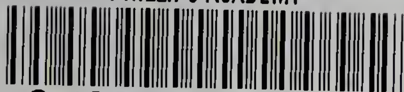
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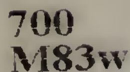
William Morris on Art and Socialism

Edited by Norman Kelvin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WILLIAM MORRIS on Art and Socialism

WILLIAM MORRIS

Edited and with an Introduction by
Norman Kelvin,
*Distinguished Professor of English in the City College
and Graduate Center,
City University of New York*

DOVER PUBLICATIONS, INC.
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A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

William Morris (1834–1896), a poet, prose-romance writer, designer, craftsman, translator, lecturer, and socialist, exerted enormous influence as a designer and socialist lecturer in his day. At Oxford he formed what was to be a lifelong friendship with the painter Edward Burne-Jones, read Ruskin, and met Dante Gabriel Rossetti, who was to be a shaping presence in both his career and private life. In 1858, *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* was published; it established Morris as a rival to Tennyson, in the opinion of some.

In 1861, married to Jane Burden, and dissatisfied with available design and manufacture of household furnishings, he founded the firm to be known as Morris & Co. He always was at the heart of its design enterprise. The successful sale of wallpapers, tapestries, rugs, and furniture created the "Morris look" in British interiors, one zealously sought after by the middle classes and titled owners of fine houses.

The Earthly Paradise (1868–70) and *Sigurd the Volsung* (1876) confirmed and enhanced Morris's reputation as a poet, but in the 1870s he turned—without giving up his other activities—to politics and to the defense (as he saw it) of England's architectural heritage. In 1877, he founded the *Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings.* In 1883 he became a socialist and, as lecturer, editor, and participant in public demonstrations, quickly became known as a man of the arts who was also a man of political action. This, for his contemporaries, was a paradox. For Morris, it was no paradox, for there was for him no possible separation between art and politics, as his many lectures and some of his late romances, notably *News from Nowhere* (1890), make clear.

As a translator, Morris's best-known achievement was a series of translations from the Icelandic that were published as The Saga Library. For him, and for many who see him as the father of modern design, especially in the book arts, his crowning achievement was the Kelmscott Press, which he founded in 1891 and which is generally credited with bringing to high awareness at the end of the 19th century—

and thus for our time—the importance of "getting it right" when verbal texts and graphic images are to be integrated. His marriage to Jane Burden (in 1859) was less than happy, though it lasted his lifetime, but his two daughters, Jenny and May, were devoted to him. He found an object for his love in Jenny, a chronic epileptic, and a comrade and helpmate in May, to whom we are indebted for editing and publishing her father's *Collected Works* in twenty-four volumes, plus two supplementary volumes.

CHRONOLOGY

Based on "A Calendar of Principal Events in Morris's Life," May Morris, *William Morris: Artist, Writer, Socialist,* II (Oxford; 1936), 632–37; and on *The Collected Letters,* edited by Norman Kelvin (Princeton University Press: 1984–1996).

1834 William Morris born, March 24, at Elm House, Walthamstow.

1840 Family moves to Woodford Hall, Walthamstow.

1847 Father dies.

1848 Goes to school at Marlborough. Family moves to Water House, Walthamstow.

1851 Leaves school at Christmas, after school rebellion in November.

1852 Reads with Dr. F. B. Guy, Forest School, Walthamstow. Matriculates at Exeter College, Oxford, in June. Plans to prepare for the Church.

1853 Goes to Oxford in January. Meets Edward Burne-Jones, C. J. Faulkner, R. W. Dixon, Harry Macdonald, and William Fulford. In rooms at Exeter College by December. During this and following year reads Ruskin's *Stones of Venice,* Carlyle's *Past and Present,* Thorp's *Northern Mythologies,* and Charlotte Yonge's *The Heir of Redclyffe.*

1854 Visits Belgium and Northern France in the summer, seeing the paintings of Memling and Van Eyck, and Amiens, Beauvais, and Rouen cathedrals. Meets Cormell Price. Reads Ruskin's *Edinburgh Lectures* and becomes aware of the Pre-Raphaelites. Morris, Burne-Jones, and their circle plan a monastic brotherhood.

1855 Reads Chaucer and Malory. Makes second tour of France, accompanied by Burne-Jones and Fulford. Morris decides not to take orders, and to follow art as a career.

1856 Edits and finances the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine.* Articled to G. E. Street, the architect, in whose Oxford office he meets Philip Webb. Takes his B.A. degree. Moves to London with Street's office and shares rooms with Burne-Jones. Meets Rossetti and abandons architecture for painting by end of the year.

1857 Decorative work begins at 17 Red Lion Square. Frescoes in the Oxford Union painted, under leadership of Rossetti. Meets Jane Burden. Macmillan rejects *The Defence of Guenevere.*

1858 *The Defence of Guenevere* published by Bell and Daldy at Morris's own expense. With Faulkner and Webb, visits France again.

1859 Morris and Jane Burden married on April 26. Tour of France, Belgium, and the Rhineland. Philip Webb builds Red House, at Upton, Kent, for them.

1860 Morrises move into Red House. Edward Burne-Jones and Georgiana Macdonald married on June 9.

1861 Firm of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner and Co. founded. Jane Alice ("Jenny") born January 17. Morris begins writing stories for *The Earthly Paradise.*

1862 Mary ("May") Morris born March 25. Firm shows work at the Great Exhibition and is awarded two gold medals.

1864 Morris ill with rheumatic fever. The Burne-Joneses decide against sharing Red House, and the plan for a "Palace of Art" there is abandoned.

1865 Red House sold to a retired naval officer and Morris family moves to 26 Queen Square, London, where the firm also sets up shop.

1866 *The Earthly Paradise* takes form. Morris visits France again, with Warington Taylor and William Fulford.

1867 *The Life and Death of Jason,* originally intended as a tale in *The Earthly Paradise,* published separately in January. Firm begins decoration of dining room at South Kensington Museum.

1868 *The Earthly Paradise,* Volume I, published in April. Morris begins studying Icelandic with Eiríkr Magnússon.

1869 "The Saga of Gunnlaug Worm-tongue" published in the *Fortnightly Review* (January). *The Story of Grettir the Strong* published in June. Morris takes his wife to Bad Ems for her health. Burne-Jones's breakdown, precipitated by affair with Mary Zambaco.

1870 Volumes I and III of *The Earthly Paradise* published. Translation (with Magnússon) of *Volsunga Saga* published. Completes first illuminated manuscript, *A Book of Verse,* as gift for Georgiana Burne-Jones. Meets Aglaia Coronio and begins long friendship and correspondence.

1871 Takes Kelmscott Manor, Lechlade, Gloucestershire, in joint tenancy with Rossetti in June. Rossetti and Jane Morris and children take up residence there. In July Morris leaves on first Icelandic trip, accompanied by Faulkner, Magnússon, and W. H. Evans. Makes an illuminated *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* for Edward Burne-Jones. A second (on vellum), a gift for Georgiana Burne-Jones, begun and completed following year.

1872 Morris family leaves Queen Square (firm continues there) for Horrington House, Turnham Green. *Love is Enough* published. Rossetti suffers breakdown and attempts suicide.

1873 With Burne-Jones, visits Florence and Siena in spring. Second trip to Iceland in summer.

1874 Rossetti gives up his share of Kelmscott Manor. Morris takes family on trip to Belgium. In winter of 1874–75, begins illuminated *Aeneid* on vellum.

1875 Morris, Marshall, Faulkner, and Co. dissolved and reestablished as Morris and Co., with Morris as single owner. Takes M.A. degree at Oxford. *Three Northern Love Stories* published. Begins experiments with dyeing, staying with Thomas Wardle, at Leek, for the purpose. Morris's translation of the *Aeneid* published.

1876 Becomes Treasurer of Eastern Question Association and begins first period of political activity. Appointed Examiner at School of Art, South Kensington. Jenny suffers first epileptic attack and becomes semi-invalid for the rest of her life. *Sigurd the Volsung* published.

1877 Gives first public lecture, "The Decorative Arts." Helps found

the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings ("Anti-Scrape") and becomes its first secretary.

1878 Takes family on visit to Venice, Verona, and Padua in spring. Move to Kelmscott House, Hammersmith, on return. Morris begins tapestry weaving. Russo-Turkish war ends with Treaty of San Stefano in March; after Congress of Berlin, June–July, EQA becomes inactive.

1879 Leads protest by S.P.A.B. against proposed restorations at St. Mark's, Venice. Becomes treasurer of the National Liberal League. First meeting with H. M. Hyndman, founder in 1881 of the Democratic Federation.

1880 Firm decorates Throne Room at St. James's Palace.

1881 Merton Abbey works of Morris and Co. started.

1882 *Hopes and Fears for Art* (first collection of essays) published. Death of Rossetti on April 9.

1883 Joins Democratic Federation on January 13. Made Honorary Fellow of Exeter College on same day. Death of Karl Marx, March 14. High warp tapestry started at Merton Abbey works. Lecture, "Art and Democracy," sponsored by Russell Club and delivered in University Hall, Oxford, with Ruskin in chair, in November.

1884 Partially subsidizes *Justice,* organ of the Democratic Federation. *Chants for Socialists* and *A Summary of the Principles of Socialism* (with H. M. Hyndman) published. In dissension with Hyndman at end of year, and along with others resigns from Democratic Federation (renamed Social Democratic Federation in August).

1885 The Socialist League founded and *Commonweal* started with Morris as editor. Free speech demonstration, Dod Street, on September 20. Morris arrested when protesting sentencing of free speech demonstrators (charge dismissed in court next day). *The Pilgrims of Hope* published in *Commonweal,* 1885–86.

1886 Demonstration of unemployed in Trafalgar Square, February 8 ("Black Monday"). *A Dream of John Ball* appears in *Commonweal,* 1886–87. *A Short Account of the Commune of Paris* (with E. Belfort Bax and Victor Dave) published.

1887 Morris's translation of the *Odyssey* published in April. *The Tables Turned; or Nupkins Awakened* produced at hall of Socialist League on October 15. Trafalgar Square demonstra-

tion attacked by police, November 13 ("Bloody Sunday"). Pallbearer at funeral of Alfred Linnell, who was fatally injured in demonstration.

1888 *Signs of Changes,* second volume of lectures, published in May. Lectures on tapestry weaving at the first exhibition of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society. Attends the first Art Congress, held in Liverpool. *The House of the Wolfings* published in December. (Takes interest in its design and begins to consider the technique of printing.)

1889 Delegate at International Socialist Congress, July, in Paris, at which Second International is founded. London Dock Strike (August 14–September 14). *The Roots of the Mountains* published in November. Opens series of lectures at second exhibition of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society. Attends Art Congress in Edinburgh (November).

1890 Designs type, preparing to start the Kelmscott Press. *News from Nowhere* appears in *Commonweal.* Leaves Socialist League at end of year and forms Hammersmith Socialist Society.

1891 The Kelmscott Press begins printing in January; its first book, *The Story of the Glittering Plain,* issued in May. *Poems by the Way* and first volume of Saga Library published in October. Serious illness. Takes Jenny to France. Address on Pre-Raphaelites at Municipal Art Gallery, Birmingham, in October.

1892 Death of Tennyson on October 13. Morris mentioned as possible candidate for Laureateship. Reputedly declines to be considered. Elected Master of the Art Workers' Guild for the year. Principal Kelmscott Press books: *The Defence of Guenevere, The Golden Legend, The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye.* Second volume of Saga Library published.

1893 Joint Manifesto of English Socialists drawn up by Morris, G. B. Shaw, and H. M. Hyndman. *Socialism: Its Growth and Outcome* (with E. Belfort Bax) published. Principal Kelmscott Press books: More's *Utopia, News from Nowhere.*

1894 Morris's mother dies at age 90. Principal Kelmscott Press books: *The Wood beyond the World,* Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon,* Keats's *Poems,* and Rossetti's *Sonnets and Lyrical Poems.* Sydney Carlyle Cockerell becomes Secretary of the Kelmscott Press.

1895 Morris goes to Rottingdean for his health. Death of Friedrich

	Engels in August. Kelmscott Press publishes *Beowulf* (Morris's translation) and *The Life and Death of Jason.* Purchases Huntingfield Psalter and Tiptoft Missal. Speaks at Sergius Stepniak's funeral.
1896	Kelmscott Press publishes *Chaucer* and *The Well at the World's End.* Purchases Windmill Psalter (the last manuscript he was to buy). Sea voyage to Norway in attempt to restore health. Death of Morris, October 3.
1898	Death of Burne-Jones, Bernard Quaritch, and Kate Faulkner. Sale of Morris's library at auction by Sotheby's. Final Kelmscott Press volumes are issued, and the Press is closed.
1900	Death of John Ruskin.
1906	Death of Aglaia Coronio. Final volume (6) of the Saga Library completed and published by Eiríkr Magnússon.
	Deaths of the following:
1914	Jane Morris.
1915	Philip Webb.
1920	Georgiana Burne-Jones.
1935	Jenny Morris.
1938	May Morris.
1962	Sydney Carlyle Cockerell.

INTRODUCTION

William Morris was born on March 24, 1834, and died on October 3, 1896. Thus, his life spanned the period of high Victorianism in art and literature. His life spanned, too, the simultaneous growth of industrial capitalism and the rise of the challenge to it by socialism. For Morris, the subject of 19th-century art and the subject of socialism were inseparable.

He was solidly middle class by birth, was educated at Exeter College, Oxford, and was left an annual income by his father, who died when Morris was still a boy. Paradoxically, he became both a reformer of middle-class taste through the successful promotion of the "Morris look" in interior decoration (carried on by Morris and Co., the firm he founded in 1861 and led for the rest of his life), and a proclaimed enemy of the class into which he was born and which, through his own art, he served.

Yet to say this barely begins to suggest his importance and influence. As a socialist, he lectured indefatigably, edited the journal *Commonweal,* wrote articles for it, and increasingly came to be seen by the working class as a true friend among their middle-class would-be leaders. He was a man who himself worked with his hands, who organized and attended meetings with socialists of working-class origin, and who met and corresponded with them without condescension and often with humility, as his letters clearly show. As a leader in the arts, he is regarded as the father of the arts-and-crafts movement, who successfully overcame the 19th-century distinction between the fine artist and the craftsman. His legacy in this area is more vigorous today than ever. He was a reformer of the book arts (typography, page layout, quality of paper) and thus of the arts relevant to all visual material combining word and image, which are more central to our own culture every day.

The essays collected here, though they must be read within the frame of his life and of his times (see the chronology, p. vii), articulate his chief attitudes and ideas and demonstrate how inseparable from each other were his ideas about art and about society. Indeed, though he did

not become a socialist until 1883, and the essay "Art under Plutocracy" is the first major address he delivered *as* a socialist, it is already apparent in his 1877 lecture, "The Lesser Arts," that he saw economic history and class consciousness as the causes of the lamentable separation of the crafts and the fine arts, and the causes of relegating to an inferior social and economic position the practitioners of the first. "Art under Plutocracy" emphasizes and develops still another of his positions: the inevitability of the transformation of society through an historical process. Morris called himself a Marxist after 1883. It seemed strange to many that, as an orthodox 19th-century Marxist, he continuously foregrounded the fate of art. Even his demand that the working classes achieve healthier living conditions and more leisure rested on the view that a chief—if not *the* chief—human pleasure is in making and using articles and other cultural artifacts that are known to be useful and thought to be beautiful.

Indeed, his most profound statement of what art is resembles nothing so much as contemporary theory that society is a series of interpenetrating texts, a theory that is itself socially radical in origin and adherence. "I . . . ask you to extend the word art," Morris says to his listeners, at a meeting that was being conducted at University College, Oxford, with John Ruskin in the chair, before an academic and middle-class audience, "beyond those matters which are consciously works of art, to take in not only painting and sculpture, and architecture, but the shapes and colours of all household goods, nay, even the arrangement of the fields for tillage and pasture, the management of towns and of our highways of all kinds; in a word, to extend it to the aspect of all the externals of our life."

Literally, directly, and unselfconsciously Morris has here made it plain that art and social well-being are aspects of human existence as a single entity. Whether this makes Morris more or less profound than those radical thinkers who relegated art to the superstructure of a society whose base reality was the means of production and the way these were organized is a matter for each reader to decide. However, that the Morris view became, in different guise, increasingly the preoccupation of radical theorists in the 20th century, from Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Herbert Marcuse and the rest of the Frankfurt School to Terry Eagleton today, is clear and is important to note.

This collection concludes with an essay titled "The Present Outlook of Socialism in England." It was the last essay by Morris to be published in his lifetime, appearing in the American journal *The Forum* for April 1896; Morris died in October of that year. Perhaps oddly, given that it was written at the time of his greatest personal achievement in the arts (the work of the Kelmscott Press, for which he designed typefaces and ornaments), there is less about art and more about

contemporary politics in "The Present Outlook" than in any of the earlier essays. This is not to say that art as a topic is absent. Written when Morris was already ill and dying, it was meant as a kind of challenge to personal death, to express hope; and for Morris "hope" meant hope for the future of the arts. After condemning the arts of the mid-19th century as "sick," as evidence of a society made sick by commercialism, he speaks of the saving remnant: The great poet Tennyson, who was "once thought the very acme of wild eccentricity [died] a peer of the realm without having to make any considerable recantation." Romanticism (of which Morris approves) "is now rather rebelled against than rebelling," a sign, at least, of vitality and energy in the arts of the 1890s. In painting, "owing chiefly to the energy and genius . . . of Rossetti, [William] Holman Hunt and Millais," who, Morris's language suggests, established firm ground for young artists of the 1890s to stand upon, "it is at least possible for painters of pictures to live by giving their genius free scope, if they have it in them, however sore the struggle may be against their isolated position which denies them the support of a reasonable unbroken tradition." In architecture, usually for Morris the most important of all the arts, there has been some courageous and successful building; which, Morris's language seems to suggest, embodies neo-Gothic design.

Yet politics, in which he also sees hope, seems—uncharacteristically for him—to have proceeded along lines independent of art. In economics, which for a Marxist is the base of politics, Morris says, that in the past twenty years, the principle of *laissez-faire* "has been blown to the winds . . . and collective action is admitted everywhere to be the machinery through which we must . . . strive to make the best of our surroundings." In politics proper the word democracy has changed in meaning. It "no longer signifies a consensus of the rich middle classes, but . . . a gathering of the opinion of the working classes," if not for the purpose of enabling them to decide the best method for the production of utilities, "at least to let the governing or possessing class find out what steps may be necessary to . . . make the only useful class . . . temporarily contented." Despite the fine irony of this conclusion, the note of hope is here. For the first time, Morris speaks of ameliorative political action as a sign of hope, whereas in all the years since 1883 he had denounced such action as merely a method for turning the working classes into members of the middle class.

Although he does, in the essay, once again in theory bring art and politics together by saying that underlying the changes in both he sees a "great change in opinion, which has produced the visible new birth of Socialism," the rest of the essay is devoted to political analysis pure and simple and ends with the call for the establishment of a Socialist party

that includes "the whole of the genuine labor movement [and also] . . . all that is definitely Socialist amongst the middle class." Its one aim, "the realization of a new society founded on the practical equality of condition for all, and general association for the satisfaction of the needs of those equals." Morris concludes: "Whatever checks [such a Socialist Party] may meet on the way, it will get to its goal at last and *Socialism* will melt into *society.*"

Too much should not be made of this seeming separation of art and society at the very end. On some level, Morris, his self-awareness sharpened by illness, may have realized that he himself, as the greatest designer of the 19th century, culminating his career with the Kelmscott Press, presented a problem for the theory that there can be no real art again until society is radically changed. On another level, he no doubt thought that pointing to the (apparent) beginning of socialism as the ground for progress in *both* art and politics made it clear that he still regarded them as inseparable. Whatever the answer, what is more important is that Morris, asking himself what *was* the "present outlook for socialism," at a time when he knew he was dying, asserted a faith in people, in social justice as a cure for social ill, and in common action as a way of achieving a better society. The final emphasis on society—indeed, the substitution of it for socialism—recalls in its own way the phrase Morris used in speaking in his socialist romance of 1890, *News from Nowhere,* of the society of the future as the embodiment of "an epoch of rest." It is characteristic of Morris, who might easily in 1896 have associated "rest" with "death," to associate it instead with the still-to-be-achieved glory of the future: the melting of socialism, a term connoting struggle, into society, a term connoting for him harmony and leisure. Most certainly, everything we know about Morris tells us that in his vision the new society will be a ground on which the individual self will be realized through the pleasure of making, using, and seeing beautiful objects. It tells us, too, that the pursuit of this pleasure by individuals will result in the fulfilling of the vision of society—of cities, fields, and roads—as a vision of *art,* in accordance with the definition Morris provided in 1883. The good society (and this is the proof that it is the good society) both encourages art and *is* art.

The Lesser Arts

Hereafter I hope in another lecture to have the pleasure of laying before you an historical survey of the lesser, or, as they are called, the Decorative Arts, and I must confess it would have been pleasanter to me to have begun my talk with you by entering at once upon the subject of the history of this great industry; but, as I have something to say in a third lecture about various matters connected with the practice of Decoration among ourselves in these days, I feel that I should be in a false position before you, and one that might lead to confusion, or overmuch explanation, if I did not let you know what I think on the nature and scope of these arts, on their condition at the present time, and their outlook in times to come. In doing this it is like enough that I shall say things with which you will very much disagree; I must ask you therefore from the outset to believe that whatever I may blame or whatever I may praise, I neither, when I think of what history has been, am inclined to lament the past, to despise the present, or despair of the future; that I believe all the change and stir about us is a sign of the world's life, and that it will lead—by ways, indeed, of which we have no guess—to the bettering of all mankind.

Now as to the scope and nature of these Arts I have to say, that though when I come more into the details of my subject I shall not meddle much with the great art of Architecture, and less still with the great arts commonly called Sculpture and Painting, yet I cannot in my own mind quite sever them from those lesser so-called Decorative Arts, which I have to speak about: it is only in latter times, and under the most intricate conditions of life, that they have fallen apart from one another; and I hold that, when they are so parted, it is ill for the Arts altogether: the lesser ones become trivial, mechanical, unintelligent, incapable of resisting the changes pressed upon them by fashion or dishonesty; while the greater, however they may be practised for a while by men of great minds and wonder-working hands, unhelped by the lesser, unhelped by each other, are sure to lose their dignity of popular arts,

and become nothing but dull adjuncts to unmeaning pomp, or ingenious toys for a few rich and idle men.

However, I have not undertaken to talk to you of Architecture, Sculpture, and Painting, in the narrower sense of those words, since, most unhappily as I think, these master-arts, these arts more specially of the intellect, are at the present day divorced from decoration in its narrower sense. Our subject is that great body of art, by means of which men have at all times more or less striven to beautify the familiar matters of everyday life: a wide subject, a great industry; both a great part of the history of the world, and a most helpful instrument to the study of that history.

A very great industry indeed, comprising the crafts of housebuilding, painting, joinery and carpentry, smiths' work, pottery and glass-making, weaving, and many others: a body of art most important to the public in general, but still more so to us handicraftsmen; since there is scarce anything that they use, and that we fashion, but it has always been thought to be unfinished till it has had some touch or other of decoration about it. True it is that in many or most cases we have got so used to this ornament, that we look upon it as if it had grown of itself, and note it no more than the mosses on the dry sticks with which we light our fires. So much the worse! for there *is* the decoration, or some pretence of it, and it has, or ought to have, a use and a meaning. For, and this is at the root of the whole matter, everything made by man's hands has a form, which must be either beautiful or ugly; beautiful if it is in accord with Nature, and helps her; ugly if it is discordant with Nature, and thwarts her; it cannot be indifferent: we, for our parts, are busy or sluggish, eager or unhappy, and our eyes are apt to get dulled to this eventfulness of form in those things which we are always looking at. Now it is one of the chief uses of decoration, the chief part of its alliance with nature, that it has to sharpen our dulled senses in this matter: for this end are those wonders of intricate patterns interwoven, those strange forms invented, which men have so long delighted in: forms and intricacies that do not necessarily imitate nature, but in which the hand of the craftsman is guided to work in the way that she does, till the web, the cup, or the knife, look as natural, nay as lovely, as the green field, the river bank, or the mountain flint.

To give people pleasure in the things they must perforce *use,* that is one great office of decoration; to give people pleasure in the things they must perforce *make,* that is the other use of it.

Does not our subject look important enough now? I say that without these arts, our rest would be vacant and uninteresting, our labour mere endurance, mere wearing away of body and mind.

As for that last use of these arts, the giving us pleasure in our work, I scarcely know how to speak strongly enough of it; and yet if I did not

know the value of repeating a truth again and again, I should have to excuse myself to you for saying any more about this, when I remember how a great man now living has spoken of it: I mean my friend Professor John Ruskin: if you read the chapter in the 2nd vol. of his "Stones of Venice" entitled, "On the Nature of Gothic, and the Office of the Workman therein," you will read at once the truest and the most eloquent words that can possibly be said on the subject. What I have to say upon it can scarcely be more than an echo of his words, yet I repeat there is some use in reiterating a truth, lest it be forgotten; so I will say this much further: we all know what people have said about the curse of labour, and what heavy and grievous nonsense are the more part of their words thereupon; whereas indeed the real curses of craftsmen have been the curse of stupidity, and the curse of injustice from within and from without: no, I cannot suppose there is anybody here who would think it either a good life, or an amusing one, to sit with one's hands before one doing nothing—to live like a gentleman, as fools call it.

Nevertheless there *is* dull work to be done, and a weary business it is setting men about such work, and seeing them through it, and I would rather do the work twice over with my own hands than have such a job: but now only let the arts which we are talking of beautify our labour, and be widely spread, intelligent, well understood both by the maker and the user, let them grow in one word *popular,* and there will be pretty much an end of dull work and its wearing slavery; and no man will any longer have an excuse for talking about the curse of labour, no man will any longer have an excuse for evading the blessing of labour. I believe there is nothing that will aid the world's progress so much as the attainment of this; I protest there is nothing in the world that I desire so much as this, wrapped up, as I am sure it is, with changes political and social, that in one way or another we all desire.

Now if the objection be made, that these arts have been the handmaids of luxury, of tyranny, and of superstition, I must needs say that it is true in a sense; they have been so used, as many other excellent things have been. But it is also true that, among some nations, their most vigorous and freest times have been the very blossoming-times of art: while at the same time, I must allow that these decorative arts have flourished among oppressed peoples, who have seemed to have no hope of freedom: yet I do not think that we shall be wrong in thinking that at such times, among such peoples, art, at least, was free; when it has not been, when it has really been gripped by superstition, or by luxury, it has straightway begun to sicken under that grip. Nor must you forget that when men say popes, kings, and emperors built such and such buildings, it is a mere way of speaking. You look in your history-books to see who built Westminster Abbey, who built St. Sophia at Constantinople, and they tell you Henry III., Justinian the Emperor.

Did they? or, rather, men like you and me, handicraftsmen, who have left no names behind them, nothing but their work?

Now as these arts call people's attention and interest to the matters of every-day life in the present, so also, and that I think is no little matter, they call our attention at every step to that history, of which, I said before, they are so great a part; for no nation, no state of society, however rude, has been wholly without them: nay, there are peoples not a few, of whom we know scarce anything, save that they thought such and such forms beautiful. So strong is the bond between history and decoration, that in the practice of the latter we cannot, if we would, wholly shake off the influence of past times over what we do at present. I do not think it is too much to say that no man, however original he may be, can sit down to-day and draw the ornament of a cloth, or the form of an ordinary vessel or piece of furniture, that will be other than a development or a degradation of forms used hundreds of years ago; and these, too, very often, forms that once had a serious meaning, though they are now become little more than a habit of the hand; forms that were once perhaps the mysterious symbols of worships and beliefs now little remembered or wholly forgotten. Those who have diligently followed the delightful study of these arts are able as if through windows to look upon the life of the past—the very first beginnings of thought among nations whom we cannot even name; the terrible empires of the ancient East; the free vigour and glory of Greece; the heavy weight, the firm grasp of Rome; the fall of her temporal Empire which spread so wide about the world all that good and evil which men can never forget, and never cease to feel; the clashing of East and West, South and North, about her rich and fruitful daughter Byzantium; the rise, the dissensions, and the waning of Islam; the wanderings of Scandinavia; the Crusades; the foundation of the States of modern Europe; the struggles of free thought with ancient dying system—with all these events and their meaning is the history of popular art interwoven; with all this, I say, the careful student of decoration as an historical industry must be familiar. When I think of this, and the usefulness of all this knowledge, at a time when history has become so earnest a study amongst us as to have given us, as it were, a new sense: at a time when we so long to know the reality of all that has happened, and are to be put off no longer with the dull records of the battles and intrigues of kings and scoundrels,—I say when I think of all this, I hardly know how to say that this interweaving of the Decorative Arts with the history of the past is of less importance than their dealings with the life of the present: for should not these memories also be a part of our daily life?

And now let me recapitulate a little before I go further, before we begin to look into the condition of the arts at the present day. These arts, I have said, are part of a great system invented for the expression

of a man's delight in beauty: all peoples and times have used them; they have been the joy of free nations, and the solace of oppressed nations; religion has used and elevated them, has abused and degraded them; they are connected with all history, and are clear teachers of it; and, best of all, they are the sweeteners of human labour, both to the handicraftsman, whose life is spent in working in them, and to people in general who are influenced by the sight of them at every turn of the day's work: they make our toil happy, our rest fruitful.

And now if all I have said seems to you but mere open-mouthed praise of these arts, I must say that it is not for nothing that what I have hitherto put before you has taken that form.

It is because I must now ask you this question: All these good things—will you have them? will you cast them from you?

Are you surprised at my question—you, most of whom, like myself, are engaged in the actual practice of the arts that are, or ought to be, popular?

In explanation, I must somewhat repeat what I have already said. Time was when the mystery and wonder of handicrafts were well acknowledged by the world, when imagination and fancy mingled with all things made by man; and in those days all handicraftsmen were *artists,* as we should now call them. But the thought of man became more intricate, more difficult to express; art grew a heavier thing to deal with, and its labour was more divided among great men, lesser men, and little men; till that art, which was once scarce more than a rest of body and soul, as the hand cast the shuttle or swung the hammer, became to some men so serious a labour, that their working lives have been one long tragedy of hope and fear, joy and trouble. This was the growth of art: like all growth, it was good and fruitful for awhile; like all fruitful growth, it grew into decay; like all decay of what was once fruitful, it will grow into something new.

Into decay; for as the arts sundered into the greater and the lesser, contempt on one side, carelessness on the other arose, both begotten of ignorance of that *philosophy* of the Decorative Arts, a hint of which I have tried just now to put before you. The artist came out from the handicraftsmen, and left them without hope of elevation, while he himself was left without the help of intelligent, industrious sympathy. Both have suffered; the artist no less than the workman. It is with art as it fares with a company of soldiers before a redoubt, when the captain runs forward full of hope and energy, but looks not behind him to see if his men are following, and they hang back, not knowing why they are brought there to die. The captain's life is spent for nothing, and his men are sullen prisoners in the redoubt of Unhappiness and Brutality.

I must in plain words say of the Decorative Arts, of all the arts, that it is not so much that we are inferior in them to all who have gone

before us, but rather that they are in a state of anarchy and disorganisation, which makes a sweeping change necessary and certain.

So that again I ask my question, All that good fruit which the arts should bear, will you have it? will you cast it from you? Shall that sweeping change that must come, be the change of loss or of gain?

We who believe in the continuous life of the world, surely we are bound to hope that the change will bring us gain and not loss, and to strive to bring that gain about.

Yet how the world may answer my question, who can say? A man in his short life can see but a little way ahead, and even in mine wonderful and unexpected things have come to pass. I must needs say that therein lies my hope rather than in all I see going on round about us. Without disputing that if the imaginative arts perish, some new thing, at present unguessed of, *may* be put forward to supply their loss in men's lives, I cannot feel happy in that prospect, nor can I believe that mankind will endure such a loss for ever: but in the meantime the present state of the arts and their dealings with modern life and progress seem to me to point, in appearance at least, to this immediate future; that the world, which has for a long time busied itself about other matters than the arts, and has carelessly let them sink lower and lower, till many not uncultivated men, ignorant of what they once were, and hopeless of what they might yet be, look upon them with mere contempt; that the world, I say, thus busied and hurried, will one day wipe the slate, and be clean rid in her impatience of the whole matter with all its tangle and trouble.

And then—what then?

Even now amid the squalor of London it is hard to imagine what it will be. Architecture, Sculpture, Painting, with the crowd of lesser arts that belong to them, these, together with Music and Poetry, will be dead and forgotten, will no longer excite or amuse people in the least: for, once more, we must not deceive ourselves; the death of one art means the death of all; the only difference in their fate will be that the luckiest will be eaten the last—the luckiest, or the unluckiest: in all that has to do with beauty the invention and ingenuity of man will have come to a dead stop; and all the while Nature will go on with her eternal recurrence of lovely changes—spring, summer, autumn, and winter; sunshine, rain, and snow; storm and fair weather; dawn, noon, and sunset; day and night—ever bearing witness against man that he has deliberately chosen ugliness instead of beauty, and to live where he is strongest amidst squalor or blank emptiness.

You see, sirs, we cannot quite imagine it; any more, perhaps, than our forefathers of ancient London, living in the pretty, carefully whitened houses, with the famous church and its huge spire rising above them—than they, passing about the fair gardens running down to the broad river, could have imagined a whole county or more covered over with

hideous hovels, big, middle-sized, and little, which should one day be called London.

Sirs, I say that this dead blank of the arts that I more than dread is difficult even now to imagine; yet I fear that I must say that if it does not come about, it will be owing to some turn of events which we cannot at present foresee: but I hold that if it does happen, it will only last for a time, that it will be but a burning up of the gathered weeds, so that the field may bear more abundantly. I hold that men would wake up after a while, and look round and find the dulness unbearable, and begin once more inventing, imitating, and imagining, as in earlier days.

That faith comforts me, and I can say calmly if the blank space must happen, it must, and amidst its darkness the new seed must sprout. So it has been before: first comes birth, and hope scarcely conscious of itself; then the flower and fruit of mastery, with hope more than conscious enough, passing into insolence, as decay follows ripeness; and then—the new birth again.

Meantime it is the plain duty of all who look seriously on the arts to do their best to save the world from what at the best will be a loss, the result of ignorance and unwisdom; to prevent, in fact, that most discouraging of all changes, the supplying the place of an extinct brutality by a new one; nay, even if those who really care for the arts are so weak and few that they can do nothing else, it may be their business to keep alive some tradition, some memory of the past, so that the new life when it comes may not waste itself more than enough in fashioning wholly new forms for its new spirit.

To what side then shall those turn for help, who really understand the gain of a great art in the world, and the loss of peace and good life that must follow from the lack of it? I think that they must begin by acknowledging that the ancient art, the art of unconscious intelligence, as one should call it, which began without a date, at least so long ago as those strange and masterly scratchings on mammoth-bones and the like found but the other day in the drift—that this art of unconscious intelligence is all but dead; that what little of it is left lingers among half-civilised nations, and is growing coarser, feebler, less intelligent year by year; nay, it is mostly at the mercy of some commercial accident, such as the arrival of a few shiploads of European dye-stuffs or a few dozen orders from European merchants: this they must recognize, and must hope to see in time its place filled by a new art of conscious intelligence, the birth of wiser, simpler, freer ways of life than the world leads now, than the world has ever led.

I said, *to see* this in time; I do not mean to say that our own eyes will look upon it: it may be so far off, as indeed it seems to some, that many would scarcely think it worth while thinking of: but there are some of us who cannot turn our faces to the wall, or sit deedless because our hope seems somewhat dim; and, indeed, I think that while the signs of

the last decay of the old art with all the evils that must follow in its train are only too obvious about us, so on the other hand there are not wanting signs of the new dawn beyond that possible night of the arts, of which I have before spoken; this sign chiefly, that there are some few at least who are heartily discontented with things as they are, and crave for something better, or at least some promise of it—this best of signs: for I suppose that if some half-dozen men at any time earnestly set their hearts on something coming about which is not discordant with nature, it will come to pass one day or other; because it is not by accident that an idea comes into the heads of a few; rather they are pushed on, and forced to speak or act by something stirring in the heart of the world which would otherwise be left without expression.

By what means then shall those work who long for reform in the arts, and who shall they seek to kindle into eager desire for possession of beauty, and better still, for the development of the faculty that creates beauty?

People say to me often enough: If you want to make your art succeed and flourish, you must make it the fashion: a phrase which I confess annoys me; for they mean by it that I should spend one day over my work to two days in trying to convince rich, and supposed influential people, that they care very much for what they really do not care for in the least, so that it may happen according to the proverb: *Bell-wether took the leap, and we all went over.* Well, such advisers are right if they are content with the thing lasting but a little while; say till you can make a little money—if you don't get pinched by the door shutting too quickly: otherwise they are wrong: the people they are thinking of have too many strings to their bow, and can turn their backs too easily on a thing that fails, for it to be safe work trusting to their whims: it is not their fault, they cannot help it, but they have no chance of spending time enough over the arts to know anything practical of them, and they must of necessity be in the hands of those who spend their time in pushing fashion this way and that for their own advantage.

Sirs, there is no help to be got out of these latter, or those who let themselves be led by them: the only real help for the decorative arts must come from those who work in them; nor must they be led, they must lead.

You whose hands make those things that should be works of art, you must be all artists, and good artists too, before the public at large can take real interest in such things; and when you have become so, I promise you that you shall lead the fashion; fashion shall follow your hands obediently enough.

That is the only way in which we can get a supply of intelligent popular art: a few artists of the kind so-called now, what can they do working in the teeth of difficulties thrown in their way by what is called Commerce, but which should be called greed of money? working help-

lessly among the crowd of those who are ridiculously called manufacturers, i.e. handicraftsmen, though the more part of them never did a stroke of hand-work in their lives, and are nothing better than capitalists and salesmen. What can these grains of sand do, I say, amidst the enormous mass of work turned out every year which professes in some way to be decorative art, but the decoration of which no one heeds except the salesmen who have to do with it, and are hard put to it to supply the cravings of the public for something new, not for something pretty?

The remedy, I repeat, is plain if it can be applied; the handicraftsman, left behind by the artist when the arts sundered, must come up with him, must work side by side with him: apart from the difference between a great master and a scholar, apart from the differences of the natural bent of men's minds, which would make one man an imitative, and another an architectural or decorative artist, there should be no difference between those employed on strictly ornamental work; and the body of artists dealing with this should quicken with their art all makers of things into artists also, in proportion to the necessities and uses of the things they would make.

I know what stupendous difficulties, social and economical, there are in the way of this; yet I think that they seem to be greater than they are: and of one thing I am sure, that no real living decorative art is possible if this is impossible.

It is not impossible, on the contrary it is certain to come about, if you are at heart desirous to quicken the arts; if the world will, for the sake of beauty and decency, sacrifice some of the things it is so busy over (many of which I think are not very worthy of its trouble), art will begin to grow again; as for those difficulties above mentioned, some of them I know will in any case melt away before the steady change of the relative conditions of men; the rest, reason and resolute attention to the laws of nature, which are also the laws of art, will dispose of little by little: once more, the way will not be far to seek, if the will be with us.

Yet, granted the will, and though the way lies ready to us, we must not be discouraged if the journey seem barren enough at first, nay, not even if things seem to grow worse for a while: for it is natural enough that the very evil which has forced on the beginning of reform should look uglier, while on the one hand life and wisdom are building up the new, and on the other folly and deadness are hugging the old to them.

In this, as in all other matters, lapse of time will be needed before things seem to straighten, and the courage and patience that does not despise small things lying ready to be done; and care and watchfulness, lest we begin to build the wall ere the footings are well in; and always through all things much humility that is not easily cast down by failure, that seeks to be taught, and is ready to learn.

For your teachers, they must be Nature and History: as for the first,

that you must learn of it is so obvious that I need not dwell upon that now: hereafter, when I have to speak more of matters of detail, I may have to speak of the manner in which you must learn of Nature. As to the second, I do not think that any man but one of the highest genius, could do anything in these days without much study of ancient art, and even he would be much hindered if he lacked it. If you think that this contradicts what I said about the death of that ancient art, and the necessity I implied for an art that should be characteristic of the present day, I can only say that, in these times of plenteous knowledge and meagre performance, if we do not study the ancient work directly and learn to understand it, we shall find ourselves influenced by the feeble work all round us, and shall be copying the better work through the copyists and *without* understanding it, which will by no means bring about intelligent art. Let us therefore study it wisely, be taught by it, kindled by it; all the while determining not to imitate or repeat it; to have either no art at all, or an art which we have made our own.

Yet I am almost brought to a stand-still when bidding you to study nature and the history of art, by remembering that this is London, and what it is like: how can I ask working-men passing up and down these hideous streets day by day to care about beauty? If it were politics, we must care about that; or science, you could wrap yourselves up in the study of facts, no doubt, without much caring what goes on about you—but beauty! do you not see what terrible difficulties beset art, owing to a long neglect of art—and neglect of reason, too, in this matter? It is such a heavy question by what effort, by what dead-lift, you can thrust this difficulty from you, that I must perforce set it aside for the present, and must at least hope that the study of history and its monuments will help you somewhat herein. If you can really fill your minds with memories of great works of art, and great times of art, you will, I think, be able to a certain extent to look through the aforesaid ugly surroundings, and will be moved to discontent of what is careless and brutal now, and will, I hope, at last be so much discontented with what is bad, that you will determine to bear no longer that short-sighted, reckless brutality of squalor that so disgraces our intricate civilization.

Well, at any rate, London is good for this, that it is well off for museums—which I heartily wish were to be got at seven days in the week instead of six, or at least on the only day on which an ordinarily busy man, one of the taxpayers who support them, can as a rule see them quietly—and certainly any of us who may have any natural turn for art must get more help from frequenting them than one can well say. It is true, however, that people need some preliminary instruction before they can get all the good possible to be got from the prodigious treasures of art possessed by the country in that form: there also one sees things in a piecemeal way: nor can I deny that there is something

melancholy about a museum, such a tale of violence, destruction, and carelessness, as its treasured scraps tell us.

