

EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS
BY GEORGE ALFRED WILLIAMS
MARCH 1st to MARCH 31st, 1920

DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS

GEORGE ALFRED WILLIAMS

George Alfred Williams was born in Newark, New Jersey, in 1875. At the age of seventeen, Mr. Williams entered a large mechanical business in that city, but finding this little suited to his liking decided to resign all idea of a mechanical career and follow art, for which he had a strong predilection. During the three years he devoted to business Mr. Williams spent all the time possible in drawing and painting the life that came under his observation. A group of works done during this period was accepted by The American Watercolor Society for its annual exhibition of 1897. The year following, through the advice of a friend, Mr. Williams sought Mr. Alexander W. Drake, art editor of The Century Magazine. Mr. Drake encouraged Mr. Williams to give up all thoughts of a business career, and procured for him a commission to illustrate for St. Nicholas Magazine. Up to this time Mr. Williams had not had any formal instruction in art, and after the completion of the work for St. Nicholas he entered The Art Students League, and studied under Douglas Volk, and Kenyon Cox. Later he studied painting with William M. Chase.

After working some time for St. Nicholas, commissions followed for The Century Magazine. The first important work for The Century was the drawing made on "The East Side" for an article by Mrs. Schuyler-Van Rensselaer, entitled "Mid-summer in New York." This work attracted the attention of other editors and commissions followed from Scribner's and Harper's, and many other publishers.

In addition to his work for the magazines Mr. Williams has illustrated many editions of the English classics, including an edition de luxe of Smollet, Fielding and Defoe published by The University Press. He also made the decorations and illustrations for an edition de luxe of an English translation, by Richard Le Gallienne, of "Wagner's Tristan and Isolde." These illustrations were carried out in the style of decorative paintings and were later purchased by The Newark, New Jersey, Museum Association, where they now hang as a decorative frieze in the permanent collection of that institution. This work was completed in 1909, and since that time Mr. Williams has devoted his time exclusively to painting, although he exhibited at The National Academy of Design as early as 1898. For the two subsequent years Mr. Williams continued to exhibit at National Academy, and at The Society of American Artists.

In 1900 a group of small figure paintings and landscapes were hung in a special group at The American Watercolor Society. None of these works were more than a few inches in size, but they called forth high praise from Charles H. Caffin and Arthur Hoeber. Mr. Williams felt that in these works he had but found the key to his personal expression, which meant to him the beginning of finer things. He accordingly retired from all public exhibitions and devoted himself to the development of this expression. He did not again exhibit until ten years later, when he made his debut in New York City in the gallery of Mr. N. E. Montross. The pictures shown at that time were still small works, but in 1914 Mr. Williams completed his first large figure composition, "The Drama of Life—The Marginal Way," which was exhibited in the same gallery and was at once purchased by The Art Institute of Chicago for the permanent collection.

In 1915 a group of paintings by Mr. Williams was awarded a silver medal at The Panama Pacific Exposition. From that time on Mr. Williams has held one-man exhibitions at the Milwaukee Art Institute, and at The Minneapolis Institute of Arts, and in various private galleries.

Besides assiduous attention to his art Mr. Williams has devoted considerable time to the study of the history of art, and has written essays on "American Marine Painters," and on "American Painters of Children," and he is the author of the authoritative essay on "Robert Havell, the Engraver of Audubon's 'The Birds of America'," published by The Boston Museum of Fine Arts in The Print Collectors' Quarterly. Mr. Williams has also written other articles treating of the theme of art, the most important of which appeared in The American Magazine of Art. This essay treats of the painter's creed and is entitled "Principles."

Mr. Williams' work is to be found in many private collections here and abroad. He is well represented in several well-known collections in South America.

NOTE—The Detroit Institute of Arts is deeply indebted to the following individuals and museums who have co-operated in the formation of this collection by lending pictures or otherwise: Mr. and Mrs. F. D. Lake, Menasha, Wisconsin; Dr. and Mrs. E. Zeh Hawkes, Newark, New Jersey; Mrs. William Mayhew, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Mrs. George Alfred Williams, New Providence, New Jersey; and The Art Institute of Chicago.

