removed from him.

More than statesmen or scientists, more than the great artists, more than Tennyson or Browning, even more than Ruskin, he indicates, I am sure, the important creative impulses and tendencies of England in the nineteenth century.

He represents especially the movement towards democracy, and his philosophy of life—drawn largely from Ruskin—is such as the world must eventually accept and apply, or suffer loss through divagation in a wilderness of barren aims and useless endeavor.

He is representative of a century of transition.
With Tolstoi he passed through the whole cycle of change from aristocracy to democracy. Exclusive and aristocratic in his early years, he became before his death the expositor and the living exemplar of the doctrine of brotherhood. A reactionist in his youth, judging the world by mediæval standards, he became the voice of prophecy announcing the better day that is to come. From a mere poet and idle dreamer, writing to please himself or some "lady of an ancient bower," he passed to perfect with his own hands a model system of industry in the full spirit of social service.

His restlessness carried him through plane after plane of development. Not only did he represent at different times in his life the aristocratic and democratic spirit, but also at each moment he touched the world at many points and threw back its reflection from many facets of character. He was, in truth, an unspecialized type, like certain of the great mediæval poets and artists—like Dante, who was both scholar and poet; like Angelo, who was poet, painter, sculptor and builder. More than any of his contemporaries Morris saw life "whole," if not quite "steadily." As an epic poet he belongs with Chaucer and Spenser. Professor Moulton calls him appropriately "the English Homer." In the field of pure romance, in stories such as "The Story of the Glittering Plain," his work is without counterpart either in English or continental literature. He is equally conspicuous as an artist and craftsman. He was beyond doubt the leading craftsman in Europe, and this characterization is true as referring to his decorative designs, his household arts, and his
printing of books. He had, moreover, a genius for social reform, although in this field his place is due not so much to what he accomplished as to what he contributed in respect to ideals and impulses. There are many—and I am one—who think that in the long future he will be most universally known and honored because he loved mankind and pointed the road to social betterment.

What other Englishman shows such a record? Keats was a poet and dreamer, but he had no constructive ability of any kind. Carlyle was a “man of letters”—and nothing more. Shelley was a great poet and had, as he said, “a passion for reforming the world,” but his hands were untrained and he made practical shipwreck of his own life. Rossetti was poet and artist, but he lacked modernity and rarely touched reality at any point. Burne-Jones was Morris’s intimate associate, but he saw the world from the vantage ground of but a single art, and his mysticism betrays remoteness from practical life.

Ruskin and Tolstoi approach nearest to Morris’s standard of universality. But Ruskin resisted the democratic and scientific tendencies of the age and dissipated his large fortune in miscellaneous enterprises, no one of which has the economic stability of the Morris manufactory at Merton Abbey. Tolstoi is great above all his contemporaries as writer, teacher, moralist, and peasant; he is a true world-citizen, having passed, like Morris, through every stage of development and come out into the open modern world. But Tolstoi, more than Morris was, is limited to his environment. He has not yet contributed a romance
of pure unconditioned type, like the fabulous "Story of the Glittering Plain" or "The Well at the World's End," revealing thereby a defect of fancy and imagination.

Morris's distinction, it seems to me, consists in this: that he combined the poetical and the practical, the romantic and the real, mythology and science, aristocracy and democracy, past and present, the arts and crafts; and that these he combined with an integrity and logical consistency which can be predicated of no other modern man.
CHAPTER II.
DEVELOPING INFLUENCES.

It will be profitable to scrutinize the life-history of William Morris and note the condition of his growth and the stages of his development. At first sight his life seems confused in its aims and almost incoherent in its occupations, but with deeper view it will not be difficult to show that its spirit was single and its development regular and, indeed, with reference to the conditions of his work, normal.

It is significant, I think, that Morris was of Welsh-English descent, his heredity indicating thus the union of Celtic and English strains—the Celtic which Matthew Arnold asserts has furnished to English literature its "turn for style, its turn for melancholy, and its turn for natural magic," and the English, which is ever characterized by practicality and moral earnestness.

His father conducted a successful brokerage business in London, and, dying in 1847, left his family amply provided for. Morris, of course, never knew the sting of poverty or deprivation. He had capital for his various enterprises and, being economically independent, he could openly preach the doctrines of social change. On account of inherited wealth both Ruskin and Morris
were able to experiment with life on ideal grounds.

The mother also belonged to the commercial proprietary class. She was reserved, conservative, had considerable musical talent, and trained her children in the ways of mother-church.

No one of the children save William came to any prominence. Like genius in so many other cases, William was a "sport" of transient character. William was born on the 24th of March, 1834, at Walthamstow, a village near London, on the borders of Epping Forest and the wide Essex plains. Here and at Woodford, farther north on the Epping Road, he lived until his fourteenth year. As a child he was care-free, ranging without restriction the fields and woods, cherishing those romantic fancies to which his nature subjected him. "When we were children," he said, "every house in the fields was the Fairyland King's home to us." Epping Forest, in particular, is the proper playground for a child. It is a piece of ancient soil. Its strange pollarded trees—oak and beech and the rare hornbeam—have been protected by some favoring chance against the inroads of modern rapacity and greed. It is a haunted place, a mysterious whispering place of old memories, suggestive of Druid altars and Robin Hood, Titania and Oberon, and all that one has dreamed. There is nothing grand or impressive about the environment; it is rather intimate, historic, personal. Those who know the land recognize in the poet's writings a constant reference back to the impressions and associations of his youth. It is noticeable that many scenes are laid in wildwoods, as in "The Wood Beyond
DEVELOPING INFLUENCES

the World," where trees seem to have some mystic or symbolical import. In "News from Nowhere" memories of his boyhood are preserved. "I was born and bred on the edge of Epping Forest, Walthamstow and Woodford, to-wit: A pretty place, a very jolly place." And, speaking of the Essex marshes, he says: "What, with the beasts and the men, and the scattered red-tiled roofs, and the big hay-ricks, it does not make a bad holiday to get a quiet pony and ride about there on a sunny afternoon of autumn and look over the river and the craft passing up and down, and on to Shooter's Hill and the Kentish uplands, and then turn round to the wide, green sea of the Essex marsh-land, with the great domed line of the sky, and the sun shining down in one flood of peaceful light."

His early schooling as such was unimportant, but he was a voracious reader, especially of romances, and by the time he was ten he had read the whole of Scott's novels and had come under the spell of the Middle Ages. Scott's novels were ever afterward associated in his mind with a tapestry room of "faded greenery" in an old house of Epping Forest. Add to Scott a love of the old Essex churches, weather-worn and unrestored, but beautiful with an old-world and rather pathetic beauty and ever delightful to the romantic imagination. As a boy of eight he saw the great cathedral of Canterbury. Here was a beauty surpassing all he had dreamed. He never saw the cathedral again, but so vividly was its beauty impressed upon his sensitive mind that he always remembered its structure with perfect distinctness.
In his home no opposition was offered to his boyish pursuits. The traditional religious festivals were kept with exactness. Sometimes he rode about the woods in a suit of armor, pretending to be a knight of the old days. It was with his father he visited Canterbury, and to please his son the father had obtained a coat of arms from the Herald's College, which contained the horse's head which appeared later on the tiles and painted windows at Red House.