But moreover you may sometimes have an opportunity of studying ancient art in a narrower but a more intimate, a more kindly form, the monuments of our own land. Sometimes only, since we live in the middle of this world of brick and mortar, and there is little else left us amidst it, except the ghost of the great church at Westminster, ruined as its exterior is by the stupidity of the restoring architect, and insulted as its glorious interior is by the pompous undertakers' lies, by the vainglory and ignorance of the last two centuries and a half—little besides that and the matchless Hall near it: but when we can get beyond that smoky world, there, out in the country, we may still see the works of our fathers yet alive amidst the very nature they were wrought into, and of which they are so completely a part. For there indeed if anywhere, in the English country, in the days when people cared about such things, was there a full sympathy between the works of man, and the land they were made for. 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 hills, 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.

All which I neither praise nor blame, but say that so it is: some people praise this homeliness overmuch, as if the land were the very axletree of the world; so do not I, nor any unblinded by pride in themselves and all that belongs to them: others there are who scorn it and the tameness of it: not I any the more: though it would indeed be hard if there were nothing else in the world, no wonders, no terrors, no unspeakable beauties: yet when we think what a small part of the world's history, past, present, and to come, is this land we live in, and how much smaller still in the history of the arts, and yet how our forefathers clung to it, and with what care and pains they adorned it, this unromantic, uneventful-looking land of England, surely by this too our hearts may be touched, and our hope quickened.

For as was the land, such was the art of it while folk yet troubled themselves about such things; it strove little to impress people either by pomp or ingenuity: not unseldom it fell into commonplace, rarely it rose into majesty; yet was it never oppressive, never a slave's nightmare nor an insolent boast: and at its best it had an inventiveness, an individuality that grander styles have never overpassed: its best too, and that was in its very heart, was given as freely to the yeoman's house, and

the humble village church, as to the lord's palace or the mighty cathedral: never coarse, though often rude enough, sweet, natural and unaffected, an art of peasants rather than of merchant-princes or courtiers, it must be a hard heart, I think, that does not love it: whether a man has been born among it like ourselves, or has come wonderingly on its simplicity from all the grandeur over-seas. A peasant art, I say, and it clung fast to the life of the people, and still lived among the cottagers and yeomen in many parts of the country while the big houses were being built "French and fine": still lived also in many a quaint pattern of loom and printing-block, and embroiderer's needle, while over-seas stupid pomp had extinguished all nature and freedom, and art was become, in France especially, the mere expression of that successful and exultant rascality, which in the flesh no long time afterwards went down into the pit for ever.

Such was the English art, whose history is in a sense at your doors, grown scarce indeed, and growing scarcer year by year, not only through greedy destruction, of which there is certainly less than there used to be, but also through the attacks of another foe, called nowadays "restoration."

I must not make a long story about this, but also I cannot quite pass it over, since I have pressed on you the study of these ancient monuments. Thus the matter stands: these old buildings have been altered and added to century after century, often beautifully, always historically; their very value, a great part of it, lay in that: they have suffered almost always from neglect also, often from violence (that latter a piece of history often far from uninteresting), but ordinary obvious mending would almost always have kept them standing, pieces of nature and of history.

But of late years a great uprising of ecclesiastical zeal, coinciding with a great increase of study, and consequently of knowledge of mediæval architecture, has driven people into spending their money on these buildings, not merely with the purpose of repairing them, of keeping them safe, clean, and wind and water-tight, but also of "restoring" them to some ideal state of perfection; sweeping away if possible all signs of what has befallen them at least since the Reformation, and often since dates much earlier: this has sometimes been done with much disregard of art and entirely from ecclesiastical zeal, but oftener it has been well meant enough as regards art: yet you will not have listened to what I have said to-night if you do not see that from my point of view this restoration must be as impossible to bring about, as the attempt at it is destructive to the buildings so dealt with: I scarcely like to think what a great part of them have been made nearly useless to students of art and history: unless you knew a great deal about architecture you perhaps would scarce understand what terrible damage has been done by that dangerous "little knowledge" in this matter: but at least it is easy

to be understood, that to deal recklessly with valuable (and national) monuments which, when once gone, can never be replaced by any splendour of modern art, is doing a very sorry service to the State.

You will see by all that I have said on this study of ancient art that I mean by education herein something much wider than the teaching of a definite art in schools of design, and that it must be something that we must do more or less for ourselves: I mean by it a systematic concentration of our thoughts on the matter, a studying of it in all ways, careful and laborious practice of it, and a determination to do nothing but what is known to be good in workmanship and design.

Of course, however, both as an instrument of that study we have been speaking of, as well as of the practice of the arts, all handicraftsmen should be taught to draw very carefully; as indeed all people should be taught drawing who are not physically incapable of learning it: but the art of drawing so taught would not be the art of designing, but only a means towards this end, *general capability in dealing with the arts.*

For I wish specially to impress this upon you, that *designing* cannot be taught at all in a school: continued practice will help a man who is naturally a designer, continual notice of nature and of art: no doubt those who have some faculty for designing are still numerous, and they want from a school certain technical teaching, just as they want tools: in these days also, when the best school, the school of successful practice going on around you, is at such a low ebb, they do undoubtedly want instruction in the history of the arts: these two things schools of design can give: but the royal road of a set of rules deduced from a sham science of design, that is itself not a science but another set of rules, will lead nowhere—or, let us rather say, to beginning again.

As to the kind of drawing that should be taught to men engaged in ornamental work, there is only *one best* way of teaching drawing, and that is teaching the scholar to draw the human figure: both because the lines of a man's body are much more subtle than anything else, and because you can more surely be found out and set right if you go wrong. I do think that such teaching as this, given to all people who care for it, would help the revival of the arts very much: the habit of discriminating between right and wrong, the sense of pleasure in drawing a good line, would really, I think, be education in the due sense of the word for all such people as had the germs of invention in them; yet as aforesaid, in this age of the world it would be mere affectation to pretend to shut one's eyes to the art of past ages: that also we must study. If other circumstances, social and economical, do not stand in our way, that is to say, if the world is not too busy to allow us to have Decorative Arts at all, these two are the *direct* means by which we shall get them; that is, general cultivation of the powers of the mind, general cultivation of the powers of the eye and hand.

Perhaps that seems to you very commonplace advice and a very

roundabout road; nevertheless 'tis a certain one, if by any road you desire to come to the new art, which is my subject to-night: if you do not, and if those germs of invention, which, as I said just now, are no doubt still common enough among men, are left neglected and undeveloped, the laws of Nature will assert themselves in this as in other matters, and the faculty of design itself will gradually fade from the race of man. Sirs, shall we approach nearer to perfection by casting away so large a part of that intelligence which makes us *men?*

And now before I make an end, I want to call your attention to certain things, that, owing to our neglect of the arts for other business, bar that good road to us and are such an hindrance, that, till they are dealt with, it is hard even to make a beginning of our endeavour. And if my talk should seem to grow too serious for our subject, as indeed I think it cannot do, I beg you to remember what I said earlier, of how the arts all hang together. Now there is one art of which the old architect of Edward the Third's time was thinking—he who founded New College at Oxford, I mean—when he took this for his motto: "Manners maketh man": he meant by manners the art of morals, the art of living worthily, and like a man. I must needs claim this art also as dealing with my subject.

There is a great deal of sham work in the world, hurtful to the buyer, more hurtful to the seller, if he only knew it, most hurtful to the maker: how good a foundation it would be towards getting good Decorative Art, that is ornamental workmanship, if we craftsmen were to resolve to turn out nothing but excellent workmanship in all things, instead of having, as we too often have now, a very low average standard of work, which we often fall below.

I do not blame either one class or another in this matter, I blame all: to set aside our own class of handicraftsmen, of whose shortcomings you and I know so much that we need talk no more about it, I know that the public in general are set on having things cheap, being so ignorant that they do not know when they get them nasty also; so ignorant that they neither know nor care whether they give a man his due: I know that the manufacturers (so called) are so set on carrying out competition to its utmost, competition of cheapness, not of excellence, that they meet the bargain-hunters half way, and cheerfully furnish them with nasty wares at the cheap rate they are asked for, by means of what can be called by no prettier name than fraud. England has of late been too much busied with the counting-house and not enough with the workshop: with the result that the counting-house at the present moment is rather barren of orders.

I say all classes are to blame in this matter, but also I say that the remedy lies with the handicraftsmen, who are not ignorant of these things like the public, and who have no call to be greedy and isolated like the manufacturers or middlemen; the duty and honour of educating the

public lies with them, and they have in them the seeds of order and organization which make that duty the easier.

When will they see to this and help to make men of us all by insisting on this most weighty piece of manners: so that we may adorn life with the pleasure of cheerfully *buying* goods at their due price; with the pleasure of *selling* goods that we could be proud of both for fair price and fair workmanship; with the pleasure of working soundly and without haste at *making* goods that we could be proud of?—much the greatest pleasure of the three is that last, such a pleasure as, I think, the world has none like it.

You must not say that this piece of manners lies out of my subject: it is essentially a part of it and most important: for I am bidding you learn to be artists, if art is not to come to an end amongst us: and what is an artist but a workman who is determined that, whatever else happens, his work shall be excellent? or, to put it in another way: the decoration of workmanship, what is it but the expression of man's pleasure in successful labour? But what pleasure can there be in *bad* work, in *un*successful labour; why should we decorate *that?* and how can we bear to be always unsuccessful in our labour?

As greed of unfair gain, wanting to be paid for what we have not earned, cumbers our path with this tangle of bad work, of sham work, so the heaped-up money which this greed has brought us (for greed will have its way, like all other strong passions), this money, I say, gathered into heaps little and big, with all the false distinction which so unhappily it yet commands amongst us, has raised up against the arts a barrier of the love of luxury and show, which is of all obvious hindrances the worst to overpass: the highest and most cultivated classes are not free from the vulgarity of it, the lower are not free from its pretence. I beg you to remember both as a remedy against this, and as explaining exactly what I mean, that nothing can be a work of art which is not useful; that is to say, which does not minister to the body when well under command of the mind, or which does not amuse, soothe, or elevate the mind in a healthy state. What tons upon tons of unutterable rubbish pretending to be works of art in some degree would this maxim clear out of our London houses, if it were understood and acted upon! To my mind it is only here and there (out of the kitchen) that you can find in a well-to-do house things that are of any use at all: as a rule all the decoration (so called) that has got there is there for the sake of show, not because any body likes it. I repeat, this stupidity goes through all classes of society: the silk curtains in my Lord's drawing-room are no more a matter of art to him than the powder in his footman's hair; the kitchen in a country farmhouse is most commonly a pleasant and homelike place, the parlour dreary and useless.

Simplicity of life, begetting simplicity of taste, that is, a love for sweet and lofty things, is of all matters most necessary for the birth of the new

and better art we crave for; simplicity everywhere, in the palace as well as in the cottage.

Still more is this necessary, cleanliness and decency everywhere, in the cottage as well as in the palace: the lack of that is a serious piece of *manners* for us to correct: that lack and all the inequalities of life, and the heaped-up thoughtlessness and disorder of so many centuries that cause it: and as yet it is only a very few men who have begun to think about a remedy for it in its widest range: even in its narrower aspect, in the defacements of our big towns by all that commerce brings with it, who heeds it? who tries to control their squalor and hideousness? there is nothing but thoughtlessness and recklessness in the matter: the helplessness of people who don't live long enough to do a thing themselves, and have not manliness and foresight enough to begin the work, and pass it on to those that shall come after them.

Is money to be gathered? cut down the pleasant trees among the houses, pull down ancient and venerable buildings for the money that a few square yards of London dirt will fetch; blacken rivers, hide the sun and poison the air with smoke and worse, and it's nobody's business to see to it or mend it: that is all that modern commerce, the counting-house forgetful of the workshop, will do for us herein.

And Science—we have loved her well, and followed her diligently, what will she do? I fear she is so much in the pay of the counting-house—the counting-house and the drill-sergeant—that she is too busy, and will for the present do nothing. Yet there are matters which I should have thought easy for her; say for example teaching Manchester how to consume its own smoke, or Leeds how to get rid of its superfluous black dye without turning it into the river, which would be as much worth her attention as the production of the heaviest of heavy black silks, or the biggest of useless guns. Anyhow, however it be done, unless people care about carrying on their business without making the world hideous, how can they care about Art? I know it will cost much both of time and money to better these things even a little; but I do not see how these can be better spent than in making life cheerful and honourable for others and for ourselves; and the gain of good life to the country at large that would result from men seriously setting about the bettering of the decency of our big towns would be priceless, even if nothing specially good befell the arts in consequence: I do not know that it would; but I should begin to think matters hopeful if men turned their attention to such things, and I repeat that, unless they do so, we can scarcely even begin with any hope our endeavours for the bettering of the arts.

Unless something or other is done to give all men some pleasure for the eyes and rest for the mind in the aspect of their own and their neighbours' houses, until the contrast is less disgraceful between the fields where beasts live and the streets where men live, I suppose that the practice of the arts must be mainly kept in the hands of a few highly

cultivated men, who can go often to beautiful places, whose education enables them, in the contemplation of the past glories of the world, to shut out from their view the everyday squalors that the most of men move in. Sirs, I believe that art has such sympathy with cheerful freedom, open-heartedness and reality, so much she sickens under selfishness and luxury, that she will not live thus isolated and exclusive. I will go further than this and say that on such terms I do not wish her to live. I protest that it would be a shame to an honest artist to enjoy what he had huddled up to himself of such art, as it would be for a rich man to sit and eat dainty food amongst starving soldiers in a beleaguered fort.

I do not want art for a few, any more than education for a few, or freedom for a few.

No, rather than art should live this poor thin life among a few exceptional men, despising those beneath them for an ignorance for which they themselves are responsible, for a brutality that they will not struggle with,—rather than this, I would that the world should indeed sweep away all art for awhile, as I said before I thought it possible she might do; rather than the wheat should rot in the miser's granary, I would that the earth had it, that it might yet have a chance to quicken in the dark.

I have a sort of faith, though, that this clearing away of all art will not happen, that men will get wiser, as well as more learned; that many of the intricacies of life, on which we now pride ourselves more than enough, partly because they are new, partly because they have come with the gain of better things, will be cast aside as having played their part, and being useful no longer. I hope that we shall have leisure from war—war commercial, as well as war of the bullet and the bayonet; leisure from the knowledge that darkens counsel; leisure above all from the greed of money, and the craving for that overwhelming distinction that money now brings: I believe that as we have even now partly achieved LIBERTY, so we shall one day achieve EQUALITY, which, and which only, means FRATERNITY, and so have leisure from poverty and all its griping, sordid cares.

Then having leisure from all these things, amidst renewed simplicity of life we shall have leisure to think about our work, that faithful daily companion, which no man any longer will venture to call the Curse of labour: for surely then we shall be happy in it, each in his place, no man grudging at another; no one bidden to be any man's *servant,* every one scorning to be any man's *master:* men will then assuredly be happy in their work, and that happiness will assuredly bring forth decorative, noble, *popular* art.

That art will make our streets as beautiful as the woods, as elevating as the mountain-sides: it will be a pleasure and a rest, and not a weight upon the spirits to come from the open country into a town; every man's house will be fair and decent, soothing to his mind and helpful to his work: all the works of man that we live amongst and handle will be

in harmony with nature, will be reasonable and beautiful: yet all will be simple and inspiriting, not childish nor enervating; for as nothing of beauty and splendour that man's mind and hand may compass shall be wanting from our public buildings, so in no private dwelling will there be any signs of waste, pomp, or insolence, and every man will have his share of the *best.*

It is a dream, you may say, of what has never been and never will be; true, it has never been, and therefore, since the world is alive and moving yet, my hope is the greater that it one day will be: true, it is a dream; but dreams have before now come about of things so good and necessary to us, that we scarcely think of them more than of the daylight, though once people had to live without them, without even the hope of them.

Anyhow, dream as it is, I pray you to pardon my setting it before you, for it lies at the bottom of all my work in the Decorative Arts, nor will it ever be out of my thoughts: and I am here with you to-night to ask you to help me in realizing this dream, this *hope.*

The Art of the People

> "And the men of labour spent their strength in daily struggling for bread to maintain the vital strength they labour with: so living in a daily circulation of sorrow, living but to work, and working but to live, as if daily bread were the only end of a wearisome life, and a wearisome life the only occasion of daily bread." —Daniel Defoe

I know that a large proportion of those here present are either already practising the Fine Arts, or are being specially educated to that end, and I feel that I may be expected to address myself specially to these. But since it is not to be doubted that we are *all* met together because of the interest we take in what concerns these arts, I would rather address myself to you *all* as representing the public in general. Indeed, those of you who are specially studying Art could learn little of me that would be useful to yourselves only. You are already learning under competent masters—most competent, I am glad to know—by means of a system which should teach you all you need, if you have been right in making the first step of devoting yourselves to Art; I mean if you are aiming at the right thing, and in some way or another understand what Art means, which you may well do without being able to express it, and if you are resolute to follow on the path which that inborn knowledge has shown to you; if it is otherwise with you than this, no system and no teachers will help you to produce real art of any kind, be it never so humble. Those of you who are real artists know well enough all the special advice I can give you, and in how few words it may be said—follow nature, study antiquity, make your own art, and do not steal it, grudge no expense of trouble, patience, of courage, in the striving to accomplish the hard thing you have set yourselves to do. You have had all that said to you twenty times, I doubt not; and twenty times twenty have said it to yourselves, and now I have said it again to you, and done neither you nor me good nor harm thereby. So true it all is, so well known, and so hard to follow.

But to me, and I hope to you, Art is a very serious thing, and cannot

by any means be dissociated from the weighty matters that occupy the thoughts of men; and there are principles underlying the practice of it, on which all serious-minded men, may—nay, must—have their own thoughts. It is on some of these that I ask your leave to speak, and to address myself, not only to those who are consciously interested in the arts, but to all those also who have considered what the progress of civilization promises and threatens to those who shall come after us: what there is to hope and fear for the future of the arts, which were born with the birth of civilization and will only die with its death—what on this side of things, the present time of strife and doubt and change is preparing for the better time, when the change shall have come, the strife be lulled, and the doubt cleared: this is a question, I say, which is indeed weighty, and may well interest all thinking men.

Nay, so universally important is it, that I fear lest you should think I am taking too much upon myself to speak to you on so weighty a matter, nor should I have dared to do so, if I did not feel that I am to-night only the mouthpiece of better men than myself, whose hopes and fears I share; and that being so, I am the more emboldened to speak out, if I can, my full mind on the subject, because I am in a city where, if anywhere, men are not contented to live wholly for themselves and the present, but have fully accepted the duty of keeping their eyes open to whatever new is stirring, so that they may help and be helped by any truth that there may be in it. Nor can I forget, that, since you have done me the great honour of choosing me for the President of your Society of Arts for the past year, and of asking me to speak to you to-night, I should be doing less than my duty if I did not, according to my lights, speak out straightforwardly whatever seemed to me might be in a small degree useful to you. Indeed, I think I am among friends, who may forgive me if I speak rashly, but scarcely if I speak falsely.

The aim of your Society and School of Arts is, as I understand it, to further those arts by education widely spread. A very great object is that, and well worthy of the reputation of this great city; but since Birmingham has also, I rejoice to know, a great reputation for not allowing things to go about shamming life when the brains are knocked out of them, I think you should know and see clearly what it is you have undertaken to further by these institutions, and whether you really care about it, or only languidly acquiesce in it—whether, in short, you know it to the heart, and are indeed part and parcel of it, with your own will, or against it; or else have heard say that it is a good thing if any one care to meddle with it.

If you are surprised at my putting that question for your consideration, I will tell you why I do so. There are some of us who love Art most, and I may say most faithfully, who see for certain that such love is rare nowadays. We cannot help seeing, that besides a vast number of people, who (poor souls!) are sordid and brutal of mind and habits, and

have had no chance or choice in the matter, there are many high-minded, thoughtful, and cultivated men who inwardly think the arts to be a foolish accident of civilization—nay, worse perhaps, a nuisance, a disease, a hindrance to human progress. Some of these, doubtless, are very busy about other sides of thought. They are, as I should put it, so *artistically* engrossed by the study of science, politics, or what not, that they have necessarily narrowed their minds by their hard and praiseworthy labours. But since such men are few, this does not account for a prevalent habit of thought that looks upon Art as at best trifling.

What is wrong, then, with us or the arts, since what was once accounted so glorious, is now deemed paltry?

The question is no light one; for, to put the matter in its clearest light, I will say that the leaders of modern thought do for the most part sincerely and single-mindedly hate and despise the arts; and you know well that as the leaders are, so must the people be; and that means that we who are met together here for the furthering of Art by wide-spread education are either deceiving ourselves and wasting our time, since we shall one day be of the same opinion as the best men among us, or else we represent a small minority that is right, as minorities sometimes are, while those upright men aforesaid, and the great mass of civilized men, have been blinded by untoward circumstances.

That we are of this mind—the minority that is right—is, I hope, the case. I hope we know assuredly that the arts we have met together to further are necessary to the life of man, if the progress of civilization is not to be as causeless as the turning of a wheel that makes nothing.

How, then, shall we, the minority, carry out the duty which our position thrusts upon us, of striving to grow into a majority?

If we could only explain to those thoughtful men, and the millions of whom they are the flower, what the thing is that we love, which is to us as the bread we eat, and the air we breathe, but about which they know nothing and feel nothing, save a vague instinct of repulsion, then the seed of victory might be sown. This is hard indeed to do; yet if we ponder upon a chapter of ancient or mediæval history, it seems to me some glimmer of a chance of doing so breaks in upon us. Take for example a century of the Byzantine Empire, weary yourselves with reading the names of the pedants, tyrants, and tax-gatherers to whom the terrible chain which long-dead Rome once forged, still gave the power of cheating people into thinking that they were necessary lords of the world. Turn then to the lands they governed, and read and forget a long string of the causeless murders of Northern and Saracen pirates and robbers. That is pretty much the sum of what so-called history has left us of the tale of those days—the stupid languor and the evil deeds of kings and scoundrels. Must we turn away then, and say that all was evil? How then did men live from day to day? How then did Europe grow into intelligence and freedom? It seems there were others than those of whom

history (so called) has left us the names and the deeds. These, the raw material for the treasury and the slave-market, we now call "the people," and we know that they were working all that while. Yes, and that their work was not merely slaves' work, the meal-trough before them and the whip behind them; for though history (so called) has forgotten them, yet their work has not been forgotten, but has made another history—the history of Art. There is not an ancient city in the East or the West that does not bear some token of their grief, and joy, and hope. From Ispahan to Northumberland, there is no building built between the seventh and seventeenth centuries that does not show the influence of the labour of that oppressed and neglected herd of men. No one of them, indeed, rose high above his fellows. There was no Plato, or Shakespeare, or Michael Angelo amongst them. Yet scattered as it was among many men, how strong their thought was, how long it abided, how far it travelled!

And so it was ever through all those days when Art was so vigorous and progressive. Who can say how little we should know of many periods, but for their art? History (so called) has remembered the kings and warriors, because they destroyed; Art has remembered the people, because they created.

I think, then, that this knowledge we have of the life of past times gives us some token of the way we should take in meeting those honest and single-hearted men who above all things desire the world's progress, but whose minds are, as it were, sick on this point of the arts. Surely you may say to them: When all is gained that you (and we) so long for, what shall we do then? That great change which we are working for, each in his own way, will come like other changes, as a thief in the night, and will be with us before we know it; but let us imagine that its consummation has come suddenly and dramatically, acknowledged and hailed by all right-minded people; and what shall we do then, lest we begin once more to heap up fresh corruption for the woeful labour of ages once again? I say, as we turn away from the flagstaff where the new banner has been just run up; as we depart, our ears yet ringing with the blare of the heralds' trumpets that have proclaimed the new order of things, what shall we turn to then, what *must* we turn to then?

To what else, save to our work, our daily labour?

With what, then, shall we adorn it when we have become wholly free and reasonable? It is necessary toil, but shall it be toil only? Shall all we can do with it be to shorten the hours of that toil to the utmost, that the hours of leisure may be long beyond what men used to hope for? and what then shall we do with the leisure, if we say that all toil is irksome? Shall we sleep it all away?—Yes, and never wake up again, I should hope, in that case.

What shall we do then? what shall our necessary hours of labour bring forth?

That will be a question for all men in that day when many wrongs are righted, and when there will be no classes of degradation on whom the dirty work of the world can be shovelled; and if men's minds are still sick and loathe the arts, they will not be able to answer that question.

Once men sat under grinding tyrannies, amidst violence and fear so great, that nowadays we wonder how they lived through twenty-four hours of it, till we remember that then, as now, their daily labour was the main part of their lives, and that that daily labour was sweetened by the daily creation of Art; and shall we who are delivered from the evils they bore, live drearier days than they did? Shall men, who have come forth from so many tyrannies, bind themselves to yet another one, and become the slaves of nature, piling day upon day of hopeless, useless toil? Must this go on worsening till it comes to this at last—that the world shall have come into its inheritance, and with all foes conquered and nought to bind it, shall choose to sit down and labour for ever amidst grim ugliness? How, then, were all our hopes cheated, what a gulf of despair should we tumble into then!

In truth, it cannot be; yet if that sickness of repulsion to the arts were to go on hopelessly, nought else would be, and the extinction of the love of beauty and imagination would prove to be the extinction of civilization. But that sickness the world will one day throw off, yet will, I believe, pass through many pains in so doing, some of which will look very like the death-throes of Art, and some, perhaps, will be grievous enough to the poor people of the world; since hard necessity, I doubt, works many of the world's changes, rather than the purblind striving to see, which we call the foresight of man.

Meanwhile, remember that I asked just now, what was amiss in Art or in ourselves that this sickness was upon us. Nothing is wrong or can be with Art in the abstract—that must always be good for mankind, or we are all wrong together: but with Art as we of these latter days have known it, there is much wrong; nay, what are we here for to-night if that is not so? were not the schools of art founded all over the country some thirty years ago because we had found out that popular art was fading—or perhaps had faded out from amongst us?

As to the progress made since then in this country—and in this country only, if at all—it is hard for me to speak without being either ungracious or insincere, and yet speak I must. I say, then, that an apparent external progress in some ways is obvious, but I do not know how far that is hopeful, for time must try it, and prove whether it be a passing fashion or the first token of a real stir among the great mass of civilized men. To speak quite frankly, and as one friend to another, I must needs say that even as I say those words they seem too good to be true. And yet—who knows?—so wont are we to frame history for the future as well as for the past, so often are our eyes blind both when we look backward and when we look forward, because we have been gazing so

intently at our own days, our own lines. May all be better than I think it!

At any rate let us count our gains, and set them against less hopeful signs of the times. In England, then—and as far as I know, in England only—painters of pictures have grown, I believe, more numerous, and certainly more conscientious in their work, and in some cases—and this more especially in England—have developed and expressed a sense of beauty which the world has not seen for the last three hundred years. This is certainly a very great gain, which is not easy to over-estimate, both for those who make the pictures and those who use them.

Furthermore, in England, and in England only, there has been a great improvement in architecture and the arts that attend it—arts which it was the special province of the afore-mentioned schools to revive and foster. This, also, is a considerable gain to the users of the works so made, but I fear a gain less important to most of those concerned in making them.

Against these gains we must, I am very sorry to say, set the fact not easy to be accounted for, that the rest of the civilized world (so called) seems to have done little more than stand still in these matters; and that among ourselves these improvements have concerned comparatively few people, the mass of our population not being in the least touched by them; so that the great bulk of our architecture—the art which most depends on the taste of the people at large—grows worse and worse every day.

I must speak also of another piece of discouragement before I go further. I daresay many of you will remember how emphatically those who first had to do with the movement of which the foundation of our art-schools was a part, called the attention of our pattern-designers to the beautiful works of the East. This was surely most well judged of them, for they bade us look at an art at once beautiful, orderly, living in our own day, and above all, popular. Now, it is a grievous result of the sickness of civilization that this art is fast disappearing before the advance of western conquest and commerce—fast, and every day faster. While we are met here in Birmingham to further the spread of education in art, Englishmen in India are, in their short-sightedness, actively destroying the very sources of that education—jewellery, metal-work, pottery, calico-printing, brocade-weaving, carpet-making—all the famous and historical arts of the great peninsula have been for long treated as matters of no importance, to be thrust aside for the advantage of any paltry scrap of so-called commerce; and matters are now speedily coming to an end there. I daresay some of you saw the presents which the native Princes gave to the Prince of Wales on the occasion of his progress through India. I did myself, I will not say with great disappointment, for I guessed what they would be like, but with great grief, since there was scarce here and there a piece of goods among these

costly gifts, things given as great treasures, which faintly upheld the ancient fame of the cradle of the industrial arts. Nay, in some cases, it would have been laughable, if it had not been so sad, to see the piteous simplicity with which the conquered race had copied the blank vulgarity of their lords. And this deterioration we are now, as I have said, actively engaged in forwarding. I have read a little book,* a handbook to the Indian Court of last year's Paris Exhibition, which takes the occasion of noting the state of manufactures in India one by one. "Art manufactures," you would call them; but, indeed, all manufactures are, or were, "art manufactures" in India. Dr. Birdwood, the author of this book, is of great experience in Indian life, a man of science, and a lover of the arts. His story, by no means a new one to me, or others interested in the East and its labour, is a sad one indeed. The conquered races in their hopelessness are everywhere giving up the genuine practice of their own arts, which we know ourselves, as we have indeed loudly proclaimed, are founded on the truest and most natural principles. The often-praised perfection of these arts is the blossom of many ages of labour and change, but the conquered races are casting it aside as a thing of no value, so that they may conform themselves to the inferior art, or rather the lack of art, of their conquerors. In some parts of the country the genuine arts are quite destroyed; in many others nearly so; in all they have more or less begun to sicken. So much so is this the case, that now for some time the Government has been furthering this deterioration. As for example, no doubt with the best intentions, and certainly in full sympathy with the general English public, both at home and in India, the Government is now manufacturing cheap Indian carpets in the Indian gaols. I do not say that it is a bad thing to turn out real work, or works of art, in gaols; on the contrary, I think it good if it be properly managed. But in this case, the Government, being, as I said, in full sympathy with the English public, has determined that it will make its wares cheap, whether it make them nasty or not. Cheap and nasty they are, I assure you; but, though they are the worst of their kind, they would not be made thus, if everything did not tend the same way. And it is the same everywhere and with all Indian manufactures, till it has come to this—that these poor people have all but lost the one distinction, the one glory that conquest had left them. Their famous wares, so praised by those who thirty years ago began to attempt the restoration of popular art amongst ourselves, are no longer to be bought at reasonable prices in the common market, but must be sought for and treasured as precious relics for the museums we have founded for our art education. In short, their art is dead, and the commerce of modern civilization has slain it.

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*Now incorporated in the "Handbook of Indian Art," by Dr. (now Sir George) Birdwood, published by the Science and Art Department.

What is going on in India is also going on, more or less, all over the East; but I have spoken of India chiefly because I cannot help thinking that we ourselves are responsible for what is happening there. Chance-hap has made us the lords of many millions out there; surely, it behoves us to look to it, lest we give to the people whom we have made helpless scorpions for fish and stones for bread.

But since neither on this side, nor on any other, can art be amended, until the countries that lead civilization are themselves in a healthy state about it, let us return to the consideration of its condition among ourselves. And again I say, that obvious as is that surface improvement of the arts within the last few years, I fear too much that there is something wrong about the root of the plant to exult over the bursting of its February buds.

I have just shown you for one thing that lovers of Indian and Eastern Art, including as they do the heads of our institutions for art education, and I am sure many among what are called the governing classes, are utterly powerless to stay its downward course. The general tendency of civilization is against them, and is too strong for them.

Again, though many of us love architecture dearly, and believe that it helps the healthiness both of body and soul to live among beautiful things, we of the big towns are mostly compelled to live in houses which have become a by-word of contempt for their ugliness and inconvenience. The stream of civilization is against us, and we cannot battle against it.

Once more, those devoted men who have upheld the standard of truth and beauty amongst us, and whose pictures, painted amidst difficulties that none but a painter can know, show qualities of mind unsurpassed in any age—these great men have but a narrow circle that can understand their works, and are utterly unknown to the great mass of the people: civilization is so much against them, that they cannot move the people.

Therefore, looking at all this, I cannot think that all is well with the root of the tree we are cultivating. Indeed, I believe that if other things were but to stand still in the world, this improvement before mentioned would lead to a kind of art which, in that impossible case, would be in a way stable, would perhaps stand still also. This would be an art cultivated professedly by a few, and for a few, who would consider it necessary—a duty, if they could admit duties—to despise the common herd, to hold themselves aloof from all that the world has been struggling for from the first, to guard carefully every approach to their palace of art. It would be a pity to waste many words on the prospect of such a school of art as this, which does in a way, theoretically at least, exist at present, and has for its watchword a piece of slang that does not mean the harmless thing it seems to mean—art for art's sake. Its fore-doomed end must be, that art at last will seem too delicate a thing for even the hands

of the initiated to touch; and the initiated must at last sit still and do nothing—to the grief of no one.

Well, certainly, if I thought you were come here to further such an art as this I could not have stood up and called you *friends;* though such a feeble folk as I have told you of one could scarce care to call foes.

Yet, as I say, such men exist, and I have troubled you with speaking of them, because I know that those honest and intelligent people, who are eager for human progress, and yet lack part of the human senses and are anti-artistic, suppose that such men are artists, and that this is what art means, and what it does for people, and that such a narrow, cowardly life is what we, fellow-handicraftsmen, aim at. I see this taken for granted continually, even by many who, to say truth, ought to know better, and I long to put the slur from off us; to make people understand that we, least of all men, wish to widen the gulf between the classes, nay, worse still, to make new classes of elevation, and new classes of degradation—new lords and new slaves; that we, least of all men, want to cultivate the "plant called man" in different ways—here stingily, there wastefully: I wish people to understand that the art we are striving for is a good thing which all can share, which will elevate all; in good sooth, if all people do not soon share it there will soon be none to share; if all are not elevated by it, mankind will lose the elevation it has gained. Nor is such an art as we long for a vain dream; such an art once was in times that were worse than these, when there was less courage, kindness, and truth in the world than there is now; such an art there will be hereafter, when there will be more courage, kindness, and truth than there is now in the world.

Let us look backward in history once more for a short while, and then steadily forward till my words are done: I began by saying that part of the common and necessary advice given to Art students was to study antiquity; and no doubt many of you, like me, have done so; have wandered, for instance, through the galleries of the admirable museum of South Kensington, and, like me, have been filled with wonder and gratitude at the beauty which has been born from the brain of man. Now, consider, I pray you, what these wonderful works are, and how they were made; and indeed, it is neither in extravagance nor without due meaning that I use the word "wonderful" in speaking of them. Well, these things are just the common household goods of those past days, and that is one reason why they are so few and so carefully treasured. They were common things in their own day, used without fear of breaking or spoiling—no rarities then—and yet we have called them "wonderful."

And how were they made? Did a great artist draw the designs for them—a man of cultivation, highly paid, daintily fed, carefully housed, wrapped up in cotton wool, in short, when he was not at work? By no means. Wonderful as these works are, they were made by "common

fellows," as the phrase goes, in the common course of their daily labour. Such were the men we honour in honouring those works. And their labour—do you think it was irksome to them? Those of you who are artists know very well that it was not; that it could not be. Many a grin of pleasure, I'll be bound—and you will not contradict me—went to the carrying through of those mazes of mysterious beauty, to the invention of those strange beasts and birds and flowers that we ourselves have chuckled over at South Kinsington. While they were at work, at least, these men were not unhappy, and I suppose they worked most days, and the most part of the day, as we do.

Or those treasures of architecture that we study so carefully nowadays—what are they? how were they made? There are great minsters among them, indeed, and palaces of kings and lords, but not many; and, noble and awe-inspiring as these may be, they differ only in size from the little grey church that still so often makes the common-place English landscape beautiful, and the little grey house that still, in some parts of the country at least, makes an English village a thing apart, to be seen and pondered on by all who love romance and beauty. These form the mass of our architectural treasures, the houses that everyday people lived in, the unregarded churches in which they worshipped.

And, once more, who was it that designed and ornamented them? The great architect, carefully kept for the purpose, and guarded from the common troubles of common men? By no means. Sometimes, perhaps, it was the monk, the ploughman's brother; oftenest his other brother, the village carpenter, smith, mason, what not—"a common fellow," whose common everyday labour fashioned works that are to-day the wonder and despair of many a hard-working "cultivated" architect. And did he loathe his work? No, it is impossible. I have seen, as we most of us have, work done by such men in some out-of-the-way hamlet—where to-day even few strangers ever come, and whose people seldom go five miles from their own doors; in such places, I say, I have seen work so delicate, so careful, and so inventive, that nothing in its way could go further. And I will assert, without fear of contradiction, that no human ingenuity can produce work such as this without pleasure being a third party to the brain that conceived and the hand that fashioned it. Nor are such works rare. The throne of the great Plantagenet, or the great Valois, was no more daintily carved than the seat of the village mass-john, or the chest of the yeoman's good-wife.

So, you see, there was much going on to make life endurable in those times. Not every day, you may be sure, was a day of slaughter and tumult, though the histories read almost as if it were so; but every day the hammer chinked on the anvil, and the chisel played about the oak beam, and never without some beauty and invention being born of it, and consequently some human happiness.

That last word brings me to the very kernel and heart of what I have

come here to say to you, and I pray you to think of it most seriously—not as to my words, but as to a thought which is stirring in the world, and will one day grow into something.

That thing which I understand by real art is the expression by man of his pleasure in labour. I do not believe he can be happy in his labour without expressing that happiness; and especially is this so when he is at work at anything in which he specially excels. A most kind gift is this of nature, since all men, nay, it seems all things too, must labour; so that not only does the dog take pleasure in hunting, and the horse in running, and the bird in flying, but so natural does the idea seem to us, that we imagine to ourselves that the earth and the very elements rejoice in doing their appointed work; and the poets have told us of the spring meadows smiling, of the exultation of the fire, of the countless laughter of the sea.

Nor until these latter days has man ever rejected this universal gift, but always, when he has not been too much perplexed, too much bound by disease or beaten down by trouble, has striven to make his work at least happy. Pain he has too often found in his pleasure, and weariness in his rest, to trust to these. What matter if his happiness lie with what must be always with him—his work?

And, once more, shall we, who have gained so much, forego this gain, the earliest, most natural gain of mankind? If we have to a great extent done so, as I verily fear we have, what strange fog-lights must have misled us; or rather let me say, how hard pressed we must have been in the battle with the evils we have overcome, to have forgotten the greatest of all evils. I cannot call it less than that. If a man has work to do which he despises, which does not satisfy his natural and rightful desire for pleasure, the greater part of his life must pass unhappily and without self-respect. Consider, I beg of you, what that means, and what ruin must come of it in the end.

If I could only persuade you of this, that the chief duty of the civilized world to-day is to set about making labour happy for all, to do its utmost to minimize the amount of unhappy labour—nay, if I could only persuade some two or three of you here present—I should have made a good night's work of it.

Do not, at any rate, shelter yourselves from any misgiving you may have behind the fallacy that the art-lacking labour of to-day is happy work: for the most of men it is not so. It would take long, perhaps, to show you, and make you fully understand that the would-be art which it produces is joyless. But there is another token of its being most unhappy work, which you cannot fail to understand at once—a grievous thing that token is—and I beg of you to believe that I feel the full shame of it, as I stand here speaking of it; but if we do not admit that we are sick, how can we be healed? This hapless token is, that the work done by the civilized world is mostly dishonest work. Look now: I admit that

civilization does make certain things well, things which it knows, consciously or unconsciously, are necessary to its present unhealthy condition. These things, to speak shortly, are chiefly machines for carrying on the competition in buying and selling called falsely commerce; and machines for the violent destruction of life—that is to say, materials for two kinds of war; of which kinds the last is no doubt the worst, not so much in itself perhaps, but because on this point the conscience of the world is beginning to be somewhat pricked. But, on the other hand, matters for the carrying on of a dignified daily life, that life of mutual trust, forbearance, and help, which is the only real life of thinking men—these things the civilized world makes ill, and even increasingly worse and worse.

If I am wrong in saying this, you know well I am only saying what is widely thought, nay widely said too, for that matter. Let me give an instance, familiar enough, of that wide-spread opinion. There is a very clever book of pictures* now being sold at the railway bookstalls, called "The British Working Man, by one who does not believe in him,"—a title and a book which make me both angry and ashamed, because the two express much injustice, and not a little truth in their quaint, and necessarily exaggerated way. It is quite true, and very sad to say, that if any one nowadays wants a piece of ordinary work done by gardener, carpenter, mason, dyer, weaver, smith, what you will, he will be a lucky rarity if he get it well done. He will, on the contrary, meet on every side with evasion of plain duties, and disregard of other men's rights; yet I cannot see how the "British Working Man" is to be made to bear the whole burden of this blame, or indeed the chief part of it. I doubt if it be possible for a whole mass of men to do work to which they are driven, and in which there is no hope and no pleasure, without trying to shirk it—at any rate, shirked it has always been under such circumstances. On the other hand, I know that there are some men so right-minded, that they will, in despite of irksomeness and hopelessness, drive right through their work. Such men are the salt of the earth. But must there not be something wrong with a state of society which drives these into that bitter heroism, and the most part into shirking, into the depths often of half-conscious self-contempt and degradation? Be sure that there is, that the blindness and hurry of civilization as it now is, have to answer a heavy charge as to that enormous amount of pleasureless work—work that tries every muscle of the body and every atom of the brain, and which is done without pleasure and without aim—work which everybody who has to do with tries to shuffle off in the speediest way that dread of starvation or ruin will allow him.

I am as sure of one thing as that I am living and breathing, and it is this: that the dishonesty in the daily arts of life, complaints of which are

*These were originally published in "Fun."

in all men's mouths, and which I can answer for it does exist, is the natural and inevitable result of the world in the hurry of the war of the counting-house, and the war of the battlefield, having forgotten—of all men, I say, each for the other, having forgotten, that pleasure in our daily labour, which nature cries out for as its due.

Therefore, I say again, it is necessary to the further progress of civilization that men should turn their thoughts to some means of limiting, and in the end of doing away with, degrading labour.