CATALOGUE

OIL PAINTINGS—FIGURE WORKS

1. The Merging of Spring into Summer—A Fantasy
2. Man's Heritage
3. The Drama of Life—The Pilgrimage
4. The Traders
5. The Drama of Life—The Trail of the Star
Lent by Mrs. F. D. Lake
6. The Drama of Nature—The Wine of Autumn
Lent by Mrs. F. D. Lake
7. The Drama of the Spirit—The Seekers
Lent by Mrs. F. D. Lake
8. The Drama of Life—The Marginal Way
Lent by the Art Institute of Chicago

SMALL FIGURE WORKS

9. The Drama of Life—The Plague
10. The Drama of Life—The Daughters of Man
11. The Drama of Hell—The Forest of Souls
12. The Drama of Hell—The Black Pit
13. Temptation
14. The Wanderers
15. Tragedy
16. The Martyrs
17. The Prophets
18. The Monks
19. The Master
20. Ivory Towers
21. Soubrette
22. Brown Harmonies
23. The Golden Glow
24. The Hunters
25. Arabia—Fantasy
26. The Idol
27. The Witch

OIL PAINTINGS—LANDSCAPES

28. October—The Red Oak
29. Early Spring
30. October—Afternoon Glow
31. October Afternoon—West Wind

OIL PAINTINGS—MARINES

- 32. The Breaker
Lent by Dr. E. Zeh Hawkes
- 33. The Restful Sea
Lent by Dr. E. Zeh Hawkes
- 34. The Moonlit Breaker
Lent by Mrs. George Alfred Williams
- 35. Moonrise
- 36. August Sea
- 37. Afternoon Glow—Ogunquit
- 38. Freshening Breeze—Ogunquit
- 39. A Storm-Cleared Sea
- 40. After the Shower
- 41. Sea Memories
- 42. Sea Surge

PASTELS

- 43. Moonrise, August—Ogunquit
- 44. Moonrise, October—Ogunquit
- 45. Summer Squall—Maine Coast
- 46. Moonrise—Ogunquit River Inlet
- 47. September Twilight
- 48. The Squall
Lent by Dr. E. Zeh Hawkes
- 49. Moonrise, August
Lent by Mrs. E. Zeh Hawkes

LARGE WATERCOLORS

- 50. The Gnarled Willow Tree
- 51. Beyond the Furrows—New Providence
- 52. Evening Star
- 53. October
- 54. The Sea
- 55. After the Shower
- 56. Sunset, November
Lent by Dr. E. Zeh Hawkes
- 57. October Moonrise
Lent by Mrs. E. Zeh Hawkes
- 58. In Mauve October
Lent by Dr. E. Zeh Hawkes
- 59. In the Woodland
Lent by Mrs. George Alfred Williams
- 60. Winter Afternoon
Lent by Mrs. E. Zeh Hawkes

SMALL WATERCOLORS

61. The Coming of November
62. November
63. Twilight
64. Sunset on the River—New Providence
65. Fall Evening
66. Early Spring
67. October
68. Moonrise on the West Wind
69. Indian Summer
Lent by Dr. and Mrs. E. Zeh Hawkes
70. Shades of Evening
Lent by Dr. and Mrs. E. Zeh Hawkes
71. November Moonrise
Lent by Dr. and Mrs. E. Zeh Hawkes
72. February Twilight
Lent by Dr. and Mrs. E. Zeh Hawkes
73. Sunset Glow
Lent by Dr. and Mrs. E. Zeh Hawkes
74. The Cove—Ogunquit
Lent by Dr. and Mrs. E. Zeh Hawkes
75. November
Lent by Dr. and Mrs. E. Zeh Hawkes
76. A Burst of Sunlight
Lent by Dr. and Mrs. E. Zeh Hawkes
77. The Glow of October
Lent by Dr. and Mrs. E. Zeh Hawkes
78. After the Shower
Lent by Dr. and Mrs. E. Zeh Hawkes
79. The Witching Hour
Lent by Mrs. George Alfred Williams

