

....We have before us two books on art, which, with great differences of subject and treatment, have many and close resemblances. The first is *Lectures on Art*, delivered in support of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings in England against injudicious reconstruction and restoration, by Reginald Stuart Poole, Professor W. B. Richmond, E. J. Poynter, I. T. Michlethwaite, and William Morris. (Macmillan & Co.) The subjects treated are varied, both as to time and place, from the distant hieratic art of the ancient Egyptian down, by way of the mediæval parish churches of England, to the lesser arts of modern life. We have a lively sympathy, Americans as we are, in the somewhat remote objects of this Society, and share with Mr. Michlethwaite the feeling he has for the ancient English Parish Churches. They are far more English than the constructions of Augustine and his Roman monks. For devout Anglicans, with their new pride in the independent origin of their Church and in a legitimacy independent of Rome, these churches are sacred as cradles of their free Anglican Christianity and it would be a thousand pities to let the hand of ill-judged restoration fall on them with ruthless indiscriminatio and obliterate their historic features. But it is also a thousand pities that Mr. Michlethwaite and his associates cannot pursue their laudable object without sneering at things greater and worth more than all the old parish churches in Great Britain, put together. What drop of poison is it in the love of art which shrivels up the ecclesiastic mind, and so dries it up at the fountain as to make it love the Bloody Mary and hate nothing so much as Protestantism and the Revolution? For honest mummies of age and well kept we have great respect; but the mummified ecclesiastic of modern manufacture is an experiment in desiccated flesh in whose presence humanity withers, and all for a bit of old stone or ecclesiastical finery. William Morris is a tremendous croaker; but he croaks in a better mode. His two lectures are immensely entertaining. They arraign modern life on the art side as boldly as the Papal Encyclical does on the ecclesiastical. His talk is extravaganza, of course; but it is splendid, thought-provoking, and to be read by all means. Mr. Morris takes his difference with the world easily. He expands in singular dislikes, especially in the bad opinion of that much-glorified movement, the Renaissance. He does not believe in dominant races of any kind. He charges the university authorities at Oxford with having spoiled the most beautiful town in England. He brings down his heavy hand on pretty much all the industrial arts (except printed paper-hangings) and stands up with a fearless face to say that we ought to smash to bits about all the machinery there is in the world, throw aniline dyes in particular into the sea, and make things by hand again, have fewer clothes, fewer people in the world, and pay higher prices for what we get. This is very much in the Ruskin style; but, like Mr. Ruskin's utterances, the nonsense and the extravagance evaporates in the amusement of reading it and behind them remains a rich and thought-provoking residuum of rare and high good sense.