I do not think my words hitherto spoken have given you any occasion to think that I mean by this either hard or rough labour; I do not pity men much for their hardships, especially if they be accidental; not necessarily attached to one class or one condition, I mean. Nor do I think (I were crazy or dreaming else) that the work of the world can be carried on without rough labour; but I have seen enough of that to know that it need not be by any means degrading. To plough the earth, to cast the net, to fold the flock—these, and such as these, which are rough occupations enough, and which carry with them many hardships, are good enough for the best of us, certain conditions of leisure, freedom, and due wages being granted. As to the bricklayer, the mason, and the like—these would be artists, and doing not only necessary, but beautiful, and therefore happy work, if art were anything like what it should be. No, it is not such labour as this which we need to do away with, but the toil which makes the thousand and one things which nobody wants, which are used merely as the counters for the competitive buying and selling, falsely called commerce, which I have spoken of before—I know in my heart, and not merely by my reason, that this toil cries out to be done away with. But, besides that, the labour which now makes things good and necessary in themselves, merely as counters for the commercial war aforesaid, needs regulating and reforming. Nor can this reform be brought about save by art; and if we were only come to our right minds, and could see the necessity for making labour sweet to all men, as it is now to very few—the necessity, I repeat; lest discontent, unrest, and despair should at last swallow up all society—If we, then, with our eyes cleared, could but make some sacrifice of things which do us no good, since we unjustly and uneasily possess them, then indeed I believe we should sow the seeds of a happiness which the world has not yet known, of a rest and content which would make it what I cannot help thinking it was meant to be: and with that seed would be sown also the seed of real art, the expression of man's happiness in his labour—an art made by the people, and for the people, as a happiness to the maker and the user.

That is the only real art there is, the only art which will be an instrument to the progress of the world, and not a hindrance. Nor can I seriously doubt that in your hearts you know that it is so, all of you, at any rate, who have in you an instinct for art. I believe that you agree with

me in this, though you may differ from much else that I have said. I think assuredly that this is the art whose welfare we have met together to further, and the necessary instruction in which we have undertaken to spread as widely as may be.

Thus I have told you something of what I think is to be hoped and feared for the future of Art; and if you ask me what I expect as a practical outcome of the admission of these opinions, I must say at once that I know, even if we were all of one mind, and that what I think the right mind on this subject, we should still have much work and many hindrances before us; we should still have need of all the prudence, foresight, and industry of the best among us; and, even so, our path would sometimes seem blind enough. And, to-day, when the opinions which we think right, and which one day will be generally thought so, have to struggle sorely to make themselves noticed at all, it is early days for us to try to see our exact and clearly mapped road. I suppose you will think it too commonplace of me to say that the general education that makes men think, will one day make them think rightly upon art. Commonplace as it is, I really believe it, and am indeed encouraged by it, when I remember how obviously this age is one of transition from the old to the new, and what a strange confusion, from out of which we shall one day come, our ignorance and half-ignorance is like to make of the exhausted rubbish of the old and the crude rubbish of the new, both of which lie so ready to our hands.

But, if I must say, furthermore, any words that seem like words of practical advice, I think my task is hard, and I fear I shall offend some of you whatever I say; for this is indeed an affair of morality, rather than of what people call art.

However, I cannot forget that, in my mind, it is not possible to dissociate art from morality, politics, and religion. Truth in these great matters of principle is of one, and it is only in formal treatises that it can be split up diversely. I must also ask you to remember how I have already said, that though my mouth alone speaks, it speaks, however feebly and disjointedly, the thoughts of many men better than myself. And further, though when things are tending to the best, we shall still, as aforesaid, need our best men to lead us quite right; yet even now surely, when it is far from that, the least of us can do some yeoman's service to the cause, and live and die not without honour.

So I will say that I believe there are two virtues much needed in modern life, if it is ever to become sweet; and I am quite sure that they are absolutely necessary in the sowing the seed of an *art which is to be made by the people and for the people, as a happiness to the maker and the user.* These virtues are honesty, and simplicity of life. To make my meaning clearer I will name the opposing vice of the second of these—luxury to wit. Also I mean by honesty, the careful and eager giving his due to

every man, the determination not to gain by any man's loss, which in my experience is not a common virtue.

But note how the practice of either of these virtues will make the other easier to us. For if our wants are few, we shall have but little chance of being driven by our wants into injustice; and if we are fixed in the principle of giving every man his due, how can our self-respect bear that we should give too much to ourselves?

And in art, and in that preparation for it without which no art that is stable or worthy can be, the raising, namely, of those classes which have heretofore been degraded, the practice of these virtues would make a new world of it. For if you are rich, your simplicity of life will both go towards smoothing over the dreadful contrast between waste and want, which is the great horror of civilized countries, and will also give an example and standard of dignified life to those classes which you desire to raise, who, as it is indeed, being like enough to rich people, are given both to envy and to imitate the idleness and waste that the possession of much money produces.

Nay, and apart from the morality of the matter, which I am forced to speak to you of, let me tell you that though simplicity in art may be costly as well as uncostly, at least it is not wasteful, and nothing is more destructive to art than the want of it. I have never been in any rich man's house which would not have looked the better for having a bonfire made outside of it of nine-tenths of all that it held. Indeed, our sacrifice on the side of luxury will, it seems to me, be little or nothing: for, as far as I can make out, what people usually mean by it, is either a gathering of possessions which are sheer vexations to the owner, or a chain of pompous circumstance, which checks and annoys the rich man at every step. Yes, luxury cannot exist without slavery of some kind or other, and its abolition will be blessed, like the abolition of other slaveries, by the freeing both of the slaves and of their masters.

Lastly, if, besides attaining to simplicity of life, we attain also to the love of justice, then will all things be ready for the new springtime of the arts. For those of us that are employers of labour, how can we bear to give any man less money than he can decently live on, less leisure than his education and self-respect demand? or those of us who are workmen, how can we bear to fail in the contract we have undertaken, or to make it necessary for a foreman to go up and down spying out our mean tricks and evasions? or we the shopkeepers—can we endure to lie about our wares, that we may shuffle off our losses on to some one else's shoulders? or we the public—how can we bear to pay a price for a piece of goods which will help to trouble one man, to ruin another, and starve a third? Or, still more, I think, how can we bear to use, how can we enjoy something which has been a pain and a grief for the maker to make?

And now, I think, I have said what I came to say. I confess that there

is nothing new in it, but you know the experience of the world is that a thing must be said over and over again before any great number of men can be got to listen to it. Let my words to-night, therefore, pass for one of the necessary times that the thought in them must be spoken out.

For the rest I believe that, however seriously these words may be gainsayed, I have been speaking to an audience in whom any words spoken from a sense of duty and in hearty good-will, as mine have been, will quicken thought and sow some good seed. At any rate, it is good for a man who thinks seriously to face his fellows, and speak out whatever really burns in him, so that men may seem less strange to one another, and misunderstanding, the fruitful cause of aimless strife, may be avoided.

But if to any of you I have seemed to speak hopelessly, my words have been lacking in art; and you must remember that hopelessness would have locked my mouth, not opened it. I am, indeed, hopeful, but can I give a date to the accomplishment of my hope, and say that it will happen in my life or yours?

But I will say at least, Courage! for things wonderful, unhoped-for, glorious, have happened even in this short while I have been alive.

Yes, surely these times are wonderful and fruitful of change, which, as it wears and gathers new life even in its wearing, will one day bring better things for the toiling days of men, who, with freer hearts and clearer eyes, will once more gain the sense of outward beauty, and rejoice in it.

Meanwhile, if these hours be dark, as, indeed, in many ways they are, at least do not let us sit deedless, like fools and fine gentlemen, thinking the common toil not good enough for us, and beaten by the muddle; but rather let us work like good fellows trying by some dim candle-light to set our workshop ready against to-morrow's daylight—that to-morrow, when the civilized world, no longer greedy, strifeful, and destructive, shall have a new art, a glorious art, made by the people and for the people, as a happiness to the maker and the user.

The Beauty of Life

"—propter vitam vivendi perdere causas."
—Juvenal

I stand before you this evening weighted with a disadvantage that I did not feel last year—I have little fresh to tell you; I can somewhat enlarge on what I said then; here and there I may make bold to give you a practical suggestion, or I may put what I have to say in a way which will be clearer to some of you perhaps; but my message is really the same as it was when I first had the pleasure of meeting you.

It is true that if all were going smoothly with art, or at all events so smoothly that there were but a few malcontents in the world, you might listen with some pleasure, and perhaps advantage, to the talk of an old hand in the craft concerning ways of work, the snares that beset success, and the shortest road to it, to a tale of workshop receipts and the like: that would be a pleasant talk surely between friends and fellow-workmen: but it seems to me as if it were not for us as yet; nay, maybe we may live long and find no time fit for such restful talk as the cheerful histories of the hopes and fears of our workshops: anyhow to-night I cannot do it, but must once again call the faithful of art to a battle wider and more distracting than that kindly struggle with nature, to which all true craftsmen are born; which is both the building-up and the wearing-away of their lives.

As I look round on this assemblage, and think of all that it represents, I cannot choose but be moved to the soul by the troubles of the life of civilized man, and the hope that thrusts itself through them; I cannot refrain from giving you once again the message with which, as it seems, some chance-hap has charged me: that message is, in short, to call on you to face the latest danger which civilization is threatened with, a danger of her own breeding: that men in struggling towards the complete attainment of all the luxuries of life for the strongest portion of their race should deprive their whole race of all the beauty of life: a danger that the strongest and wisest of mankind, in striving to attain to a complete

mastery over Nature, should destroy her simplest and widest-spread gifts, and thereby enslave simple people to them, and themselves to themselves, and so at last drag the world into a second barbarism more ignoble, and a thousandfold more hopeless, than the first.

Now of you who are listening to me, there are some, I feel sure, who have received this message, and taken it to heart, and are day by day fighting the battle that it calls on you to fight: to you I can say nothing but that if any word I speak discourage you, I shall heartily wish I had never spoken at all: but to be shown the enemy, and the castle we have got to storm, is not to be bidden to run from him; nor am I telling you to sit down deedless in the desert because between you and the promised land lies many a trouble, and death itself maybe: the hope before you you know, and nothing that I can say can take it away from you; but friend may with advantage cry out to friend in the battle that a stroke is coming from this side or that: take my hasty words in that sense, I beg of you.

But I think there will be others of you in whom vague discontent is stirring: who are oppressed by the life that surrounds you; confused and troubled by that oppression, and not knowing on which side to seek a remedy, though you are fain to do so: well, we, who have gone further into those troubles, believe that we can help you: true we cannot at once take your trouble from you; nay, we may at first rather add to it; but we can tell you what we think of the way out of it; and then amidst the many things you will have to do to set yourselves and others fairly on that way, you will many days, nay most days, forget your trouble in thinking of the good that lies beyond it, for which you are working.

But, again, there are others amongst you (and to speak plainly, I daresay they are the majority), who are not by any means troubled by doubt of the road the world is going, nor excited by any hope of its bettering that road: to them the cause of civilization is simple and even commonplace: wonder, hope, and fear no longer hang about it; it has become to us like the rising and setting of the sun; it cannot err, and we have no call to meddle with it, either to complain of its course, or to try to direct it.

There is a ground of reason and wisdom in that way of looking at the matter: surely the world will go on its ways, thrust forward by impulses which we cannot understand or sway: but as it grows in strength for the journey, its necessary food is the life and aspirations of *all* of us: and we discontented strugglers with what at times seems the hurrying blindness of civilization, no less than those who see nothing but smooth, unvarying progress in it, are bred of civilization also, and shall be used up to further it in some way or other, I doubt not: and it may be of some service to those who think themselves the only loyal subjects of progress to hear of our existence, since their not hearing of it would not make an end of it: it may set them a-thinking not unprofitably to hear

of burdens that they do not help to bear, but which are nevertheless real and weighty enough to some of their fellow-men, who are helping, even as they are, to form the civilization that is to be.

The danger that the present course of civilization will destroy the beauty of life—these are hard words, and I wish I could mend them, but I cannot, while I speak what I believe to be the truth.

That the beauty of life is a thing of no moment, I suppose few people would venture to assert, and yet most civilized people act as if it were of none, and in so doing are wronging both themselves and those that are to come after them; for that beauty, which is what is meant by *art,* using the word in its widest sense, is, I contend, no mere accident to human life, which people can take or leave as they choose, but a positive necessity of life, if we are to live as nature meant us to; that is, unless we are content to be less than men.

Now I ask you, as I have been asking myself this long while, what proportion of the population in civilized countries has any share at all in that necessity of life?

I say that the answer which must be made to that question justifies my fear that modern civilization is on the road to trample out all the beauty of life, and to make us less than men.

Now if there should be any here who will say: It was always so; there always was a mass of rough ignorance that knew and cared nothing about art; I answer first, that if that be the case, then it was always wrong, and we, as soon as we have become conscious of that wrong, are bound to set it right if we can.

But moreover, strange to say, and in spite of all the suffering that the world has wantonly made for itself, and has in all ages so persistently clung to, as if it were a good and holy thing, this wrong of the mass of men being regardless of art was *not* always so.

So much is now known of the periods of art that have left abundant examples of their work behind them, that we can judge of the art of all periods by comparing these with the remains of times of which less has been left us; and we cannot fail to come to the conclusion that down to very recent days everything that the hand of man touched was more or less beautiful: so that in those days all people who made anything shared in art, as well as all people who used the things so made: that is, *all* people shared in art.

But some people may say: And was that to be wished for? would not this universal spreading of art stop progress in other matters, hinder the work of the world? Would it not make us unmanly? or if not that, would it not be intrusive, and push out other things necessary also for men to study?

Well, I have claimed a necessary place for art, a natural place, and it would be in the very essence of it, that it would apply its own rules of order and fitness to the general ways of life: it seems to me, therefore,

that people who are over-anxious of the outward expression of beauty becoming too great a force among the other forces of life, would, if they had had the making of the external world, have been afraid of making an ear of wheat beautiful, lest it should not have been good to eat.

But indeed there seems no chance of art becoming universal, unless on the terms that it shall have little self-consciousness, and for the most part be done with little effort; so that the rough work of the world would be as little hindered by it, as the work of external nature is by the beauty of all her forms and moods: this was the case in the times that I have been speaking of: of art which was made by conscious effort, the result of the individual striving towards perfect expression of their thoughts by men very specially gifted, there was perhaps no more than there is now, except in very wonderful and short periods; though I believe that even for such men the struggle to produce beauty was not so bitter as it now is. But if there were not more great thinkers than there are now, there was a countless multitude of happy workers whose work did express, and could not choose but express, some original thought, and was consequently both interesting and beautiful: now there is certainly no chance of the more individual art becoming common, and either wearying us by its over-abundance, or by noisy self-assertion preventing highly cultivated men taking their due part in the other work of the world; it is too difficult to do: it will be always but the blossom of all the half-conscious work below it, the fulfilment of the shortcomings of less complete minds: but it will waste much of its power, and have much less influence on men's minds, unless it be surrounded by abundance of that commoner work, in which all men once shared, and which, I say, will, when art has really awakened, be done so easily and constantly, that it will stand in no man's way to hinder him from doing what he will, good or evil. And as, on the one hand, I believe that art made by the people and for the people as a joy both to the maker and the user would further progress in other matters rather than hinder it, so also I firmly believe that that higher art produced only by great brains and miraculously gifted hands cannot exist without it: I believe that the present state of things in which it does exist, while popular art is, let us say, asleep or sick, is a transitional state, which must end at last either in utter defeat or utter victory for the arts.

For whereas all works of craftsmanship were once beautiful, unwittingly or not, they are now divided into two kinds, works of art and non-works of art: now nothing made by man's hand can be indifferent: it must be either beautiful and elevating, or ugly and degrading; and those things that are without art are so aggressively; they wound it by their existence, and they are now so much in the majority that the works of art we are obliged to set ourselves to seek for, whereas the other things are the ordinary companions of our everyday life; so that if those who cultivate art intellectually were inclined never so much to wrap

themselves in their special gifts and their high cultivation, and so live happily, apart from other men, and despising them, they could not do so: they are as it were living in an enemy's country; at every turn there is something lying in wait to offend and vex their nicer sense and educated eyes: they must share in the general discomfort—and I am glad of it.

So the matter stands: from the first dawn of history till quite modern times, Art, which Nature meant to solace all, fulfilled its purpose; all men shared in it: that was what made life romantic, as people call it, in those days—that and not robber-barons and inaccessible kings with their hierarchy of serving-nobles and other such rubbish: but art grew and grew, saw empires sicken and sickened with them; grew hale again, and haler, and grew so great at last, that she seemed in good truth to have conquered everything, and laid the material world under foot. Then came a change at a period of the greatest life and hope in many ways that Europe had known till then: a time of so much and such varied hope that people call it the time of the New Birth: as far as the arts are concerned I deny it that title; rather it seems to me that the great men who lived and glorified the practice of art in those days, were the fruit of the old, not the seed of the new order of things: but a stirring and hopeful time it was, and many things were newborn then which have since brought forth fruit enough: and it is strange and perplexing that from those days forward the lapse of time, which, through plenteous confusion and failure, has on the whole been steadily destroying privilege and exclusiveness in other matters, has delivered up art to be the exclusive privilege of a few, and has taken from the people their birthright; while both wronged and wrongers have been wholly unconscious of what they were doing.

Wholly unconscious—yes, but we are no longer so: there lies the sting of it, and there also the hope.

When the brightness of the so-called Renaissance faded, and it faded very suddenly, a deadly chill fell upon the arts: that New-birth mostly meant looking back to past times, wherein the men of those days thought they saw a perfection of art, which to their minds was different in kind, and not in degree only, from the ruder suggestive art of their own fathers: this perfection they were ambitious to imitate, this alone seemed to be art to them, the rest was childishness: so wonderful was their energy, their success so great, that no doubt to commonplace minds among them, though surely not to the great masters, that perfection seemed to be gained: and, perfection being gained, what are you to do?—you can go no further, you must aim at standing still—which you cannot do.

Art by no means stood still in those latter days of the Renaissance, but took the downward road with terrible swiftness, and tumbled down at the bottom of the hill, where as if bewitched it lay long in great

content, believing itself to be the art of Michael Angelo, while it was the art of men whom nobody remembers but those who want to sell their pictures.

Thus it fared with the more individual forms of art. As to the art of the people; in countries and places where the greater art had flourished most, it went step by step on the downward path with that: in more out-of-the-way places, England for instance, it still felt the influence of the life of its earlier and happy days, and in a way lived on a while; but its life was so feeble, and, so to say, illogical, that it could not resist any change in external circumstances, still less could it give birth to anything new; and before this century began, its last flicker had died out. Still, while it was living, in whatever dotage, it did imply something going on in those matters of daily use that we have been thinking of, and doubtless satisfied some cravings for beauty: and when it was dead, for a long time people did not know it, or what had taken its place, crept so to say into its dead body—that pretence of art, to wit, which is done with machines, though sometimes the machines are called men, and doubtless are so out of working hours: nevertheless long before it was quite dead it had fallen so low that the whole subject was usually treated with the utmost contempt by every one who had any pretence of being a sensible man, and in short the whole civilized world had forgotten that there had ever been an art *made by the people for the people as a joy for the maker and the user.*

But now it seems to me that the very suddenness of the change ought to comfort us, to make us look upon this break in the continuity of the golden chain as an accident only, that itself cannot last: for think how many thousand years it may be since that primæval man graved with a flint splinter on a bone the story of the mammoth he had seen, or told us of the slow uplifting of the heavily-horned heads of the reindeer that he stalked: think I say of the space of time from then till the dimming of the brightness of the Italian Renaissance! whereas from that time till popular art died unnoticed and despised among ourselves is just but two hundred years.

Strange too, that very death is contemporaneous with new-birth of something at all events; for out of all despair sprang a new time of hope lighted by the torch of the French Revolution: and things that have languished with the languishing of art, rose afresh and surely heralded its new birth: in good earnest poetry was born again, and the English Language, which under the hands of sycophantic verse-makers had been reduced to a miserable jargon, whose meaning, if it have a meaning, cannot be made out without translation, flowed clear, pure, and simple, along with the music of Blake and Coleridge: take those names, the earliest in date among ourselves, as a type of the change that has happened in literature since the time of George II.

With that literature in which romance, that is to say humanity, was

re-born, there sprang up also a feeling for the romance of external nature, which is surely strong in us now, joined with a longing to know something real of the lives of those who have gone before us; of these feelings united you will find the broadest expression in the pages of Walter Scott: it is curious as showing how sometimes one art will lag behind another in a revival, that the man who wrote the exquisite and wholly unfettered naturalism of the Heart of Midlothian, for instance, thought himself continually bound to seem to feel ashamed of, and to excuse himself for, his love of Gothic Architecture: he felt that it was romantic, and he knew that it gave him pleasure, but somehow he had not found out that it was art, having been taught in many ways that nothing could be art that was not done by a named man under academical rules.

I need not perhaps dwell much on what of change has been since: you know well that one of the master-arts, the art of painting, has been revolutionized. I have a genuine difficulty in speaking to you of men who are my own personal friends, nay, my masters: still, since I cannot quite say nothing of them I must say the plain truth, which is this: never in the whole history of art did any set of men come nearer to the feat of making something out of nothing than that little knot of painters who have raised English art from what it was when as a boy I used to go to the Royal Academy Exhibition, to what it is now.

It would be ungracious indeed for me who have been so much taught by him that I cannot help feeling continually as I speak that I am echoing his words, to leave out the name of John Ruskin from an account of what has happened since the tide, as we hope, began to turn in the direction of art. True it is, that his unequalled style of English and his wonderful eloquence would, whatever its subject-matter, have gained him some sort of a hearing in a time that has not lost its relish for literature; but surely the influence that he has exercised over cultivated people must be the result of that style and that eloquence expressing what was already stirring in men's minds; he could not have written what he has done unless people were in some sort ready for it; any more than those painters could have begun their crusade against the dulness and incompetency that was the rule in their art thirty years ago unless they had some hope that they would one day move people to understand them.

Well, we find that the gains since the turning-point of the tide are these: that there are some few artists who have, as it were, caught up the golden chain dropped two hundred years ago, and that there are a few highly cultivated people who can understand them; and that beyond these there is a vague feeling abroad among people of the same degree, of discontent at the ignoble ugliness that surrounds them.

That seems to me to mark the advance that we have made since the last of popular art came to an end amongst us, and I do not say,

considering where we then were, that it is not a great advance, for it comes to this, that though the battle is still to win, there are those who are ready for the battle.

Indeed it would be a strange shame for this age if it were not so: for as every age of the world has its own troubles to confuse it, and its own follies to cumber it, so has each its own work to do, pointed out to it by unfailing signs of the times; and it is unmanly and stupid for the children of any age to say: We will not set our hands to the work; we did not make the troubles, we will not weary ourselves seeking a remedy for them: so heaping up for their sons a heavier load than they can lift without such struggles as will wound and cripple them sorely. Not thus our fathers served us, who, working late and early, left us at last that seething mass of people so terribly alive and energetic, that we call modern Europe; not thus those served us, who have made for us these present days, so fruitful of change and wondering expectation.

The century that is now beginning to draw to an end, if people were to take to nicknaming centuries, would be called the Century of Commerce; and I do not think I undervalue the work that it has done: it has broken down many a prejudice and taught many a lesson that the world has been hitherto slow to learn: it has made it possible for many a man to live free, who would in other times have been a slave, body or soul, or both: if it has not quite spread peace and justice through the world, as at the end of its first half we fondly hoped it would, it has at least stirred up in many fresh cravings for peace and justice: its work has been good and plenteous, but much of it was roughly done, as needs was; recklessness has commonly gone with its energy, blindness too often with its haste: so that perhaps it may be work enough for the next century to repair the blunders of that recklessness, to clear away the rubbish which that hurried work has piled up; nay even we in the second half of its last quarter may do something towards setting its house in order.

You, of this great and famous town, for instance, which has had so much to do with the Century of Commerce, your gains are obvious to all men, but the price you have paid for them is obvious to many—surely to yourselves most of all: I do not say that they are not worth the price; I know that England and the world could very ill afford to exchange the Birmingham of to-day for the Birmingham of the year 1700: but surely if what you have gained be more than a mockery, you cannot stop at those gains, or even go on always piling up similar ones. Nothing can make me believe that the present condition of your Black Country yonder is an unchangeable necessity of your life and position: such miseries as this were begun and carried on in pure thoughtlessness, and a hundredth part of the energy that was spent in creating them would get rid of them: I do think if we were not all of us too prone to acquiesce in the base byword "after me the deluge," it would soon be

something more than an idle dream to hope that your pleasant midland hills and fields might begin to become pleasant again in some way or other, even without depopulating them; or that those once lovely valleys of Yorkshire in the "heavy woollen district," with their sweeping hill-sides and noble rivers, should not need the stroke of ruin to make them once more delightful abodes of men, instead of the dog-holes that the Century of Commerce has made them.

Well, people will not take the trouble or spend the money necessary to beginning this sort of reforms, because they do not feel the evils they live amongst, because they have degraded themselves into something less than men; they are unmanly because they have ceased to have their due share of art.

For again I say that therein rich people have defrauded themselves as well as the poor: you will see a refined and highly educated man nowadays, who has been to Italy and Egypt and where not, who can talk learnedly enough (and fantastically enough sometimes) about art, and who has at his fingers' ends abundant lore concerning the art and literature of past days, sitting down without signs of discomfort in a house, that with all its surroundings is just brutally vulgar and hideous: all his education has not done more for him than that.

The truth is, that in art, and in other things besides, the laboured education of a few will not raise even those few above the reach of the evils that beset the ignorance of the great mass of the population: the brutality of which such a huge stock has been accumulated lower down will often show without much peeling through the selfish refinement of those who have let it accumulate. The lack of art, or rather the murder of art, that curses our streets from the sordidness of the surroundings of the lower classes, has its exact counterpart in the dulness and vulgarity of those of the middle classes, and the double-distilled dulness, and scarcely less vulgarity of those of the upper classes.

I say this is as it should be; it is just and fair as far as it goes; and moreover the rich with their leisure are the more like to move if they feel the pinch themselves.

But how shall they and we, and all of us, move? What is the remedy?

What remedy can there be for the blunders of civilization but further civilization? You do not by any accident think that we have gone as far in that direction as it is possible to go, do you?—even in England, I mean?

When some changes have come to pass, that perhaps will be speedier than most people think, doubtless education will both grow in quality and in quantity; so that it may be, that as the nineteenth century is to be called the Century of Commerce, the twentieth may be called the Century of Education. But that education does not end when people leave school is now a mere commonplace; and how then can you really educate men who lead the life of machines, who only think for the few

hours during which they are not at work, who in short spend almost their whole lives in doing work which is not proper for developing them body and mind in some worthy way? You cannot educate, you cannot civilize men, unless you can give them a share in art.

Yes, and it is hard indeed as things go to give most men that share; for they do not miss it, or ask for it, and it is impossible as things are that they should either miss or ask for it. Nevertheless everything has a beginning, and many great things have had very small ones; and since, as I have said, these ideas are already abroad in more than one form, we must not be too much discouraged at the seemingly boundless weight we have to lift.

After all, we are only bound to play our own parts, and do our own share of the lifting; and as in no case that share can be great, so also in all cases it is called for, it is necessary. Therefore let us work and faint not; remembering that though it be natural, and therefore excusable, amidst doubtful times to feel doubts of success oppress us at whiles, yet not to crush those doubts, and work as if we had them not, is simple cowardice, which is unforgivable. No man has any right to say that all has been done for nothing, that all the faithful unwearying strife of those that have gone before us shall lead us nowhither; that mankind will but go round and round in a circle for ever: no man has a right to say that, and then get up morning after morning to eat his victuals and sleep a-nights, all the while making other people toil to keep his worthless life a-going.

Be sure that some way or other will be found out of the tangle, even when things seem most tangled, and be no less sure that some use will then have come of our work, if it has been faithful, and therefore unsparingly careful and thoughtful.

So once more I say, if in any matters civilization has gone astray, the remedy lies not in standing still, but in more complete civilization.

Now whatever discussion there may be about that often used and often misused word, I believe all who hear me will agree with me in believing from their hearts, and not merely in saying in conventional phrase, that the civilization which does not carry the whole people with it is doomed to fall, and give place to one which at least aims at doing so.

We talk of the civilization of the ancient peoples, of the classical times: well, civilized they were no doubt, some of their folk at least: an Athenian citizen for instance led a simple, dignified, almost perfect life; but there were drawbacks to happiness perhaps in the lives of his slaves: and the civilization of the ancients was founded on slavery.

Indeed that ancient society did give a model to the world, and showed us for ever what blessings are freedom of life and thought, self-restraint and a generous education: all those blessings the ancient free peoples set forth to the world—and kept them to themselves.

Therefore no tyrant was too base, no pretext too hollow, for enslaving the grandsons of the men of Salamis and Thermopylæ: therefore did the descendants of those stern and self-restrained Romans, who were ready to give up everything, and life as the least of things, to the glory of their commonweal, produce monsters of license and reckless folly. Therefore did a little knot of Galilean peasants overthrow the Roman Empire.

Ancient civilization was chained to slavery and exclusiveness, and it fell; the barbarism that took its place has delivered us from slavery and grown into modern civilization; and that in its turn has before it the choice of never-ceasing growth, or destruction by that which has in it the seeds of higher growth.

There is an ugly word for a dreadful fact, which I must make bold to use—the residuum: that word since the time I first saw it used, has had a terrible significance to me, and I have felt from my heart that if this residuum were a necessary part of modern civilization, as some people openly, and many more tacitly, assume that it is, then this civilization carries with it the poison that shall one day destroy it, even as its elder sister did: if civilization is to go no further than this, it had better not have gone so far: if it does not aim at getting rid of this misery and giving some share in the happiness and dignity of life to *all* the people that it has created, and which it spends such unwearying energy in creating, it is simply an organized injustice, a mere instrument for oppression, so much the worse than that which has gone before it, as its pretensions are higher, its slavery subtler, its mastery harder to overthrow, because supported by such a dense mass of commonplace well-being and comfort.

Surely this cannot be: surely there is a distinct feeling abroad of this injustice: so that if the residuum still clogs all the efforts of modern civilization to rise above mere population-breeding and money-making, the difficulty of dealing with it is the legacy, first of the ages of violence and almost conscious brutal injustice, and next of the ages of thoughtlessness, of hurry and blindness; surely all those who think at all of the future of the world are at work in one way or other in striving to rid it of this shame.

That to my mind is the meaning of what we call National Education, which we have begun, and which is doubtless already bearing its fruits, and will bear greater, when all people are educated, not according to the money which they or their parents possess, but according to the capacity of their minds.

What effect that will have upon the future of the arts I cannot say, but one would surely think a very great effect; for it will enable people to see clearly many things which are now as completely hidden from them as if they were blind in body and idiotic in mind: and this, I say, will act not only upon those who most directly feel the evils of ignorance, but

also upon those who feel them indirectly—upon us, the educated: the great wave of rising intelligence, rife with so many natural desires and aspirations, will carry all classes along with it, and force us all to see that many things which we have been used to look upon as necessary and eternal evils are merely the accidental and temporary growths of past stupidity, and can be escaped from by due effort and the exercise of courage, good-will, and forethought.

And among those evils, I do, and must always, believe will fall that one which last year I told you that I accounted the greatest of all evils, the heaviest of all slaveries; that evil of the greater part of the population being engaged for by far the most part of their lives in work, which at the best cannot interest them, or develop their best faculties, and at the worst (and that is the commonest, too) is mere unmitigated slavish toil, only to be wrung out of them by the sternest compulsion, a toil which they shirk all they can—small blame to them. And this toil degrades them into less than men: and they will some day come to know it, and cry out to be made men again, and art only can do it, and redeem them from this slavery; and I say once more that this is her highest and most glorious end and aim; and it is in her struggle to attain to it that she will most surely purify herself, and quicken her own aspirations towards perfection.

But we—in the meantime we must not sit waiting for obvious signs of these later and glorious days to show themselves on earth, and in the heavens, but rather turn to the commonplace, and maybe often dull work of fitting ourselves in detail to take part in them if we should live to see one of them; or in doing our best to make the path smooth for their coming, if we are to die before they are here.

What, therefore, can we do, to guard traditions of time past that we may not one day have to begin anew from the beginning with none to teach us? What are we to do, that we may take heed to, and spread the decencies of life, so that at the least we may have a field where it will be possible for art to grow when men begin to long for it: what finally can we do, each of us, to cherish some germ of art, so that it may meet with others, and spread and grow little by little into the thing that we need?

Now I cannot pretend to think that the first of these duties is a matter of indifference to you, after my experience of the enthusiastic meeting that I had the honour of addressing here last autumn on the subject of the (so called) restoration of St. Mark's at Venice; you thought, and most justly thought, it seems to me, that the subject was of such moment to art in general, that it was a simple and obvious thing for men who were anxious on the matter to address themselves to those who had the decision of it in their hands; even though the former were called Englishmen, and the latter Italians; for you felt that the name of lovers of art would cover those differences: if you had any misgivings, you remembered that there was but one such building in the world, and that

it was worth while risking a breach of etiquette, if any words of ours could do anything towards saving it; well, the Italians were, some of them, very naturally, though surely unreasonably, irritated, for a time, and in some of their prints they bade us look at home; that was no argument in favour of the wisdom of wantonly rebuilding St. Mark's façade: but certainly those of us who have not yet looked at home in this matter had better do so speedily, late and over late though it be: for though we have no golden-pictured interiors like St. Mark's Church at home, we still have many buildings which are both works of ancient art and monuments of history: and just think what is happening to them, and note, since we profess to recognize their value, how helpless art is in the Century of Commerce!

In the first place, many and many a beautiful and ancient building is being destroyed all over civilized Europe as well as in England, because it is supposed to interfere with the convenience of the citizens, while a little forethought might save it without trenching on that convenience;* but even apart from that, I say that if we are not prepared to put up with a little inconvenience in our lifetimes for the sake of preserving a monument of art which will elevate and educate, not only ourselves, but our sons, and our sons' sons, it is vain and idle of us to talk about art—or education either. Brutality must be bred of such brutality.

The same thing may be said about enlarging, or otherwise altering for convenience' sake, old buildings still in use for something like their original purposes: in almost all such cases it is really nothing more than a question of a little money for a new site: and then a new building can be built exactly fitted for the uses it is needed for, with such art about it as our own days can furnish; while the old monument is left to tell its tale of change and progress, to hold out example and warning to us in the practice of the arts: and thus the convenience of the public, the progress of modern art, and the cause of education, are all furthered at once at the cost of a little money.

Surely if it be worth while troubling ourselves about the works of art of to-day, of which any amount almost can be done, since we are yet alive, it is worth while spending a little care, forethought, and money in preserving the art of bygone ages, of which (woe worth the while!) so little is left, and of which we can never have any more, whatever good-hap the world may attain to.

No man who consents to the destruction or the mutilation of an

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*As I correct these sheets for the press, the case of two such pieces of destruction is forced upon me: first, the remains of the Refectory of Westminster Abbey, with the adjacent Ashburnham House, a beautiful work, probably by Inigo Jones; and second, Magdalen Bridge at Oxford. Certainly this seems to mock my hope of the influence of education on the Beauty of Life; since the first scheme of destruction is eagerly pressed forward by the authorities of Westminster School, the second scarcely opposed by the resident members of the University of Oxford.

ancient building has any right to pretend that he cares about art; or has any excuse to plead in defence of his crime against civilization and progress, save sheer brutal ignorance.

But before I leave this subject I must say a word or two about the curious invention of our own days called Restoration, a method of dealing with works of bygone days which, though not so degrading in its spirit as downright destruction, is nevertheless little better in its results on the condition of those works of art; it is obvious that I have no time to argue the question out to-night, so I will only make these assertions:

That ancient buildings, being both works of art and monuments of history, must obviously be treated with great care and delicacy: that the imitative art of to-day is not, and cannot be the same thing as ancient art, and cannot replace it; and that therefore if we superimpose this work on the old, we destroy it both as art and as a record of history: lastly, that the natural weathering of the surface of a building is beautiful, and its loss disastrous.

Now the restorers hold the exact contrary of all this: they think that any clever architect to-day can deal off-hand successfully with the ancient work; that while all things else have changed about us since (say) the thirteenth century, art has not changed, and that our workmen can turn out work identical with that of the thirteenth century; and, lastly, that the weather-beaten surface of an ancient building is worthless, and to be got rid of wherever possible.

You see the question is difficult to argue, because there seem to be no common grounds between the restorers and the anti-restorers: I appeal therefore to the public, and bid them note, that though our opinions may be wrong, the action we advise is not rash: let the question be shelved awhile: if, as we are always pressing on people, due care be taken of these monuments, so that they shall not fall into disrepair, they will be always there to "restore" whenever people think proper and when we are proved wrong; but if it should turn out that we are right, how can the "restored" buildings be restored? I beg of you therefore to let the question be shelved, till art has so advanced among us, that we can deal authoritatively with it, till there is no longer any doubt about the matter.

Surely these monuments of our art and history, which, whatever the lawyers may say, belong not to a coterie, or to a rich man here and there, but to the nation at large, are worth this delay: surely the last relics of the life of the "famous men and our fathers that begat us" may justly claim of us the exercise of a little patience.

It will give us trouble no doubt, all this care of our possessions: but there is more trouble to come; for I must now speak of something else, of possessions which should be common to all of us, of the green grass, and the leaves, and the waters, of the very light and air of heaven, which the Century of Commerce has been too busy to pay any heed to. And

first let me remind you that I am supposing every one here present professes to care about art.

Well, there are some rich men among us whom we oddly enough call manufacturers, by which we mean capitalists who pay other men to organize manufacturers; these gentlemen, many of whom buy pictures and profess to care about art, burn a deal of coal: there is an Act in existence which was passed to prevent them sometimes and in some places from pouring a dense cloud of smoke over the world, and, to my thinking, a very lame and partial Act it is: but nothing hinders these lovers of art from being a law to themselves, and making it a point of honour with them to minimize the smoke nuisance as far as their own works are concerned; and if they don't do so, when mere money, and even a very little of that, is what it will cost them, I say that their love of art is a mere pretence: how can you care about the image of a landscape when you show by your deeds that you don't care for the landscape itself? or what right have you to shut yourself up with beautiful form and colour when you make it impossible for other people to have any share in these things?

Well, and as to the Smoke Act itself: I don't know what heed you pay to it in Birmingham,* but I have seen myself what heed is paid to it in other places; Bradford for instance: though close by them at Saltaire they have an example which I should have thought might have shamed them; for the huge chimney there which serves the acres of weaving and spinning sheds of Sir Titus Salt and his brothers is as guiltless of smoke as an ordinary kitchen chimney. Or Manchester: a gentleman of that city told me that the Smoke Act was a mere dead letter there: well, they buy pictures in Manchester and profess to wish to further the arts: but you see it must be idle pretence as far as their rich people are concerned: they only want to talk about it, and have themselves talked of.

I don't know what you are doing about this matter here; but you must forgive my saying, that unless you are beginning to think of some way of dealing with it, you are not beginning yet to pave your way to success in the arts.

Well, I have spoken of a huge nuisance, which is a type of the worst nuisances of what an ill-tempered man might be excused for calling the Century of Nuisances, rather than the Century of Commerce. I will now leave it to the consciences of the rich and influential among us, and speak of a minor nuisance which it is in the power of every one of us to abate, and which, small as it is, is so vexatious, that if I can prevail on a score of you to take heed to it by what I am saying, I shall think my evening's work a good one. Sandwich-papers I mean—of course you

*Since perhaps some people may read these words who are not of Birmingham, I ought to say that it was authoritatively explained at the meeting to which I addressed these words, that in Birmingham the law is strictly enforced.

laugh: but come now, don't you, civilized as you are in Birmingham, leave them all about the Lickey hills and your public gardens and the like? If you don't I really scarcely know with what words to praise you. When we Londoners go to enjoy ourselves at Hampton Court, for instance, we take special good care to let everybody know that we have had something to eat: so that the park just outside the gates (and a beautiful place it is) looks as if it had been snowing dirty paper. I really think you might promise me one and all who are here present to have done with this sluttish habit, which is the type of many another in its way, just as the smoke nuisance is. I mean such things as scrawling one's name on monuments, tearing down tree boughs, and the like.

I suppose 'tis early days in the revival of the arts to express one's disgust at the daily increasing hideousness of the posters with which all our towns are daubed. Still we ought to be disgusted at such horrors, and I think make up our minds never to buy any of the articles so advertised. I can't believe they can be worth much if they need all that shouting to sell them.

Again, I must ask what do you do with the trees on a site that is going to be built over? do you try to save them, to adapt your houses at all to them? do you understand what treasures they are in a town or a suburb? or what a relief they will be to the hideous dog-holes which (forgive me!) you are probably going to build in their places? I ask this anxiously, and with grief in my soul, for in London and its suburbs we always* begin by clearing a site till it is as bare as the pavement: I really think that almost anybody would have been shocked, if I could have shown him some of the trees that have been wantonly murdered in the suburb in which I live (Hammersmith to wit), amongst them some of those magnificent cedars, for which we along the river used to be famous once.

But here again see how helpless those are who care about art or nature amidst the hurry of the Century of Commerce.

Pray do not forget, that any one who cuts down a tree wantonly or carelessly, especially in a great town or its suburbs, need make no pretence of caring about art.

What else can we do to help to educate ourselves and others in the path of art, to be on the road to attaining an *Art made by the people and for the people as a joy to the maker and the user?*

Why, having got to understand something of what art was, having got to look upon its ancient monuments as friends that can tell us something of times bygone, and whose faces we do not wish to alter, even though they be worn by time and grief: having got to spend money and trouble upon matters of decency, great and little; having made it clear

*Not *quite* always: in the little colony at Bedford Park, Chiswick, as many trees have been left as possible, to the boundless advantage of its quaint and pretty architecture.

that we really do care about nature even in the suburbs of a big town—having got so far, we shall begin to think of the houses in which we live.

For I must tell you that unless you are resolved to have good and rational architecture, it is, once again, useless your thinking about art at all.