Such were some of the developing influences of Morris's early life. They all counted to the upbuilding of the romantic side of his nature. If he was a mediævalist, it was because from his boyhood he knew intimately the life of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and loved their culture passionately. If we find in his writings, his wall-papers and tapestries, the evidences of a love of nature beyond the love of most poets, it is because as a child he lived in an environment peculiarly personal and appealing. The record of his life thus far accounts for what he has himself called his "archæological natural-history side."

At the age of fourteen he left home and went west across country to Marlborough College, in Wiltshire. It is not likely that he gained much in this preparatory school in respect to formal discipline. There were no new avenues of interest opened up in his mind. But he was able to continue the two main studies of his life—archæology and natural history. In the neighborhood were Druidic, Celtic and Roman remains and other Gothic churches. He exchanged Epping for Savernoke Forest and delved more deeply into its shady recesses. Creative impulses began to
emerge in the form of tales of fairies and knights and of miraculous adventure.

The boy Morris was educated, it will be seen, not by books or masters, but through impressions received from the outer world. Throughout his life he was particularly open to suggestion from without, and this fact accounts, I should say, for the great variety of his interests and occupations. But these impressions were received upon a mind peculiarly imaginative, and hence the facts of his world were always given imaginative interpretation. The inner world of his own creation was as large as the outer world he perceived. For this reason also his nature was finely balanced between realism and idealism, and his training counted, therefore, for the same as his heredity.

At Oxford, whither he went in 1852 to matriculate at Exeter College for holy orders, there was at first but little change of direction. Oxford had not then come under the restorer's chisel. To eyes like Morris's its ancient beauty was still undimmed. The even current of its life had been but little affected by the Tractarian movement. The first effect of Oxford was to confirm a twig already bent. Morris continued his mediæval studies by reading Mallory and Froissart and patterned himself after the hero of "The Heir of Redclyffe." These books he read in company with Edward Burne-Jones, his college-mate, who had come up from Birmingham the same day as himself and with the same intention of entering the church. Like Morris, Burne-Jones was a Welshman and a dreamer. In an old book store he found Mallory's wonderful book and took it home for himself and Morris to read. There followed days
and nights of revel in imagining that quaint old world. For the regular work of Oxford Morris cared little. He read only for a pass degree, and if he did not learn much Latin and Greek and less theology, he discovered for himself that "fritillaries grew in Iffley meadow," and made the master friendships of his life with Burne-Jones, Faulkner, and Webb, and indirectly with Rossetti and Ruskin. Besides Mallory and Froissart, mediaevalists, the Morris group read Browning and Ruskin, who formed, as it were, the bridge upon which they moved from their little isle of safety into the larger ways of service. In Morris's case creative energy now began to reveal itself.

Four years were spent in Oxford. In the long vacations Morris and Burne-Jones traveled on the continent, visiting the art galleries and the great churches. One summer they announced exultingly they had seen nine cathedrals and twenty-four great churches. On one of these excursions the two decided to abandon theology and serve the world through the medium of art, one to become a painter, the other an architect. This change, it appears, was one of means and not of motives. About this time also Morris discovered he could write poetry, remarking: "Well, if this is poetry, it is very easy to write." An opportunity for the exercise of his literary talents was furnished by the "Oxford and Cambridge Magazine," which the Morris group, now calling itself "The Brotherhood," conducted for the twelve months of 1856. Morris was managing editor, chief contributor and paid the bills. He wrote poems, stories and critical reviews. The poems and tales revealed at once the special quality of
his genius; he had the faculty of vision. He was a "seer" in the true sense of the world—a seer of visions.

THE MERTON ABBEY WORKSHOPS.

This fact indicates the unity of his psychology. The faculty which gave pictorial and epical character to his poems and stories is the same faculty which, when turned upon materials, made him a great designer, and which, when directed to the social order, made him a reformer. Imagination is always the creative faculty, and it matters little what materials it works in.
CHAPTER III.

MORRIS, THE CRAFTSMAN.

After leaving Oxford Morris's life work was taken up in earnest. He entered an architect's office, that of George E. Street, then of Oxford, and later of London. The formal study of architecture, however, was little to his taste. Nothing that he wanted was to be secured at the end of a compass point. Enforced by Rossetti, whom he met in London, he tried painting. Otherwhiles he tried his hand at clay modelling and embroidery. He was apparently seeking some form of plastic expression, a medium as flexible as the poetry which he had already mastered. A highly dramatic and structural sense he clearly did not possess. It was his function to deal with surfaces. He was fitted both by the character of his mind and by his training up to this time to be a decorative artist.

It is in the light of this fact that all his works are to be interpreted. He was attracted from the first by the physical aspect of nature. His poems and tales, we now perceive, have little plot or structural consistency. His stories are successions of pictures. The industrial arts he cultivated were those which admitted of superficial design—wall papers, tapestries, embroidery, tiles,
Morris, the Craftsman

I painted windows, manuscript illumination, printing and engraving. Not that he meant by design and pattern a mere abstract arrangement in line and color; decoration, rather, should be reminiscent of the beauty and freshness of nature. As a sociologist he aimed to change, not the structure of society, but to improve, through structural change, if need be, its surface. “Scientific” socialism he never understood or advocated. The complex of Bellamy’s “Looking Backward” he repudiated, intimating in “News from Nowhere” an ideal of peace in which one feature was the love by all mankind of the “very surface of the earth.” It was his aim, in short, to make the world beautiful—to destroy ugliness wherever found, to preserve the beauty already wrought, and to create always more beauty.