I have spoken of the popular arts, but they might all be summed up in that one word Architecture; they are all parts of that great whole, and the art of house-building begins it all: if we did not know how to dye or to weave; if we had neither gold, nor silver, nor silk; and no pigments to paint with, but half-a-dozen ochres and umbers, we might yet frame a worthy art that would lead to everything, if we had but timber, stone, and lime, and a few cutting tools to make these common things not only shelter us from wind and weather, but also express the thoughts and aspirations that stir in us.

Architecture would lead us to all the arts, as it did with earlier men: but if we despise it and take no note of how we are housed, the other arts will have a hard time of it indeed.

Now I do not think the greatest of optimists would deny that, taking us one and all, we are at present housed in a perfectly shameful way, and since the greatest part of us have to live in houses already built for us, it must be admitted that it is rather hard to know what to do, beyond waiting till they tumble about our ears.

Only we must not lay the fault upon the builders, as some people seem inclined to do: they are our very humble servants, and will build what we ask for; remember, that rich men are not obliged to live in ugly houses, and yet you see they do; which the builders may be well excused for taking as a sign of what is wanted.

Well, the point is, we must do what we can, and make people understand what we want them to do for us, by letting them see what we do for ourselves.

Hitherto, judging us by that standard, the builders may well say, that we want the pretence of a thing rather than the thing itself; that we want a show of petty luxury if we are unrich, a show of insulting stupidity if we are rich: and they are quite clear that as a rule we want to get something that shall look as if it cost twice as much as it really did.

You cannot have Architecture on those terms: simplicity and solidity are the very first requisites of it: just think if it is not so: How we please ourselves with an old building by thinking of all the generations of men that have passed through it! do we not remember how it has received their joy, and borne their sorrow, and not even their folly has left sourness upon it? it still looks as kind to us as it did to them. And the converse of this we ought to feel when we look at a newly-built house if it were as it should be: we should feel a pleasure in thinking how he who had built it had left a piece of his soul behind him to greet the new-

comers one after another long and long after he was gone:—but what sentiment can an ordinary modern house move in us, or what thought—save a hope that we may speedily forget its base ugliness?

But if you ask me how we are to pay for this solidity and extra expense, that seems to me a reasonable question; for you must dismiss at once as a delusion the hope that has been sometimes cherished, that you can have a building which is a work of art, and is therefore above all things properly built, at the same price as a building which only pretends to be this: never forget when people talk about cheap art in general, by the way, that all art costs time, trouble, and thought, and that money is only a counter to represent these things.

However, I must try to answer the question I have supposed put, how are we to pay for decent houses?

It seems to me that, by a great piece of good luck, the way to pay for them is by doing that which alone can produce popular art among us: living a simple life, I mean. Once more I say that the greatest foe to art is luxury; art cannot live in its atmosphere.

When you hear of the luxuries of the ancients, you must remember that they were not like our luxuries, they were rather indulgence in pieces of extravagant folly than what we to-day call luxury; which perhaps you would rather call comfort: well, I accept the word, and say that a Greek or Roman of the luxurious time would stare astonished could he be brought back again and shown the comforts of a well-to-do middle-class house.

But some, I know, think that the attainment of these very comforts is what makes the difference between civilization and uncivilization, that they are the essence of civilization. Is it so indeed? Farewell my hope then!—I had thought that civilization meant the attainment of peace and order and freedom, of good-will between man and man, of the love of truth and the hatred of injustice, and by consequence the attainment of the good life which these things breed, a life free from craven fear, but full of incident: that was what I thought it meant, not more stuffed chairs and more cushions, and more carpets and gas, and more dainty meat and drink—and therewithal more and sharper differences between class and class.

If that be what it is, I for my part wish I were well out of it, and living in a tent in the Persian desert, or a turf hut on the Iceland hill-side. But however it be, and I think my view is the true view, I tell you that art abhors that side of civilization, she cannot breathe in the houses that lie under its stuffy slavery.

Believe me, if we want art to begin at home, as it must, we must clear our houses of troublesome superfluities that are for ever in our way: conventional comforts that are no real comforts, and do but make work for servants and doctors: if you want a golden rule that will fit everybody, this is it:

Have nothing in your houses that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful.

And if we apply that rule strictly, we shall in the first place show the builders and such-like servants of the public what we really want, we shall create a demand for real art, as the phrase goes; and in the second place, we shall surely have more money to pay for decent houses.

Perhaps it will not try your patience too much if I lay before you my idea of the fittings necessary to the sitting-room of a healthy person: a room, I mean, which he would not have to cook in much, or sleep in generally, or in which he would not have to do any very litter-making manual work.

First a book-case with a great many books in it: next a table that will keep steady when you write or work at it: then several chairs that you can move, and a bench that you can sit or lie upon: next a cupboard with drawers: next, unless either the book-case or the cupboard be very beautiful with painting or carving, you will want pictures or engravings, such as you can afford, only not stopgaps, but real works of art on the wall; or else the wall itself must be ornamented with some beautiful and restful pattern: we shall also want a vase or two to put flowers in, which latter you must have sometimes, especially if you live in a town. Then there will be the fireplace of course, which in our climate is bound to be the chief object in the room.

That is all we shall want, especially if the floor be good; if it be not, as, by the way, in a modern house it is pretty certain not to be, I admit that a small carpet which can be bundled out of the room in two minutes will be useful, and we must also take care that it is beautiful, or it will annoy us terribly.

Now unless we are musical, and need a piano (in which case, as far as beauty is concerned, we are in a bad way), that is quite all we want: and we can add very little to these necessaries without troubling ourselves and hindering our work, our thought, and our rest.

If these things were done at the least cost for which they could be done well and solidly, they ought not to cost much; and they are so few, that those that could afford to have them at all, could afford to spend some trouble to get them fitting and beautiful: and all those who care about art ought to take great trouble to do so, and to take care that there be no sham art amongst them, nothing that it has degraded a man to make or sell. And I feel sure, that if all who care about art were to take this pains, it would make a great impression upon the public.

This simplicity you may make as costly as you please or can, on the other hand: you may hang your walls with tapestry instead of whitewash or paper; or you may cover them with mosaic, or have them frescoed by a great painter: all this is not luxury, if it be done for beauty's sake, and not for show: it does not break our golden rule: *Have nothing*

in your houses which you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful.

All art starts from this simplicity; and the higher the art rises, the greater the simplicity. I have been speaking of the fittings of a dwelling-house—a place in which we eat and drink, and pass familiar hours; but when you come to places which people want to make more specially beautiful because of the solemnity or dignity of their uses, they will be simpler still, and have little in them save the bare walls made as beautiful as may be. St. Mark's at Venice has very little furniture in it, much less than most Roman Catholic churches: its lovely and stately mother St. Sophia of Constantinople had less still, even when it was a Christian church: but we need not go either to Venice or Stamboul to take note of that: go into one of our own mighty Gothic naves (do any of you remember the first time you did so?) and note how the huge free space satisfies and elevates you, even now when window and wall are stripped of ornament: then think of the meaning of simplicity and absence of encumbering gewgaws.

Now after all, for us who are learning art, it is not far to seek what is the surest way to further it; that which most breeds art is art; every piece of work that we do which is well done, is so much help to the cause; every piece of pretence and half-heartedness is so much hurt to it. Most of you who take to the practice of art can find out in no very long time whether you have any gifts for it or not: if you have not, throw the thing up, or you will have a wretched time of it yourselves, and will be damaging the cause by laborious pretence: but if you have gifts of any kind, you are happy indeed beyond most men; for your pleasure is always with you, nor can you be intemperate in the enjoyment of it, and as you use it, it does not lessen, but grows: if you are by chance weary of it at night, you get up in the morning eager for it; or if perhaps in the morning it seems folly to you for a while, yet presently, when your hand has been moving a little in its wonted way, fresh hope has sprung up beneath it and you are happy again. While others are getting through the day like plants thrust into the earth, which cannot turn this way or that but as the wind blows them, you know what you want, and your will is on the alert to find it, and you, whatever happens, whether it be joy or grief, are at least alive.

Now when I spoke to you last year, after I had sat down I was half afraid that I had on some points said too much, that I had spoken too bitterly in my eagerness; that a rash word might have discouraged some of you; I was very far from meaning that: what I wanted to do, what I want to do to-night is to put definitely before you a cause for which to strive.

That cause is the Democracy of Art, the ennobling of daily and common work, which will one day put hope and pleasure in the place of

fear and pain, as the forces which move men to labour and keep the world a-going.

If I have enlisted any one in that cause, rash as my words may have been, or feeble as they may have been, they have done more good than harm; nor do I believe that any words of mine can discourage any who have joined that cause or are ready to do so: their way is too clear before them for that, and every one of us can help the cause whether he be great or little.

I know indeed that men, wearied by the pettiness of the details of the strife, their patience tried by hope deferred, will at whiles, excusably enough, turn back in their hearts to other days, when if the issues were not clearer, the means of trying them were simpler; when, so stirring were the times, one might even have atoned for many a blunder and backsliding by visibly dying for the cause. To have breasted the Spanish pikes at Leyden, to have drawn sword with Oliver: that may well seem to us at times amidst the tangles of to-day a happy fate: for a man to be able to say, I have lived like a fool, but now I will cast away fooling for an hour, and die like a man—there is something in that certainly: and yet 'tis clear that few men can be so lucky as to die for a cause, without having first of all lived for it. And as this is the most that can be asked from the greatest man that follows a cause, so it is the least that can be taken from the smallest.

So to us who have a Cause at heart, our highest ambition and our simplest duty are one and the same thing: for the most part we shall be too busy doing the work that lies ready to our hands, to let impatience for visibly great progress vex us much; but surely since we are servants of a Cause, hope must be ever with us, and sometimes perhaps it will so quicken our vision that it will outrun the slow lapse of time, and show us the victorious days when millions of those who now sit in darkness will be enlightened by an *Art made by the people and for the people, a joy to the maker and the user.*

The Prospects of Architecture in Civilization

"—the horrible doctrine that this universe is a Cockney Nightmare—which no creature ought for a moment to believe or listen to."
—Thomas Carlyle

The word Architecture has, I suppose, to most of you the meaning of the art of building nobly and ornamentally. Now I believe the practice of this art to be one of the most important things which man can turn his hand to, and the consideration of it to be worth the attention of serious people, not for an hour only, but for a good part of their lives, even though they may not have to do with it professionally.

But, noble as that art is by itself, and though it is specially the art of civilization, it neither ever has existed nor never can exist alive and progressive by itself, but must cherish and be cherished by all the crafts whereby men make the things which they intend shall be beautiful, and shall last somewhat beyond the passing day.

It is this union of the arts, mutually helpful and harmoniously subordinated one to another, which I have learned to think of as Architecture, and when I use the word to-night, that is what I shall mean by it and nothing narrower.

A great subject truly, for it embraces the consideration of the whole external surroundings of the life of man; we cannot escape from it if we would so long as we are part of civilization, for it means the moulding and altering to human needs of the very face of the earth itself, except in the outermost desert.

Neither can we hand over our interests in it to a little band of learned men, and bid them seek and discover, and fashion, that we may at last stand by and wonder at the work, and learn a little of how 'twas all done: 'tis we ourselves, each one of us, who must keep watch and ward over the fairness of the earth, and each with his own soul and hand do his due share therein, lest we deliver to our sons a lesser treasure than our fathers left to us.

Nor, again, is there time enough and to spare that we may leave this matter alone till our latter days or let our sons deal with it: for so busy

and eager is mankind, that the desire of to-day makes us utterly forget the desire of yesterday and the gain it brought; and whensoever in any object of pursuit we cease to long for perfection, corruption sure and speedy leads from life to death and all is soon over and forgotten: time enough there may be for many things: for peopling the desert; for breaking down the walls between nation and nation; for learning the innermost secrets of the fashion of our souls and bodies, the air we breathe, and the earth we tread on: time enough for subduing all the forces of nature to our material wants: but no time to spare before we turn our eyes and our longing to the fairness of the earth; lest the wave of human need sweep over it and make it not a hopeful desert as it once was, but a hopeless prison; lest man should find at last that he has toiled and striven, and conquered, and set all things on the earth under his feet, that he might live thereon himself unhappy.

Most true it is that when any spot of earth's surface has been marred by the haste or carelessness of civilization, it is heavy work to seek a remedy, nay a work scarce conceivable; for the desire to live on any terms which nature has implanted in us, and the terrible swift multiplication of the race which is the result of it, thrusts out of men's minds all thought of other hopes, and bars the way before us as with a wall of iron: no force but a force equal to that which marred can ever mend, or give back those ruined places to hope and civilization.

Therefore I entreat you to turn your minds to thinking of what is to come of Architecture, that is to say, the fairness of the earth amidst the habitations of men: for the hope and the fear of it will follow us though we try to escape it; it concerns us all, and needs the help of all; and what we do herein must be done at once, since every day of our neglect adds to the heap of troubles a blind force is making for us; till it may come to this if we do not look to it, that we shall one day have to call, not on peace and prosperity, but on violence and ruin to rid us of them.

In making this appeal to you, I will not suppose that I am speaking to any who refuse to admit that we who are part of civilization are responsible to posterity for what may befall the fairness of the earth in our own days, for what we have done, in other words, towards the progress of Architecture; if any such exists among cultivated people, I need not trouble myself about them; for they would not listen to me, nor should I know what to say to them.

On the other hand, there may be some here who have a knowledge of their responsibility in this matter, but to whom the duty that it involves seems an easy one, since they are fairly satisfied with the state of Architecture as it now is: I do not suppose that they fail to note the strange contrast which exists between the beauty that still clings to some habitations of men and the ugliness which is the rule in others, but it seems to them natural and inevitable, and therefore does not trouble them: and they fulfil their duties to civilization and the arts by

sometimes going to see the beautiful places, and gathering together a few matters to remind them of these for the adornment of the ugly dwellings in which their homes are enshrined: for the rest, they have no doubt that it is natural and not wrong that while all ancient towns, I mean towns whose houses are largely ancient, should be beautiful and romantic, all modern ones should be ugly and commonplace: it does not seem to them that this contrast is of any import to civilization, or that it expresses anything save that one town *is* ancient as to its buildings and the other modern. If their thoughts carry them into looking any farther into the contrasts between ancient art and modern, they are not dissatisfied with the result: they may see things to reform here and there, but they suppose, or, let me say, take for granted, that art is alive and healthy, is on the right road, and that following that road, it will go on living for ever, much as it is now.

It is not unfair to say that this languid complacency is the general attitude of cultivated people towards the arts: of course if they were ever to think seriously of them, they would be startled into discomfort by the thought that civilization as it now is brings inevitable ugliness with it: surely if they thought this, they would begin to think that this was not natural and right; they would see that this was not what civilization aimed at in its struggling days: but they do not think seriously of the arts because they have been hitherto defended by a law of nature which forbids men to see evils which they are not ready to redress.

Hitherto: but there are not wanting signs that that defence may fail them one day, and it has become the duty of all true artists, and all men who love life though it be troublous better than death though it be peaceful, to strive to pierce that defence and sting the world, cultivated and uncultivated, into discontent and struggle.

Therefore I will say that the contrast between past art and present, the universal beauty of men's habitations as they *were* fashioned, and the universal ugliness of them as they *are* fashioned, is of the utmost import to civilization, and that it expresses much; it expresses no less than a blind brutality which will destroy art at least, whatever else it may leave alive: art is not healthy, it even scarcely lives; it is on the wrong road, and if it follow that road will speedily meet its death on it.

Now perhaps you will say that by asserting that the general attitude of cultivated people towards the arts is a languid complacency with this unhealthy state of things, I am admitting that cultivated people generally do not care about the arts, and that therefore this threatened death of them will not frighten people much, even if the threat be founded on truth: so that those are but beating the air who strive to rouse people into discontent and struggle.

Well, I will run the risk of offending you by speaking plainly, and saying, that to me it seems over true that cultivated people in general do *not* care about the arts: nevertheless I will answer any possible

challenge as to the usefulness of trying to rouse them to thought about the matter, by saying that they do not care about the arts because they do not know what they mean, or what they lose in lacking them: cultivated, that is rich, as they are, they are also under that harrow of hard necessity which is driven onward so remorselessly by the competitive commerce of the latter days; a system which is drawing near now I hope to its perfection, and therefore to its death and change: the many millions of civilization, as labour is now organized, can scarce think seriously of anything but the means of earning their daily bread; they do not know of art, it does not touch their lives at all: the few thousands of cultivated people whom Fate, not always as kind to them as she looks, has placed above the material necessity for this hard struggle, are nevertheless bound by it in spirit: the reflex of the grinding trouble of those who toil to live that they may live to toil weighs upon them also, and forbids them to look upon art as a matter of importance: they know it but as a toy, not as a serious help to life: as they know it, it can no more lift the burden from the conscience of the rich than it can from the weariness of the poor. They do not know what art means: as I have said, they think that as labour is now organized art can go indefinitely as *it* is now organized, practised by a few for a few, adding a little interest, a little refinement to the lives of those who have come to look upon intellectual interest and spiritual refinement as their birthright.

No, no, it can never be: believe me, if it were otherwise possible that it should be an enduring condition of humanity that there must be one class utterly refined and another utterly brutal, art would bar the way and forbid the monstrosity to exist: such refinement would have to do as well as it might without the aid of Art: it may be she will die, but it cannot be that she will live the slave of the rich, and the token of the enduring slavery of the poor. If the life of the world is to be brutalized by her death, the rich must share that brutalization with the poor.

I know that there are people of good-will now, as there have been in all ages, who have conceived of art as going hand in hand with luxury, nay, as being much the same thing; but it is an idea false from the root up, and most hurtful to art, as I could demonstrate to you by many examples if I had time, lacking which I will only meet it with one, which I hope will be enough.

We are here in the richest city of the richest country of the richest age of the world: no luxury of time past can compare with our luxury; and yet if you could clear your eyes from habitual blindness you would have to confess that there is no crime against art, no ugliness, no vulgarity which is not shared with perfect fairness and equality between the modern hovels of Bethnal Green and the modern palaces of the West End: and then if you looked at the matter deeply and seriously, you would not regret it, but rejoice at it, and as you went past some notable

example of the aforesaid palaces you would exult indeed as you said, "So that is all that luxury and money can do for refinement."

For the rest, if of late there has been any change for the better in the prospects of the arts; if there has been a struggle both to throw off the chains of dead and powerless tradition, and to understand the thoughts and aspirations of those among whom those traditions were once alive powerful and beneficent; if there has been abroad any spirit of resistance to the flood of sordid ugliness that modern civilization has created to make modern civilization miserable: in a word, if any of us have had the courage to be discontented that Art seems dying, and to hope for her new birth, it is because others have been discontented and hopeful in other matters than the arts; I believe most sincerely that the steady progress of those whom the stupidity of language forces me to call the lower classes in material, political, and social condition, has been our real help in all that we have been able to do or to hope, although both the helpers and the helped have been mostly unconscious of it.

It is indeed in this belief, the belief in the beneficent progress of civilization, that I venture to face you and to entreat you to strive to enter into the real meaning of the arts, which are surely the expression of reverence for nature, and the crown of nature, the life of man upon the earth.

With this intent in view I may, I think, hope to move you, I do not say to agree to all I urge upon you, yet at least to think the matter worth thinking about; and if you once do that, I believe I shall have won you. Maybe indeed that many things which I think beautiful you will deem of small account; nay, that even some things I think base and ugly will not vex your eyes or your minds: but one thing I know you will none of you like to plead guilty to—blindness to the natural beauty of the earth; and of that beauty art is the only possible guardian.

No one of you can fail to know what neglect of art has done to this great treasure of mankind: the earth which was beautiful before man lived on it, which for many ages grew in beauty as men grew in numbers and power, is now growing uglier day by day, and there the swiftest where civilization is the mightiest: this is quite certain; no one can deny it: are you contented that it should be so?

Surely there must be few of us to whom this degrading change has not been brought home personally. I think you will most of you understand me but too well when I ask you to remember the pang of dismay that comes on us when we revisit some spot of country which has been specially sympathetic to us in times past; which has refreshed us after toil, or soothed us after trouble; but where now as we turn the corner of the road or crown the hill's brow we can see first the inevitable blue slate roof, and then the blotched mud-coloured stucco, or ill-built wall of ill-made bricks of the new buildings; then as we come nearer and see the arid and pretentious little gardens, and cast-iron horrors of railings,

and miseries of squalid out-houses breaking through the sweet meadows and abundant hedge-rows of our old quiet hamlet, do not our hearts sink within us, and are we not troubled with a perplexity not altogether selfish, when we think what a little bit of carelessness it takes to destroy a world of pleasure and delight, which now whatever happens can never be recovered?

Well may we feel the perplexity and sickness of heart which some day the whole world shall feel to find its hopes disappointed, if we do not look to it; for this is not what civilization looked for: a new house added to the old village, where is the harm of that? Should it not have been a gain and not a loss; a sign of growth and prosperity which should have rejoiced the eye of an old friend? a new family come in health and hope to share the modest pleasures and labours of the place we loved; that should have been no grief, but a fresh pleasure to us.

Yes, and time was that it would have been so; the new house indeed would have taken away a little piece of the flowery green sward, a few yards of the teeming hedge-row; but a new order, a new beauty would have taken the place of the old: the very flowers of the field would have but given place to flowers fashioned by man's hand and mind: the hedge-row oak would have blossomed into fresh beauty in roof-tree and lintel and door-post: and though the new house would have looked young and trim beside the older houses & the ancient church—ancient even in those days—yet it would have a piece of history for the time to come, and its dear and dainty cream-white walls would have been a genuine link among the numberless links of that long chain whose beginnings we know not of, but on whose mighty length even the many-pillared garth of Pallas, and the stately dome of the Eternal Wisdom, are but single links, wondrous and resplendent though they be.

Such I say can a new house be, such it has been: for 'tis no ideal house I am thinking of: no rare marvel of art, of which but few can ever be vouchsafed to the best times and countries; no palace either, not even a manor-house, but a yeoman's steading at grandest, or even his shepherd's cottage: there they stand at this day, dozens of them yet, in some parts of England: such an one, and of the smallest, is before my eyes as I speak to you, standing by the roadside on one of the western slopes of the Cotswolds: the tops of the great trees near it can see a long way off the mountains of the Welsh border, and between a great county of hill, and waving woodland, and meadow and plain where lies hidden many a famous battle-field of our stout forefathers: there to the right a wavering patch of blue is the smoke of Worcester town, but Evesham smoke, though near, is unseen, so small it is: then a long line of haze just traceable shows where the Avon wends its way thence towards Severn, till Bredon Hill hides the sight both of it and Tewkesbury smoke: just below on either side the Broadway lie the grey houses of the village street ending with a lovely house of the fourteenth century;

above, the road winds serpentine up the steep hill-side, whose crest looking westward sees the glorious map I have been telling of spread before it, but eastward strains to look on Oxfordshire, and thence all waters run towards Thames: all about lie the sunny slopes, lovely of outline, flowery and sweetly grassed, dotted with the best-grown and most graceful of trees: 'tis a beautiful country-side indeed, not undignified, not unromantic, but most familiar.

And there stands the little house that was new once, a labourer's cottage built of the Cotswold limestone, and grown now, walls and roof, a lovely warm grey, though it was creamy white in its earliest day; no line of it could ever have marred the Cotswold beauty; everything about it is solid and well wrought: it is skilfully planned and well proportioned: there is a little sharp and delicate carving about its arched doorway, and every part of it is well cared for: 'tis in fact beautiful, a work of art and a piece of nature—no less: there is no man who could have done it better considering its use and its place.

Who built it then? No strange race of men, but just the mason of Broadway village: even such a man as is now running up down yonder three or four cottages of the wretched type we know too well: nor did he get an architect from London, or even Worcester, to design it: I believe 'tis but two hundred years old, and at that time, though beauty still lingered among the peasants' houses, your learned architects were building houses for the high gentry that were ugly enough, though solid and well built; nor are its materials far-fetched; from the neighbouring field came its walling-stones; and at the top of the hill they are quarrying now as good freestone as ever.

No, there was no effort or wonder about it when it was built, though its beauty makes it strange now.

And are you contented that we should lose all this; this simple, harmless beauty that was no hindrance or trouble to any man, and that added to the natural beauty of the earth instead of marring it?

You cannot be contented with it; all you can do is to try to forget it, and to say that such things are the necessary and inevitable consequences of civilization. Is it so indeed? The loss of such-like beauty is an undoubted evil: but civilization cannot mean at heart to produce evils for mankind: such losses therefore must be accidents of civilization, produced by its carelessness, not its malice; and we, if we be men and not machines, must try to amend them: or civilization itself will be undone.

But, now let us leave the sunny slopes of the Cotswolds, and their little grey houses, lest we fall a-dreaming over past time, and let us think about the suburbs of London, neither dull nor unpleasant once, where surely we ought to have some power to do something: let me remind you how it fares with the beauty of the earth when some big house near our dwelling-place, which has passed through many vicissitudes of rich

merchant's dwelling, school, hospital, or what not, is at last to be turned into ready money, and is sold to A, who lets it to B, who is going to build houses on it which he will sell to C, who will let them to D and the other letters of the alphabet: well, the old house comes down; that was to be looked for, and perhaps you don't much mind it; it was never a work of art, was stupid and unimaginative enough, though creditably built, and without pretence; but even while it is being pulled down, you hear the axe falling on the trees of its generous garden, which it was such a pleasure even to pass by, and where man and nature together have worked so long and patiently for the blessing of the neighbours: so you see the boys dragging about the streets great boughs of the flowering may-trees covered with blossom, and you know what is going to happen. Next morning when you get up you look towards that great plane-tree which has been such a friend to you so long through sun and rain and wind, which was a world in itself of incident and beauty: but now there is a gap and no plane-tree; next morning 'tis the turn of the great sweeping layers of darkness that the ancient cedars thrust out from them, very treasures of loveliness and romance; they are gone too: you may have a faint hope left that the thick bank of lilac next your house may be spared, since the newcomers may like lilac; but 'tis gone in the afternoon, and the next day when you look in with a sore heart, you see that once fair great garden turned into a petty miserable clay-trampled yard, and everything is ready for the latest development of Victorian architecture—which in due time (two months) arises from the wreck.

Do you like it? You I mean, who have not studied art and do not think you care about it?

Look at the houses (there are plenty to choose from)! I will not say, are they beautiful, for you say you don't care whether they are or not: but just look at the wretched penny-worths of material, of accommodation, of ornament doled out to you! if there were one touch of generosity, of honest pride, of wish to please about them, I would forgive them in the lump. But there is none—not one.

It is for this that you have sacrificed your cedars and planes and may-trees, which I do believe you really liked—are you satisfied?

Indeed you cannot be: all you can do is to go to your business, converse with your family, eat, drink, and sleep, and try to forget it, but whenever you think of it, you will admit that a loss without compensation has befallen you and your neighbours.

Once more neglect of art has done it; for though it is conceivable that the loss of your neighbouring open space might in any case have been a loss to you, still the building of a new quarter of a town ought not to be an unmixed calamity to the neighbours: nor would it have been once: for first, the builder doesn't now murder the trees (at any rate not all of them) for the trifling sum of money their corpses will bring him, but

because it will take him too much trouble to fit them into the planning of his houses: so to begin with you would have saved the more part of your trees; and I say your trees, advisedly, for they were at least as much your trees, who loved them and would have saved them, as they were the trees of the man who neglected and murdered them. And next, for any space you would have lost, and for any unavoidable destruction of natural growth, you would in the times of art have been compensated by orderly beauty, by visible signs of the ingenuity of man and his delight both in the works of nature and the works of his own hands.

Yes indeed, if we had lived in Venice in early days, as islet after islet was built upon, we should have grudged it but little, I think, though we had been merchants and rich men, that the Greek shafted work, and the carving of the Lombards was drawn nearer and nearer to us and blocked us out a little from the sight of the blue Euganean hills or the Northern mountains. Nay, to come nearer home, much as I know I should have loved the willowy meadows between the network of the streams of Thames and Cherwell; yet I should not have been ill content as Oxford crept northward from its early home of Oseney, and Rewley, and the Castle, as townsman's house, and scholar's hall, and the great College and the noble Church hid year by year more and more of the grass and flowers of Oxfordshire.*

That was the natural course of things then; men could do no otherwise when they built than give some gift of beauty to the world: but all is turned inside out now, and when men build they cannot but take away some gift of beauty, which Nature or their own forefathers have given to the world.

Wonderful it is indeed, and perplexing, that the course of civilization towards perfection should have brought this about: so perplexing, that to some it seems as if civilization were eating her own children, and the arts first of all.

I will not say that; time is big with so many a change; surely there must be some remedy, and whether there be or no, at least it is better to die seeking one, than to leave it alone and do nothing.

I have said, are you satisfied? and assumed that you are not, though to many you may seem to be at least helpless: yet indeed it is something or even a great deal that I can reasonably assume that you are discontented: fifty years ago, thirty years ago, nay perhaps twenty years ago, it would have been useless to have asked such a question, it could only have been answered in one way: We are perfectly satisfied: whereas now we may at least hope that discontent will grow till some remedy will be sought for.

And if sought for, should it not, in England at least, be as good as

*Indeed it is a new world now, when the new Cowley dog-holes must needs slay Magdalen Bridge!—Nov. 1881.

found already, and acted upon? At first sight it seems so truly; for I may say without fear of contradiction that we of the English middle classes are the most powerful body of men that the world has yet seen, and that anything we have set our heart upon we will have: and yet when we come to look the matter in the face, we cannot fail to see that even for us with all our strength it will be a hard matter to bring about that birth of the new art: for between us and that which is to be, if art is not to perish utterly, there is something alive and devouring; something as it were a river of fire that will put all that tries to swim across to a hard proof indeed, and scare from the plunge every soul that is not made fearless by desire of truth and insight of the happy days to come beyond.

That fire is the hurry of life bred by the gradual perfection of competitive commerce which we, the English middle classes, when we had won our political liberty, set ourselves to further with an energy, an eagerness, a single-heartedness that has no parallel in history; we would suffer none to bar the way to us, we called on none to help us, we thought of that one thing and forgot all else, and so attained to our desire, and fashioned a terrible thing indeed from the very hearts of the strongest of mankind.

Indeed I don't suppose that the feeble discontent with our own creation that I have noted before can deal with such a force as this—not yet—not till it swells to very strong discontent: nevertheless as we were blind to its destructive power, and have not even yet learned all about that, so we may well be blind to what it has of constructive force in it, and that one day may give us a chance to deal with it again and turn it toward accomplishing our new and worthier desire: in that day at least, when we have at last learned what we want, let us work no less strenuously and fearlessly, I will not say to quench it, but to force it to burn itself out, as we once did to quicken and sustain it.

Meantime if we could but get ourselves ready by casting off certain old prejudices and delusions in this matter of the arts, we should the sooner reach the pitch of discontent which would drive us into action: such a one I mean as the aforesaid idea that luxury fosters art, and especially the Architectural arts; or its companion one, that the arts flourish best in a rich country, *i.e.* a country where the contrast between rich and poor is greatest; or this, the worst because the most plausible, the assertion of the hierarchy of intellect in the arts: an old foe with a new face indeed: born out of the times that gave the death-blow to the political and social hierarchies, and waxing as they waned, it proclaimed from a new side the divinity of the few and the subjugation of the many, and cries out, like they did, that it is expedient, not that one man should die for the people, but that the people should die for one man.

Now perhaps these three things, though they have different forms, are in fact but one thing; tyranny to wit: but however that may be, they are

to be met by one answer, and there is no other: if art which is now sick is to live and not die, it must in the future be of the people for the people, and by the people; it must understand all and be understood by all: equality must be the answer to tyranny: if that be not attained, art will die.

The past art of what has grown to be civilized Europe from the time of the decline of the ancient classical peoples, was the outcome of instinct working on an unbroken chain of tradition: it was fed not by knowledge but by hope, and though many a strange and wild illusion mingled with that hope, yet was it human and fruitful ever: many a man it solaced, many a slave in body it freed in soul; boundless pleasure it gave to those who wrought it and those who used it: long and long it lived, passing that torch of hope from hand to hand, while it kept but little record of its best and noblest; for least of all things could it abide to make for itself kings and tyrants: every man's hand and soul it used, the lowest as the highest, and in its bosom at least were all men free: it did its work, not creating an art more perfect than itself, but rather other things than art, freedom of thought and speech, and the longing for light and knowledge and the coming days that should slay it: and so at last it died in the hour of its highest hope, almost before the greatest men that came of it had passed away from the world. It is dead now; no longing will bring it back to us; no echo of it is left among the peoples whom it once made happy.

Of the art that is to come who may prophesy? But this at least seems to follow from comparing that past with the confusion in which we are now struggling and the light which glimmers through it: that that art will no longer be an art of instinct, of ignorance which is hopeful to learn and strives to see; since ignorance is now no longer hopeful. In this and in many other ways it may differ from the past art, but in one thing it must needs be like it: it will not be an esoteric mystery shared by a little band of superior beings; it will be no more hierarchical than the art of past time was, but like it will be a gift of the people to the people, a thing which everybody can understand, and everyone surround with love; it will be a part of every life, and a hindrance to none.

For this is the essence of art, and the thing that is eternal to it, whatever else may be passing and accidental.

Here it is, you see, wherein the art of to-day is so far astray, would that I could say wherein it *has been* astray; it has been sick because of this packing and peeling with tyranny, and now with what of life it has it must struggle back towards equality.

There is the hard business for us! to get all simple people to care about art, to get them to insist on making it part of their lives, whatever becomes of systems of commerce and labour held perfect by some of us.

This is henceforward for a long time to come the real business of art: and—yes I will say it since I think it—of civilization too for that

matter: but how shall we set to work about it? How shall we give people without traditions of art eyes with which to see the works we do to move them? How shall we give them leisure from toil, and truce with anxiety, so that they may have time to brood over the longing for beauty which men are born with, as 'tis said, even in London streets? And chiefly, for this will breed the others swiftly and certainly, how shall we give them hope and pleasure in their daily work?

How shall we give them this soul of art without which men are worse than savages? If they would but drive us to it! But what and where are the forces that shall drive them to drive us? Where is the lever and the standpoint?

Hard questions indeed! but unless we are prepared to seek an answer for them, our art is a mere toy, which may amuse us for a little, but which will not sustain us at our need: the cultivated classes, as they are called, will feel it slipping away from under them: till some of them will but mock it as a worthless thing; and some will stand by and look at it as a curious exercise of the intellect, useless when done, though amusing to watch a-doing. How long will art live on those terms? Yet such were even now the state of art were it not for that hope which I am here to set forth to you, the hope of an art that shall express the soul of the people.

Therefore, I say, that in these days we men of civilization have to choose if we will cast art aside or not; if we choose to do so I have no more to say, save that we *may* find something to take its place for the solace and joy of mankind, but I scarce think we shall: but if we refuse to cast art aside, then must we seek an answer for those hard questions aforesaid, of which this is the first.

How shall we set about giving people without traditions of art eyes with which to see works of art? It will doubtless take many years of striving and success before we can think of answering that question fully: and if we strive to do our duty herein, long before it is answered fully there will be some kind of a popular art abiding among us: but meantime, and setting aside the answer which every artist must make to his own share of the question, there is one duty obvious to us all; it is that we should set ourselves, each one of us, to doing our best to guard the natural beauty of the earth: we ought to look upon it as a crime, an injury to our fellows, only excusable because of ignorance, to mar the natural beauty which is the property of all men; and scarce less than a crime to look on and do nothing while others are marring it, if we can no longer plead this ignorance.

Now this duty, as it is the most obvious to us, and the first and readiest way of giving people back their eyes, so happily it is the easiest to set about; up to a certain point you will have all people of good-will to the public good on your side: nay, small as the beginning is, something has actually been begun in this direction, and we may well say,

considering how hopeless things looked twenty years ago, that it is marvellous in our eyes! Yet if we ever get out of the troubles that we are now wallowing in, it will seem perhaps more marvellous still to those that come after us that the dwellers in the richest city in the world were at one time rather proud that the members of a small, humble, and rather obscure, though I will say it, a beneficent society, should have felt it their duty to shut their eyes to the apparent hopelessness of attacking with their feeble means the stupendous evils they had become alive to, so that they might be able to make some small beginnings towards awakening the general public to a due sense of those evils.

I say, that though I ask your earnest support for such associations as the Kyrle and the Commons Preservation Societies, and though I feel sure that they have begun at the right end, since neither gods nor governments will help those who don't help themselves; though we are bound to wait for nobody's help than our own in dealing with the devouring hideousness and squalor of our great towns, and especially of London, for which the whole country is responsible; yet it would be idle not to acknowledge that the difficulties in our way are far too huge and wide-spreading to be grappled by private or semi-private efforts only.

All we can do in this way we must look on not as palliatives of an unendurable state of things, but as tokens of what we desire; which is in short the giving back to our country of the natural beauty of the earth, which we are so ashamed of having taken away from it: and our chief duty herein will be to quicken this shame and the pain that comes from it in the hearts of our fellows: this I say is one of the chief duties of all those who have any right to the title of cultivated men: and I believe that if we are faithful to it, we may help to further a great impulse towards beauty among us, which will be so irresistible that it will fashion for itself a national machinery which will sweep away all difficulties between us and a decent life, though they may have increased a thousandfold meantime, as is only too like to be the case.

Surely that light will arise, though neither we nor our children's children see it, though civilization may have to go down into dark places enough meantime: surely one day making will be thought more honourable, more worthy the majesty of a great nation than destruction.

It is strange indeed, it is woeful, it is scarcely comprehensible, if we come to think of it as men, and not as machines, that, after all the progress of civilization, it should be so easy for a little official talk, a few lines on a sheet of paper, to set a terrible engine to work, which without any trouble on our part will slay us ten thousand men, and ruin who can say how many thousand of families; and it lies light enough on the conscience of *all* of us; while, if it is a question of striking a blow at grievous and crushing evils which lie at our own doors, evils which every thoughtful man feels and laments, and for which we alone are responsible, not only is there no national machinery for dealing with

them, though they grow ranker and ranker every year, but any hint that such a thing may be possible is received with laughter or with terror, or with severe and heavy blame. The rights of property, the necessities of morality, the interests of religion—these are the sacramental words of cowardice that silence us!

Sirs, I have spoken of thoughtful men who feel these evils: but think of all the millions of men whom our civilization has bred, who are not thoughtful, and have had no chance of being so; how can you fail then to acknowledge the duty of defending the fairness of the Earth? and what is the use of our cultivation if it is to cultivate us into cowards? Let us answer those feeble counsels of despair and say, We also have a property which your tyranny of squalor cheats us of; we also have a morality which its baseness crushes; we also have a religion which its injustice makes a mock of.

Well, whatever lesser helps there may be to our endeavour of giving people back the eyes we have robbed them of, we may pass them by at present, for they are chiefly of use to people who are beginning to get their eyesight again; to people who, though they have no traditions of art, can study those mighty impulses that once led nations and races: it is to such that museums and art education are of service; but it is clear they cannot get at the great mass of people, who will at present stare at them in unintelligent wonder.

Until our streets are decent and orderly, and our town gardens break the bricks and mortar every here and there, and are open to all people; until our meadows even near our towns become fair and sweet, and are unspoiled by patches of hideousness; until we have clear sky above our heads and green grass beneath our feet; until the great drama of the seasons can touch our workmen with other feelings than the misery of winter and the weariness of summer—till all this happens our museums and art schools will be but amusements of the rich; and they will soon cease to be of any use to them also, unless they make up their minds that they will do their best to give us back the fairness of the Earth.

In what I have been saying on this last point I have been thinking of our own special duties as cultivated people; but in our endeavours towards this end, as in all others, cultivated people cannot stand alone; nor can we do much to open people's eyes till they cry out to us to have them opened. Now I cannot doubt that the longing to attack and overcome the sordidness of the city life of to-day still dwells in the minds of workmen, as well as in ours, but it can scarcely be otherwise than vague and lacking guidance with men who have so little leisure, and are so hemmed in with hideousness as they are. So this brings us to our second question: How shall people in general get leisure enough from toil, and truce enough with anxiety to give scope to their inborn longing for beauty?

Now the part of this question that is not involved in the next one,

How shall they get proper work to do? is I think in a fair way to be answered.

The mighty change which the success of competitive commerce has wrought in the world, whatever it may have destroyed, has at least unwittingly made one thing—from out of it has been born the increasing power of the working-class. The determination which this power has bred in it to raise their class as a class will, I doubt not, make way and prosper with our good-will, or even in spite of it; but it seems to me that both to the working-class and especially to ourselves it is important that it should have our abundant good-will, and also what help we may be able otherwise to give it, by our determination to deal fairly with workmen, even when that justice may seem to involve our own loss. The time of unreasonable and blind outcry against the Trades Unions is, I am happy to think, gone by, and has given place to the hope of a time when these great Associations, well organized, well served, and earnestly supported, as I *know* them to be, will find other work before them than the temporary support of their members and the adjustment of due wages for their crafts: when that hope begins to be realized, and they find they can make use of the help of us scattered units of the cultivated classes, I feel sure that the claims of art, as we and they will then understand the word, will by no means be disregarded by them.

Meantime with us who are called artists, since most unhappily that word means at present another thing than artisan: with us who either practise the arts with our own hands, or who love them so wholly that we can enter into the inmost feelings of those who do—with us it lies to deal with our last question, to stir up others to think of answering this: How shall we give people in general hope and pleasure in their daily work in such a way that in those days to come the word art *shall* be rightly understood?

Of all that I have to say to you this seems to me the most important—that our daily and necessary work, which we could not escape if we would, which we would not forego if we could, should be human, serious, and pleasurable, not machine-like, trivial, or grievous. I call this not only the very foundation of Architecture in all senses of the word, but of happiness also in all conditions of life.

Let me say before I go further, that though I am nowise ashamed of repeating the words of men who have been before me in both senses, of time and insight, I mean, I should be ashamed of letting you think that I forget their labours on which mine are founded. I know that the pith of what I am saying on this subject was set forth years ago and for the first time by Mr. Ruskin in that chapter of the Stones of Venice which is entitled, "On the Nature of Gothic," in words more clear and eloquent than any man else now living could use. So important do they seem to me, that to my mind they should have been posted up in every school of art throughout the country—nay, in every association of

English-speaking people which professes in any way to further the culture of mankind. But I am sorry to have to say it, my excuse for doing little more now than repeating those words is that they have been less heeded than most things which Mr. Ruskin has said: I suppose because people have been afraid of them, lest they should find the truth they express sticking so fast in their minds that it would either compel them to act on it or confess themselves slothful and cowardly.