Almost accidentally Morris came to take up the crafts. Some rooms he had taken in London with his friend, Burne-Jones, needed furniture and decoration. He could find nothing to his taste in the London shops, so he forthwith designed certain pieces of furniture which, with the help of his room-mate and Rossetti, he painted with scenes from Mallory, Chaucer and Dante. Later the same three artists, with other volunteers, essayed to decorate a hall at Oxford. They covered the walls in fresco with subjects from the Arthurian romance, and Morris, besides his picture of Sir Palomides, painted the ceiling with delicate pattern work. Then came the building of the Red House at Bexley Heath. Morris had married and wanted a place for his penates. He saw an apple orchard in blossom on the downs of Kent and selected it as the site of his home. Philip
Webb, one of his Oxford friends, helped in the architecture; Burne-Jones and Rossetti co-operated in the furniture and decoration. House building is a simple task, and everyone at some time in his life builds something. But never was a house built as this one was, and never from any house has proceeded a greater impulse for the improvement of life. In it Morris served his apprentice-time in craftsmanship and virtually initiated the modern arts and crafts movement. A new group of workers, with Morris as center, had now been formed. In the main it was the group which had gathered originally at Oxford and had talked of a monastic association to start a holy crusade against the age. The "Oxford and Cambridge Magazine" had been conducted by the Oxford Brotherhood. The decoration of the hall at Oxford had been undertaken by members of this band, joined by two of the older Preraphaelites. After completing Red House, was the group to dissolve? Naturally the association already formed led to a closer relationship. In 1861 the firm of "Morris and Company" was organized—the original name being "Morris, Marshall, Faulkner and Company." Rossetti gives the following account of its initiation: "One evening a lot of us were together and we got to talking about the way in which artists did all kinds of things in olden times, designed every kind of furniture, and someone suggested—as a joke more than anything else—that we should each put down five pounds and form a company. Fivers were blossoms of a rare growth among us in those days, and I won't swear that the table bristled with fivers. Anyhow, the firm was formed; but,
of course, there was no deed or anything of that kind. In fact, it was a mere playing at business, and Morris was elected manager, not because we ever dreamed he would turn out a man of business, but because he was the only one among us who had both time and money to spare. We had no idea whatever of commercial success, but it succeeded almost in our own despite.” The “firm” originally consisted of Morris, Rossetti, Burne-Jones, Madox-Brown, Webb, Marshall and Faulkner. It established its shops in Red Lion Square, London, and pledged itself to execute mural decoration, wood-carving, stained-glass, metal work, jewelry, furniture, embroidery and all other articles necessary for domestic use. Morris, as usual, was the moving spirit. For a period he gave his undivided time to the upbuilding of the work. With characteristic restlessness he passed from one craft to another, mastering the technique of each, trying a new one as soon as the old was understood. Furniture was least to his taste—its materials were too intractable. Glass painting also gave him difficulty and tried his patience. But he had no objection to dabbling in dyes. He liked the freer arts, embroidery and tapestry-weaving, paper and cloth printing. And besides being the firm’s chief designer, he was its poet, writing homely verses to be woven in embroideries or engrossed on tiles.

For a period of nearly forty years Morris was engaged on one or the other of the crafts. The original firm dissolved in 1873, when Morris assumed responsibility alone. The workshops were established finally at Merton Abbey, near London, where they now remain. The Kelmscott Press
was a separate institution and was conducted with another group of men, with Walker, Cockerell and Cobden-Sanderson, though Burne-Jones continued to be his main supporter in this enterprise also.

One dwells with fully absorbed interest on this side of Morris's career. It is so unusual for a poet or any man of culture to turn workman that the incident strikes one as phenomenal. It appears that words are not the only material a creative spirit can employ. The order and rhythm of verse may appear in wall hangings. Interlaced patterns may betoken the mystery of the life each one leads. Figures of plants and birds may recall the soul to the sweet outlying nature.

This much is certain: whatever Morris wrought was done in the spirit of the poet, and, if we are surprised that the poet should turn workman, it must be also a surprise to us that work-a-day materials should show such capacity for revealing beauty and philosophy.

One is drawn to Morris also because of his associates. It is not often that an artist group is formed of such transcendent ability as is represented by Madox-Brown, Rossetti, Philip Webb, Burne-Jones and Morris. One brought a sense for construction, another a love of color, another ideas and conceptions, another the feeling for design, another an enthusiasm for work. There was only one other group of artists in the nineteenth century to be compared with this in greatness of aims and unity of purpose. This was the Preraphaelite Brotherhood, of which Rossetti was sponsor. Rossetti and his group genuinely recreated in England the art of painting. The
Morris Brotherhood was content to revive "the lesser arts." Together these two bands of artists produced an actual revolution in the art of England. But from the younger men came the larger impulse and the more significant fact, for their object was not merely the refinement of painting, but the re-creation of work and the enlargement of life.

Then the work of Morris manifestly is itself interesting apart from other considerations. Take any of Morris's patterns: the simple "Daisy" wallpaper. How sweet and satisfying it is! How effective the intricate "Pimpernell" or "Acanthus" paper in reminding us of the beauty of nature! Here is a pattern suggesting the tangle of thickets, where birds sing and timid beasts crouch; there one of a garden with climbing roses; another of a flower-sprinkled meadow. How steady and brilliant is the coloring of tapestries and rugs! How strong and free are the lines of patterns! How original the cartoons for stained-glass windows! How the eye rests lovingly upon the pages of his printed books! If nameless hands had done work of this character we should rejoice the same in their achievement.
CHAPTER IV.

MORRIS, THE WRITER.

It has seemed fitting to discuss Morris first as a craftsman because this was the main business of his life. As a craftsman he worked professionally and for his income. Writing was his diversion, the occupation of his leisure.

The management of the "Oxford and Cambridge Magazine" occupied his last years at the university. To its pages he contributed five poems, eight prose tales, a criticism of Browning's "Men and Women" and essays on Alfred Bethel's engravings and the cathedral at Amiens. "In all this early work, filled with superabundant imagery, self-conscious, sensuous, unsubstantial, pictorial, we have," remarks Miss Cary, "Morris, the writer, as he was at the beginning and much as he was again at the end. His first strange little romances pass before the eyes, as his late ones do, like strips of beautiful fabric, deeply dyed with colors both dim and rich, and printed with faintly outlined figures in postures illustrating the dreamy events of dreamy lives. Many of the pages echo with the sound of trumpets and the clash of arms, but the echo is from so far away that the heart of the reader declines to leap. Passionate emotions are portrayed in passionate language. Men
and women love and die with wild adventure. Splendid sacrifices are made, and dark revenges taken.” The scenes, though not defined as to date, have the atmosphere of the thirteenth century. The distinguishing feature of these pieces is their descriptive quality. Each one is a series of pictures which might be painted—or, rather, which are painted. For Morris had the vision of the painter. He loved especially to paint with gold as if he were illuminating a manuscript in some monastic scriptorium. In the description of Amiens Cathedral there is added to picture the enhancing note of personal feeling, as in the passage closing his account of the church: “And now farewell to the church that I love, to the carved temple-mountain that rises so high above the water-meadows of the Somme, above the grey roofs of the good town. Farewell to the sweep of the arches, up from the bronze bishops lying at the west end, up to the belt of solemn windows, where, through the painted glass, the light comes solemnly. Farewell to the cavernous porches of the west front so grey under the fading August sun, grey with the wind-storms, grey with the rain-storms, grey with the beat of many days’ sun, from sunrise to sunset; showing white sometimes, too, when the sun strikes it strongly; snowy white, sometimes, when the moon is on it, and the shadows growing blacker; but grey now, fretted into deeper grey, fretted into black by the mitres of the bishops, by the solemn, covered heads of the prophets, by the company of the risen, and the long robes of the judgment-angels by hell-mouth and its flames gaping there, and the devils that feed it; by the saved souls and the crowning
angels; by the presence of the judge, and by the roses growing above them all forever."

When his first zeal for architectural drawing had worn off, verse making was resumed. By 1858 he had thirty pieces ready for publication. Three new influences are discernable in the volume entitled "The Defence of Guenevere." He had read Browning to good effect, and adopted the form of the dramatic monolog for the more intensive pieces. He had met Rossetti, a kindred genius, and honored his challenge. If he could not paint pictures as well as "Gabriel," he could image them poetically as well or better. Upon backgrounds of gold he drew pictures in scarlet and green, blue and grey, using for subject Froissart's and Mallory's chronicles. Anticipating Maeterlinck, he made symbolic use of physical features, as hands and hair. His new model was Jane Burden. Her strange beauty had attracted both Rossetti and Morris when they were in Oxford painting the walls of the Union. In another year these two were planning Red House for a future home. Morris's "Praise of My Lady," in the Guenevere volume, is accurately descriptive of Miss Burden:

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"My Lady seems of Ivory
Forehead, straight nose, and cheeks that be
Hollowed a little mournfully.
    Beata mea Domina!

Her forehead, overshadow'd much
By bows of hair, has a wave such
As God was, good to make for me.
    Beata mea Domina!

Not greatly long my lady's hair,
Nor yet with yellow color fair,
But thick and crisped wonderfully.
    Beata mea Domina!
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MORRIS, THE WRITER

Heavy to make the pale face sad,
And dark, but dead, as though it had
Been forged by God most wonderfully.
Beata mea Domina!

Of some strange metal, thread by thread,
To stand out from my lady's head,
Not moving much to tangle me.
Beata mea Domina!

Beneath her brows the lids fall slow,
The lashes a clear shadow throw
Where I would wish my lips to be.
Beata mea Domina!

Her great eyes, standing far apart,
Draw up some memory from her heart,
And gaze out very mournfully.
Beata mea Domina!

I wonder if the lashes long
Are those that do her bright eyes wrong,
For always half tears seem to be,
Beata mea Domina!

Lurking below the underlid,
Darkening the place where they lie hid—
If they should rise and flow for me!
Beata mea Domina!

Her full lips being made to kiss,
Curled up and pensive each one is;
This makes me faint to stand and see.
Beata mea Domina!

The years following the building of Red House
and the formation of the firm were fully absorbed
in business. Not until 1867 did another volume
of verse appear from Morris's hand. He had
begun and abandoned a cycle of twelve poems on
the Trojan War. He was planning a new cycle
of twenty-four poems to be called "The Earthly
Paradise." The fruit of his new studies was
"The Life and Death of Jason," begun as one of
the stories of "The Earthly Paradise," but pub-
lished separately in 1867. The new poem was
the fruit not only of learning wider than that of
the first volume, but also of deeper experience.
The change of style from the 1858 volume is so
marked as to betoken a change of direction. It is not merely that the boy has become a man; in nine years he had gained something absolute. "Jason" is romantic and pictorial, as everything is which Morris wrote, but also it is epical; it has movement which seems to have no reason for stopping. Nature is in it; the seasons are in it; and Fate beyond the will of man. We must recognize here the effect of the work in which Morris had been engaged. He had become the kind of man which Carlyle applauded—a man of practice. He is out in the current of things. He has not yet become a social reformer, but that, too, is intimated in the change which has taken place. His own life has become real and in a sense epical. Let it be supposed that Morris had carried out his first plan of a monastic brotherhood and had lived in seclusion, cherishing his dreams and devoting himself to pure literature. We should then have had from him a truly specialized product, a sensuous and pictorial poetry of a character similar to the poetry of Keats. But Morris was anything but specialized. The unity of his work is not found in any product, but in his own creative life. Hence, while he was designing tapestries, he could write the story of "Jason," and the story of "Jason" leads to the story of "Sigurd," and "Sigurd" leads to a formulation of a philosophy of life.

For the next three years Morris must have devoted himself almost exclusively to poetry. The first part of "The Earthly Paradise," his next great book, was published in 1868, and the last in 1870. Following Chaucer, he had arranged a scheme of twenty-four narrative poems connected
by lyrical interludes. Some northern voyagers, driven from their homes by pestilence, and, searching for a land where there is no death, come to an island in the sea inhabited by Greeks. The time is the fourteenth century. For twelve months the visitors are entertained by the recital of the traditional Greek legends, and in their turn tell their hosts the stories of the North. The mood is that of settled melancholy. Fate carries the reader outside the region of strife. The intention is to soothe the heart and suggest repose—the same suggestion, it is curious to observe, which Morris's first decorative designs were calculated to arouse.

A morality play came next from his pen, "Love Is Enough." Pharamond is a brave warrior and a wise king, but he lacks love. Deserting his kingdom, he wanders over the earth in search of one who would satisfy his ideal. When Azalais is found he returns to find his people opposed to him. He abdicates his throne and retires to obscurity with "Love," which is enough.

Translations from the Icelandic and from Virgil's Aeneid were diversions of this period—his Sunday amusement and to beguile the tedium of travel on the Underground Railway. His object in translating Virgil was to claim him for the lover of romance. For the sagas he had a deeper reverence. "This," he said of the Volsung Tale, "is the Great Story of the North, which should be to all our race what the Tale of Troy was to the Greeks—to all our race first, and afterwards, when the change in the world has made our race nothing more than a name of what has been—a story, too—then should it be to those that come
after us no less than the Tale of Troy has been to us.”

To revivify the Story of Sigurd, translating it into English rhymes and meters, was the task our English Homer next essayed. Ten years intervened between the writing of the Story of Jason and the Story of Sigurd. The change of style in the second decade of Morris's poetic activity was hardly less than that wrought in the first decade. His epical strength had increased, reaching its consummation in this, the greatest epic of the nineteenth century. There is less of sweetness and charm in "Sigurd" than in "Jason," but there is more of vigor and reality. Mediævalism has been exchanged for a view which is at once more primitive and more modern. The ethical contest of the modern world, its unenlightened struggle for power through commerce and gold, corresponds almost exactly with the moral issues involved in the ancient myth of Wotan and the giants and the gold ring. That story of greed is, I think, the most tremendous conception of mythology, and the solution of the problem is the most sublime achievement of the northern conscience. Morris's choice of subject was not accidental. For the first time he penetrates below the surface and interprets life in terms of its struggle. The aim of Sigurd is not to soothe, but to arouse. Not that he does not adorn the tale and keep its movement within the bounds of romance. The incidents of the ancient saga are short, direct, brutal, and at times repulsive. Morris expands, adorns and softens the story. But yet the tale is unrelieved as to its fundamental passions. It preserves the paganism of its source. The hint of the nature
myth is not obscured; Sigurd is still the golden-haired, the shining one, the bright god driving away the shadows, the sun. Nothing has been lost, but much has been gained. In Morris's hands the story reaches the full and perfect proportions of the great epic—the epic as measured by standards of world literature, as tested, that is, by Homer and Dante and Spenser.