Nor can I pretend to wonder at that: for if people were once to accept it as true, that it is nothing but just and fair that every man's work should have some hope and pleasure always present in it, they must try to bring the change about that would make it so: and all history tells of no greater change in man's life than that would be.

Nevertheless, great as the change may be, Architecture has no prospects in civilization unless the change be brought about: and 'tis my business to-day, I will not say to convince you of this, but to send some of you away uneasy lest perhaps it may be true; if I can manage that I shall have spoken to some purpose.

Let us see however in what light cultivated people, men not without serious thoughts about life, look to this matter, lest perchance we may seem to be beating the air only: when I have given you an example of this way of thinking, I will answer it to the best of my power in the hopes of making some of you uneasy, discontented, and revolutionary.

Some few months ago I read in a paper the report of a speech made to the assembled workpeople of a famous firm of manufacturers (as they are called). The speech was a very humane and thoughtful one, spoken by one of the leaders of modern thought: the firm to whose people it was addressed was and is famous not only for successful commerce, but also for the consideration and good-will with which it treats its work-people, men and women. No wonder, therefore, that the speech was pleasant reading; for the tone of it was that of a man speaking to his friends who could well understand him and from whom he need hide nothing; but towards the end of it I came across a sentence, which set me a-thinking so hard, that I forgot all that had gone before. It was to this effect, and I think nearly in these very words, "Since no man would work if it were not that he hoped by working to earn leisure": and the context showed that this was assumed as a self-evident truth.

Well, for many years I have had my mind fixed on what I in my turn regarded as an axiom which may be worded thus: No work which cannot be done without pleasure in the doing is worth doing; so you may think I was much disturbed at a grave and learned man taking such a completely different view of it with such calmness of certainty. What a little way, I thought, has all Ruskin's fire and eloquence made in driving into people so great a truth, a truth so fertile of consequences!

Then I turned the intrusive sentence over again in my mind: "No man would work unless he hoped by working to earn leisure": and I saw

that this was another way of putting it: first, all the work of the world is done against the grain: second, what a man does in his "leisure" is not work.

A poor bribe the hope of such leisure to supplement the other inducement to toil, which I take to be the fear of death by starvation: a poor bribe; for the most of men, like those Yorkshire weavers and spinners (and the more part far worse than they) work for such a very small share of leisure that one must needs say that if all their hope be in that, they are pretty much beguiled of their hope!

So I thought, and this next, that if it were indeed true and beyond remedy, that no man would work unless he hoped by working to earn leisure, the hell of theologians was but little needed; for a thickly populated civilized country, where, you know, after all people must work at something, would serve their turn well enough. Yet again I knew that this theory of the general and necessary hatefulness of work was indeed the common one, and that all sorts of people held it, who without being monsters of insensibility grew fat and jolly nevertheless.

So to explain this puzzle, I fell to thinking of the one life of which I knew something—my own to wit—and out tumbled the bottom of the theory.

For I tried to think what would happen to me if I were forbidden my ordinary daily work; and I knew that I should die of despair and weariness, unless I could straightway take to something else which I could make my daily work: and it was clear to me that I worked not in the least in the world for the sake of earning leisure by it, but partly driven by the fear of starvation or disgrace, and partly, and even a very great deal, because I love the work itself: and as for my leisure: well I had to confess that part of it I do indeed spend as a dog does—in contemplation, let us say; and like it well enough: but part of it also I spend in work: which work gives me just as much pleasure as my bread-earning work—neither more nor less; and therefore could be no bribe or hope for my work-a-day hours.

Then next I turned my thoughts to my friends: mere artists, and therefore, you know, lazy people by prescriptive right: I found that the one thing they enjoyed was their work, and that their only idea of happy leisure was other work, just as valuable to the world as their work-a-day work: they only differed from me in liking the dog-like leisure less and the man-like labour more than I do.

I got no further when I turned from mere artists to important men—public men: I could see no signs of their working merely to earn leisure: they all worked for the work and the deeds' sake. Do rich gentlemen sit up all night in the House of Commons for the sake of earning leisure? if so, 'tis a sad waste of labour. Or Mr. Gladstone? he doesn't seem to have succeeded in winning much leisure by tolerably strenuous work; what he does get he might have got on much easier terms, I am sure.

Does it then come to this, that there are men, say a class of men, whose daily work, though maybe they cannot escape from doing it, is chiefly pleasure to them; and other classes of men whose daily work is wholly irksome to them, and only endurable because they hope while they are about it to earn thereby a little leisure at the day's end?

If that were wholly true the contrast between the two kinds of lives would be greater than the contrast between the utmost delicacy of life and the utmost hardship could show, or between the utmost calm and utmost trouble. The difference would be literally immeasurable.

But I dare not, if I would, in so serious a matter overstate the evils I call on you to attack: it is not wholly true that such immeasurable difference exists between the lives of divers classes of men, or the world would scarce have got through to past the middle of this century: misery, grudging, and tyranny would have destroyed us all.

The inequality even at the worst is not really so great as that: any employment in which a thing can be done better or worse has some pleasure in it, for all men more or less like doing what they can do well: even mechanical labour is pleasant to some people (to me amongst others) if it be not too mechanical.

Nevertheless though it be not wholly true that the daily work of some men is merely pleasant and of others merely grievous; yet it is over true both that things are not very far short of this, and also that if people do not open their eyes in time they will speedily worsen. Some work, nay, almost all the work done by artisans *is* too mechanical; and those that work at it must either abstract their thoughts from it altogether, in which case they are but machines while they are at work; or else they must suffer such dreadful weariness in getting through it, as one can scarcely bear to think of. Nature desires that we shall at least live, but seldom, I suppose, allows this latter misery to happen; and the workmen who do purely mechanical work do as a rule become mere machines as far as their work is concerned. Now as I am quite sure that no art, not even the feeblest, rudest, or least intelligent, can come of such work, so also I am sure that such work makes the workman less than a man and degrades him grievously and unjustly, and that nothing can compensate him or us for such degradation: and I want you specially to note that this was instinctively felt in the very earliest days of what are called the industrial arts. When a man turned the wheel, or threw the shuttle, or hammered the iron, he was expected to make something more than a water-pot, a cloth, or a knife: he was expected to make a work of art also: he could scarcely altogether fail in this, he might attain to making a work of the greatest beauty: this was felt to be positively necessary to the peace of mind both of the maker and the user; and this is it which I have called Architecture: the turning of necessary articles of daily use into works of art.

Certainly, when we come to think of it thus, there does seem to be

little less than that immeasurable contrast above mentioned between such work and mechanical work: and most assuredly do I believe that the crafts which fashion our familiar wares need this enlightenment of happiness no less now than they did in the days of the early Pharaohs: but we have forgotten this necessity, and in consequence have reduced handicraft to such degradation, that a learned, thoughtful, and humane man can set forth as an axiom that no man will work except to earn leisure thereby.

But now let us forget any conventional ways of looking at the labour which produces the matters of our daily life, which ways come partly from the wretched state of the arts in modern times, and partly I suppose from that repulsion to handicraft which seems to have beset some minds in all ages: let us forget this, and try to think how it really fares with the divers ways of work in handicrafts.

I think one may divide the work with which Architecture is conversant into three classes: first there is the purely mechanical: those who do this are machines only, and the less they think of what they are doing the better for the purpose, supposing they are properly drilled: the purpose of this work, to speak plainly, is not the making of wares of any kind, but what on the one hand is called employment, on the other what is called money-making: that is to say, in other words, the multiplication of the species of the mechanical workman, and the increase of the riches of the man who sets him to work, called in our modern jargon by a strange perversion of language, a manufacturer:* Let us call this kind of work Mechanical Toil.

The second kind is more or less mechanical as the case may be; but it can always be done better or worse: if it is to be well done, it claims attention from the workman, and he must leave on it signs of his individuality: there will be more or less of art in it, over which the workman has at least some control; and he will work on it partly to earn his bread in not too toilsome or disgusting a way, but in a way which makes even his work-hours pass pleasantly to him, and partly to make wares, which when made will be a distinct gain to the world; things that will be praised and delighted in. This work I would call Intelligent Work.

The third kind of work has but little if anything mechanical about it; it is altogether individual; that is to say, that what any man does by means of it could never have been done by any other man. Properly speaking, this work is all pleasure: true, there are pains and perplexities and weariness in it, but they are like the troubles of a beautiful life; the dark places that make the bright ones brighter: they are the romance of the work and do but elevate the workman, not depress him: I would call this Imaginative Work.

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*Or, to put it plainer still, the unlimited breeding of mechanical workmen as *mechanical workmen,* not as *men.*

Now I can fancy that at first sight it may seem to you as if there were more difference between this last and Intelligent Work, than between Intelligent Work and Mechanical Toil: but 'tis not so. The difference between these two is the difference between light and darkness, between Ormuzd and Ahriman: whereas the difference between Intelligent work and what for want of a better word I am calling Imaginative work, is a matter of degree only; and in times when art is abundant and noble there is no break in the chain from the humblest of the lower to the greatest of the higher class; from the poor weaver who chuckles as the bright colour comes round again, to the great painter anxious and doubtful if he can give to the world the whole of his thought or only nine-tenths of it, they are all artists—that is men; while the mechanical workman, who does not note the difference between bright and dull in his colours, but only knows them by numbers, is, while he is at his work, no man, but a machine. Indeed when Intelligent work coexists with Imaginative, there is no hard and fast line between them; in the very best and happiest times of art, there is scarce any Intelligent work which is not Imaginative also; and there is but little of effort or doubt, or sign of unexpressed desires even in the highest of the Imaginative work: the blessing of Equality elevates the lesser, and calms the greater, art.

Now further, Mechanical Toil is bred of that hurry and thoughtlessness of civilization of which, as aforesaid, the middle classes of this country have been such powerful furtherers: on the face of it it is hostile to civilization, a curse that civilization has made for itself and can no longer think of abolishing or controlling: such it seems, I say; but since it bears with it change and tremendous change, it may well be that there is something more than mere loss in it: it will full surely destroy art as we know art, unless art new-born destroy it: yet belike at the worst it will destroy other things beside which are the poison of art, and in the long run itself also, and thus make way for the new art, of whose form we know nothing.

Intelligent work is the child of struggling, hopeful, progressive civilization: and its office is to add fresh interest to simple and uneventful lives, to soothe discontent with innocent pleasure fertile of deeds gainful to mankind; to bless the many toiling millions with hope daily recurring, and which it will by no means disappoint.

Imaginative work is the very blossom of civilization triumphant and hopeful; it would fain lead men to aspire towards perfection: each hope that it fulfils gives birth to yet another hope: it bears in its bosom the worth and the meaning of life and the counsel to strive to understand everything; to fear nothing and to hate nothing: in a word, 'tis the symbol and sacrament of the Courage of the World.

Now thus it stands to-day with these three kinds of work: Mechanical Toil has swallowed Intelligent Work and all the lower part

of Imaginative Work, and the enormous mass of the very worst now confronts the slender but still bright array of the very best: what is left of art is rallied to its citadel of the highest intellectual art, and stands at bay there.

At first sight its hope of victory is slender indeed; yet to us now living it seems as if man had not yet lost all that part of his soul which longs for beauty: nay we cannot but hope that it is not yet dying. If we are not deceived in that hope, if the art of to-day has really come alive out of the slough of despond which we call the eighteenth century, it will surely grow and gather strength and draw to it other forms of intellect and hope that now scarcely know it; and then, whatever changes it may go through, it will at the last be victorious and bring abundant content to mankind. On the other hand, if, as some think, it be but the reflection and feeble ghost of that glorious autumn which ended the good days of the mighty art of the Middle Ages, it will take but little killing: Mechanical Toil will sweep over all the handiwork of man, and art will be gone.

I myself am too busy a man to trouble myself much as to what may happen after that: I can only say that if you do not like the thought of that dull blank, even if you know or care little for art, do not cast the thought of it aside, but think of it again and again, and cherish the trouble it breeds till such a future seems unendurable to you; and then make up your minds that you will not bear it; and even if you distrust the artists that now are, set yourself to clear the way for the artists that are to come. We shall not count you among our enemies then, however hardly you deal with us.

I have spoken of one most important part of that task; I have prayed you to set yourselves earnestly to protecting what is left, and recovering what is lost of the Natural Fairness of the Earth: no less I pray you to do what you may to raise up some firm ground amid the great flood of mechanical toil, to make an effort to win human and hopeful work for yourselves and your fellows.

But if our first task of guarding the beauty of the Earth was hard, this is far harder, nor can I pretend to think that we can attack our enemy directly; yet indirectly surely something may be done, or at least the foundations laid for something.

For Art breeds Art, and every worthy work done and delighted in by maker and user begets a longing for more: and since art cannot be fashioned by mechanical toil, the demand for real art will mean a demand for intelligent work, which if persisted in will in time create its due supply—at least I hope so.

I believe that what I am now saying will be well understood by those who really care about art, but to speak plainly I know that these are rarely to be found even among the cultivated classes: it must be confessed that the middle classes of our civilization have embraced luxury

instead of art, and that we are even so blindly base as to hug ourselves on it, and to insult the memory of valiant people of past times and to mock at them because they were not encumbered with the nuisances that foolish habit has made us look on as necessaries. Be sure that we are not beginning to prepare for the art that is to be, till we have swept all that out of our minds, and are setting to work to rid ourselves of all the useless luxuries (by some called comforts) that make our stuffy art-stifling houses more truly savage than a Zulu's kraal or an East Greenlander's snow hut.

I feel sure that many a man is longing to set his hand to this if he only durst; I believe that there are simple people who think that they are dull to art, and who are really only perplexed and wearied by finery and rubbish: if not from these, 'tis at least from the children of these that we may look for the beginnings of the building up of the art that is to be.

Meanwhile, I say, till the beginning of new construction is obvious, let us be at least destructive of the sham art: it is full surely one of the curses of modern life, that if people have not time and eyes to discern or money to buy the real object of their desire, they must needs have its mechanical substitute. On this lazy and cowardly habit feeds and grows and flourishes mechanical toil and all the slavery of mind and body it brings with it: from this stupidity are born the itch of the public to overreach the tradesmen they deal with, the determination (usually successful) of the tradesmen to over-reach them, and all the mockery and flouting that has been cast of late (not without reason) on the British tradesman and the British workman—men just as honest as ourselves, if we would not compel them to cheat us, and reward them for doing it.

Now if the public knew anything of art, that is excellence in things made by man, they would not abide the shams of it; and if the real thing were not to be had, they would learn to do without, nor think their gentility injured by the forbearance.

Simplicity of life, even the barest, is not a misery, but the very foundation of refinement: a sanded floor and whitewashed walls, and the green trees and flowery meads and living waters outside; or a grimy palace amid the smoke with a regiment of housemaids always working to smear the dirt together so that it may be unnoticed; which, think you, is the most refined, the most fit for a gentleman of those two dwellings?

So I say, if you cannot learn to love real art, at least learn to hate sham art and reject it. It is not so much because the wretched thing is so ugly and silly and useless that I ask you to cast it from you; it is much more because these are but the outward symbols of the poison that lies within them: look through them and see all that has gone to their fashioning, and you will see how vain labour, and sorrow, and disgrace have been their companions from the first—and all this for trifles that no man really needs!

Learn to do without: there is virtue in those words; a force that

rightly used would choke both demand and supply of Mechanical Toil: would make it stick to its last—the making of machines.

And then from simplicity of life would rise up the longing for beauty, which cannot yet be dead in men's souls, and we know that nothing can satisfy that demand but Intelligent work rising gradually into Imaginative work; which will turn all "operatives" into workmen, into artists, into men.

Now, I have been trying to show you how the hurry of modern Civilization, accompanied by the tyrannous Organization of labour which was a necessity to the full development of Competitive Commerce, has taken from the people at large, gentle and simple, the eyes to discern and the hands to fashion that popular art which was once the chief solace and joy of the world: I have asked you to think of that as no light matter, but a grievous mishap: I have prayed you to strive to remedy this evil: first by guarding jealously what is left, and by trying earnestly to win back what is lost of the Fairness of the Earth; and next by rejecting luxury, that you may embrace art, if you can, or if indeed you in your short lives cannot learn what art means, that you may at least live a simple life fit for men.

And in all I have been saying, what I have been really urging on you is this—Reverence for the life of Man upon the Earth: let the past be past, every whit of it that is not still living in us: let the dead bury their dead, but let us turn to the living, and with boundless courage and what hope we may, refuse to let the Earth be joyless in the days to come.

What lies before us of hope or fear for this? Well, let us remember that those past days whose art was so worthy, did nevertheless forget much of what was due to the Life of Man upon the Earth; and so belike it was to revenge this neglect that art was delivered to our hands for maiming: to us, who were blinded by our eager chase of those things which our forefathers had neglected, and by the chase of other things which seemed revealed to us on our hurried way, not seldom, it may be for our beguiling.

And of that to which we were blinded, not all was unworthy: nay the most of it was deep-rooted in men's souls, and was a necessary part of their Life upon the Earth, and claims our reverence still: let us add this knowledge to our other knowledge: and there will still be a future for the arts. Let us remember this, and amid simplicity of life turn our eyes to real beauty that can be shared by all: and then though the days worsen, and no rag of the elder art be left for our teaching, yet the new art may yet arise among us, and even if it have the hands of a child together with the heart of a troubled man, still it may bear on for us to better times the tokens of our reverence for the Life of Man upon the Earth. For we indeed freed from the bondage of foolish habit and dulling luxury might at last have eyes wherewith to see: and should have to babble to one another many things of our joy in the life around us:

the faces of people in the streets bearing the tokens of mirth and sorrow and hope, and all the tale of their lives: the scraps of nature the busiest of us would come across; birds and beasts and the little worlds they live in; and even in the very town the sky above us and the drift of the clouds across it; the wind's hand on the slim trees, and its voice amid their branches, and all the ever-recurring deeds of nature; nor would the road or the river winding past our homes fail to tell us stories of the country-side, and men's doings in field and fell. And whiles we should fall to muse on the times when all the ways of nature were mere wonders to men, yet so well beloved of them that they called them by men's names and gave them deeds of men to do; and many a time there would come before us memories of the deeds of past times, and of the aspirations of those mighty peoples whose deaths have made our lives, and their sorrows our joys.

How could we keep silence of all this? and what voice could tell it but the voice of Art: and what audience for such a tale would content us but all men living on the Earth?

This is what Architecture hopes to be: it will have this life, or else death; and it is for us now living between the past and the future to say whether it shall live or die.

Art and the Beauty of the Earth

We are here in the midst of a population busied about a craft which may be called the most ancient in the world, a craft which I look upon with the greatest interest, as I well may, since, except perhaps the noble craft of house-building, it is second to none other. And in the midst of this industrious population, engaged in making goods of such importance to our households, I am speaking to a School of Art, one of the bodies that were founded all over the country at a time when it was felt there was something wrong as between the two elements that go to make anything which can be correctly described as a work of industrial art, namely the utilitarian and the artistic elements. I hope nothing I may say to-night will make you think that I under-value the importance of these places of instruction; on the contrary, I believe them to be necessary to us, unless we are prepared to give up all attempt to unite these two elements of use and beauty.

Now, though no man can be more impressed with the importance of the art of pottery than I am, and though I have not, I hope, neglected the study of it from the artistic or historico-artistic side, I do not think myself bound to follow up the subject of your especial art; not so much because I know no more of the technical side of it than I have thought enough to enable me to understand it from the above-said historico-artistic side; but rather because I feel it almost impossible to dissociate one of the ornamental arts from the others, as things go now-a-days. Neither do I think I should interest you much, still less instruct you, if I were to recapitulate the general rules that ought to guide a designer for the industrial arts; at the very first foundation of these schools the instructors in them formulated those rules clearly and satisfactorily, and I think they have since been accepted generally, at least in theory. What I do really feel myself bound to do is to speak to you of certain things that are never absent from my thoughts, certain considerations on the condition and prospects of the arts in general, the neglect of which conditions would drive us in time into a strange state of things indeed; a

state of things under which no potter would put any decoration on his pots, and indeed, if a man of strict logical mind, would never know of what shape to make a pot, unless the actual use it was to be put to drove him in one direction or another. What I have to say on these matters will not, I fear, be very new to you, and perhaps it may more or less offend you; but I will beg you to believe that I feel deeply the honour you have done me in asking me to address you. I cannot doubt you have asked me to do so that you might hear what I may chance to think on the subject of the arts, and it seems to me, therefore, that I should ill repay you for that honour, and be treating you unworthily, if I were to stand here and tell you at great length what I do not think. So I will ask your leave and license to speak plainly, as I promise I will not speak lightly.

Yet I would not have you think I underrate the difficulty of the art of plain speaking, an art as difficult, perhaps, as that of pottery, and not nearly so much of it done in the world; so what I will ask you to forgive me if I wound your feelings in any way will not be my downright meaning, my audacious and rash thought, but rather my clumsy way of expressing it; and in truth I expect to have your forgiveness, since in my heart I believe that a plain word spoken because it must be said, free from malice or self-seeking, can be no lasting offence to any one, whereas, what end is there to the wrong and damage that come of half-hearted speech, of words spoken in vagueness, hypocrisy, and cowardice?

You who in these parts make such hard, smooth, well-compacted, and enduring pottery understand well that you must give it other qualities besides those which make it fit for ordinary use. You must profess to make it beautiful as well as useful, and if you did not you would certainly lose your market. That has been the view the world has taken of your art, and of all the industrial arts since the beginning of history, and, as I said, is held to this day, whether from the force of habit or otherwise.

Nevertheless, so different is the position of art in our daily lives from what it used to be that it seems to me (and I am not alone in my thought), that the world is hesitating as to whether it shall take art home to it or cast it out.

I feel that I am bound to explain what may seem a very startling as it is assuredly a very serious statement. I will do so in as few words as I can. I do not know whether a sense of the great change which has befallen the arts in modern times has come home to most, or indeed to many, of you: a change which has only culminated in quite recent times within the lives of many of you present. It may seem to you that there has been no break in the chain of art, at all events since it began to struggle out of the confusion and barbarism of the early middle ages; you may think that there has been gradual change in it, growth,

improvement (not always perhaps readily recognized at first, that latter), but that all this has taken place without violence or breakdown, and that the growth and improvement are still going on.

And this seems a very reasonable view to take of it, and is analogous beyond doubt to what has happened on other sides of human progress; nay, it is on this ground that your pleasure in art is founded, and your hopes for its future. That foundation for hope has failed some of us; on what our hopes are founded to-day I may be able to tell you partly this evening, but I will now give you a glimpse of the abyss into which our earlier hope tumbled.

Let us look back a little to the early middle ages, the days of barbarism and confusion. As you follow the pages of the keen-eyed, cool-headed Gibbon, you may well think that the genius of the great historian has been wasted over the mean squabbles, the bald self-seeking, the ignoble superstition, the pomp and the cruelty of the kings and scoundrels who are the chief persons named in the story; yet also you cannot fail to know, when you come to think of it, that the story has not been fully told; nay scarce told at all, only a chance hint given, here and there. The palace and the camp were but a small part of their world surely; and outside them you may be sure that faith and heroism and love were at work, or what birth could there have been from those days? For the visible tokens of that birth you must seek in the art that grew up and flourished amid that barbarism and confusion, and you know who wrought it. The tyrants, and pedants, and bullies of the time paid dog's wages for it, and bribed their gods with it, but they were too busy over other things to make it; the nameless people wrought it; for no names of its makers are left, not one. Their work only is left, and all that came of it, and all that is to come of it. What came of it first was the complete freedom of art in the midst of a society that had at least begun to free itself from religious and political fetters. Art was no longer now, as in Egypt of olden time, kept rigidly within certain prescribed bounds that no fancy might play with, no imagination overpass, lest the majesty of the beautiful symbols might be clouded and the memory of the awful mysteries they symbolized become dim in the hearts of men. Nor was it any longer as in the Greece of Pericles, wherein no thought might be expressed that could not be expressed in perfect form. Art was free. Whatever a man thought of, that he might bring to light by the labour of his hands, to be praised and wondered at by his fellows. Whatever man had thought in him of any kind, and skill in him of any kind to express it, he was deemed good enough to be used for his own pleasure and the pleasure of his fellows; in this art nothing and nobody was wasted; all people east of the Atlantic felt this art; from Bokhara to Galway, from Iceland to Madras, all the world glittered with its brightness and quivered with its vigour. It cast down the partitions of race and religion also. Christian and Mussulman were

made joyful by it; Kelt, Teuton, and Latin raised it up together; Persian, Tartar, and Arab gave and took its gifts from one another. Considering how old the world is it was not too long-lived at its best. In the days when Norwegian, Dane, and Icelander stalked through the streets of Micklegarth, and hedged with their axes the throne of Kirialax the Greek king, it was alive and vigorous. When blind Dandolo was led from the Venetian galleys on to the conquered wall of Constantinople, it was near to its best and purest days. When Constantine Palæologus came back an old and care-worn man from a peacefuller home in the Morea to his doom in the great city, and the last Cæsar got the muddle of his life solved, not ingloriously, by Turkish swords on the breached and battered walls of that same Constantinople, there were signs of sickness beginning to show in the art that sprang from there to cover east and west alike with its glory.

And all that time it was the art of free men. Whatever slavery still existed in the world (more than enough, as always) art had no share in it; and still it was only here and there that any great names rose above the host of those that wrought it. These names (and it was mainly in Italy only) came to the front when those branches of it that were the work of collective rather than individual genius, architecture especially, had quite reached their highest perfection. Men began to look round for something more startlingly new than the slow, gradual change of architecture and the attendant lesser arts could give them. This change they found in the glorious work of the painters, and they received it with an out-spoken excitement and joy that seems strange indeed to us in these days when art is held so cheap.

All went better than well for a time; though in Italy architecture began to lose something of the perfection it had gained, yet it was scarcely to be noticed amidst the glory of the light that was increasing in painting and sculpture. In France and England meantime the change, as it was slower in growing to a head, so it had begun earlier, as witness the sculpture in the great French Churches, and the exquisite drawing of the illuminations of English books; while the Flemings, never very great in the art of building, towards the end of this period had found their true vocation as painters of a sweet and serious external naturalism, illuminated by colour unsurpassed for purity and brightness.

So had the art of the Middle Ages climbed gradually to the top of the hill, doubtless not without carrying the seeds of the disease that was to end it, threatenings of great change which no doubt no one heeded at the time. Nor was there much to wonder at in their blindness. Since still for centuries to come their art was full of life and splendour, and when at last its death drew near, men could see in it nothing but the hope of a new life. For many years, a hundred years at least, before the change really showed itself, the expression of the greater thoughts that art can deal with was being made more difficult to men not specially learned.

Without demanding the absolute perfection that was the rule in the days of Greece, people began to look for an intricacy of treatment that the Greeks had never dreamed of; men began to see hopes of realizing scenes of history and poetry in a far more complete way than the best of their forerunners had attempted. Yet for long the severance between artist and artisan (as our nicknames go) was not obvious, though doubtless things were leading up to it; it is, perhaps, noticeable chiefly in the difference between the work of nation and nation rather than among the individual workmen. I mean, for instance, that in the thirteenth century England was going step by step with Italy as far as mere excellence is concerned, while in the middle of the fifteenth England was rude, and Italy cultured; and even while the change was preparing, by one accident or another came a great access of discoveries of the art and literature of the ancient world, and, as it were, fate ran to meet the half-expressed longings of men.

Then, indeed, all hesitation was over, and suddenly, as it now seems to us, amidst a blaze of glory, the hoped-for new birth took place. Once, as I have said, the makers of beautiful things passed away nameless; but under the Renaissance there are more names of excellent craftsmen left to us than a good memory can well remember, and among those names are the greatest the world has ever known, or perhaps ever will know. No wonder men's exultation rose high; no wonder that their pride blinded them and that they did not know where they were; yet most pitiable and sad the story is. It was one of those strange times when men seem to themselves to have pierced through all the space which lies between longing and attainment. They, it seems, and no others, have at last reached the spot where lie heaped together all the treasures of the world, vainly sought aforetime. They, it seems, have everything, and no one of those that went before them had anything, nay, not even their fathers whose bones lie yet unrotted under the turf.

The men of the Renaissance looked at the thousand years behind them as a deedless blank, and at all that lay before them as a perpetual triumphal march. We, taught so much by other people's failures, can see their position otherwise than that. We can see that while up to that time, since art first began, it had always looked forward, now it was looking backward; that whereas once men were taught to look through the art at that which the art represented, they were now taught to deem the art an end in itself, and that it mattered nothing whether the story it told was believed or not. Once its aim was to see, now its aim was to be seen only. Once it was done to be understood, and to be helpful to all men: now the vulgar were beyond the pale, and the insults which the Greek slave-holders and the Roman tax-sweaters of old cast upon the people, upon all men but a chosen few, were brought forth and tricked up again in fantastic guise to adorn the day of boundless hope.

Not all this, indeed, came at once, but come it did, nor very slowly

either, when men once began to look back. At the beginning of the sixteenth century the new birth was in its hey-day. Before the seventeenth had quite begun, what had become of its over-weening hopes? In Venice alone of all Italy was any art being done that was of any worth. The conquered North had gained nothing from Italy save an imitation of its worst extravagance, and all that saved the art of England from nothingness was a tradition of the earlier days still lingering among a people rustic and narrow-minded indeed, but serious, truthful, and of simple habits.

I have just spoken somewhat of how this came about. But what was at the bottom of it, and what I wish you chiefly to note and remember is this, that the men of the Renaissance lent all their energies, consciously or unconsciously, to the severance of art from the daily lives of men, and that they brought it to pass, if not utterly in their own days, yet speedily and certainly. I must remind you, though I, and better men than I, have said it over and over again, that once every man that made anything made it a work of art besides a useful piece of goods, whereas now, only a very few things have even the most distant claim to be considered works of art. I beg you to consider that most carefully and seriously, and to try to think what it means.

But first, lest any of you doubt it, let me ask you what forms the great mass of the objects that fill our museums, setting aside positive pictures and sculpture? Is it not just the common household goods of past time? True it is that some people may look upon them simply as curiosities, but you and I have been taught most properly to look upon them as priceless treasures that can teach us all sorts of things, and yet, I repeat, they are for the most part common household goods, wrought by "common fellows," as people say now, without any cultivation, men who thought the sun went round the earth, and that Jerusalem was exactly in the middle of the world.

Again, take another museum that we have still left us, our country churches. Take note of them, I say, to see how art ran through every thing; for you must not let the name of "church" mislead you: in times of real art people built their churches in just the same style as their houses; "ecclesiastical art" is an invention of the last thirty years. Well, I myself am just fresh from an out-of-the-way part of the country near the end of the navigable Thames, where, within a radius of five miles, are some half-dozen tiny village churches, every one of which is a beautiful work of art, with its own individuality. These are the works of the Thames-side country bumpkins, as you would call us, nothing grander than that. If the same sort of people were to design and build them now (since within the last fifty years or so they have lost all the old traditions of building, though they clung to them longer than most people), they could not build anything better than the ordinary little plain Nonconformist chapels that one sees scattered about new neighbourhoods.

That is what they correspond with, not an architect-designed new Gothic church. The more you study archæology the more certain you will become that I am right in this, and that what we have left us of earlier art was made by the unhelped people. Neither will you fail to see that it was made intelligently and with pleasure.

That last word brings me to a point so important that at the risk of getting wearisome I must add it to my old sentence and repeat the whole. Time was when everybody that made anything made a work of art besides a useful piece of goods, *and it gave them pleasure to make it.* That is an assertion from which nothing can drive me; whatever I doubt, I have no doubt of that. And, sirs, if there is anything in the business of my life worth doing, if I have any worthy aspiration, it is the hope that I may help to bring about the day when we shall be able to say, So it was once, so it is now.

Do not misunderstand me; I am not a mere praiser of past times. I know that in those days of which I speak life was often rough and evil enough, beset by violence, superstition, ignorance, slavery; yet I cannot help thinking that sorely as poor folks needed a solace, they did not altogether lack one, and that solace was pleasure in their work. Ah, sirs, much as the world has won since then, I do not think it has won for all men such perfect happiness that we can afford to cast aside any solace that Nature holds forth to us. Or must we for ever be casting out one devil by another? Shall we never make a push to get rid of the whole pack of them at once?

I do not mean to say that all the work we do now is done without any pleasure, but I mean to say that the pleasure is rather that of conquering a good spell of work—a courageous and good feeling certainly—or of bearing up well under the burden, and seldom, very seldom, comes to the pitch of compelling the workman, out of the fulness of his heart, to impress on the work itself the tokens of his manly pleasure.

Nor will our system of organizing the work allow of it. In almost all cases there is no sympathy between the designer and the man who carries out the design; not unseldom the designer also is driven to work in a mechanical, down-hearted kind of way, and I don't wonder at it. I know by experience that the making of design after design—mere diagrams, mind you—without oneself executing them, is a great strain upon the mind. It is necessary, unless all workmen of all grades are to be permanently degraded into machines, that the hand should rest the mind as well as the mind the hand. And I say that this is the kind of work which the world has lost, supplying its place with the work which is the result of the division of labour.

That work, whatever else it can do, cannot produce art, which must, as long as the present system lasts, be entirely confined to such works as are the work from beginning to end of one man: pictures, independent sculpture, and the like. As to these, on the one hand, they cannot

fill the gap which the loss of popular art has made, nor can they, especially the more imaginative of them, receive the sympathy which should be their due. I must speak plainly and say that as things go it is impossible for any one who is not highly educated to understand the higher kind of pictures. Nay, I believe most people receive very little impression indeed from any pictures but those which represent the scenes with which they are thoroughly familiar. The aspect of this as regards people in general is to my mind much more important than that which has to do with the unlucky artist; but he also has some claim upon our consideration; and I am sure that this lack of the general sympathy of simple people weighs very heavily on him, and makes his work feverish and dreamy, or crabbed and perverse.

No, be sure if the people is sick its leaders also have need of healing. Art will not grow and flourish, nay, it will not long exist, unless it be shared by all people; and for my part I don't wish that it should.

Therefore it is that I stand before you to say that the world has in these days to choose whether she will have art or leave it, and that we also, each one of us, have to make up our minds which camp we will or can join, those that honestly accept art or those that honestly reject it.

Once more let me try to put into words what these two alternatives mean. If you accept it, it must be part of your daily lives, and the daily life of every man. It will be with us wherever we go, in the ancient city full of traditions of past time, in the newly-cleared farm in America or the colonies, where no man has dwelt for traditions to gather round him; in the quiet countryside as in the busy town, no place shall be without it. You will have it with you in your sorrow as in your joy, in your work-a-day hours as in your leisure. It shall be no respecter of persons, but be shared by gentle and simple, learned and unlearned, and be as a language that all can understand. It will not hinder any work that is necessary to the life of man at the best, but it will destroy all degrading toil, all enervating luxury, all foppish frivolity. It will be the deadly foe of ignorance, dishonesty, and tyranny, and will foster good-will, fair dealing, and confidence between man and man. It will teach you to respect the highest intellect with a manly reverence, but not to despise any man who does not pretend to be what he is not; and that which will be the instrument that it shall work with and the food that shall nourish it shall be man's pleasure in his daily labour, the kindest and best gift that the world has ever had.

Again I say, I am sure that this is what art means, no less; that if we attempt to keep art alive on other terms, we are but bolstering up a sham, and that it would be far better for us to accept the other alternative, the frank rejection of art, as many people, and they not the worst of us, have already done. To these and not to me you must go if you want to have any clear idea of what is hoped for the future of the world

when art is laid within her tomb. Yet I think I can in a measure judge from the present tendency of matters what is likely to happen to those things which we handicraftsmen have to deal with.

When men have given up the idea that the work of men's hands can ever be pleasurable to them, they must, as good men and true, do their utmost to reduce the work of the world to a minimum; like us artists they must do all they can to simplify the life of man, to reduce his wants as much as possible; and doubtless in theory they will be able to reduce them more than we shall, for it is clear that the waste of tissue caused by a search after beauty will be forbidden: all ornament will cease from the work of men's hands, though still, wherever Nature works there will be beauty. The garment shall be unadorned, though the moth that frets it is painted with silver and pearl. London shall be a desert of hideousness, though the blossom of the "London pride" be more daintily flecked than the minutest missal that ever monk painted. And when all is done there will yet be too much work, that is to say, too much *pain* in the world.

What then? Machines then. Truly we shall have a good stock to start with, but not near enough. Some men must press on to martyrdom, and toil to invent new ones, till at last pretty nearly everything that is necessary to men will be made by machines. I don't see why it should not be done. I myself have boundless faith in their capacity. I believe machines can do everything—except make works of art.

And yet again, what next? Supposing we shall be able to get martyrs enough (or say slaves) to make all the machines that will still be needed, and to work them, shall we still be able to get rid of all labour, of all that which we have found out is an unmitigated curse? And what will our consciences be like (since I started by supposing us all to be conscientious people), when we think we have done all that we can do, and must still be waited upon by groaning, discontented wretches? What shall we do, I say?

Well, I must say that my imagination will stretch no further than to suggest rebellion in general as a remedy, the end of which rebellion, if successful, must needs be to set up some form of art again as a necessary solace of mankind.

But to say the truth, this leads me to making another suggestion, a practical one I consider it. Suppose we start by rebelling at once; because when I spoke of the world having to choose between accepting and rejecting art, I did not suppose that its choice could be final if it chose to reject it. No, the rebellion will have to come and will be victorious, don't doubt that; only if we wait till the tyranny is firmly established, our rebellion will have to be a Nihilistic one; every help would be gone save deadly anger and the hope that comes of despair; whereas if we begin now, the change and the counter-change will work together, and the new art will come upon us gradually, and we shall one day see

it marching on steadily and victoriously, though its battle has raised no clamour—we, or our sons, or our sons' sons.

How shall our rebellion begin then? What is the remedy for the lack of due pleasure in their work which has befallen all craftsmen, and for the consequent sickness of art and degradation of civilization?

I am afraid whatever answer I may make to that question will disappoint you. I myself suffer so sorely from the lack above-mentioned that I have little remedy in myself save that of fostering discontent. I have no infallible nostrum to cure an evil whose growth is centuries old. Any remedies I can think of are commonplace enough. In those old days of popular art, the world, in spite of all the ills that beset life, was struggling toward civilization and liberty, and it is in that way which we must also struggle, unless you think that we are civilized enough already, as I must confess I do not. Education on all sides is what we must look to. We may expect, if we do not learn much, to learn this at least, that we know but little, and that knowledge means aspiration or discontent, call it which you will.

I do not doubt that, as far as our schools of art go, education is bringing us to that point. I do not think any reasonable man can consider them a failure when the condition of the ornamental part of the individual arts is considered at the time of their foundation. True it is that those who established them were partly influenced by a delusive expectation that they would presently be able to supply directly a demand which was felt for trained and skilful designers of goods; but, though this hope failed them, they have no doubt influenced both that side of art and others also; among all that they have done not the least is that public recognition of the value of art in general which their very existence implies: or, to speak more correctly, their existence and the interest that is felt in them, is a token of people's uneasiness at the present disorganized state of the arts.

Perhaps you who study here, and represent such a large body of people who must needs have some aspirations towards the progress of the arts, will excuse a word or two from me a little less general than the rest I have been saying. I think I have a right to look upon you as enrolled soldiers of that rebellion against blank ugliness that I have been preaching this evening. You, therefore, above all people are bound to be careful not to give cause to the enemy to blaspheme. You are bound to be specially careful to do solid, genuine work, and eschew all pretence and flashiness.

Be careful to eschew all vagueness. It is better to be caught out in going wrong when you have had a definite purpose, than to shuffle and slur so that people can't blame you because they don't know what you are at. Hold fast to distinct form in art. Don't think too much of style, but set yourself to get out of you what you think beautiful, and express it, as cautiously as you please, but, I repeat, quite distinctly and without

vagueness. Always think your design out in your head before you begin to get it on the paper. Don't begin by slobbering and messing about in the hope that something may come out of it. You must see it before you can draw it, whether the design be of your own invention or Nature's. Remember always, form before colour, and outline, silhouette, before modelling; not because these latter are of less importance, but because they can't be right if the first are wrong.

Now, upon all these points you may be as severe with yourselves as you will, and are not likely to be too severe.

Furthermore, those of you especially who are designing for goods, try to get the most out of your material, but always in such a way as honours it most. Not only should it be obvious what your material is, but something should be done with it which is specially natural to it, something that could not be done with any other. This is the very raison d'être of decorative art: to make stone look like ironwork, or wood like silk, or pottery like stone is the last resource of the decrepitude of art. Set yourselves as much as possible against all machine-work (this to all men). But if you have to design for machine-work, at least let your design show clearly what it is. Make it mechanical with a vengeance, at the same time as simple as possible. Don't try, for instance, to make a printed plate look like a hand-painted one: make it something which no one would try to do if he were painting by hand, if your market drives you into printed plates: I don't see the use of them myself. To sum up, don't let yourselves be made machines, or it is all up with you as artists. Though I don't much love the iron and brass machines, the flesh and blood ones are more terrible and hopeless to me; no man is so clumsy or base a workman that he is not fit for something better than that.

Well, I have said that education is the first remedy for the barbarism which has been bred by the hurry of civilization and competitive commerce. To know that men lived and worked mightily before you is an incentive for you to work faithfully now, that you may leave something to those who come after you.

What next is to be thought of after education? I must here admit that if you accept art and join the ranks of those who are to rise in rebellion against the Philistines, you will have a roughish time of it. "Nothing for nothing and not much for a dollar," says a Yankee somewhere, and I am sorry to say it is the rule of nature also. Those of us who have money will have to give of it to the cause, and all of us will have to give time, and thought, and trouble to it; and I must now consider a matter of the utmost importance to art and to the lives of all of us, which we can, if we please, deal with at once, but which emphatically claims of us time, thought, and money. Of all the things that is likely to give us back popular art in England, the cleaning of England is the first and the most necessary. Those who are to make beautiful things must live in a beautiful place. Some people may be inclined to say, and I have heard the

argument put forward, that the very opposition between the serenity and purity of art and the turmoil and squalor of a great modern city stimulates the invention of artists, and produces special life in the art of today. I cannot believe it. It seems to me that at the best it but stimulates the feverish and dreamy qualities that throw some artists out of the general sympathy. But apart from that, these are men who are stuffed with memories of more romantic days and pleasanter lands, and it is on these memories they live, to my mind not altogether happily for their art; and you see it is only a very few men who could have even these doubtful advantages.

I abide by my statement that those who are to make beautiful things must live in beautiful places, but you must understand I do not mean to claim for all craftsmen a share of those gardens of the world, or of those sublime and awe-inspiring mountains and wastes that men make pilgrimages to see; that is to say, not a personal share. Most of us must be content with the tales of the poets and painters about these places, and learn to love the narrow spot that surrounds our daily life for what of beauty and sympathy there is in it.

For surely there is no square mile of earth's inhabitable surface that is not beautiful in its own way, if we men will only abstain from wilfully destroying that beauty; and it is this reasonable share in the beauty of the earth that I claim as the right of every man who will earn it by due labour; a decent house with decent surroundings for every honest and industrious family; that is the claim which I make of you in the name of art. Is it such an exorbitant claim to make of civilization? of a civilization that is too apt to boast in after-dinner speeches; too apt to thrust her blessings on far-off peoples at the cannon's mouth before she has improved the quality of those blessings so far that they are worth having at any price, even the smallest.

Well, I am afraid that claim is exorbitant. Both you as representatives of the manufacturing districts, and I as representing the metropolis, seem hitherto to have assumed that, at any rate; nor is there one family in a thousand that has established its claim to the right aforesaid. It is a pity though; for if the claim is to be considered inadmissible, then is it most certain that we have been simply filling windbags and weaving sand-ropes by all the trouble we have taken in founding schools of art, National Galleries, South Kensington Museums, and all the rest of it.

I have said education is good, is necessary, to all people; neither can you if you would withhold it; and yet to educate people with no hope, what do you expect to come of that? Perhaps you might learn what to expect in Russia.

Look you, as I sit at my work at home, which is at Hammersmith, close to the river, I often hear go past the window some of that ruffianism of which a good deal has been said in the papers of late, and has been said before at recurring periods. As I hear the yells and shrieks and

all the degradation cast on the glorious tongue of Shakespeare and Milton, as I see the brutal reckless faces and figures go past me, it rouses the recklessness and brutality in me also, and fierce wrath takes possession of me, till I remember, as I hope I mostly do, that it was my good luck only of being born respectable and rich that has put me on this side of the window among delightful books and lovely works of art, and not on the other side, in the empty street, the drink-steeped liquor-shops, the foul and degraded lodgings. What words can say what all that means? Do not think, I beg of you, that I am speaking rhetorically in saying that when I think of all this, I feel that the one great thing I desire is that this great country should shake off from her all foreign and colonial entanglements, and turn that mighty force of her respectable people, the greatest power the world has ever seen, to giving the children of these poor folk the pleasures and the hopes of men. Is that really impossible? is there no hope of it? If so, I can only say that civilization is a delusion and a lie; there is no such thing and no hope of such a thing.

But since I wish to live, and even to be happy, I cannot believe it impossible. I know by my own feelings and desires what 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 which they could come to with pleasure, surroundings which would soothe and elevate them; reasonable labour, reasonable rest. There is only one thing that can give them this, and that is art.

I have no doubt that you think this statement a ridiculous exaggeration, but it is my firm conviction nevertheless, and I can only ask you to remember that in my mind it means the properly organized labour of all men who make anything; that must at least be a mighty instrument in the raising of men's self-respect, in the adding of dignity to their lives. Once more, "Nothing for nothing and very little for a dollar." You can no more have art without paying for it than you can have anything else, and if you care about art, as you must when you come to know it, you will not shrink from the necessary sacrifice. After all, we are the descendants and countrymen of those who have well known how to give the lesser for the greater. What you have to sacrifice is chiefly money, that is, force, and dirt; a serious sacrifice I know; but perhaps, as I have said, we have made greater in England aforetime; nay, I am far from sure that dirt will not in the long run cost us more in hard cash even than art will.

So which shall we have, art or dirt?

What is to be done, then, if we make the better choice? The land we live in is not very big either in actual acreage or in scale of fashion, but I think it is not our natural love for it only that makes us think it as fit as any land for the peaceful dwellings of serious men. Our fathers have

shown us that, if it could otherwise be doubted. I say, without fear of contradiction, that no dwelling of men has ever been sweeter or pleasanter than an ancient English house; but our fathers treated our lovely land well, and we have treated it ill. Time was when it was beautiful from end to end, and now you have to pick your way carefully to avoid coming across blotches of hideousness which are a disgrace, I will not say to civilization, but to human nature. I have seen no statistics of the size of these blotches in relation to the unspoiled, or partially spoiled, country, but in some places they run together so as to cover a whole county, or even several counties, while they increase at a fearful rate, fearful in good earnest and literally. Now, while this goes on unchecked, nay, unlamented, it is really idle to talk about art. While we are doing this or letting it be done, we are really covertly rejecting art, and it would be honester and better for us if we did so openly. If we accept art we must atone for what we have done and pay the cost of it. We must turn this land from the grimy back-yard of a workshop into a garden. If that seems difficult, or rather impossible, to some of you, I cannot help it; I only know that it is necessary.

As to its being impossible, I do not believe it. The men of this generation even have accomplished matters that but a very little while ago would have been thought impossible. They conquered their difficulties because their faces were set in that direction; and what was done once can be done again. Why even the money and the science that we expend in devices for killing and maiming our enemies present and future would make a good nest-egg towards the promotion of decency of life if we could make up our minds to that tremendous sacrifice.

However, I am far from saying that mere money can do much or indeed anything: it is our will that must do it. Nor need I attempt to try to show how that will should express itself in action. True I have, in common with some others, ideas as to what steps would best help us on our way, but those ideas would not be accepted by you, and I feel sure that when you are thoroughly intent on the goal you will find the means to reach it, and it is of infinitesimal importance what those means may be. When you have accepted the maxim that the external aspect of the country belongs to the whole public, and that whoever wilfully injures that property is a public enemy, the cause will be on its way to victory.

Meantime it is encouraging to me to think there is one thing that makes it possible for me to stand here, in a district that makes as much smoke as pottery, and to say what I have been saying on the subject of dirt, and that is that quite lately there has been visible expression given to a feeling on this subject, which has doubtless been long growing. If I am a crazy dreamer, as may well be, yet there are many members and supporters of such societies as the Kyrle and the Commons Preservation Societies, who have not time to dream, and whose craziness, if that befel them, would be speedily felt throughout the country.

I pray your pardon for having tried your patience so long. A very few words more, and I have done. Those words are words of hope. Indeed, if I have said anything that seemed to you hopeless, it has been, I think, owing to that bitterness which will sometimes overtake an impatient man when he feels how little his own hands can do towards helping the cause that he has at heart. I know that cause will conquer in the end, for it is an article of faith with me, that the world cannot drop back into savagery, and that art must be its fellow on the forward march. I know well it is not for me to prescribe the road which that progress must take. I know that many things that seem to me to-day clinging hindrances, nay, poisons to that progress, may be furtherers of it, medicines to it, though they be fated to bring terrible things to pass before the visible good comes of them. But that very faith impels me to speak according to my knowledge, feeble as it may be and rash as the words may sound; for every man who has a cause at heart is bound to act as if it depended on him alone, however well he may know his own unworthiness; and thus is action brought to birth from mere opinion. And in all I have been saying I have had steadily in mind that you have asked me to speak to you as a friend, and that I could do no less than be quite open and fearless before my friends and fellow-craftsmen.

Art: A Serious Thing

Some six weeks ago I had occasion to go from London to a place not far from here (called Manchester if you must know). We left London about 9 in the morning I think on rather a cold morning, with a white frost on the grass and a thickish mist piled above it some feet into the air, though it was visibly not a foul-weather day; well we went on so till we got to the foot of those chalk hills near Tring, the Chilterns I suppose, there we ran into a tunnel, and coming out on the other side were off the clay; being off the clay we were also out of the mist, and into the bright morning sun: it was an almost magical change, instead of the white thick mist through which one could barely see the ghost of a tree here and there, the bright hill-sides lay before us with the pleasant homesteads lying at their feet surrounded by the autumn elm-trees, and the sky above was clear blue though pale, while the only sign of the mist that had hidden meadows, houses, and all while we were on the clay, was a wreath or two of white vapour dragging along some of the hollows halfway up the hill: indeed it was all very beautiful, and I settled myself down to enjoy myself, knowing how little there is amusing to look at on the L.[ondon] and N.[orth] W.[estern] railway till you have got clear of the pottery towns: but I had scarcely got my eyes well focussed on it when—crick—my neighbour opposite found the sun was in his eyes and pulled down the blind. I was so vexed that I was really inclined to be uncivil to the good man, who for the rest didn't look very ruffianly; like a business man I should say, his countenance bearing no particular expression of any sort; just that look of mingled boredom and anxiety which [is] the usual expression of the modern Anglo-Saxon face: I suppose I ought to have suggested a change of seats to him, but I was too shy, so I just flounced off angrily to the other side, the unsunny side, of the carriage, and looked out of the window, which was also the dull and flat side as well as the unsunny; however there was something to be looked at, and my anger gradually faded away, while something in the sunny glimpse I had had reminded me of a window

which was opened to me last year in the midst of Paris, and this is what I saw from that window:[1]

In the foreground I saw a sort of corridor or cloister of lovely and delicate round-arched architecture in which sat a slim serious-visaged woman dressed in a gown of deep blue; she was sitting for her portrait, and the painter who was taking it was serious of face also with a look of staid but refined enthusiasm, and was dressed in rich but sober stuffs: the cloister was in half-tone almost, but the sun shone widely abroad without, serene but not glittering: a quaint flowery garden I saw stretching down from the cloister pillars, 2 peacocks strutting about the path: the garden ended in a terraced battlemented wall over which leaned two burgher-like persons dressed in red and blue cloth of antique cut and looked at the landscape beyond: indeed they might well look for even what I could see if it was fair enough: we were in some house, an Abbey I think, but certainly high up on a hill out into terraces, and below the garden wall I could see a river running through a rich country of meadow and hill slopes; an islet split the river some way up and beyond it was a bridge guarded at both ends and the middle by ashlar-built towers: past this I could see the river coming down from hills that grew higher and higher till at last they grew into mountains and rose higher yet till their snow-capped summits cut the clear pale sky so far and far away.

That was the window I looked out in the gallery of the Louvre at Paris, and I thought I had not come all the way from London for nothing since I had seen all that, which I shall never any more forget.

Now he who opened that window to me and keeps it open for whomever will cross the narrow seas, has been dead near 500 years ago; when he was alive he was a citizen of a city which he called in his country tongue the bridges, but which we today call Bruges, and his name was John Van Eyck, the brother of Hubert and Margaret; all three of them had wondrous skill of hand, which however would have served them but little as window-openers but for the eyes they had and the diligent use they made of them; now that kind of use of the senses which nature has given us and joined in a strange way to that other part of us which we call the mind and soul is what I wish to recommend to all who are here present, not only to those who use their hands in trying to tell us what they think they see, and who are called artists, but also to other reasonable people, as a means for curing that bored and anxious expression of the Anglo-Saxon countenance, which, give me leave to say, is a ridiculous mask to put on our faces in a world which has or ought to have so much to interest a reasonable man as ours has or ought to have.

In passing I may say that my window-shutting fellow traveller turned

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[1](Editor's Note, 1999): Probably "The Madonna with Chancellor Rolin," by Jan van Eyck, painted ca. 1434.

out to be good-natured enough and not unintelligent, but it was quite clear that he never used his eyes for looking at anything that his business or his bodily wants didn't compel him to look [at]: his landscape was bounded by his ledger and his mutton chop.

Here is a contrast to that long-dead citizen of Bruges to whom I owe such gratitude, I and many another; for indeed you need not cross the narrow seas to look through his eyes, for in no prettier or cleaner place than Trafalgar Sq.[2] in London you can see a chamber in Bruges city, and a man and his wife standing hand in hand amidst their household goods just as they stood 500 years ago, and to make it clear to all that he really did see it, the citizen of Bruges above-named wrote on the wall in gold letters, 'Ego Johannes de Eyk fuit hic': 'I John Van Eyck was here.'

I say that is a great contrast, which however is only worth noticing because the man who snuffed out the sunlit Chilterns for me was no monster of stupidity, but the type of a class, and that class comprises the most of people nowadays; and once more I say no wonder that such people look bored and anxious.

Further the remedy to this strange perversity which I commend to all reasonable people is to use their eyes to wit. I am bound chief of all to commend to such of you as are definitely studying art, as we call it, to those of you whose special business it is to see yourselves and to make others see what there is in the world: by which indeed you will gain some insight both into what has been and what will be in it: with you it lies to get people in general to use their eyesight, for you can give them examples of the benefit of doing so: there is, or perhaps I may hopefully say, there was an idea abroad that the artist was a lazy, loafing sort of fellow, who if he were born of well-to-do people became an artist for the same sort of reason that his brother went into the army or the church, in order namely that he might escape hard work; or if he were an artisan work pretty hard at high wages 2 days a week so that he might be lazy and probably drunk the other 4 days: I say that was the idea of [the] result of a man being born with some artistic gift, if he were so ill-advised as to let the said gift have any scope and carry him into a fatal course of life.

Well, the amount of truth that may be at the bottom of this theory, I can dimly discern, but so dimly, that it is not worth while to try to put it into words for you: because practically and as far as dealing with the actualities of life, from a business point of view, let me say there is *no* truth in the theory.

I have the honour and advantage of knowing several artists of the higher kind, and nothing about their way of working is more

[2](Editor's Note, 1999): Morris refers to Jan van Eyck's "Wedding Portrait of Giovanni Arnolfi," dated 1434, which hangs in the National Gallery.

noteworthy than the pains they take: they will not allow anything to come easy to them, for they are forever intent in making the very best of their talent, and when they have got the mastery over one point, they don't rest and be thankful, but go on to master another: they don't hug themselves on the work that they have done; hope which lit their path till that work was turned out of hand, has died out of it now, and is shining on the work which they have to do: nothing can be ever done well enough for them. Pray is this likely to be a lazy, loafing kind of life?

I don't want to find fault anywhere if I can help it, but you must pardon me for saying that if our law-makers and law-administrators, our practical common sense men of business, who can be trusted worked half as hard, and single-heartedly as our real artists do—why England would be quite a decent place to live in.

Mind I say our real artists, and I don't profess to think there are many of them: there are plenty of pretenders to the title, as there are in all occupations, who are criminal nuisances nothing short of it: so please to remember all you that are studying art that you have a heavy responsibility on your shoulders: if you are less than honest in your work, and you may judge by what I have just been saying what my standard of honesty is, if you are less than honest I say, every act of your artistic life is a nail in the coffin of art, or in plain words of civilization, or in plainer words still, of the hope of mankind to live a decent life fit for men.

Indeed I suppose that the fact of your having made up your minds to study art shows that you have some gifts in that direction: but pray don't play with the matter, but find out through any failures if it must be so what your gifts are: then the worst that can happen will be that you will find out that you have no gifts for art, in which case, out with the knife—cut it all away, and betake yourselves to some other occupation, and you will at any rate have saved yourselves loss of time, and self-respect.

But the worst case will not be common: most men have still some gifts towards the arts which can be brought to light if they have opportunities for developing them; that last sentence shows you the meaning of the schools of art which have been established to teach people to use their eyes, and to eschew drawing down blinds on sunlit landscapes.

These opportunities for developing your talents, will if you use them properly show you infallibly what you can attempt, and what you had better leave alone: in the first place I believe that nearly as many people can be taught to draw anything that will stand still, as can be taught to write: well, well, I do assure you that many people are incapable of learning writing, even distinguished ones: I think the ghost of Dean Stanley[3] for instance will forgive me for saying that he was one of them.

[3](Editor's Note, 1999): Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, Dean of Westminster, 1815–1881.

Now, though a man may draw well in a sense, and still not be an artist in any sense, still the acquirement of the art will be useful to him even then, and I think it ought to be taught more widely and more systematically than it is, even looking at it from that point of view. But if you can learn to draw not only mechanically, but artistically also, that is to say, in such a way that it is obvious to those who can use their eyes that you have had pleasure in the drawing, and a hope of carrying on your art further, if this be the case, then you can lay claim to be an artist of some sort: in striving to find out of what sort, to what rank of artist you belong you will doubtless have difficulties and disappointments, but it will all come right in the end, so long as you are honest in your work: nor, as long as there is any real appreciation of art, need any man quarrel with himself because his rank as an artist is humble; everyone comes to the end of his tether step by step whether he be great or small; and let me tell you, that though every real artist aspires to do his best, and ever to better it, yet every real artist has also in him a fund of content, or if you please so to call it of humility: withal I repeat that whenever art is at all approximately in the state that it should be there is room for artists of all capacities from the greatest to the least: to be a pretender, a bungler, that is to be not a humble artist, but none at all; and the distance between the humblest man who can do a thing, and the showiest pretender who can *not* is not to be measured at all, it is infinite, the difference between nothing and something.

I think sometimes that there have been ages in the world's history of which ours is one, that have thought over much of the glories of great men, and not enough of the welfare of common men; such ages have had a tendency to carry due hero-worship, which is a proper and necessary thing, into superstition; by which they not only injure their great men, flattering them like flunkies instead of honouring them like men and their very fellows, but also are easily led astray into taking pretentious men for great ones, not remembering that the foundation of all greatness is humility; you must be a man first before you are a great man. Now all artists cannot be Michael Angelos, but all can be worthy fellows and helpmates for him: and he will be the first to acknowledge this, the first to feel the want of such helpmates and fellows, if unhappily the time does not breed them for him: be sure that every great artist will do full justice to any piece of artistic work which is good and sound of its kind, and will not despise it because it does not profess to solve 'the riddle of the painful earth' in a hurry: indeed he need do justice to it, for it will show him that there is at least someone who can sympathize with his troubles and triumphs; he can no more do without an audience than can any other interpreter between nature and man; and I will go bail for it if he is a man of any note, he has had enough of the kind of worshipper who will stand before his easel, and say "charming!" looking out of the window at nothing all the time.

But remember this great man who will be sympathetic, indulgent even, for all genuine work will have nothing but justice for all empty pretence: the slap-dash and the vague they will send back to their grammar, and bid them learn before they try to teach.

I say remember this, and don't be too mild in judging yourselves, however kind you are to others: and as to how you are to judge yourselves, I must say again use your eyes: your *own* eyes, you understand, in one way or other, and not other people's: for I have noticed that one is often rather anxious for the favourable opinion of others on a piece of work which in one's own heart one has condemned already.

Now as to the standard of comparison by which you are to judge your work, apart from the works of the great master, nature, I would have you take a high standard; nor be discouraged at the apparent difference between your attempts and this exemplary accomplishment: it is part of the great gifts of all thoroughly good work, and finely illustrates the fellowship of all genuine workmen little and great which I have been speaking of, that such work does not discourage the learner, but encourages him: I suppose the reason for this is that the great natural principles on which it was done shine through the workmanship, and are, tacitly or not, understood by those who are honestly aspiring to do good work: while on the contrary coming across a bad and pretentious piece of work, does not exhilarate a successful artist with a sense of superiority but depresses him with a feeling of doubt as to the value of his own work: so immeasurable is the difference between bad and good in the arts, so unceasing the evil that falseness gives birth to.

Now again as to your standard of excellence, though I do not wish to be considered a pedant or even a mere antiquarian, I do think you will judge yourselves better by comparison with work that has stood the test of ages, and is still accounted excellent, than if you used contemporary work to test yourselves by: to say, I can do as well as or better than my fellows, people who are in the same hobble as ourselves, that is apt to lower our standard, I think, and reduces what ought to be calm and cool judgment of our own work by ourselves to a mere piece of competition, and competition which is apt to be decided by reference to conventional standards applied by people who do not thoroughly know us.

Well, I have caught myself for some little time past advising you that are art students here; caught myself, I say because I feel shy of doing this to an audience I am not thoroughly acquainted with, and who are taught by competent teachers on a definite and well-considered plan: all I can say in excuse is that it rather leads up to what I am going to say to you, and which I would say to any audience, whatever their calling might be.

A while ago I was speaking of what I considered the erroneous estimate that was and perhaps still is made by people of the effect of the

study and practice of art on the lives of the artists: quite conventionally made, let me add, for the people who hold that view know nothing whatever of artists' lives or the difficulties of their work: In trying to confute this erroneous impression which people have or had of art, I spoke almost entirely of the kind of workman whom we today call an *artist:* that is to say a man whose work is demanded entirely by the necessities of the mind; but there is another kind of workman whose work is demanded partly by the necessities of the body: him we call by various names, which I am ashamed to say do in most people's minds imply inferiority: artisan for instance, or operative: as these names are certainly not English, and to my mind there is a smack of insult about them, as withal their etymological meaning is vague, I shall by your leave use an English word in their stead; a word full of meaning, and to all reasonable people implying honour and not reproach: I shall use the word handicraftsman.

Please excuse a word or two etymological, which also will have a serious bearing on our general subject of the arts; and let me remind you that the word craft and its adjective crafty have been degraded and misapplied in modern English very unfortunately as I think: they are used to express trickiness or dishonesty, where we ought to use the words guile or guileful: oddly enough by the way our kinsmen on the other side of the herring-pond have served the word clever in the same way, while they use the word 'cunning' in its true sense, 'knowing' viz. Well, the right meaning of the word craft is simply *power:* so that a handicraftsman signifies a man who exercises a power by means of his hands, and doubtless when it was first used was intended to signify that he exercised a certain kind of power; to wit, a readiness of mind and deftness of hand which had been acquired through many ages, handed down from father to son and increased generation by generation: surely a class of men who possess such a power is a class to be honoured and thanked rather than nicknamed by foolish outlandish words.

Well anyhow this kind of man is or ought to be the other kind of artist who is or was conventionally considered to be a 'loose fish' by prescriptive right: but I should call that opinion a libel on him if I had not heard it said that 'twas a maxim of law, the greater the truth the greater the libel: so the first syllable of the word *libel* must answer my purpose: for my own part I know by experience that ever so little of the artist added to the handicraftsman makes him a more profitable man to employ, to say nothing of the effect of art on himself, as giving some additional pleasure and interest to his life.

Thus much I have been saying of the artist and the handicraftsman as if they were naturally two distinct classes of workers: I suppose it is almost the universally received opinion not only that it is so, which is obvious, but also that it is natural and right that it should be so.

But if that be so, I will ask in the first place, what is intended to be

done by all the schools of art and the like, which have been established under the superintendence of the Depart[ment] of Sci[ence] and Art? Are they intended to turn out any number of artists? and if so what kind of artists, and how are they going to live: my impression is that there is a pretty sharp struggle for subsistence in what may be called the lower ranks of those we call artists.

The fact is these schools were not intended to turn out what are conventionally termed artists, they were intended first for general artistic education, and second for the special education of those who design for industrial arts. As for the result of the second of these purposes, I have some doubts if it has quite answered the expectations formed, as for that of the first I suppose it has not been disappointing on the whole; at all events from whencesoever it comes there is more interest felt in art than there used to be; and moreover there was assuredly an idea in those who founded these places of education that some tincture would not spoil the handicraftsman but would improve him; in short that it is not natural and right that the artist should be wholly dissociated from the handicraftsman.

Meantime however, the wide distinction remains as wide as ever; the only difference made by the spread of artistic education is that there are more, and I hope better artists than there were; if a handicraftsman shows any decidedly artistic talents, instead of remaining in his craft, and illuminating it, so to say by his talents, he climbs up out of it into the class of artists, the craft that really needed his talent has lost it; the profession that did not specially want it has gained it, and probably smothered it into invisibility: surely there is waste of power here, waste of craftsmanship.

Well now I can understand some of you saying; but are you a crusted old Tory? would you prevent a clever man from rising in the world? because whereas when he was a handicraftsman he was not a *gentleman,* now he is one, since he is an artist, and so he has risen a step even if he hasn't bettered his income; would you we say prevent the man from rising?

Indeed I mustn't say what I am, but I suppose I may go as far as to say what I am not, and that is a crusted old Tory: so in any case I am glad if a clever man rises, and know well that in order to rise he must do as I have been saying as things are—more's the pity! more's the waste! and to be plain with you, you won't better the matter on this side till you have got rid of all that folly of calling a man a gentleman or denying him the title according as he works in this or that way; all that quaint heraldic jargon with the mismanagement of forces and unfairness that goes with it.

Now don't misunderstand me, I don't want a mere confusion of the different grades of artists for I have said before that such grades must exist; but there must be no sharp distinction if we are to have art worth

the trouble, widespread and 'understanded of the people': if we are to have popular art.

If things are to go on as they are now what will art amount to when we clear our eyes and look into the matter without fear of making ourselves disagreeable: in fact without hypocrisy? To my mind it will amount to this:

There will be on the one hand a great body of artists so-called turning out most of them unsatisfactory work not for lack of talent, but because their talent will be misapplied; they will be compelled to be gentlemen and more or less useless because they are more talented than their fellows, and so are to be set to supply the demand for *fine art* as 'tis called, and not really being artists *enough* for that demand will have to supply a substitute for it, which will receive very languid attention from the public in general, yet more attention than it will deserve: above the heads of these will be a very few men of genius, who at the expense of great toil and suffering will have acquired real mastery over their art, and will produce works of art of a high quality, but which will not in the least be 'understanded of the people' partly from their fault or rather misfortune, partly from the fault or misfortune of the people.

All this will supply the languid demand for the more intellectual side of art: the fine arts; but there is still a demand for the less intellectual side of the arts, to wit, the ornament of the industrial arts, that side of it which should be done by handicraftsmen. How is that to be supplied if things are to go on as they are? Well, the handicraftsmen can't supply it, if the article is to be genuine, for they are not taught to be artists, nay are not allowed to be, are in fact turned into 'operatives' which I take it is another name for machines.

Now the machines, some of which will be of steel and brass and some of flesh and bone, will not turn out art, for a machine cannot do it, but they will turn out a substitute for it, which will be sold very cheap, but will not be worth the money it costs, for it will be worth nothing.

So that will be the art produced by the wasteful system of forcing men to do what they are unfit to do simply because we have fallen into a groove and will not get out of it: let us look at it clearly and see what it means.

First at the top of the tree will come very scanty however precious fruit, the art done by great men struggling under great disadvantages, the worst of which will be that the public in general will have little sympathy for them.

Then lower down the fruit will be tolerably plenteous, but unripe, of little use as it is: the art of a good number of men of fair talents, but undisciplined, and striving to do what they have no chance to do really well: such art will be plausible pretension, but unsatisfying: nobody will care much about it because it will not have the root of the matter in it.

Last and lowest will come a very strange fruit indeed, which nobody

will want, and nobody will be willing to pay for, but which will go on being produced from a sort of habit: that will be the position of ornamental art so-called; to be allowed to exist when it does not get in the way of the machine which is to be used for producing riches that nobody will be able to use.

Well, there is one comfort about it, that such a state of things cannot last very long: civilized man will either say, 'let us have an end of this folly called art and live like decent beasts—' or what else will happen?

Indeed I should hope that man, even when he is so civilized as to be forced to live in Burslem or Widnes or Manchester will still have some longing for beauty left him, enough at all events to feel discontented with the sweet spots I have just named, and that he will cast about to see if something cannot be done to get him as large a share of it as a red-skin or a Zulu gets for himself, and if by some means art cannot be begun again; in which case what ideal will he look up to beyond the humble present endeavours to bring art to a healthy new birth again? What ideas will he have as to what art has to do for him, and what kind of sacrifices will he be bound to make for it?

Surely, first of all he will remember that no pyramid can stand on its apex, but must stand on its base: he will know that before anything worthy to be called art can exist, it must be longed for by the whole people, and he will look forward to the day when no one save a few curious exceptions, men of more or less diseased minds, will fail to understand art and to demand his due share of it: in that day though there will be gradations of art from the humblest to the most exalted, there will [be] no sham art, nor even any bungling, because everyone who works with his hands will find out his real and proper place, and will do his best in it: and between all handicraftsmen will be mutual help and sympathy; they will all keep touch, as the drill sergeants call it: the great artist will think it a matter of course that his house and the goods in it should be made beautiful and interesting by the hearty thought and happy deftness of his humbler guild-brother, who in his turn will not find that the great master speaks to him in an unknown tongue: moreover it will be a consequence of this that civilized man will no longer seem (as he does now) to be the enemy of nature, to shame her and befoul her, and turn her rest and order and beauty into feverish ragged squalor: the house shall be like a natural growth of the meadow, and the city a necessary fulfillment of the valley. Nor is that all, nor the most of it: for this outward order and beauty will be but a token of fair and orderly life, of days made up of unwearisome work, and of leisure restful but not vacant: of a life in which year by year the land of his fathers shall grow dearer and fairer to a man as he gets to know it better and better, although his times be cast in a place where nature wears her everyday clothes, no queen but a thrifty housewife: so that when he goes into other lands richer of startling beauty and wild romance, he will fare not as a man

driven by dulness that nothing can brighten, by weariness that no idleness can soothe, but as a pilgrim who has left his home a while that he may come back stored with new pictures and tales of the life of other men. A steadfast home that he shall never weary of, work that he shall never turn from in disgust, neighbours that never shame him with faces soured by injustice and hopelessness; these are the surroundings that he shall look to art to find for him, and if it be the art of his ideal, it will not fail him: would not such things as these be worth buying at a heavy price? or what price could buy them?

Indeed if ever such art as I am thinking of be gained by men once more when they look back on anything which they have had to sacrifice for it, they will think it little enough: but, to us looking forward, and, many of us, thinking of art vaguely, looking upon it as a pretty ornament which our lives may wear or not as they think fit, and be none the worse if they refuse it: to us I say who do not rightly know what art means, or have had [no] leisure or opportunity to think what a dull blank the total loss of it would make in all men's lives, the necessary sacrifices to be made before art can be born again might seem great and overgreat if we could see them rightly all at once.

But let me say for myself, that I have now followed art for a good many years and through all that time have more and more directly set my face toward that ideal of art which I have been speaking of, till it seems to me that I have gained some inkling of what sacrifices must be made before art can become healthy and progressive again.

My views if I stated them fully would seem to many here too wild and eccentric to be even listened to, yet something I must at least hint at, since it seems to me that the first sacrifice to be made in favour of art is the pleasure of prophesying smooth things to one's friends and neighbours whose kindness one would fain forebear to try by differing from them even a little.

I have said already that I durst not ask a man born to earning weekly wages to sacrifice his ambition to rise out of his class: what can I ask men to do who have little money and little leisure to spare for any cause that does not seem very clear indeed to them? Yet surely among such men the hope is not lacking nor the effort to raise their whole class as a class, and by such efforts is art more helped if we artists did but know it than by anything else that is done in our days.

I have taken note of many strikes, and I must needs say without circumlocution that with many of these I have heartily sympathized: but when the day comes that there is a serious strike of workmen against the poisoning of the air with smoke or the waters with filth, I shall think that art is getting on indeed, and that the schools of art have had a noble success: meanwhile I fancy most of you will agree with me in thinking it a hopeful token that all classes show signs of uniting to prevent the robbery of commons which till quite lately has gone on

unchecked in England: the more individuals are kept in due order by the public, the more public rights are respected, the nearer grows our chance of the new birth of popular art.

For the rest I might I know preach a sermon to my brethren of the working classes on the benefit of thrift and sobriety and the rest of it, but I am thinking that art and the love of art will one day preach that sermon clearly enough to them so I had rather say a few words to finish with to those of my own class, to the rich and well-to-do, and the rather because, and it is a woeful confession to have to make, I know little of any class save my own.

Now then I will say what I have often said before, and shall go on saying till there is no more need to say it: what I mean by art, what I am really interested in, is not the prevalence of this or that style, not the laying on the public taste whether it will or not a law that such or such a thing must be done in art, not this interests me, and forces me to speak when I had far rather hold my peace; but rather a general love of beauty, partly for its own sake, and because it is natural and right for the dwellers on the beautiful earth to help and not to mar its beauty, and partly, yes and chiefly, because that external beauty is a symbol of a decent and reasonable life, is above all the token of what chiefly makes life good and not evil, of joy in labour, in creation that is: and this joy in labour, this evidence of man helping in the work of creation, is I feel sure the thing which from the first all progress in civilization has been aiming at: feed this inspiration and you feed the flame of civilization throughout the world; extinguish it, and civilization will die also: material prosperity, as they call it, that is a thing, which according to our way of dealing with it will be either the helpful servant or the cruel tyrant of civilization: are you satisfied that it is still only our servant? If so bid it give back to England the green fields which it has wasted, bid it turn its terrible power to the task of giving us something worthy to supply the place of the stored-up loveliness of ten centuries of which it has robbed the homes of England: give it that command first, and see if it will obey you, for there will be tasks heavy enough for it when it has begun that.

And if you will find that it will not obey you, and that it is, as indeed I fear, our master now, and not our servant, what shall we do then? Two courses lie open to us; the first to sit down deedless, and pretend that we believe all is well and better, to let our material prosperity drag us into deeds of injustice at home and abroad: to destroy the prosperity both material and spiritual of far-off countries in the name of civilization, while at home we weakly try to palliate with our left hand the miseries we have recklessly raised with our right: to sit still and feign content, though we know that for all men day by day is less and less leisure, more and more wearisome work unworthy of men; to gather if we be rich some share of material prosperity to us, making an island in

the sea of squalor, and hoping at least that we shall be eaten last or one of the last.

That is the one course open to us when we know that we have become the slaves of the tyrant we have made for ourselves: and the other, what is that? Daily and hourly resistance to our tyrant. Ceaseless plotting or rebellion against him, till one day it breaks out openly and reduces him to his old condition of servant again: a heavy task you may say, even those of you who have your eyes open, and know the monster which we have misnamed commerce for what he is.

Indeed it is no light task, but I do believe that the heaviest part of it lies in making up our minds that it has to be undertaken: some ease and comfort the rebels of commerce will have to sacrifice doubtless, and many things which men oftenest desire; but of those many, most, will be found when we have lost them, to have been but troublous hindrances to life.

Surely there are those who now desire money unreasonably and who distress themselves (and their neighbours) very much in the acquirement of it who strive for it for reasons which would no longer exist if civilization should get into the right road again: I know some of those reasons, of the nature of fencing oneself against the intrusion of barbarous ugliness, or the desire for the private possession of works of art. The time will come when no one will need money for such purposes, for ugliness in the work of man's hands, which is now the rule, will exist no longer; when there will be humble but satisfying art in private dwellings, and lofty soul-inspiring art in public places, in short nature here unspoiled, there helped in her loveliness about us on all hands.

Could any money buy that now? Still more could any money buy the deep content of which it will be at once a token and a cause, a content arising from a population employed in worthy work, which will bring pleasure and sympathy for the worker in him who uses it, pleasure and self-respect in him who makes it?

Compare that with the track of waste and squalor which the misnamed monster Commerce leaves behind him now, and join me I beg of you in hastening forward the day when the motto of our country and of all countries shall be 'one for all, and all for one.'

Art under Plutocracy

You may well think I am not here to criticize any special school of art or artists, or to plead for any special style, or to give you any instructions, however general, as to the practice of the arts. Rather I want to take counsel with you as to what hindrances may lie in the way towards making art what it should be, a help and solace to the daily life of all men. Some of you here may think that the hindrances in the way are none, or few, and easy to be swept aside. You will say that there is on many sides much knowledge of the history of art, and plenty of taste for it, at least among the cultivated classes; that many men of talent, and some few of genius, practise it with no mean success; that within the last fifty years there has been something almost like a fresh renaissance of art, even in directions where such a change was least to be hoped for. All this is true as far as it goes; and I can well understand this state of things being a cause of gratulation amongst those who do not know what the scope of art really is, and how closely it is bound up with the general condition of society, and especially with the lives of those who live by manual labour and whom we call the working classes. For my part, I cannot help noting that under the apparent satisfaction with the progress of art of late years there lies in the minds of most thinking people a feeling of mere despair as to the prospects of art in the future; a despair which seems to me fully justified if we look at the present condition of art without considering the causes which have led to it, or the hopes which may exist for a change in those causes. For, without beating about the bush, let us consider what the real state of art is. And first I must ask you to extend the word art beyond those matters which are consciously works of art, to take in not only painting and sculpture, and architecture, but the shapes and colours of all household goods, nay, even the arrangement of the fields for tillage and pasture, the management of towns and of our highways of all kinds; in a word, to extend it to the aspect of all the externals of our life. For I must ask you to believe that every one of the things that goes to make up the

surroundings among which we live must be either beautiful or ugly, either elevating or degrading to us, either a torment and burden to the maker of it to make, or a pleasure and a solace to him. How does it fare therefore with our external surroundings in these days? What kind of an account shall we be able to give to those who come after us of our dealings with the earth, which our forefathers handed down to us still beautiful, in spite of all the thousands of years of strife and carelessness and selfishness?

Surely this is no light question to ask ourselves; nor am I afraid that you will think it a mere rhetorical flourish if I say that it is a question that may well seem a solemn one when it is asked here in Oxford, amidst sights and memories which we older men at least regard with nothing short of love. He must be indeed a man of narrow incomplete mind who, amidst the buildings raised by the hopes of our forefathers, amidst the country which they made so lovely, would venture to say that the beauty of the earth was a matter of little moment. And yet, I say, how have we of these latter days treated the beauty of the earth, or that which we call art?

Perhaps I had best begin by stating what will scarcely be new to you, that art must be broadly divided into two kinds, of which we may call the first Intellectual, and the second Decorative Art, using the words as mere forms of convenience. The first kind addresses itself wholly to our mental needs; the things made by it serve no other purpose but to feed the mind, and, as far as material needs go, might be done without altogether. The second, though so much of it as is art does also appeal to the mind, is always but a part of things which are intended primarily for the service of the body. I must further say that there have been nations and periods which lacked the purely Intellectual art but positively none which lacked the Decorative (or at least some pretence of it); and furthermore, that in all times when the arts were in a healthy condition there was an intimate connexion between the two kinds of art; a connexion so close, that in the times when art flourished most, the higher and lower kinds were divided by no hard and fast lines. The highest intellectual art was meant to please the eye, as the phrase goes, as well as to excite the emotions and train the intellect. It appealed to all men, and to all the faculties of a man. On the other hand, the humblest of the ornamental art shared in the meaning and emotion of the intellectual; one melted into the other by scarce perceptible gradations; in short, the best artist was a workman still, the humblest workman was an artist. This is not the case now, nor has been for two or three centuries in civilized countries. Intellectual art is separated from Decorative by the sharpest lines of demarcation, not only as to the kind of work produced under those names, but even in the social position of the producers; those who follow the Intellectual arts being all professional men or gentlemen by virtue of their calling, while those

who follow the Decorative are workmen earning weekly wages, non-gentlemen in short.

Now, as I have already said, many men of talent and some few of genius are engaged at present in producing works of Intellectual art, paintings and sculpture chiefly. It is nowise my business here or elsewhere to criticize their works; but my subject compels me to say that those who follow the Intellectual arts must be divided into two sections, the first composed of men who would in any age of the world have held a high place in their craft; the second of men who hold their position of gentleman-artist either by the accident of their birth, or by their possessing industry, business habits, or such-like qualities, out of all proportion to their artistic gifts. The work which these latter produce seems to me of little value to the world, though there is a thriving market for it, and their position is neither dignified nor wholesome; yet they are mostly not to be blamed for it personally, since often they have gifts for art, though not great ones, and would probably not have succeeded in any other career. They are, in fact, good decorative workmen spoiled by a system which compels them to ambitious individualist effort, by cutting off from them any opportunity for co-operation with others of greater or less capacity for the production of popular art.

As to the first section of artists, who worthily fill their places and make the world wealthier by their work, it must be said of them that they are very few. These men have won their mastery over their craft by dint of incredible toil, pains, and anxiety, by qualities of mind and strength of will which are bound to produce something of value. Nevertheless they are injured also by the system which insists on individualism and forbids co-operation. For first, they are cut off from tradition, that wonderful, almost miraculous accumulation of the skill of ages, which men find themselves partakers in without effort on their part. The knowledge of the past and the sympathy with it which the artists of to-day have, they have acquired, on the contrary, by their own most strenuous individual effort; and as that tradition no longer exists to help them in their practice of the art, and they are heavily weighted in the race by having to learn everything from the beginning, each man for himself, so also, and that is worse, the lack of it deprives them of a sympathetic and appreciative audience. Apart from the artists themselves and a few persons who would be also artists but for want of opportunity and for insufficient gifts of hand and eye, there is in the public of to-day no real knowledge of art, and little love for it. Nothing, save at the best certain vague prepossessions, which are but the phantom of that tradition which once bound artist and public together. Therefore the artists are obliged to express themselves, as it were, in a language not understanded of the people. Nor is this their fault. If they were to try, as some think they should, to meet the public halfway and work in such a manner as to satisfy at any cost those vague

prepossessions of men ignorant of art, they would be casting aside their special gifts, they would be traitors to the cause of art, which it is their duty and glory to serve. They have no choice save to do their own personal individual work unhelped by the present, stimulated by the past, but shamed by it, and even in a way hampered by it; they must stand apart as possessors of some sacred mystery which, whatever happens, they must at least do their best to guard. It is not to be doubted that both their own lives and their works are injured by this isolation. But the loss of the people; how are we to measure that? That they should have great men living and working amongst them, and be ignorant of the very existence of their work, and incapable of knowing what it means if they could see it!