The tale itself is epical in character. The narrative form, therefore, rather than the drama, is its proper vehicle. Even Wagner must write his plays in series to preserve the epical consistency of events. To Morris, then, the one poet prepared for the task by training and insight, the opportunity came to give to this new-old story its absolute rendering. But what is more to the point, our poet has deepened his philosophy and, in the lines where Sigurd is described as longing for the dawn of love's summer from the "cloudy days of wrong," and in those which close the third book:

"They are gone—the lovely, the mighty, the hope of the ancient earth;
It shall labor and bear the burden as before that day of their birth;
It shall groan in its blind abiding for the day that Sigurd hath sped
And the hour that Brynhild hath hastened, and the dawn that waketh the dead.
It shall yearn, and be oft-times holpen, and forget their deeds no more
Till the new sun beams on Baldur, and the happy,
sealess shore—"

in such lines a hint is given of the next step Morris was to take in his development. Shortly he is writing "The Message of the March Wind" and other poems motivated by the new social spirit in him.
CHAPTER V.
MORRIS, THE SOCIAL REFORMER.

Up to the age of forty or more no true harmony had been reached in Morris’s life. He was divided, as it were, into compartments, into each one of which the creative spirit entered and moulded, it seemed, a different product. He worked at his crafts by day—his “bread-and-cheese work,” as he called it. At night, on Sundays and holidays, and on his way to and from business he wrote poetry—his “pleasure work of books.” I can see that his written work in so far as it was an effort “to embody dreams in a series of pictures” is the complement of his designs, and that his designs in their rhythm of line are truly melodious like his verses. But still the man seems double. His literary genius is one thing and his craftsmanship is another thing. And not only was there lack of connection between the two parts of his mind, but he was not himself linked to the world by any large principle of service. He had kept himself in large measure aloof from the world. It is true that a social motive underlay his attempt to revive the decorative arts in England, and that in the Story of Sigurd he had perceived the necessity of redeeming mankind from its curse of selfishness and greed. But up
to the time of the publication of Sigurd, he had been content to carry on his various enterprises in his own way and in peace. Great changes were now prepared for him—changes effecting a greater revolution than any I have described. He reached a new plane of being. He had new insight into the meaning of life. He perceived the philosophy implicit in what he had done hitherto and what he was now to bring out and elaborate. He became spokesman, in short, of a "cause."

The stages of Morris's public career I have already set forth in a volume entitled "Chapters in the History of the Arts and Crafts Movement." His climacteric year, the year of change was 1877, just after the Story of Sigurd had fallen from the press. That year he was instrumental in forming two social organizations, "The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings" and "The Eastern Question Association." The former of these grew out naturally from Morris's love of the past. One whose imagination settled most amicably in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and who loved the old houses and especially the churches representative of that time of popular art, who believed such buildings were sacred monuments of the nation's growth and hope, naturally resented the impertinence of modern restoration which ordinarily went far beyond mere preservation against wind and weather. Ruskin had already anticipated him in a proposition to found a society for the protection of ancient art. On the fifth of March, 1877, Morris wrote to the Athenæum: "My eye just now caught the word 'restoration' in the
morning paper, and on looking closer, I saw that this time it is nothing less than the Minister of Tewksbury that is to be destroyed by Sir Gilbert Scott. Is it altogether too late to do something to save it—it and whatever else of beautiful and historical is still left us on the sites of the ancient buildings we were once so famous for? Would it not be of some use once for all, and with the least possible delay, to set on foot an association for the purpose of watching over and protecting these relics, which, scanty as they are now become, are still wonderful treasures, all the more priceless in this age of the world, when the newly invented study of living history is the chief joy of so many of our lives?" The suggestion was taken up and within a month an association was formed with Morris as Secretary. In the circular which Morris wrote at this time for the Society will be found the ground of much of his so-called Socialism. In it and the lectures he delivered for many years, he expressed regret for the "restoration" or "destruction" as he was pleased to call this act of writing the book of history by tearing out its pages. Restoration in a period of degraded taste implied not only the destruction of the beauty which covered the surface of the earth, but spiritually a Manichean hatred of the world as the home of man. And these, the love of art and the love of nature are cardinal principles of Morris's faith in the possibility of redemption.

The object of the second society in which Morris was interested was to prevent the war in the East which sprang, as he saw, from the intention of the ruling classes to extend the field of commercial materialism. With a true instinct he
perceived that the impending war concerned other peoples than those of the East; that it was a blow struck by the government at the people of England, whose interests were bound up with the extension of freedom. Hence he addressed his manifesto to "Workingmen of England," and wrote for them his first political ballad, called "Wake, London Lads."

Thus without perhaps intending it, Morris, known hitherto only as a poet and decorative artist, put himself, like Tolstoi, in antagonism to the upper classes and formed attachment with the masses. I am not one of those who deplore this change. I do not think that he lost his life in public service, but found it rather. It is a noble thing to put one's genius to the service of one's fellows. Art which is calculated merely to please the upper classes is a poor art at best. Tolstoi in "What is Art," has discussed sufficiently this phase of the question. If you put into the scales the work which Morris did before 1877 with what he achieved after that date under the inspiration of a social motive, the work of the last twenty years of his life will far outweigh that of the previous twenty. The reason is this: In the one scale you put but the product which may weigh little, but in the other you put the hopes and fears of humanity which count much in the reckoning.

With characteristic energy Morris entered upon his new trial. Instead of going to his workshop, translating Virgil by the way, Morris now became a propagandist of humanity, and entered into an active campaign of social reform. He traveled up and down England telling his new-
found hope to whoever would listen. He spoke at the street corner, in the public spaces in the parks, in political meetings and the great assemblies of the people. He wrote social poems and hymns, prose pamphlets, platform plays and romances of reform. He edited the reform papers and wrote prefaces to others' books. Sometimes he was called to address the associates of his old life. Once at Manchester he spoke on "Art, Wealth, and Riches," and the Manchester "Guardian" with characteristic blindness, asked "Does not that raise another question than one of mere art?" And Morris answered, "It was the purpose of my lecture to raise another question than one of art. I especially wished to point out that the question of popular art was a social question, involving the happiness and misery of the greater part of the community"—and this was precisely what the "guardian" of the people did not wish to know.

I do not know of a more inspiring incident in English history than this of a poet turned reformer. William Blake and Shelley had anticipated Morris in this respect, but Blake was but a voice crying in the wilderness, and Shelley's beautiful spirit was of too ethereal a quality to be potent in a world of strife. Morris, too, in a sense was a failure, in that he did not kill the giant of materialism which he attacked, but there is still abundant evidence that as a "Childe Roland," he reached the Dark Tower and sounded the challenge which still reverberates in the shadowy places of the world. To the dawning of the day of peace and good-will we may look forward with the same feeling that animated
Morris when in Sigurd he pictured the rising of
the Sun, Balder the Beautiful.

The full text of Morris's philosophy may be
made up from such studies as "Signs of Change,"
the Commonwealth leaders, "Dream of John
Ball," "News from Nowhere," and the later
poems and lectures.

KELMSCOTT CHURCH.

It is apparent that Morris's "Socialism" is
poetic and not scientific Socialism. What he con-
tributed as a reformer is essentially the same as
what he offered as a poet, namely, vision: a
vision of the new life, something more than
dream and something less than reality. His
artistic training required him to speak in the
main as an artist and probably the most definite
part of his philosophy is that which relates to
art and practical life. I may conclude this part
of my study with a summary of his teachings
on this point.
CHAPTER VI.

HIS PHILOSOPHIC POSITION.

One of the main principles, I should say his first principle, relates to the love of nature—concrete nature, that is, affection for the very earth as for all that grows thereon. Man is a part of nature and dependent upon it: his spirit is formed by what it receives from environment. An injury to nature is therefore an injury to ourselves. If we destroy the beauty of the world we limit to that extent the scope of our own life. If we make of the earth a mere source of profit, as from a mine, an iron-furnace or a manufactory—or what is worse, if we make of the earth a dumping ground of these properties, piling up refuse heaps such as are scattered over the fair face of England (and other countries) why it is ourselves we are injuring; it is our own souls and bodies we are degrading; and our loss is greater than our gain. As a defender of the soul of man Morris resented the indifference of commerce to the higher human interests and cried out against the injury done carelessly or wantonly to the old Mother Nature. On the contrary as a prophet of the New Day, one phase of which, as he notes in "News from Nowhere," is the love of the very surface of the earth, he
set forth in his writings in many alluring ways the beauty and freshness of nature. His designs for wall-papers and tapestries are but cunningly devised patterns to remind the observer that there is a fairer world outside the enclosed space. How coaxingly he alludes in one of his lectures to the characteristic beauty of England.

"The land is a little land; too much shut up within the narrow seas, as it seems, to have much space for swelling into hugeness: there are no great wastes overwhelming in their dreariness, no great solitudes of forests, no terrible untrodden mountain-walls; all is measured, mingled, varied, gliding easily one thing into another; little rivers, little plains, swelling, speedily changing uplands, all beset with handsome, orderly trees; little rills, little mountains, netted over with the walls of sheep-walks; all is little; yet not foolish and blank, but serious rather, and abundant of meaning for such as choose to seek it: it is neither prison, nor palace, but a decent home."

I have said that Morris spoke as an artist rather than as a philosopher. For this reason, and as a corollary to the principle of love of nature, there is found in his writings a plea for that knowledge which comes through sensation and which exists particularly for the modern man as vision. The more philosophic statement of the doctrine of sensationalism is found, perhaps, in the writings of Walter Pater, notably in "Marius the Epicurean," one chapter of which is called "The Will as Vision." But adumbrations of the doctrine are recognizable in nearly everything which Morris wrote. In mediaeval
writings one meets with the fine conceit that the five senses are gateways of the soul. Among Gothic writers the concensus of opinion seemed to be that sight is the noblest sense of man. In the more abstract philosophies of the present day the value of sensation is partly denied. But however we may pile up intellectual arguments by means of conventionalized words, the fact remains that art and nature speak to us directly through the eyes. Nothing will compensate for sight. The best service descriptive writing can do is to suggest the beauty of art and nature. Representation is beyond its power. All essentially true aspects of beautiful objects are contained in sight and need interpretation in no terms beyond the concrete sensation. If we are ever to return to this doctrine the first necessity we shall be under will be to reinstate our eyes and to this end the work of Morris will be serviceable.

That Morris is a sensational poet I think few will dispute. As I have said he dealt largely with surfaces and not with skeletons. To some readers he seems to represent a new "paganism." In a sense this is true. The Christian theory that the pleasure of the soul springs somehow from the misery of the body was entirely repugnant to him. As an artist, as loving art and nature through sight, he could not argue the matter with the philosophers. An artist's argument is his art. He criticises forms and models saying: "See—this is what I mean." In this sense Morris is a profound thinker, for he probably created more beautiful forms, drew more appealing pictures and outlined more exquisite de-
signs than any artist of which history makes record.

Morris may be understood, then, as reinvesting sight or vision with a new authority and as connecting this appeal with his first principle of love of nature.

Art is related to life in another way. On its receptive side art involves a love of the beauty of the natural world and this necessitates a cultivation of the senses. On its active side art appears as creative activity and is associated, therefore, with the ordinary work of the world. This brings us to Morris's doctrine of labor, which is essentially the same as Carlyle's and Ruskin's, namely, that the greatest happiness of man is found in labor activity. For the most part ideals in the past have related to rest: we have dreamed of a heaven where there is eternal quiet. Since the middle ages the cultural classes have cultivated the arts which are associated with leisure, and the ideals of these classes have held sway over the civilized world. These ideals are now crossed by the modern industrial trend and we hear proclaimed the principle of the "strenuous life." Few there be who can endure the ennui of inactivity. Even the business man regards his work as a "form of noble exercise."

The artists, however, are the best exponents of the doctrine of labor, for they understand it better, having long enjoyed the free exercise of their energy. "The reward of labor," Morris said, "is life."

But not all labor is enjoyable. There is a curse attached to certain forms of toil, even as the ancient theologies assert. There are heights
and depths in labor. Only that is pleasurable which admits of the exercise of one’s intelligence and invention, which involves feelings of pride in skill and hope of fame and love of service. Degrading labor is that from which the pleasurable elements are removed. It is this finer element, that which redeems labor from the curse, which we now call by the vague name of art—"art, by which I mean," said Morris, "the pleasure of life," meaning that the activity of art is different from other activity in degree and not in kind. "Decoration," he said, "is the evidence of successful labor." Wherever labor is pleasurable beauty is its issue, where it is not so the result is ugliness. We are not, then, to strike our ordinary tasks but accept them as affording means for that activity which is one with life—which is life.

For the enjoyment of the beauty of nature the senses, we noted, must be trained. In order that work may be enjoyed the hands, we now see, must be educated. Morris’s educational principles correspond with what is called in pedagogical circles "manual training." Much of the education of the present day is "ceremonial," intended merely as a show, an evidence of station. What is real in modern education is intellectual only and the school is therefore partial in its work. It is safe to say that all the errors and failures of modern education spring from its dissociation from life. The remedy for loss lies in acceptance of the ideal of labor and training for service. At the present day the loss I speak of is actual, as every one who has been educated in our schools knows to his pain when he en-
counters the real world outside the school. Here lies the tragedy of the educated man—the discovery that his education is useless and not useful. In "News from Nowhere" Morris draws the picture of a bookman: there are not many such in Utopia, but this one was a survival from old time. "I know," said the bookman of the craftsman, "he looks upon me as rather a grinder and despises me for not being very dexterous with my hands. From what I have read of nineteenth century literature, it is clear to me that this is a kind of revenge for the stupidity of that day, which despised everybody who could use his hands."