In the times when art was abundant and healthy, all men were more or less artists; that is to say, the instinct for beauty which is inborn in every complete man had such force that the whole body of craftsmen habitually and without conscious effort made beautiful things, and the audience for the authors of intellectual art was nothing short of the whole people. And so they had each an assured hope of gaining that genuine praise and sympathy which all men who exercise their imagination in expression most certainly and naturally crave, and the lack of which does certainly injure them in some way; makes them shy, oversensitive, and narrow, or else cynical and mocking, and in that case well-nigh useless. But in these days, I have said and repeat, the whole people is careless and ignorant of art; the inborn instinct for beauty is checked and thwarted at every turn; and the result on the less intellectual or decorative art is that as a spontaneous and popular expression of the instinct for beauty it does not exist at all. It is a matter of course that everything made by man's hand is now obviously ugly, unless it is made beautiful by conscious effort; nor does it mend the matter that men have not lost the habit deduced from the times of art, of professing to ornament household goods and the like; for this sham ornament, which has no least intention of giving any one pleasure, is so base and foolish that the words upholstery and upholsterer have come to have a kind of secondary meaning indicative of the profound contempt which all sensible men have for such twaddle.

This, so far, is what decorative art has come to, and I must break off a while here and ask you to consider what it once was, lest you think over hastily that its degradation is a matter of little moment. Think, I beg you, to go no further back in history, of the stately and careful beauty of S. Sophia at Constantinople, of the golden twilight of S. Mark's at Venice; of the sculptured cliffs of the great French cathedrals, of the quaint and familiar beauty of our own minsters; nay, go through Oxford streets and ponder on what is left us there unscathed by the fury of the thriving shop and the progressive college; or wander some day through some of the out-of-the-way villages and little towns that lie

scattered about the country-side within twenty miles of Oxford; and you will surely see that the loss of decorative art is a grievous loss to the world.

Thus then in considering the state of art among us I have been driven to the conclusion that in its co-operative form it is extinct, and only exists in the conscious efforts of men of genius and talent, who themselves are injured, and thwarted, and deprived of due sympathy by the lack of co-operative art.

But furthermore, the repression of the instinct for beauty which has destroyed the Decorative and injured the Intellectual arts has not stopped there in the injury it has done us. I can myself sympathize with a feeling which I suppose is still not rare, a craving to escape sometimes to mere Nature, not only from ugliness and squalor, not only from a condition of superabundance of art, but even from a condition of art severe and well ordered, even, say, from such surroundings as the lovely simplicity of Periclean Athens. I can deeply sympathize with a weary man finding his account in interest in mere life and communion with external nature, the face of the country, the wind and weather, and the course of the day, and the lives of animals, wild and domestic; and man's daily dealings with all this for his daily bread, and rest, and innocent beast-like pleasure. But the interest in the mere animal life of man has become impossible to be indulged in in its fulness by most civilized people. Yet civilization, it seems to me, owes us some compensation for the loss of this romance, which now only hangs like a dream about the country life of busy lands. To keep the air pure and the rivers clean, to take some pains to keep the meadows and tillage as pleasant as reasonable use will allow them to be; to allow peaceable citizens freedom to wander where they will, so they do no hurt to garden or cornfield; nay, even to leave here and there some piece of waste or mountain sacredly free from fence or tillage as a memory of man's ruder struggles with nature in his earlier days: it is too much to ask civilization to be so far thoughtful of man's pleasure and rest, and to help so far as this her children to whom she has most often set such heavy tasks of grinding labour? Surely not an unreasonable asking. But not a whit of it shall we get under the present system of society. That loss of the instinct for beauty which has involved us in the loss of popular art is also busy in depriving us of the only compensation possible for that loss, by surely and not slowly destroying the beauty of the very face of the earth. Not only are London and our other great commercial cities mere masses of sordidness, filth, and squalor, embroidered with patches of pompous and vulgar hideousness, no less revolting to the eye and the mind when one knows what it means: not only have whole counties of England, and the heavens that hang over them, disappeared beneath a crust of unutterable grime, but the disease, which, to a visitor coming from the times of art, reason, and order, would seem to be a love of dirt and

ugliness for its own sake, spreads all over the country, and every little market-town seizes the opportunity to imitate, as far as it can, the majesty of the hell of London and Manchester. Need I speak to you of the wretched suburbs that sprawl all round our fairest and most ancient cities? Must I speak to you of the degradation that has so speedily befallen this city, still the most beautiful of them all; a city which, with its surroundings, would, if we had had a grain of common sense, have been treated like a most precious jewel, whose beauty was to be preserved at any cost? I say at any cost, for it was a possession which did not belong to us, but which we were trustees of for all posterity. I am old enough to know how we have treated that jewel; as if it were any common stone kicking about on the highway, good enough to throw at a dog. When I remember the contrast between the Oxford of to-day and the Oxford which I first saw thirty years ago, I wonder I can face the misery (there is no other word for it) of visiting it, even to have the honour of addressing you to-night. But furthermore, not only are the cities a disgrace to us, and the smaller towns a laughing-stock; not only are the dwellings of man grown inexpressibly base and ugly, but the very cowsheds and cart-stables, nay, the merest piece of necessary farm-engineering, are tarred with the same brush. Even if tree is cut down or blown down, a worse one, if any, is planted in its stead, and, in short, our civilization is passing like a blight, daily growing heavier and more poisonous, over the whole face of the country, so that every change is sure to be a change for the worse in its outward aspect. So then it comes to this, that not only are the minds of great artists narrowed and their sympathies frozen by their isolation, not only has co-operative art come to a standstill, but the very food on which both the greater and the lesser art subsists is being destroyed; the well of art is poisoned at its spring.

Now I do not wonder that those who think that these evils are from henceforth for ever necessary to the progress of civilization should try to make the best of things, should shut their eyes to all they can, and praise the galvanized life of the art of the present day; but, for my part, I believe that they are not necessary to civilization, but only accompaniments to one phase of it, which will change and pass into something else, like all prior phases have done. I believe also that the essential characteristic of the present state of society is that which has so ruined art, or the pleasure of life; and that this having died out, the inborn love of man for beauty and the desire for expressing it will no longer be repressed, and art will be free. At the same time I not only admit, but declare, and think it most important to declare, that so long as the system of competition in the production and exchange of the means of life goes on, the degradation of the arts will go on; and if that system is to last for ever, then art is doomed, and will surely die; that is to say, civilization will die. I know it is at present the received opinion that the

competitive or "Devil take the hindmost" system is the last system of economy which the world will see; that it is perfection, and therefore finality has been reached in it; and it is doubtless a bold thing to fly in the face of this opinion, which I am told is held even by the most learned men. But though I am not learned, I have been taught that the patriarchal system died out into that of the citizen and chattel slave, which in its turn gave place to that of the feudal lord and the serf, which, passing through a modified form, in which the burgher, the guild-craftsman and his journeyman played their parts, was supplanted by the system of so-called free contract now existing. That all things since the beginning of the world have been tending to the development of this system I willingly admit, since it exists; that all the events of history have taken place for the purpose of making it eternal, the very evolution of those events forbids me to believe.

For I am "one of the people called Socialists"; therefore I am certain that evolution in the economical conditions of life will go on, whatever shadowy barriers may be drawn across its path by men whose apparent self-interest binds them, consciously or unconsciously, to the present, and who are therefore hopeless for the future. I hold that the condition of competition between man and man is bestial only, and that of association human; I think that the change from the undeveloped competition of the Middle Ages, trammelled as it was by the personal relations of feudality, and the attempts at association of the guild-craftsmen into the full-blown laissez-faire competition of the nineteenth century, is bringing to birth out of its own anarchy, and by the very means by which it seeks to perpetuate that anarchy, a spirit of association founded on that antagonism which has produced all former changes in the condition of men, and which will one day abolish all classes and take definite and practical form, and substitute association for competition in all that relates to the production and exchange of the means of life. I further believe that as that change will be beneficent in many ways, so especially will it give an opportunity for the new birth of art, which is now being crushed to death by the money-bags of competitive commerce.

My reason for this hope for art is founded on what I feel quite sure is a truth, and an important one, namely that all art, even the highest, is influenced by the conditions of labour of the mass of mankind, and that any pretensions which may be made for even the highest intellectual art to be independent of these general conditions are futile and vain; that is to say, that any art which professes to be founded on the special education or refinement of a limited body or class must of necessity be unreal and short-lived. ART IS MAN'S EXPRESSION OF HIS JOY IN LABOUR. If those are not Professor Ruskin's words they embody at least his teaching on this subject. Nor has any truth more important ever been stated; for if pleasure in labour be generally

possible, what a strange folly it must be for men to consent to labour without pleasure; and what a hideous injustice it must be for society to compel most men to labour without pleasure! For since all men not dishonest must labour, it becomes a question either of forcing them to lead unhappy lives or allowing them to live unhappily. Now the chief accusation I have to bring against the modern state of society is that it is founded on the art-lacking or unhappy labour of the greater part of men; and all that external degradation of the face of the country of which I have spoken is hateful to me not only because it is a cause of unhappiness to some few of us who still love art, but also and chiefly because it is a token of the unhappy life forced on the great mass of the population by the system of competitive commerce.

The pleasure which ought to go with the making of every piece of handicraft has for its basis the keen interest which every healthy man takes in healthy life, and is compounded, it seems to me, chiefly of three elements; variety, hope of creation, and the self-respect which comes of a sense of usefulness; to which must be added that mysterious bodily pleasure which goes with the deft exercise of the bodily powers. I do not think I need spend many words in trying to prove that these things, if they really and fully accompanied labour, would do much to make it pleasant. As to the pleasures of variety, any of you who have ever made anything, I don't care what, will well remember the pleasure that went with the turning out of the first specimen. What would have become of that pleasure if you had been compelled to go on making it exactly the same for ever? As to the hope of creation, the hope of producing some worthy or even excellent work which without you, the craftsman, would not have existed at all, a thing which needs you and can have no substitute for you in the making of it—can we any of us fail to understand the pleasure of this? No less easy, surely, is it to see how much the self-respect born of the consciousness of usefulness must sweeten labour. To feel that you have to do a thing not to satisfy the whim of a fool or a set of fools, but because it is really good in itself, that is useful, would surely be a good help to getting through the day's work. As to the unreasoning, sensuous pleasure in handiwork, I believe in good sooth that it has more power of getting rough and strenuous work out of men, even as things go, than most people imagine. At any rate it lies at the bottom of the production of all art, which cannot exist without it even in its feeblest and rudest form.

Now this compound pleasure in handiwork I claim as the birthright of all workmen. I say that if they lack any part of it they will be so far degraded, but that if they lack it altogether they are, so far as their work goes, I will not say slaves, the word would not be strong enough, but machines more or less conscious of their own unhappiness.

I have appealed already to history in aid of my hopes for a change in the system of the conditions of labour. I wish to bring forward now the

witness of history that this claim of labour for pleasure rests on a foundation stronger than a mere fantastic dream; what is left of the art of all kinds produced in all periods and countries where hope of progress was alive before the development of the commercial system shows plainly enough to those who have eyes and understanding that pleasure did always in some degree accompany its production. This fact, however difficult it may be to demonstrate in a pedantic way, is abundantly admitted by those who have studied the arts widely; the very phrases so common in criticism that such and such a piece of would-be art is done mechanically, or done without feeling, express accurately enough the general sense of artists of a standard deduced from times of healthy art; for this mechanical and feelingless handiwork did not exist till days comparatively near our own, and it is the condition of labour under plutocratic rule which has allowed it any place at all.

The craftsman of the Middle Ages no doubt often suffered grievous material oppression, yet in spite of the rigid line of separation drawn by the hierarchical system under which he lived between him and his feudal superior, the difference between them was arbitrary rather than real; there was no such gulf in language, manners, and ideas as divides a cultivated middle-class person of to-day, a "gentleman," from even a respectable lower-class man; the mental qualities necessary to an artist, intelligence, fancy, imagination, had not then to go through the mill of the competitive market, nor had the rich (or successful competitors) made good their claim to be the sole possessors of mental refinement.

As to the conditions of handiwork in those days, the crafts were drawn together into guilds which indeed divided the occupations of men rigidly enough, and guarded the door to those occupations jealously; but as outside among the guilds there was little competition in the markets, wares being made in the first instance for domestic consumption, and only the overplus of what was wanted at home close to the place of production ever coming into the market or requiring any one to come and go between the producer and consumer, so inside the guilds there was but little division of labour; a man or youth once accepted as an apprentice to a craft learned it from end to end, and became as a matter of course the master of it; and in the earlier days of the guilds, when the masters were scarcely even small capitalists, there was no grade in the craft save this temporary one. Later on, when the masters became capitalists in a sort, and the apprentices were, like the masters, privileged, the class of journeymen-craftsmen came into existence; but it does not seem that the difference between them and the aristocracy of the guild was anything more than an arbitrary one. In short, during all this period the unit of labour was an intelligent man. Under this system of handiwork no great pressure of speed was put on a man's work, but he was allowed to carry it through leisurely and thoughtfully; it used the whole of a man for the production of a piece

of goods, and not small portions of many men; it developed the workman's whole intelligence according to his capacity, instead of concentrating his energy on one-sided dealing with a trifling piece of work; in short, it did not submit the hand and soul of the workman to the necessities of the competitive market, but allowed them freedom for due human development. It was this system, which had not learned the lesson that man was made for commerce, but supposed in its simplicity that commerce was made for man, which produced the art of the Middle Ages, wherein the harmonious co-operation of free intelligence was carried to the furthest point which has yet been attained, and which alone of all art can claim to be called Free. The effect of this freedom, and the widespread or rather universal sense of beauty to which it gave birth, became obvious enough in the outburst of the expression of splendid and copious genius which marks the Italian Renaissance. Nor can it be doubted that this glorious art was the fruit of the five centuries of free popular art which preceded it, and not of the rise of commercialism which was contemporaneous with it; for the glory of the Renaissance faded out with strange rapidity as commercial competition developed, so that about the end of the seventeenth century, both in the intellectual and the decorative arts, the commonplace or body still existed, but the romance or soul of them was gone. Step by step they had faded and sickened before the advance of commercialism, now speedily gathering force throughout civilization. The domestic or architectural arts were becoming (or become) mere toys for the competitive market through which all material wares used by civilized men now had to pass. Commercialism had by this time well-nigh destroyed the craft-system of labour, in which, as aforesaid, the unit of labour is a fully instructed craftsman, and had supplanted it by what I will ask leave to call the workshop-system, wherein, when complete, division of labour in handiwork is carried to the highest point possible, and the unit of manufacture is no longer a man, but a group of men, each member of which is dependent on his fellows, and is utterly useless by himself. This system of the workshop division of labour was perfected during the eighteenth century by the efforts of the manufacturing classes, stimulated by the demands of the ever-widening markets; it is still the system in some of the smaller and more domestic kinds of manufacture, holding much the same place amongst us as the remains of the craft-system did in the days when that of the workshop was still young. Under this system, as I have said, all the romance of the arts died out, but the commonplace of them flourished still; for the idea that the essential aim of manufacture is the making of goods still struggled with a newer idea which has since obtained complete victory, namely, that it is carried on for the sake of making a profit for the manufacturer on the one hand, and on the other for the employment of the working classes.

This idea of commerce being an end in itself and not a means merely,

being but half developed in the eighteenth century, the special period of the workshop-system, some interest could still be taken in those days in the making of wares. The capitalist–manufacturer of the period had some pride in turning out goods which would do him credit, as the phrase went; he was not willing wholly to sacrifice his pleasure in this kind to the imperious demands of commerce; even his workman, though no longer an artist, that is a free workman, was bound to have skill in his craft, limited though it was to the small fragment of it which he had to toil at day by day for his whole life.

But commerce went on growing, stimulated still more by the opening up of new markets, and pushed on the invention of men, till their ingenuity produced the machines which we have now got to look upon as necessities of manufacture, and which have brought about a system the very opposite to the ancient craft-system; that system was fixed and conservative of methods; there was no real difference in the method of making a piece of goods between the time of Pliny and the time of Sir Thomas More; the method of manufacture, on the contrary, in the present time, alters not merely from decade to decade, but from year to year; this fact has naturally helped the victory of this machine-system, the system of the Factory, where the machine-like workmen of the workshop period are supplanted by actual machines, of which the operatives (as they are now called) are but a portion, and a portion gradually diminishing both in importance and numbers. This system is still short of its full development, therefore to a certain extent the workshop-system is being carried on side by side with it, but it is being speedily and steadily crushed out by it; and when the process is complete, the skilled workman will no longer exist, and his place will be filled by machines directed by a few highly trained and very intelligent experts, and tended by a multitude of people, men, women, and children, of whom neither skill nor intelligence is required.

This system, I repeat, is as near as may be the opposite of that which produced the popular art which led up to that splendid outburst of art in the days of the Italian Renaissance which even cultivated men will sometimes deign to notice nowadays; it has therefore produced the opposite of what the old craft-system produced, the death of art and not its birth; in other words the degradation of the external surroundings of life, or simply and plainly unhappiness. Through all society spreads that curse of unhappiness: from the poor wretches, the news of whom we middle-class people are just now receiving with such naif wonder and horror: from those poor people whom nature forces to strive against hope, and to expend all the divine energy of man in competing for something less than a dog's lodging and a dog's food, from them up to the cultivated and refined person, well lodged, well fed, well clothed, expensively educated, but lacking all interest in life except, it may be, the cultivation of unhappiness as a fine art.

Something must be wrong then in art, or the happiness of life is sickening in the house of civilization. What has caused the sickness? Machine-labour will you say? Well, I have seen quoted a passage from one of the ancient Sicilian poets rejoicing in the fashioning of a water-mill, and exulting in labour being set free from the toil of the hand-quern in consequence; and that surely would be a type of a man's natural hope when foreseeing the invention of labour-saving machinery as 'tis called; natural surely, since though I have said that the labour of which art can form a part should be accompanied by pleasure, no one could deny that there is some necessary labour even which is not pleasant in itself, and plenty of unnecessary labour which is merely painful. If machinery had been used for minimizing such labour, the utmost ingenuity would scarcely have been wasted on it; but is that the case in any way? Look round the world, and you must agree with John Stuart Mill in his doubt whether all the machinery of modern times has lightened the daily work of one labourer. And why have our natural hopes been so disappointed? Surely because in these latter days, in which as a matter of fact machinery has been invented, it was by no means invented with the aim of saving the pain of labour. The phrase labour-saving machinery is elliptical, and means machinery which saves the cost of labour, not the labour itself, which will be expended when saved on tending other machines. For a doctrine which, as I have said, began to be accepted under the workshop-system, is now universally received, even though we are yet short of the complete development of the system of the Factory. Briefly, the doctrine is this, that the essential aim of manufacture is making a profit; that it is frivolous to consider whether the wares when made will be of more or less use to the world so long as any one can be found to buy them at a price which, when the workman engaged in making them has received of necessaries and comforts as little as he can be got to take, will leave something over as a reward to the capitalist who has employed him. This doctrine of the sole aim of manufacture (or indeed of life) being the profit of the capitalist and the occupation of the workman, is held, I say, by almost every one; its corollary is, that labour is necessarily unlimited, and that to attempt to limit it is not so much foolish as wicked, whatever misery may be caused to the community by the manufacture and sale of the wares made.

It is this superstition of commerce being an end in itself, of man made for commerce, not commerce for man, of which art has sickened; not of the accidental appliances which that superstition when put in practice has brought to its aid; machines and railways and the like, which do now verily control us all, might have been controlled by us, if we had not been resolute to seek profit and occupation at the cost of establishing for a time that corrupt and degrading anarchy which has usurped the name of Society. It is my business here to-night and everywhere to foster your discontent with that anarchy and its visible results;

for indeed I think it would be an insult to you to suppose that you are contented with the state of things as they are; contented to see all beauty vanish from our beautiful city, for instance; contented with the squalor of the black country, with the hideousness of London, the wen of all wens, as Cobbett called it; contented with the ugliness and baseness which everywhere surround the life of civilized man; contented, lastly, to be living above that unutterable and sickening misery of which a few details are once again reaching us as if from some distant unhappy country, of which we could scarcely expect to hear, but which I tell you is the necessary foundation on which our society, our anarchy, rests.

Neither can I doubt that every one here has formed some idea of remedies for these defects in our civilization, as we euphemistically call them, even though the ideas be vague; also I know that you are familiar with the precepts of the system of economy, that religion, I may say, which has supplanted the precepts of the old religions on the duty and blessing of giving to the needy; you understand of course that though a friend may give to a friend and both giver and receiver be better for the gift, yet a rich man cannot give to a poor one without both being the worse for it; I suppose because they are not friends. And amidst all this I feel sure, I say, that you all of you have some ideal of a state of things better than that amidst which we live, something, I mean to say, more than the application of temporary palliatives to the enduring defects of our civilization.

Now it seems to me that the ideal of better times which the more advanced in opinion of our own class have formed as possible and hopeful is something like this. There is to be a large class of industrious people not too much refined (or they could not do the rough work wanted of them), who are to live in comfort (not, however, meaning our middle-class comfort), and receive a kind of education (if they can), and not be overworked; that is, not overworked for a working man; his light day's work would be rather heavy for the refined classes. This class is to be the basis of society, and its existence will leave the consciences of the refined class quite free and at rest. From this refined class will come the directors or captains of labour (in other words the usurers), the directors of people's consciences religious and literary (clergy, philosophers, newspaper-writers), and lastly, if that be thought of at all, the directors of art; these two classes with or without a third, the functions of which are indefinite, will live together with the greatest goodwill, the upper helping the lower without sense of condescension on one side or humiliation on the other; the lower are to be perfectly content with their position, and there is to be no grain of antagonism between the classes: although (even Utopianism of this kind being unable to shake off the idea of the necessity of competition between individuals) the lower class, blessed and respected as it is to be, will have moreover

the additional blessing of hope held out to it; the hope of each man rising into the upper class, and leaving the chrysalis of labour behind him; nor, if that matters, is the lower class to lack due political or parliamentary power; all men (or nearly all) being equal before the ballot-box, except so far as they may be bought like other things. That seems to me to be the middle-class liberal ideal of reformed society; all the world turned bourgeois, big and little, peace under the rule of competitive commerce, ease of mind and a good conscience to all and several under the rule of the devil take the hindmost.

Well, for my part I have nothing, positively nothing, to say against it if it can be brought about. Religion, morality, art, literature, science, might for all I know flourish under it and make the world a heaven. But have we not tried it somewhat already? Are not many people jubilant whenever they stand on a public platform over the speedy advent of this good time? It seems to me that the continued and advancing prosperity of the working classes is almost always noted when a political man addresses an audience on general subjects, when he forgets party politics; nor seldom when he remembers them most. Nor do I wish to take away honour where honour is due; I believe there are many people who deeply believe in the realization of this ideal, while they are not ignorant of how lamentably far things are from it at present; I know that there are men who sacrifice time, money, pleasure, their own prejudices even, to bring it about; men who hate strife and love peace, men hard working, kindly, unambitious. What have they done? How much nearer are they to the ideal of the bourgeois commonwealth than they were at the time of the Reform Bill, or the time of the repeal of the Corn Laws? Well, thus much nearer to a great change perhaps, that there is a chink in the armour of self-satisfaction; a suspicion that perhaps it is not the accidents of the system of competitive commerce which have to be abolished, but the system itself; but as to approaching the ideal of that system reformed into humanity and decency, they are about so much nearer to it as a man is nearer to the moon when he stands on a hayrick. I don't want to make too much of the matter of money-wages apart from the ghastly contrast between the rich and the poor which is the essence of our system; yet remember that poverty driven below a certain limit means degradation and slavery pure and simple. Now I have seen a statement made by one of the hopeful men of the rich middle class that the average yearly income of an English working man's household is one hundred pounds. I don't believe the figures because I am sure that they are swollen by wages paid in times of inflation, and ignore the precarious position of most working men; but quite apart from that, do not, I beg you, take refuge behind averages; for at least they are swelled by the high wages paid to special classes of workmen in special places, and in the manufacturing districts by the mothers of families working in factories, to my mind a most abominable custom,

and by other matters of the like kind, which the average-makers leave you to find out for yourselves. But even that is not the point of the matter. For my part the enormous average of one hundred pounds a year to so many millions of toiling people, while many thousands who do not toil think themselves poor with ten times the income, does not comfort me for the fact of a thousand strong men waiting at the dock gates down at Poplar the greater part of a working-day, on the chance of some of them being taken on at wretched wages, or for the ordinary wage of a farm labourer over a great part of England being ten shillings per week, and that considered ruinous by the farmers also: if averages will content us while such things as this go on, why stop at the working classes? Why not take in everybody, from the Duke of Westminster downwards, and then raise a hymn of rejoicing over the income of the English people?

I say let us be done with averages and look at lives and their sufferings, and try to realize them: for indeed what I want you to note is this; that though you may realize a part of the bourgeois or radical ideal, there is and for ever will be under the competitive system a skeleton in the cupboard. We may, nay, we have managed to create a great mass of middling well-to-do people, hovering on the verge of the middle classes, prosperous artisans, small tradesmen, and the like; and I must say parenthetically that in spite of all their innate good qualities the class does little credit to our civilization; for though they live in a kind of swinish comfort as far as food is concerned, they are ill housed, ill educated, crushed by grovelling superstitions, lacking reasonable pleasures, utterly devoid of any sense of beauty. But let that pass. For aught I know we may very much increase the proportionate numbers of this class without making any serious change in our system, but under all that still lies and will lie another class which we shall never get rid of as long as we are under the tyranny of the devil take the hindmost; that class is the Class of Victims. Now above all things I want us not to forget them (as indeed we are not likely to for some weeks to come), or to console ourselves by averages for the fact that the riches of the rich and the comfort of the well-to-do are founded on that terrible mass of undignified, unrewarded, useless misery, concerning which we have of late been hearing a little, a very little; after all we do know that is a fact, and we can only console ourselves by hoping that we may, if we are watchful and diligent (which we very seldom are), we may greatly diminish the amount of it. I ask you, is such a hope as that worthy of our boasted civilization with its perfected creeds, its high morality, its sounding political maxims? Will you think it monstrous that some people have conceived another hope, and see before them the ideal of a society in which there should be no classes permanently degraded for the benefit of the commonweal? For one thing I would have you remember, that this lowest class of utter poverty lies like a gulf before the whole of

the working classes, who in spite of all averages live a precarious life; the failure in the game of life which entails on a rich man an unambitious retirement, and on a well-to-do man a life of dependence and laborious shifts, drags a working man down into that hell of irredeemable degradation. I hope there are but few, at least here, who can comfort their consciences by saying that the working classes bring this degradation on themselves by their own unthrift and recklessness. Some do, no doubt, stoic philosophers of the higher type not being much commoner among day-labourers than among the well-to-do and rich; but we know very well how sorely the mass of the poor strive, practising such thrift as is in itself a degradation to man, in whose very nature it is to love mirth and pleasure, and how in spite of all that they fall into the gulf. What! are we going to deny that when we see all round us in our own class cases of men failing in life by no fault of their own; nay, many of the failers worthier and more useful than those that succeed: as might indeed be looked for in the state of war which we call the system of unlimited competition, where the best campaigning-luggage a man can carry is a hard heart and no scruples? For indeed the fulfilment of that liberal ideal of the reform of our present system into a state of moderate class supremacy is impossible, because that system is after all nothing but a continuous implacable war; the war once ended, commerce, as we now understand the word, comes to an end, and the mountains of wares which are either useless in themselves or only useful to slaves and slave-owners are no longer made, and once again art will be used to determine what things are useful and what useless to be made; since nothing should be made which does not give pleasure to the maker and the user, and that pleasure of making must produce art in the hands of the workman. So will art be used to discriminate between the waste and the usefulness of labour; whereas at present the waste of labour is, as I have said above, a matter never considered at all; so long as a man toils he is supposed to be useful, no matter what he toils at.

I tell you the very essence of competitive commerce is waste; the waste that comes of the anarchy of war. Do not be deceived by the outside appearance of order in our plutocratic society. It fares with it as it does with the older forms of war, that there is an outside look of quiet wonderful order about it; how neat and comforting the steady march of the regiment; how quiet and respectable the sergeants look; how clean the polished cannon; neat as a new pin are the storehouses of murder; the books of adjutant and sergeant as innocent-looking as may be; nay, the very orders for destruction and plunder are given with a quiet precision which seems the very token of a good conscience; this is the mask that lies before the ruined cornfield and the burning cottage, the mangled bodies, the untimely death of worthy men, the desolated home. All this, the results of the order and sobriety which is the face which civilized soldiering turns towards us stay-at-homes, we have been told often

and eloquently enough to consider; often enough we have been shown the wrong side of the glories of war, nor can we be shown it too often or too eloquently. Yet I say even such a mask is worn by competitive commerce, with its respectable prim order, its talk of peace and the blessings of intercommunication of countries and the like; and all the while its whole energy, its whole organized precision is employed in one thing, the wrenching the means of living from others; while outside that everything must do as it may, whoever is the worse or the better for it; as in the war of fire and steel, all other aims must be crushed out before that one object. It is worse than the older war in one respect at least, that whereas that was intermittent, this is continuous and unresting, and its leaders and captains are never tired of declaring that it must last as long as the world, and is the end-all and be-all of the creation of man and of his home. Of such the words are said:

> For them alone do seethe
> A thousand men in troubles wide and dark;
> Half ignorant they turn an easy wheel
> That sets sharp racks at work to pinch and peel.

What can overthrow this terrible organization so strong in itself, so rooted in the self-interest, stupidity, and cowardice of strenuous narrow-minded men; so strong in itself and so much fortified against attack by the surrounding anarchy which it has bred? Nothing but discontent with that anarchy, and an order which in its turn will arise from it, nay, is arising from it; an order once a part of the internal organization of that which it is doomed to destroy. For the fuller development of industrialism from the ancient crafts through the workshop-system into the system of the factory and machine, while it has taken from the workmen all pleasure in their labour, or hope of distinction and excellence in it, has welded them into a great class, and has by its very oppression and compulsion of the monotony of life driven them into feeling the solidarity of their interests and the antagonism of those interests to those of the capitalist class; they are all through civilization feeling the necessity of their rising as a class. As I have said, it is impossible for them to coalesce with the middle classes to produce the universal reign of moderate bourgeois society which some have dreamed of: because however many of them may rise out of their class, these become at once part of the middle class, owners of capital, even though it be in a small way, and exploiters of labour; and there is still left behind a lower class which in its own turn drags down to it the unsuccessful in the struggle; a process which is being accelerated in these latter days by the rapid growth of the great factories and stores, which are extinguishing the remains of the small workshops served by men who may hope to become small masters, and also the smaller of the tradesman

class. Thus then, feeling that it is impossible for them to rise as a class, while competition naturally, and as a necessity for its existence, keeps them down, they have begun to look to association as their natural tendency, just as competition is looked to by the capitalists; in them the hope has arisen, if nowhere else, of finally making an end of class degradation.

It is in the belief that this hope is spreading to the middle classes that I stand before you now, pleading for its acceptance by you, in the certainty that in its fulfilment alone lies the other hope for the new birth of Art and the attainment by the middle classes of true refinement, the lack of which at present is so grievously betokened by the sordidness and baseness of all the external surroundings of our lives, even those of us who are rich. I know there are some to whom this possibility of the getting rid of class degradation may come, not as a hope, but as a fear. These may comfort themselves by thinking that this Socialist matter is a hollow scare, in England at least; that the proletariat have no hope, and therefore will lie quiet in this country, where the rapid and nearly complete development of commercialism has crushed the power of combination out of the lower classes; where the very combinations, the Trades Unions, founded for the advancement of the working class as a class, have already become conservative and obstructive bodies, wielded by the middle-class politicians for party purposes; where the proportion of the town and manufacturing districts to the country is so great that the inhabitants, no longer recruited from the peasantry but become townsmen bred of townsmen, are yearly deteriorating in physique; where lastly education is so backward.

It may be that in England the mass of the working classes has no hope; that it will not be hard to keep them down for a while, possibly a long while. The hope that this may be so I will say plainly is a dastard's hope, for it is founded on the chance of their degradation. I say such an expectation is that of slave-holders or the hangers-on of slave-holders. I believe, however, that hope is growing among the working classes even in England; at any rate you may be sure of one thing, that there is at least discontent. Can any of us doubt that, since there is unjust suffering? Or which of us would be contented with ten shillings a week to keep our households with, or to dwell in unutterable filth and have to pay the price of good lodging for it? Do you doubt that if we had any time for it amidst our struggle to live we should look into the title of those who kept us there, themselves rich and comfortable, under the pretext that it was necessary to society? I tell you there is plenty of discontent, and I call on all those who think there is something better than making money for the sake of making it to help in educating that discontent into hope, that is into the demand for the new birth of society; and I do this not because I am afraid of it, but because I myself am discontented and long for justice.

Yet, if any of you are afraid of the discontent which is abroad, in its present shape, I cannot say that you have no reason to be. I am representing reconstructive Socialism before you; but there are other people who call themselves Socialists whose aim is not reconstruction, but destruction; people who think that the present state of things is horrible and unbearable (as in very truth it is), and that there is nothing for it but to shake society by constant blows given at any sacrifice, so that it may at last totter and fall. May it not be worth while, think you, to combat such a doctrine by supplying discontent with hope of change that involves reconstruction? Meanwhile, be sure that, though the day of change may be long delayed, it will come at last. The middle classes will one day become conscious of the discontent of the proletariat; before that some will have renounced their class and cast in their lot with the working men, influenced by love of justice or insight into facts. For the rest, they will, when their conscience is awakened, have two choices before them; they must either cast aside their morality, of which though three parts are cant, the other is sincere, or they must give way. In either case I do believe that the change will come, and that nothing will seriously retard that new birth; yet I well know that the middle class may do much to give a peaceable or a violent character to the education of discontent which must precede it. Hinder it, and who knows what violence you may be driven into, even to the renunciation of the morality of which we middle-class men are so proud; advance it, strive single-heartedly that truth may prevail, and what need you fear? At any rate not your own violence, not your own tyranny?

Again I say things have gone too far, and the pretence at least of a love of justice is too common among us, for the middle classes to attempt to keep the proletariat in its condition of slavery to capital, as soon as they stir seriously in the matter, except at the cost of complete degradation to themselves, the middle class, whatever else may happen. I cannot help hoping that there are some here who are already in dread of the shadow of that degradation of consciously sustaining an injustice, and are eager to escape from that half-ignorant tyranny of which Keats tells, and which is, sooth to say, the common condition of rich people. To those I have a last word or two to say in begging them to renounce their class pretensions and cast in their lot with the working men. It may be that some of them are kept from actively furthering the cause which they believe in by that dread of organization, by that unpracticality in a word, which, as it is very common in England generally, is more common among highly cultivated people, and, if you will forgive the word, most common in our ancient universities. Since I am a member of a Socialist propaganda I earnestly beg those of you who agree with me to help us actively, with your time and your talents if you can, but if not, at least with your money, as you can. Do not hold aloof from us, since you agree with us, because we have not attained that

delicacy of manners, that refinement of language, nay, even that prudent and careful wisdom of action which the long oppression of competitive commerce has crushed out of us.

Art is long and life is short; let us at least do something before we die. We seek perfection, but can find no perfect means to bring it about; let it be enough for us if we can unite with those whose aims are right, and their means honest and feasible. I tell you if we wait for perfection in association in these days of combat we shall die before we can do anything. Help us now, you whom the fortune of your birth has helped to make wise and refined; and as you help us in our work-a-day business toward the success of the cause, instil into us your superior wisdom, your superior refinement, and you in your turn may be helped by the courage and hope of those who are not so completely wise and refined. Remember we have but one weapon against that terrible organization of selfishness which we attack, and that weapon is Union. Yes, and it should be obvious union, which we can be conscious of as we mix with others who are hostile or indifferent to the cause; organized brotherhood is that which must break the spell of anarchical Plutocracy. One man with an idea in his head is in danger of being considered a madman; two men with the same idea in common may be foolish, but can hardly be mad; ten men sharing an idea begin to act, a hundred draw attention as fanatics, a thousand and society begins to tremble, a hundred thousand and there is war abroad, and the cause has victories tangible and real; and why only a hundred thousand? Why not a hundred million and peace upon the earth? You and I who agree together, it is we who have to answer that question.

Useful Work *versus* Useless Toil

The above title may strike some of my readers as strange. It is assumed by most people nowadays that all work is useful, and by most *well-to-do* people that all work is desirable. Most people, well-to-do or not, believe that, even when a man is doing work which appears to be useless, he is earning his livelihood by it—he is "employed," as the phrase goes; and most of those who are well-to-do cheer on the happy worker with congratulations and praises, if he is only "industrious" enough and deprives himself of all pleasure and holidays in the sacred cause of labour. In short, it has become an article of the creed of modern morality that all labour is good in itself—a convenient belief to those who live on the labour of others. But as to those on whom they live, I recommend them not to take it on trust, but to look into the matter a little deeper.

Let us grant, first, that the race of man must either labour or perish. Nature does not give us our livelihood gratis; we must win it by toil of some sort or degree. Let us see, then, if she does not give us some compensation for this compulsion to labour, since certainly in other matters she takes care to make the acts necessary to the continuance of life in the individual and the race not only endurable, but even pleasurable.

You may be sure that she does so, that it is of the nature of man, when he is not diseased, to take pleasure in his work under certain conditions. And, yet, we must say in the teeth of the hypocritical praise of all labour, whatsoever it may be, of which I have made mention, that there is some labour which is so far from being a blessing that it is a curse; that it would be better for the community and for the worker if the latter were to fold his hands and refuse to work, and either die or let us pack him off to the workhouse or prison—which you will.

Here, you see, are two kinds of work—one good, the other bad; one not far removed from a blessing, a lightening of life; the other a mere curse, a burden to life.

What is the difference between them, then? This: one has hope in it,

the other has not. It is manly to do the one kind of work, and manly also to refuse to do the other.

What is the nature of the hope which, when it is present in work, makes it worth doing?

It is threefold, I think—hope of rest, hope of product, hope of pleasure in the work itself; and hope of these also in some abundance and of good quality; rest enough and good enough to be worth having; product worth having by one who is neither a fool nor an ascetic; pleasure enough for all for us to be conscious of it while we are at work; not a mere habit, the loss of which we shall feel as a fidgety man feels the loss of the bit of string he fidgets with.

I have put the hope of rest first because it is the simplest and most natural part of our hope. Whatever pleasure there is in some work, there is certainly some pain in all work, the beast-like pain of stirring up our slumbering energies to action, the beast-like dread of change when things are pretty well with us; and the compensation for this animal pain is animal rest. We must feel while we are working that the time will come when we shall not have to work. Also the rest, when it comes, must be long enough to allow us to enjoy it; it must be longer than is merely necessary for us to recover the strength we have expended in working, and it must be animal rest also in this, that it must not be disturbed by anxiety, else we shall not be able to enjoy it. If we have this amount and kind of rest we shall, so far, be no worse off than the beasts.

As to the hope of product, I have said that Nature compels us to work for that. It remains for *us* to look to it that we *do* really produce something, and not nothing, or at least nothing that we want or are allowed to use. If we look to this and use our wills we shall, so far, be better than machines.

The hope of pleasure in the work itself: how strange that hope must seem to some of my readers—to most of them! Yet I think that to all living things there is a pleasure in the exercise of their energies, and that even beasts rejoice in being lithe and swift and strong. But a man at work, making something which he feels will exist because he is working at it and wills it, is exercising the energies of his mind and soul as well as of his body. Memory and imagination help him as he works. Not only his own thoughts, but the thoughts of the men of past ages guide his hands; and, as a part of the human race, he creates. If we work thus we shall be men, and our days will be happy and eventful.

Thus worthy work carries with it the hope of pleasure in rest, the hope of the pleasure in our using what it makes, and the hope of pleasure in our daily creative skill.

All other work but this is worthless; it is slaves' work—mere toiling to live, that we may live to toil.

Therefore, since we have, as it were, a pair of scales in which to weigh

the work now done in the world, let us use them. Let us estimate the worthiness of the work we do, after so many thousand years of toil, so many promises of hope deferred, such boundless exultation over the progress of civilization and the gain of liberty.

Now, the first thing as to the work done in civilization and the easiest to notice is that it is portioned out very unequally amongst the different classes of society. First, there are people—not a few—who do no work, and make no pretence of doing any. Next, there are people, and very many of them, who work fairly hard, though with abundant easements and holidays, claimed and allowed; and lastly, there are people who work so hard that they may be said to do nothing else than work, and are accordingly called "the working classes," as distinguished from the middle classes and the rich, or aristocracy, whom I have mentioned above.

It is clear that this inequality presses heavily upon the "working" class, and must visibly tend to destroy their hope of rest at least, and so, in that particular, make them worse off than mere beasts of the field; but that is not the sum and end of our folly of turning useful work into useless toil, but only the beginning of it.

For first, as to the class of rich people doing no work, we all know that they consume a great deal while they produce nothing. Therefore, clearly, they have to be kept at the expense of those who do work, just as paupers have, and are a mere burden on the community. In these days there are many who have learned to see this, though they can see no further into the evils of our present system, and have formed no idea of any scheme for getting rid of this burden; though perhaps they have a vague hope that changes in the system of voting for members of the House of Commons may, as if by magic, tend in that direction. With such hopes or superstitions we need not trouble ourselves. Moreover, this class, the aristocracy, once thought most necessary to the State, is scant of numbers, and has now no power of its own, but depends on the support of the class next below it—the middle class. In fact, it is really composed either of the most successful men of that class, or of their immediate descendants.

As to the middle class, including the trading, manufacturing, and professional people of our society, they do, as a rule, seem to work quite hard enough, and so at first sight might be thought to help the community, and not burden it. But by far the greater part of them, though they work, do not produce, and even when they do produce, as in the case of those engaged (wastefully indeed) in the distribution of goods, or doctors, or (genuine) artists and literary men, they consume out of all proportion to their due share. The commercial and manufacturing part of them, the most powerful part, spend their lives and energies in fighting amongst themselves for their respective shares of the wealth which they *force* the genuine workers to provide for them; the others are

almost wholly the hangers-on of these; they do not work for the public, but a privileged class: they are the parasites of property, sometimes, as in the case of lawyers, undisguisedly so; sometimes, as the doctors and others above mentioned, professing to be useful, but too often of no use save as supporters of the system of folly, fraud, and tyranny of which they form a part. And all these we must remember have, as a rule, one aim in view; not the production of utilities, but the gaining of a position either for themselves or their children in which they will not have to work at all. It is their ambition and the end of their whole lives to gain, if not for themselves yet at least for their children, the proud position of being obvious burdens on the community. For their work itself, in spite of the sham dignity with which they surround it, they care nothing: save a few enthusiasts, men of science, art, or letters, who, if they are not the salt of the earth, are at least (and oh, the pity of it!) the salt of the miserable system of which they are the slaves, which hinders and thwarts them at every turn, and even sometimes corrupts them.