For these two principles in particular Morris stands: love of nature and love of work. The educational processes associated therewith are eye-training and hand-training.
TRAVEL NOTES IN THE MORRIS COUNTRY

London is never brighter or more attractive than in summer. The gloom accompanying the autumn and winter fogs is to a spirit unused to it almost unbearable. But a London summer is silvery and golden. Morris, it will be recalled, was a city poet, reflecting its complexity and contrasts. Like Browning, he submitted himself to its discipline and much of his secondary writing was done on the underground railroad in passing to and from his business.

Red Lion Square, above Holborn, in the Bloomsbury district, and not far from the British Museum, was the seat of Morris’s early activities as a craftsman. The district was formerly residential of high quality—as the many tablets set in on the face of the houses in memory of famous inhabitants attest. Ruskin was born in a house off Brunswick Square; a tablet to Lawrence, the painter, distinguishes Russell Square, etc. Since Morris’s time the region has steadily degenerated in character. Even the Working Men’s College in Great Ormond Street, established in 1854 by Frederick Denison Maurice and fostered by Ruskin and Rossetti and all the Morris group of artists, is moving farther to the north to Oakley Square, transferring by such move a culture-center of great importance for fifty years.

The Show Rooms of Morris and Company, formerly located in Queen Street, Bloomsbury, are now at 449 Oxford Street. These contain a display of the Morris fabrics, now manufactured at Merton Abbey, and some De Morgan tiles. Recent designs by Mr. J. H. Dearle, one of Morris’s “boys,” and now director of the manufactory, maintain the Morris traditions. The display is of course unique, the firm, now composed of Mr. Dearle
and the Messrs. Smith, having the sole right of reproducing the designs of Morris, and the friends of the original company are cautioned against misrepresentation.

Hammersmith. The house in which Morris lived in Hammersmith is marked by a stone tablet inscribed "William Morris, Poet, Craftsman, Socialist, lived here 1878-1896." It is a tall, Georgian house, being number 26 on the Upper Mall. It is separated from the Thames by a narrow roadway which is planted with large elm trees. When the Morris family occupied it in 1878 it had just been vacated by George MacDonald. It was earlier the home of Francis Ronalds, the inventor of the electric telegraph. The Kelmscott Press was established in numbers 14, 16 and 21 of the same terrace. The place is quiet and toward the river not unpicturesque. The scene is partly described in "News from Nowhere."

Near by, on the Mall, in Hammersmith Terrace, is the Doves Bindery and Press, which is conducted by J. Cobden Sanderson and Mr. Emery Walker, both close friends of Morris. The name "Doves" seems to have been taken from the public house called "The Doves" in the same street. Hammersmith contains also the workshop of an important "Artificers' Guild" (numbering thirty-five workmen), under the direction of Montague Fordham, Edward H. Spencer and H. Franks Waring. The products are in metal and glass windows and represent probably the best craftsmanship in these materials in England. The workshop—an old brick building—is in Oil Mill Lane, near by the Mall. The Show Rooms of the Guild, at 9 Maddox Street, off Regent Street, contain a display of the work done by the company and also an exhibition of other art-craft products, notably jewelry. The exhibition as a whole denotes the extraordinary vitality of the art-crafts movement. The electric fittings by the Fordham Company are particularly noteworthy.

The Kelmscott Press was closed at Morris's death. All the electrotypes were destroyed. The woodcuts for initials, ornaments, and illustrations, were placed in the British Museum, with the condition that they were not to be printed from for one hundred years, the intention being to keep the Kelmscott books unique and to prevent the designs becoming stale by repetition. The fonts of type are in the hands of the trustees and will be used
if necessary for special editions. All the Kelmscott books are in the British Museum, a few being on exhibition in the King's Library among the specimens of English printing in the nineteenth century. The last book printed was an account of the establishment of the Press, written by Morris, and a bibliography of the printed books, compiled by Sydney C. Cockerell, secretary of the Press since 1894. The colophon reads: "This is the last book printed at the Kelmscott Press. It was finished at No. XIV. Upper Mall, Hammersmith, in the County of London, on the fourth day of March, MDCCCVIII. Sold by the trustees of the late William Morris at the Kelmscott Press."

Kensington Museum, London, now called the Victoria and Albert Museum, is devoted in the main to the exhibition of the industrial arts. Morris and Burne-Jones are fully represented. In the tapestry room is a model of the loom used by Morris for his practice work. The most important Morris tapestry is the one entitled "The Orchard," accompanying verses also published in "Poems by the Way." It is a large tapestry done in colored wools and silks, with flowers, fruit-trees and figures. The fruit-trees and four figures were designed by Morris, the flowers in the foreground by Mr. H. Dearle (now the director of the Merton Abbey manufactory). This is, I believe, the only figure drawing done by Morris. Another tapestry in colored wools and silk, entitled "Angeli Laudantes," has figures by Burne-Jones and background and border by Dearle. Three large cartoons by Burne-Jones show "The Nativity," "The Crucifixion" and "The Last Judgment," designed for painted and stained-glass windows in St. Philip's Church, Birmingham, and executed by the Morris Company. The Symbols of the Evangelists are other designs by Burne-Jones for a window at Castle Howard. There is shown also the model painted in tempera colors and gold of "The Heavenly Jerusalem," designed in 1833-4 by Burne-Jones for the mosaic decoration in the apse of the American Episcopal Church of St. Paul in Rome. "The Tree of Life," designed in 1892 by this artist for the same church in Rome, represents the figure of Christ outstretched before the tree of life, Adam standing on one side; Eve, with the infants Cain and Abel, on the other side. There is a full collection of photographs showing
the designs of Burne-Jones for windows, tapestry, mosaics, needlework, etc. The decoration of the Green Dining Room was done by the Morris Company (1867).

Merton Abbey, not far from London, continues to be the seat of the manufactory of Morris and Company. The scene remains practically unchanged year after year. Apprentice boys have grown to manhood in the works. In some cases father and son pursue the same craft. Mr. Dearle, the present director, was a boy when the factory was started and has known no other employment than the work in the shops. It is interesting to note that the present traditions are based upon earlier ones of a somewhat similar character—for the place has always been a manufactory, devoted now to the making of shawls and tabecloth and again to products in felt—and the old traditions rest still farther back upon the ancient monastic employments. Since Morris's death no change has taken place in the processes of work save the substitution of a small steam engine for the ancient water-wheel, which proved unsatisfactory with the slow-moving Wandle water. Stained-glass windows, rugs, carpets, tapestries and printed cloths continue to be the staple products. The designs are the same as formerly except some new ones in the same spirit by Mr. Dearle. The special work now in progress is a large tapestry for Eaton College to accompany the "Adoration of the Magi" (similar to the Exeter College tapestry) used as an altar-piece. The design has been made up from cartoons by Burne-Jones, retouched and colored by Mr. Dearle. Another large tapestry in process is from a drawing left unfinished by Burne-Jones but completed and colored by Mr. Dearle. Merton Abbey is the only place in England where hand-woven tapestry may be seen in the making. The printed cloths from Morris's and Dearle's designs remain likewise unique. The workers, sometimes numbering fifty, are paid by the piece. Morris never practiced profit-sharing, but did the best he could under the capitalist system.

Bexley Heath is a short ride from London to the southeast. It was here in the midst of the orchards and gardens of Kent that Morris built "The Red House" and spent the first years of his married life. It is a picturesque vine-covered house, strikingly individual in its architecture, built in the shape of an L and surrounded
by lawns and orchard trees. The well is the distinctive feature of the rear court. The interior of the house is original in its arrangement and exceptionally beautiful and effective. The larger pieces of furniture, the tiled ceiling, the painted windows, the door and mantle mot- toes, and the mural decorations in the large dining room, remain as they were left when the house was given up by the Morris family for a London residence. The house is now owned by an appreciative friend of the poet.

**Epping Forest** is a public park of generous proportions, 5,800 acres in extent, owned by the people under royal gift, with its public use guaranteed by the City of London Corporation. The forest is composed mainly of oak-trees, elms, beeches, and the rare horn-beam, with thickets of holly, hawthorne, furz and bracken. The trees, large at the trunk, are dwarfed in height, having been pollarded by the peasants for many centuries. There is nothing more memorial in a way than trees and the careful soil. Here, one sees, is a bit of primitive England, with marks of historical growths. At Waltham (home by the wood) was built in the eleventh century an Abbey and the history of this Abbey Church is, as Fuller observes, "the history of the Church of England." "Eleanor's Cross" marks another stage of history. On every hand, indeed, are these signs of the long past. One would not be surprised to meet Robin Hood and his merry men under the wide-spreading trees—a feeling which a wayside innkeeper has utilized by writing over his door: "If Robin Hood is not at home, step in and visit Little John." The scene is worth visiting for its own sake, but for this also—that it was the haunt of Morris in his boyhood. The forest and the wide Essex plains gave the poet his first and most permanent natural impressions. They formed, as it were, the matrix in which the forms of his imagination were molded. Walthamstow, where Morris was born, is at the southern end of the forest. Woodford Hall, to which the family moved later (now known as Mrs. Gladstone's Convalescent Home), is farther north on the eastern side, on the road from London to Epping.

**Oxford** has many memorials of Morris and his group of artist friends. He and Burne-Jones were students together at Exeter College—a college now distinguished
above others by its possession of the tapestry of the Magi, which was designed by Burne-Jones and executed in the Morris manufactory.

The same hands worked together in the stained-glass windows in the Cathedral at Christ's Church College. There are four windows made by them—one dedicated to St. Cecelia; one dedicated to St. Catherine, in memory of Miss Liddell, daughter of Canon Liddell of the Cathedral; another representing Faith, Hope and Charity; and one in the Lady Chapel, done in memory of Mr. Vignor, murdered by Greek brigands in 1870. The windows are notable for beauty of conception and drawing and wealth and appropriateness of floral decoration.

The work of a larger group of artists is found in the Library of the Oxford Union Society, in the frescoes on the upper part of the room between the windows. The frescoes have nearly disappeared, but there is a record that ten pictures were painted: "The Education of Arthur by Merlin," by Riviere; "Arthur's Wedding," by Riviere; "Sir Lancelot's Vision," by Rossetti; "Sir Pellias and the Lady Ettenarde," by Prinsep; "How King Arthur Received the Sword Excalibar," by Pollen; "King Arthur's Victory," by Riviere; "How Sir Palomydes Loved La Belle Ysuel and How She Loved Not Him But Rather Sir Tristram," by Morris; "Death of Merlin," by Burne-Jones; "Sir Gawaine," by Stanhope, and "Death of Arthur," by Hughes. The ceiling, in a small design of branches, was decorated by Morris and remains intact except for injury due to crumbling plaster. Some large sunflowers are all that can be made out of the picture done by Morris. The building is a modern Venetian Gothic in red brick. Over the entrance is a stone carved by Munro, representing the Institution of the Round Table.

The Ashmolean Museum contains a number of paintings by the Pre-Raphaelite group. Of especial interest are the four drawings made by Rossetti of Mrs. Morris. The one called "Reverie" is signed "J. M., 1868, D. G. R. delt." "Day Dream" was painted in 1871. There is another called "Day Dream" and the well known "Prosperina." Another treasure is the large cabinet, painted by Burne-Jones with a scene from Chaucer's "Prioress Tale" and presented to Morris for the Red House. The Museum has also forty-six water-color drawings by
William Norris Turner, which were presented by Ruskin, who founded the Oxford School of Drawing. All of the Kelmscott books are in the Bodleian Library.

Lechlade is reached from Oxford on the Great Western Railroad. It is a quiet town on the upper Thames, well known to the literary traveler through its celebration in Shelley's poem. Three miles away is the little village of Kelmscott and near by the beautiful old grey manor house that Morris purchased as his country residence. The village lies in the level valley where the Thames seeps quietly through broad windows and by wooded stretches—a peaceful landscape such as Morris loved.

The parish is a small one and the church almost the tiniest in England. Through a lane of close-woven lime-trees you approach the church, noting the quaint open tower with the bells exposed to wind and weather. Within there is just room for twenty wooden pews which will seat a hundred persons. It is an old church, some of the stones in the floor dating from 1619 and 1686. Once the walls were frescoed and painted with pictures, but now are bare; the roof is timbered; one elaborate stone memorializes the Turner family. At one side of the yard Morris was buried. The tomb is a plain stone, laid horizontally, carved simply with an oak branch and grape-vine, inscribed "William Morris, 1834-1896."

The manor house is some distance away, near the river. It is a commodious structure of grey stone, weather stained, and built in the form of an E. A stone wall runs about the garden enclosure with flowers, old apple-trees and quaint box hedge. This is the present home of Mrs. Morris and her invalid daughter. It is described by Morris in "News from Nowhere." Near by are some cottages belonging to the estate and above the door of one is a bas-relief of the poet reclining beneath a tree. The scene, somehow, is a fitting symbol of the peace the poet loved. "Peace! It is peace we need that we may live and work in hope and joy." This was his continual plaint.
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