Here then is another class, this time very numerous and all-powerful, which produces very little and consumes enormously, and is therefore in the main supported, as paupers are, by the real producers. The class that remains to be considered produces all that is produced, and supports both itself and the other classes, though it is placed in a position of inferiority to them; real inferiority, mind you, involving a degradation both of mind and body. But it is a necessary consequence of this tyranny and folly that again many of these workers are not producers. A vast number of them once more are merely parasites of property, some of them openly so, as the soldiers by land and sea who are kept on foot for the perpetuating of national rivalries and enmities, and for the purposes of the national struggle for the share of the product of unpaid labour. But besides this obvious burden on the producers and the scarcely less obvious one of domestic servants, there is first the army of clerks, shop-assistants, and so forth, who are engaged in the service of the private war for wealth, which, as above said, is the real occupation of the well-to-do middle class. This is a larger body of workers than might be supposed, for it includes amongst others all those engaged in what I should call competitive salesmanship, or, to use a less dignified word, the puffery of wares, which has now got to such a pitch that there are many things which cost far more to sell than they do to make.

Next there is the mass of people employed in making all those articles of folly and luxury, the demand for which is the outcome of the existence of the rich non-producing classes; things which people leading a manly and uncorrupted life would not ask for or dream of. These things, whoever may gainsay me, I will for ever refuse to call wealth: they are not wealth, but waste. Wealth is what Nature gives us and what a reasonable man can make out of the gifts of Nature for his reasonable use. The sunlight, the fresh air, the unspoiled face of the earth,

food, raiment and housing necessary and decent; the storing up of knowledge of all kinds, and the power of disseminating it; means of free communication between man and man; works of art, the beauty which man creates when he is most a man, most aspiring and thoughtful—all things which serve the pleasure of people, free, manly, and uncorrupted. This is wealth. Nor can I think of anything worth having which does not come under one or other of these heads. But think, I beseech you, of the product of England, the workshop of the world, and will you not be bewildered, as I am, at the thought of the mass of things which no sane man could desire, but which our useless toil makes—and sells?

Now, further, there is even a sadder industry yet, which is forced on many, very many, of our workers—the making of wares which are necessary to them and their brethren, *because they are an inferior class.* For if many men live without producing, nay, must live lives so empty and foolish that they *force* a great part of the workers to produce wares which no one needs, not even the rich, it follows that most men must be poor; and, living as they do on wages from those whom they support, cannot get for their use the *goods* which men naturally desire, but must put up with miserable makeshifts for them, with coarse food that does not nourish, with rotten raiment which does not shelter, with wretched houses which may well make a town-dweller in civilization look back with regret to the tent of the nomad tribe, or the cave of the prehistoric savage. Nay, the workers must even lend a hand to the great industrial invention of the age—adulteration, and by its help produce for their own use shams and mockeries of the luxury of the rich; for the wage-earners must always live as the wage-payers bid them, and their very habits of life are *forced* on them by their masters.

But it is waste of time to try to express in words due contempt of the productions of the much-praised cheapness of our epoch. It must be enough to say that this cheapness is necessary to the system of exploiting on which modern manufacture rests. In other words, our society includes a great mass of slaves, who must be fed, clothed, housed and amused as slaves, and that their daily necessity compels them to make the slave-wares whose use is the perpetuation of their slavery.

To sum up, then, concerning the manner of work in civilized States, these States are composed of three classes—a class which does not even pretend to work, a class which pretends to work but which produces nothing, and a class which works, but is compelled by the other two classes to do work which is often unproductive.

Civilization therefore wastes its own resources, and will do so as long as the present system lasts. These are cold words with which to describe the tyranny under which we suffer; try then to consider what they mean.

There is a certain amount of natural material and of natural forces in the world, and a certain amount of labour-power inherent in the

persons of the men that inhabit it. Men urged by their necessities and desires have laboured for many thousands of years at the task of subjugating the forces of Nature and of making the natural material useful to them. To our eyes, since we cannot see into the future, that struggle with Nature seems nearly over, and the victory of the human race over her nearly complete. And, looking backwards to the time when history first began, we note that the progress of that victory has been far swifter and more startling within the last two hundred years than ever before. Surely, therefore, we moderns ought to be in all ways vastly better off than any who have gone before us. Surely we ought, one and all of us, to be wealthy, to be well furnished with the good things which our victory over Nature has won for us.

But what is the real fact? Who will dare to deny that the great mass of civilized men are poor? So poor are they that it is mere childishness troubling ourselves to discuss whether perhaps they are in some ways a little better off than their forefathers. They are poor; nor can their poverty be measured by the poverty of a resourceless savage, for he knows of nothing else than his poverty; that he should be cold, hungry, houseless, dirty, ignorant, all that is to him as natural as that he should have a skin. But for us, for the most of us, civilization has bred desires which she forbids us to satisfy, and so is not merely a niggard but a torturer also.

Thus then have the fruits of our victory over Nature been stolen from us, thus has compulsion by Nature to labour in hope of rest, gain, and pleasure been turned into compulsion by man to labour in hope—of living to labour!

What shall we do then, can we mend it?

Well, remember once more that it is not our remote ancestors who achieved the victory over Nature, but our fathers, nay, our very selves. For us to sit hopeless and helpless than would be a strange folly indeed: be sure that we can amend it. What, then, is the first thing to be done?

We have seen that modern society is divided into two classes, one of which is *privileged* to be kept by the labour of the other—that is, it forces the other to work for it and takes from this inferior class everything that it *can* take from it, and uses the wealth so taken to keep its own members in a superior position, to make them beings of a higher order than the others: longer lived, more beautiful, more honoured, more refined than those of the other class. I do not say that it troubles itself about its members being *positively* long lived, beautiful or refined, but merely insists that they shall be so *relatively* to the inferior class. As also it cannot use the labour-power of the inferior class fairly in producing real wealth, it wastes it wholesale in the production of rubbish.

It is this robbery and waste on the part of the minority which keeps the majority poor; if it could be shown that it is necessary for the preservation of society that this should be submitted to, little more

could be said on the matter, save that the despair of the oppressed majority would probably at some time or other destroy Society. But it has been shown, on the contrary, even by such incomplete experiments, for instance, as Co-operation (so-called), that the existence of a privileged class is by no means necessary for the production of wealth, but rather for the "government" of the producers of wealth, or, in other words, for the upholding of privilege.

The first step to be taken then is to abolish a class of men privileged to shirk their duties as men, thus forcing others to do the work which they refuse to do. All must work according to their ability, and so produce what they consume—that is, each man should work as well as he can for his own livelihood, and his livelihood should be assured to him; that is to say, all the advantages which society would provide for each and all of its members.

Thus, at last, would true Society be founded. It would rest on equality of condition. No man would be tormented for the benefit of another—nay, no one man would be tormented for the benefit of Society. Nor, indeed, can that order be called Society which is not upheld for the benefit of every one of its members.

But since men live now, badly as they live, when so many people do not produce at all, and when so much work is wasted, it is clear that, under conditions where all produced and no work was wasted, not only would every one work with the certain hope of gaining a due share of wealth by his work, but also he could not miss his due share of rest. Here, then, are two out of the three kinds of hope mentioned above as an essential part of worthy work assured to the worker. When class-robbery is abolished, every man will reap the fruits of his labour, every man will have due rest—leisure, that is. Some Socialists might say we need not go any further than this; it is enough that the worker should get the full produce of his work, and that his rest should be abundant. But though the compulsion of man's tyranny is thus abolished, I yet demand compensation for the compulsion of Nature's necessity. As long as the work is repulsive it will still be a burden which must be taken up daily, and even so would mar our life, even though the hours of labour were short. What we want to do is to add to our wealth without diminishing our pleasure. Nature will not be finally conquered till our work becomes a part of the pleasure of our lives.

That first step of freeing people from the compulsion to labour needlessly will at least put us on the way towards this happy end; for we shall then have time and opportunities for bringing it about. As things are now, between the waste of labour-power in mere idleness and its waste in unproductive work, it is clear that the world of civilization is supported by a small part of its people; when *all* were working *usefully* for its support, the share of work which each would have to do would be but small, if our standard of life were about on the footing of what

well-to-do and refined people now think desirable. We shall have labour-power to spare, and shall, in short, be as wealthy as we please. It will be easy to live. If we were to wake up some morning now, under our present system, and find it "easy to live," that system would force us to set to work at once and make it hard to live; we should call that "developing our resources," or some such fine name. The multiplication of labour has become a necessity for us, and as long as that goes on no ingenuity in the invention of machines will be of any real use to us. Each new machine will cause a certain amount of misery among the workers whose special industry it may disturb; so many of them will be reduced from skilled to unskilled workmen, and then gradually matters will slip into their due grooves, and all will work apparently smoothly again; and if it were not that all this is preparing revolution, things would be, for the greater part of men, just as they were before the new wonderful invention.

But when revolution has made it "easy to live," when all are working harmoniously together and there is no one to rob the worker of his time, that is to say, his life; in those coming days there will be no compulsion on us to go on producing things we do not want, no compulsion on us to labour for nothing; we shall be able calmly and thoughtfully to consider what we shall do with our wealth of labour-power. Now, for my part, I think the first use we ought to make of that wealth, of that freedom, should be to make all our labour, even the commonest and most necessary, pleasant to everybody; for thinking over the matter carefully I can see that the one course which will certainly make life happy in the face of all accidents and troubles is to take a pleasurable interest in all the details of life. And lest perchance you think that an assertion too universally accepted to be worth making, let me remind you how entirely modern civilization forbids it; with what sordid, and even terrible, details it surrounds the life of the poor, what a mechanical and empty life she forces on the rich; and how rare a holiday it is for any of us to feel ourselves a part of Nature, and unhurriedly, thoughtfully, and happily to note the course of our lives amidst all the little links of events which connect them with the lives of others, and build up the great whole of humanity.

But such a holiday our whole lives might be, if we were resolute to make all our labour reasonable and pleasant. But we must be resolute indeed; for no half measures will help us here. It has been said already that our present joyless labour, and our lives scared and anxious as the life of a hunted beast, are forced upon us by the present system of producing for the profit of the privileged classes. It is necessary to state what this means. Under the present system of wages and capital the "manufacturer" (most absurdly so called, since a manufacturer means a person who makes with his hands) having a monopoly of the means whereby the power to labour inherent in every man's body can be used

for production, is the master of those who are not so privileged; he, and he alone, is able to make use of this labour-power, which, on the other hand, is the only commodity by means of which his "capital," that is to say, the accumulated product of past labour, can be made productive to him. He therefore buys the labour-power of those who are bare of capital and can only live by selling it to him; his purpose in this transaction is to increase his capital, to make it breed. It is clear that if he paid those with whom he makes his bargain the full value of their labour, that is to say, all that they produced, he would fail in his purpose. But since he is the monopolist of the means of productive labour, he can *compel* them to make a bargain better for him and worse for them than that; which bargain is that after they have earned their livelihood, estimated according to a standard high enough to ensure their peaceable submission to his mastership, the rest (and by far the larger part as a matter of fact) of what they produce shall belong to him, shall be his *property* to do as he likes with, to use or abuse at his pleasure; which property is, as we all know, jealously guarded by army and navy, police and prison; in short, by that huge mass of physical force which superstition, habit, fear of death by starvation—IGNORANCE, in one word, among the propertyless masses, enables the propertied classes to use for the subjection of—their slaves.

Now, at other times, other evils resulting from this system may be put forward. What I want to point out now is the impossibility of our attaining to attractive labour under this system, and to repeat that it is this robbery (there is no other word for it) which wastes the available labour-power of the civilized world, forcing many men to do nothing, and many, very many more to do nothing useful; and forcing those who carry on really useful labour to most burdensome over-work. For understand once for all that the "manufacturer" aims primarily at producing, by means of the labour he has stolen from others, not goods but profits, that is, the "wealth" that is produced over and above the livelihood of his workmen, and the wear and tear of his machinery. Whether that "wealth" is real or sham matters nothing to him. If it sells and yields him a "profit" it is all right. I have said that, owing to there being rich people who have more money than they can spend reasonably, and who therefore buy sham wealth, there is waste on that side; and also that, owing to there being poor people who cannot afford to buy things which are worth making, there is waste on that side. So that the "demand" which the capitalist "supplies" is a false demand. The market in which he sells is "rigged" by the miserable inequalities produced by the robbery of the system of Capital and Wages.

It is this system, therefore, which we must be resolute in getting rid of, if we are to attain to happy and useful work for all. The first step towards making labour attractive is to get the means of making labour fruitful, the Capital, including the land, machinery, factories, &c., into

the hands of the community, to be used for the good of all alike, so that we might all work at "supplying" the real "demands" of each and all—that is to say, work for livelihood, instead of working to supply the demand of the profit market—instead of working for profit—*i.e.,* the power of compelling other men to work against their will.

When this first step has been taken and men begin to understand that Nature wills all men either to work or starve, and when they are no longer such fools as to allow some the alternative of stealing, when this happy day is come, we shall then be relieved from the tax of waste, and consequently shall find that we have, as aforesaid, a mass of labour-power available, which will enable us to live as we please within reasonable limits. We shall no longer be hurried and driven by the fear of starvation, which at present presses no less on the greater part of men in civilized communities than it does on mere savages. The first and most obvious necessities will be so easily provided for in a community in which there is no waste of labour, that we shall have time to look round and consider what we really do want, that can be obtained without over-taxing our energies; for the often-expressed fear of mere idleness falling upon us when the force supplied by the present hierarchy of compulsion is withdrawn, is a fear which is but generated by the burden of excessive and repulsive labour, which we most of us have to bear at present.

I say once more that, in my belief, the first thing which we shall think so necessary as to be worth sacrificing some idle time for, will be the attractiveness of labour. No very heavy sacrifice will be required for attaining this object, but some *will* be required. For we may hope that men who have just waded through a period of strife and revolution will be the last to put up long with a life of mere utilitarianism, though Socialists are sometimes accused by ignorant persons of aiming at such a life. On the other hand, the ornamental part of modern life is already rotten to the core, and must be utterly swept away before the new order of things is realized. There is nothing of it—there is nothing which could come of it that could satisfy the aspirations of men set free from the tyranny of commercialism.

We must begin to build up the ornamental part of life—its pleasures, bodily and mental, scientific and artistic, social and individual—on the basis of work undertaken willingly and cheerfully, with the consciousness of benefiting ourselves and our neighbours by it. Such absolutely necessary work as we should have to do would in the first place take up but a small part of each day, and so far would not be burdensome; but it would be a task of daily recurrence, and therefore would spoil our day's pleasure unless it were made at least endurable while it lasted. In other words, all labour, even the commonest, must be made attractive.

How can this be done?—is the question the answer to which will take up the rest of this paper. In giving some hints on this question, I know

that, while all Socialists will agree with many of the suggestions made, some of them may seem to some strange and venturesome. These must be considered as being given without any intention of dogmatizing, and as merely expressing my own personal opinion.

From all that has been said already it follows that labour, to be attractive, must be directed towards some obviously useful end, unless in cases where it is undertaken voluntarily by each individual as a pastime. This element of obvious usefulness is all the more to be counted on in sweetening tasks otherwise irksome, since social morality, the responsibility of man towards the life of man, will, in the new order of things, take the place of theological morality, or the responsibility of man to some abstract idea. Next, the day's work will be short. This need not be insisted on. It is clear that with work unwasted it *can* be short. It is clear also that much work which is now a torment, would be easily endurable if it were much shortened.

Variety of work is the next point, and a most important one. To compel a man to do day after day the same task, without any hope of escape or change, means nothing short of turning his life into a prison-torment. Nothing but the tyranny of profit-grinding makes this necessary. A man might easily learn and practise at least three crafts, varying sedentary occupation with outdoor—occupation calling for the exercise of strong bodily energy for work in which the mind had more to do. There are few men, for instance, who would not wish to spend part of their lives in the most necessary and pleasantest of all work—cultivating the earth. One thing which will make this variety of employment possible will be the form that education will take in a socially ordered community. At present all education is directed towards the end of fitting people to take their places in the hierarchy of commerce—these as masters, those as workmen. The education of the masters is more ornamental than that of the workmen, but it is commercial still; and even at the ancient universities learning is but little regarded, unless it can in the long run be made *to pay*. Due education is a totally different thing from this, and concerns itself in finding out what different people are fit for, and helping them along the road which they are inclined to take. In a duly ordered society, therefore, young people would be taught such handicrafts as they had a turn for as a part of their education, the discipline of their minds and bodies; and adults would also have opportunities of learning in the same schools, for the development of individual capacities would be of all things chiefly aimed at by education, instead, as now, the subordination of all capacities to the great end of "money-making" for oneself—or one's master. The amount of talent, and even genius, which the present system crushes, and which would be drawn out by such a system, would make our daily work easy and interesting.

Under this head of variety I will note one product of industry which

has suffered so much from commercialism that it can scarcely be said to exist, and is, indeed, so foreign from our epoch that I fear there are some who will find it difficult to understand what I have to say on the subject, which I nevertheless must say, since it is really a most important one. I mean that side of art which is, or ought to be, done by the ordinary workman while he is about his ordinary work, and which has got to be called, very properly, Popular Art. This art, I repeat, no longer exists now, having been killed by commercialism. But from the beginning of man's contest with Nature till the rise of the present capitalistic system, it was alive, and generally flourished. While it lasted, everything that was made by man was adorned by man, just as everything made by Nature is adorned by her. The craftsman, as he fashioned the thing he had under his hand, ornamented it so naturally and so entirely without conscious effort, that it is often difficult to distinguish where the mere utilitarian part of his work ended and the ornamental began. Now the origin of this art was the necessity that the workman felt for variety in his work, and though the beauty produced by this desire was a great gift to the world, yet the obtaining variety and pleasure in the work by the workman was a matter of more importance still, for it stamped all labour with the impress of pleasure. All this has now quite disappeared from the work of civilization. If you wish to have ornament, you must pay specially for it, and the workman is compelled to produce ornament, as he is to produce other wares. He is compelled to pretend happiness in his work, so that the beauty produced by man's hand, which was once a solace to his labour, has now become an extra burden to him, and ornament is now but one of the follies of useless toil, and perhaps not the least irksome of its fetters.

Besides the short duration of labour, its conscious usefulness, and the variety which should go with it, there is another thing needed to make it attractive, and that is pleasant surroundings. The misery and squalor which we people of civilization bear with so much complacency as a necessary part of the manufacturing system, is just as necessary to the community at large as a proportionate amount of filth would be in the house of a private rich man. If such a man were to allow the cinders to be raked all over his drawing-room, and a privy to be established in each corner of his dining-room, if he habitually made a dust and refuse heap of his once beautiful garden, never washed his sheets or changed his tablecloth, and made his family sleep five in a bed, he would surely find himself in the claws of a commission *de lunatico.* But such acts of miserly folly are just what our present society is doing daily under the compulsion of a supposed necessity, which is nothing short of madness. I beg you to bring your commission of lunacy against civilization without more delay.

For all our crowded towns and bewildering factories are simply the outcome of the profit system. Capitalistic manufacture, capitalistic

land-owning, and capitalistic exchange force men into big cities in order to manipulate them in the interests of capital; the same tyranny contracts the due space of the factory so much that (for instance) the interior of a great weaving-shed is almost as ridiculous a spectacle as it is a horrible one. There is no other necessity for all this, save the necessity for grinding profits out of men's lives, and of producing cheap goods for the use (and subjection) of the slaves who grind. All labour is not yet driven into factories; often where it is there is no necessity for it, save again the profit-tyranny. People engaged in all such labour need by no means be compelled to pig together in close city quarters. There is no reason why they should not follow their occupations in quiet country homes, in industrial colleges, in small towns, or, in short, where they find it happiest for them to live.

As to that part of labour which must be associated on a large scale, this very factory system, under a reasonable order of things (though to my mind there might still be drawbacks to it), would at least offer opportunities for a full and eager social life surrounded by many pleasures. The factories might be centres of intellectual activity also, and work in them might well be varied very much: the tending of the necessary machinery might to each individual be but a short part of the day's work. The other work might vary from raising food from the surrounding country to the study and practice of art and science. It is a matter of course that people engaged in such work, and being the masters of their own lives, would not allow any hurry or want of foresight to force them into enduring dirt, disorder, or want of room. Science duly applied would enable them to get rid of refuse, to minimize, if not wholly to destroy, all the inconveniences which at present attend the use of elaborate machinery, such as smoke, stench, and noise; nor would they endure that the buildings in which they worked or lived should be ugly blots on their fair face of the earth. Beginning by making their factories, buildings, and sheds decent and convenient like their homes, they would infallibly go on to make them not merely negatively good, inoffensive merely, but even beautiful, so that the glorious art of architecture, now for some time slain by commercial greed, would be born again and flourish.

So, you see, I claim that work in a duly ordered community should be made attractive by the consciousness of usefulness, by its being carried on with intelligent interest, by variety, and by its being exercised amidst pleasurable surroundings. But I have also claimed, as we all do, that the day's work should not be wearisomely long. It may be said, "How can you make this last claim square with the others? If the work is to be so refined, will not the goods made be very expensive?"

I do admit, as I have said before, that some sacrifice will be necessary in order to make labour attractive. I mean that, if we *could* be contented in a free community to work in the same hurried, dirty,

disorderly, heartless way as we do now, we might shorten our day's labour very much more than I suppose we shall do, taking all kinds of labour into account. But if we did, it would mean that our new-won freedom of condition would leave us listless and wretched, if not anxious, as we are now, which I hold is simply impossible. We should be contented to make the sacrifices necessary for raising our condition to the standard called out for as desirable by the whole community. Nor only so. We should, individually, be emulous to sacrifice quite freely still more of our time and our ease towards the raising of the standard of life. Persons, either by themselves or associated for such purposes, would freely, and for the love of the work and for its results—stimulated by the hope of the pleasure of creation—produce those ornaments of life for the service of all, which they are now bribed to produce (or pretend to produce) for the service of a few rich men. The experiment of a civilized community living wholly without art or literature has not yet been tried. The past degradation and corruption of civilization may force this denial of pleasure upon the society which will arise from its ashes. If that must be, we will accept the passing phase of utilitarianism as a foundation for the art which is to be. If the cripple and the starveling disappear from our streets, if the earth nourish us all alike, if the sun shine for all of us alike, if to one and all of us the glorious drama of the earth—day and night, summer and winter—can be presented as a thing to understand and love, we can afford to wait awhile till we are purified from the shame of the past corruption, and till art arises again amongst people freed from the terror of the slave and the shame of the robber.

Meantime, in any case, the refinement, thoughtfulness, and deliberation of labour must indeed be paid for, but not by compulsion to labour long hours. Our epoch has invented machines which would have appeared wild dreams to the men of past ages, and of those machines we have as yet *made no use.*

They are called "labour-saving" machines—a commonly used phrase which implies what we expect of them; but we do not get what we expect. What they really do is to reduce the skilled labourer to the ranks of the unskilled, to increase the number of the "reserve army of labour"—that is, to increase the precariousness of life among the workers and to intensify the labour of those who serve the machines (as slaves their masters). All this they do by the way, while they pile up the profits of the employers of labour, or force them to expend those profits in bitter commercial war with each other. In a true society these miracles of ingenuity would be for the first time used for minimizing the amount of time spent in unattractive labour, which by their means might be so reduced as to be but a very light burden on each individual. All the more as these machines would most certainly be very much improved when it was no longer a question as to whether their

improvement would "pay" the individual, but rather whether it would benefit the community.

So much for the ordinary use of machinery, which would probably, after a time, be somewhat restricted when men found out that there was no need for anxiety as to mere subsistence, and learned to take an interest and pleasure in handiwork which, done deliberately and thoughtfully, could be made more attractive than machine work.

Again, as people freed from the daily terror of starvation find out what they really wanted, being no longer compelled by anything but their own needs, they would refuse to produce the mere inanities which are now called luxuries, or the poison and trash now called cheap wares. No one would make plush breeches when there were no flunkies to wear them, nor would anybody waste his time over making oleo-margarine when no one was *compelled* to abstain from real butter. Adulteration laws are only needed in a society of thieves—and in such a society they are a dead letter.

Socialists are often asked how work of the rougher and more repulsive kind could be carried out in the new condition of things. To attempt to answer such questions fully or authoritatively would be attempting the impossibility of constructing a scheme of a new society out of the materials of the old, before we knew which of those materials would disappear and which endure through the evolution which is leading us to the great change. Yet it is not difficult to conceive of some arrangement whereby those who did the roughest work should work for the shortest spells. And again, what is said above of the variety of work applies specially here. Once more I say, that for a man to be the whole of his life hopelessly engaged in performing one repulsive and never-ending task, is an arrangement fit enough for the hell imagined by theologians, but scarcely fit for any other form of society. Lastly, if this rougher work were of any special kind, we may suppose that special volunteers would be called on to perform it, who would surely be forthcoming, unless men in a state of freedom should lose the sparks of manliness which they possessed as slaves.

And yet if there be any work which cannot be made other than repulsive, either by the shortness of its duration or the intermittency of its recurrence, or by the sense of special and peculiar usefulness (and therefore honour) in the mind of the man who performs it freely—if there be any work which cannot be but a torment to the worker, what then? Well, then, let us see if the heavens will fall on us if we leave it undone, for it were better that they should. The produce of such work cannot be worth the price of it.

Now we have seen that the semi-theological dogma that all labour, under any circumstances, is a blessing to the labourer, is hypocritical and false; that, on the other hand, labour is good when due hope of rest and pleasure accompanies it. We have weighed the work of civilization

in the balance and found it wanting, since hope is mostly lacking to it, and therefore we see that civilization has bred a dire curse for men. But we have seen also that the work of the world might be carried on in hope and with pleasure if it were not wasted by folly and tyranny, by the perpetual strife of opposing classes.

It is Peace, therefore, which we need in order that we may live and work in hope and with pleasure. Peace so much desired, if we may trust men's words, but which has been so continually and steadily rejected by them in deeds. But for us, let us set our hearts on it and win it at whatever cost.

What the cost may be, who can tell? Will it be possible to win peace peaceably? Alas, how can it be? We are so hemmed in by wrong and folly, that in one way or other we must always be fighting against them: our own lives may see no end to the struggle, perhaps no obvious hope of the end. It may be that the best we can hope to see is that struggle getting sharper and bitterer day by day, until it breaks out openly at last into the slaughter of men by actual warfare instead of by the slower and crueller methods of "peaceful" commerce. If we live to see that, we shall live to see much; for it will mean the rich classes grown conscious of their own wrong and robbery, and consciously defending them by open violence; and then the end will be drawing near.

But in any case, and whatever the nature of our strife for peace may be, if we only aim at it steadily and with singleness of heart, and ever keep it in view, a reflection from that peace of the future will illumine the turmoil and trouble of our lives, whether the trouble be seemingly petty, or obviously tragic; and we shall, in our hopes at least, live the lives of men: nor can the present times give us any reward greater than that.

Dawn of a New Epoch

Perhaps some of my readers may think that the above title is not a correct one: it may be said, a new epoch is always dawning, change is always going on, and it goes on so gradually that we do not know when we are out of an old epoch and into a new one. There is truth in that, at least to this extent, that no age can see itself: we must stand some way off before the confused picture with its rugged surface can resolve itself into its due order, and seem to be something with a definite purpose carried through all its details. Nevertheless, when we look back on history we do distinguish periods in the lapse of time that are not merely arbitrary ones, we note the early growth of the ideas which are to form the new order of things, we note their development into the transitional period, and finally the new epoch is revealed to us bearing in its full development, unseen as yet, the seeds of the newer order still which shall transform it in its turn into something else.

Moreover, there are periods in which even those alive in them become more or less conscious of the change which is always going on; the old ideas which were once so exciting to men's imaginations, now cease to move them, though they may be accepted as dull and necessary platitudes: the material circumstances of man's life which were once only struggled with in detail, and only according to a kind of law made manifest in their working, are in such times conscious of change, and are only accepted under protest until some means can be found to alter them. The old and dying order, once silent and all-powerful, tries to express itself violently, and becomes at once noisy and weak. The nascent order once too weak to be conscious of need of expression, or capable of it if it were, becomes conscious now and finds a voice. The silent sap of the years is being laid aside for open assault; the men are gathering under arms in the trenches, and the forlorn hope is ready, no longer trifling with little solacements of the time of weary waiting, but looking forward to mere death or the joy of victory.

Now I think, and some who read this will agree with me, that we are

now living in one of these times of conscious change; we not only are, but we feel also ourselves to be living between the old and the new; we are expecting something to happen, as the phrase goes: at such times it behoves us to understand what is the old which is dying, what is the new which is coming into existence? That is a question practically important to us all, since these periods of conscious change are also, in one way or other, times of serious combat, and each of us, if he does not look to it and learn to understand what is going on, may find himself fighting on the wrong side, the side with which he really does not sympathize.

What is the combat we are now entering upon—who is it to be fought between? Absolutism and Democracy, perhaps some will answer. Not quite, I think; that contest was practically settled by the great French Revolution; it is only its embers which are burning now: or at least that is so in the countries which are not belated, like Russia, for instance. Democracy, or at least what used to be considered Democracy, is now triumphant; and though it is true that there are countries where freedom of speech is repressed besides Russia, as *e.g.,* Germany and Ireland,* that only happens when the rulers of the triumphant Democracy are beginning to be afraid of the new order of things, now becoming conscious of itself, and are being driven into reaction in consequence. No, it is not Absolutism and Democracy as the French Revolution understood those two words that are the enemies now: the issue is deeper than it was; the two foes are now Mastership and Fellowship. This is a far more serious quarrel than the old one, and involves a much completer revolution. The grounds of conflict are really quite different. Democracy said and says, men shall not be the masters of others because hereditary privilege has made a race or a family so, and they happen to belong to such race; they shall individually grow into being the masters of others by the development of certain qualities under a system of authority which *artificially* protects the wealth of every man, if he has acquired it in accordance with this artificial system, from the interference of every other, or from all others combined.

The new order of things says, on the contrary, why have masters at all? let us be *fellows* working in the harmony of association for the common good, that is, for the greatest happiness and completest development of every human being in the community.

This ideal and hope of a new society founded on industrial peace and forethought, bearing with it its own ethics, aiming at a new and higher life for all men, has received the general name of Socialism, and it is my firm belief that it is destined to supersede the old order of things founded on industrial war, and to be the next step in the progress of humanity.

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*And the brick and mortar country London, also, it seems (Feb. 1888).

Now, since I must explain further what are the aims of Socialism, the ideal of the new epoch, I find that I must begin by explaining to you what is the constitution of the old order which it is destined to supplant. If I can make that clear to you, I shall have also made clear to you the first aim of Socialism: for I have said that the present and decaying order of things, like those which have gone before it, has to be propped up by a system of artificial authority; when that artificial authority has been swept away, harmonious association will be felt by all men to be a necessity of their happy and undegraded existence on the earth, and Socialism will become the condition under which we shall all live, and it will develop naturally, and probably with no violent conflict, whatever detailed system may be necessary: I say the struggle will not be over these details, which will surely vary according to the difference of unchangeable natural surroundings, but over the question, shall it be mastership or fellowship?

Let us see then what is the condition of society under the last development of mastership, the commercial system, which has taken the place of the Feudal system.

Like all other systems of society, it is founded on the necessity of man conquering his subsistence from Nature by labour, and also, like most other systems that we know of, it presupposes the unequal distribution of labour among different classes of society, and the unequal distribution of the results of that labour: it does not differ in that respect from the system which it supplanted; it has only altered the method whereby that unequal distribution should be arranged. There are still rich people and poor people amongst us, as there were in the Middle Ages; nay, there is no doubt that, relatively at least to the sum of wealth existing, the rich are richer and the poor are poorer now than they were then. However that may be, in any case now as then there are people who have much work and little wealth living beside other people who have much wealth and little work. The richest are still the idlest, and those who work hardest and perform the most painful tasks are the worst rewarded for their labour.

To me, and I should hope to my readers, this seems grossly unfair; and I may remind you here that the world has always had a sense of its injustice. For century after century, while society has strenuously bolstered up this injustice forcibly and artificially, it has professed belief in philosophies, codes of ethics, and religions which have inculcated justice and fair dealing between men: nay, some of them have gone so far as to bid us bear one another's burdens, and have put before men the duty, and in the long run the pleasure, of the strong working for the weak, the wise for the foolish, the helpful for the helpless; and yet these precepts of morality have been set aside in practice as persistently as they have been preached in theory; and naturally so, since they attack the very basis of class society. I as a Socialist am bound to preach them

to you once more, assuring you that they are no mere foolish dreams bidding us to do what we now must acknowledge to be impossible, but reasonable rules of action, good for our defence against the tyranny of Nature. Anyhow, honest men have the choice before them of either putting these theories in practice or rejecting them altogether. If they will but face that dilemma, I think we shall soon have a new world of it; yet I fear they will find it hard to do so: the theory is old, and we have got used to it and its form of words: the practice is new, and would involve responsibilities we have not yet thought much of.

Now the great difference between our present system and that of the feudal period is that, as far as the conditions of life are concerned, all distinction of classes is abolished except that between rich and poor: society is thus simplified; the arbitrary distinction is gone, the real one remains and is far more stringent than the arbitrary one was. Once all society was rude, there was little real difference between the gentleman and the non-gentleman, and you had to dress them differently from one another in order to distinguish them. But now a well-to-do man is a refined and cultivated being, enjoying to the full his share of the conquest over Nature which the modern world has achieved, while the poor man is rude and degraded, and has no share in the wealth conquered by modern science from Nature: he is certainly no better as to material condition than the serf of the Middle Ages, perhaps he is worse: to my mind he is at least worse than the savage living in a good climate.

I do not think that any thoughtful man seriously denies this: let us try to see what brings it about; let us see it as clearly as we all see that the hereditary privilege of the noble caste, and the consequent serf slavery of the workers of the Middle Ages, brought about the peculiar conditions of that period.

Society is now divided between two classes, those who monopolize all the means of the production of wealth save one; and those who possess nothing except that one, the Power of Labour. That power of labour is useless to its possessors and cannot be exercised without the help of the other means of production; but those who have nothing but labour-power—*i.e.*, who have no means of making others work for them, must work for themselves in order to live; and they must therefore apply to the owners of the means of fructifying labour—*i.e.*, the land, machinery, &c., for leave to work that they may live. The possessing class (as for short we will call them) are quite prepared to grant this leave, and indeed they must grant it if they are to use the labour-power of the non-possessing class for their own advantage, which is their special privilege. But that privilege enables them to *compel* the non-possessing class to sell them their labour-power on terms which ensure the continuance of their monopoly. These terms are at the outset very simple. The possessing class, or masters, allow the men just so much of the wealth produced by their labour as will give them such a livelihood as is

considered necessary at the time, and will permit them to breed and rear children to a working age: that is the simple condition of the "bargain" which obtains when the labour-power required is low in quality, what is called unskilled labour, and when the workers are too weak or ignorant to combine so as to threaten the masters with some form of rebellion. When skilled labour is wanted, and the labourer has consequently cost more to produce, and is rarer to be found, the price of the article is higher: as also when the commodity labour takes to thinking and remembers that after all it is also *men,* and as aforesaid holds out threats to the masters; in that case they for their part generally think it prudent to give way, when the competition of the market allows them to do so, and so the standard of livelihood for the workers rises.

But to speak plainly, the greater part of the workers, in spite of strikes and Trades' Unions, do get little more than a bare subsistence wage, and when they grow sick or old they would die outright if it were not for the refuge afforded them by the workhouse, which is purposely made as prison-like and wretched as possible, in order to prevent the lower-paid workers from taking refuge in it before the time of their *industrial* death.

Now comes the question as to how the masters are able to force the men to sell their commodity labour-power so dirt-cheap without treating them as the ancients treated their slaves—*i.e.,* with the whip. Well, of course you understand that the master having paid his workmen what they can live upon, and having paid for the wear and tear of machinery and other expenses of that kind, has for his share whatever remains over and above, *the whole of which he gets from the exercise of the labour-power possessed by the worker:* he is anxious therefore to make the most of this privilege, and competes with his fellow-manufacturers to the utmost in the market: so that the distribution of wares is organized on a gambling basis, and as a consequence many more hands are needed when trade is brisk than when it is slack, or even in an ordinary condition: under the stimulus also of the lust for acquiring this surplus value of labour, the great machines of our epoch were invented and are yearly improved, and they act on labour in a threefold way: first they get rid of many hands; next they lower the quality of the labour required, so that skilled work is wanted less and less; thirdly, the improvement in them forces the workers to work harder while they are at work, as notably in the cotton-spinning industry. Also in most trades women and children are employed, to whom it is not even pretended that a subsistence wage is given. Owing to all these causes, the reserve army of labour necessary to our present system of manufactures for the gambling-market, the introduction of labour-saving machines (labour saved for the master, mind you, not the man), and the intensifying of the labour while it lasts, the employment of the auxiliary labour of women and children: owing to all this there are in ordinary years even,

not merely in specially bad years like the current one,* more workers than there is work for them to do. The workers therefore undersell one another in disposing of their one commodity, labour-power, and are *forced* to do so, or they would not be allowed to work, and therefore would have to starve or go to the prison called the workhouse. This is why the masters at the present day are able to dispense with the exercise of obvious violence which in bygone times they used towards their slaves.

This then is the first distinction between the two great classes of modern Society: the upper class possesses wealth, the lower lacks wealth; but there is another distinction to which I will now draw your attention: the class which lacks wealth is the class that produces it, the class that possesses it does not produce it, it consumes it only. If by any chance the so-called lower class were to perish or leave the community, production of wealth would come to a standstill, until the wealth-owners had learned how to produce, until they had descended from their position, and had taken the place of their former slaves. If, on the contrary, the wealth-owners were to disappear, production of wealth would at the worst be only hindered for awhile, and probably would go on pretty much as it does now.

But you may say, though it is certain that some of the wealth-owners, as landlords, holders of funds, and the like, do nothing, yet there are many of them who work hard. Well, that is true, and perhaps nothing so clearly shows the extreme folly of the present system than this fact that there are so many able and industrious men employed by it, in working hard at—nothing: nothing or worse. They work, but they do not produce.

It is true that some useful occupations are in the hands of the privileged classes, physic, education, and the fine arts, *e.g.* The men who work at these occupations are certainly working usefully; and all that we can say against them is that they are sometimes paid too high in proportion to the pay of other useful persons, which high pay is given them in recognition of their being the parasites of the possessing classes. But even as to numbers these are not a very large part of the possessors of wealth, and, as to the wealth they hold, it is quite insignificant compared with that held by those who do nothing useful.

Of these last, some, as we all agree, do not pretend to do anything except amuse themselves, and probably these are the least harmful of the useless classes. Then there are others who follow occupations which would have no place in a reasonable condition of society, as, *e.g.*, lawyers, judges, jailers, and soldiers of the higher grades, and most Government officials. Finally comes the much greater group of those who are engaged in gambling or fighting for their individual shares of

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*1886, to wit.

the tribute which their class compels the working-class to yield to it: these are the group that one calls broadly business men, the conductors of our commerce, if you please to call them so.

To extract a good proportion of this tribute, and to keep as much as possible of it when extracted for oneself, is the main business of life for these men, that is, for most well-to-do and rich people; it is called, quite inaccurately, "money-making"; and those who are most successful in this occupation are, in spite of all hypocritical pretences to the contrary, the persons most respected by the public.

A word or two as to the tribute extracted from the workers as aforesaid. It is no trifle, but amounts to at least two-thirds of all that the worker produces; but you must understand that it is not all taken directly from the workman by his immediate employer, but by the employing class. Besides the tribute or profit of the direct employer, which is in all cases as much as he can get amidst his competition or war with other employers, the worker has also to pay taxes in various forms, and the greater part of the wealth so extorted is at the best merely wasted: and remember, whoever *seems* to pay the taxes, labour in the long run is the only real taxpayer. Then he has to pay house-rent, and very much heavier rent in proportion to his earnings than well-to-do people have. He has also to pay the commission of the middle-men who distribute the goods which he has made, in a way so wasteful that now all thinking people cry out against it, though they are quite helpless against it in our present society. Finally, he has often to pay an extra tax in the shape of a contribution to a benefit society or trades' union, which is really a tax on the precariousness of his employment caused by the gambling of his masters in the market. In short, besides the profit or the result of unpaid labour which he yields to his immediate master he has to give back a large part of his wages to the class of which his master is a part.

The privilege of the possessing class therefore consists in their living on this tribute, they themselves either not working or working unproductively—*i.e.,* living on the labour of others; no otherwise than as the master of ancient days lived on the labour of his slave, or as the baron lived on the labour of his serf. If the capital of the rich man consists of land, he is able to force a tenant to improve his land for him and pay him tribute in the form of rack-rent; and at the end of the transaction has his land again, generally improved, so that he can begin again and go on for ever, he and his heirs, doing nothing, a mere burden on the community for ever, while others are working for him. If he has houses on his land he has rent for them also, often receiving the value of the building many times over, and in the end house and land once more. Not seldom a piece of barren ground or swamp, worth nothing in itself, becomes a source of huge fortune to him from the development of a town or a district, and he pockets the results of the labour of thousands upon thousands of men, and calls it his property: or the earth beneath

the surface is found to be rich in coal or minerals, and again he must be paid vast sums for allowing others to labour them into marketable wares, to which labour he contributes nothing.

Or again, if his capital consists of cash, he goes into the labour market and buys the labour-power of men, women, and children, and uses it for the production of wares which shall bring him in a profit, buying it of course at the lowest price that he can, availing himself of their necessities to keep their livelihood down to the lowest point which they will bear: which indeed he *must* do, or he himself will be overcome in the war with his fellow-capitalists. Neither in this case does he do any useful work, and he need not do any semblance of it, since he may buy the brain-power of managers at a somewhat higher rate than he buys the hand-power of the ordinary workman. But even when he does seem to be doing something, and receives the pompous title of "organizer of labour," he is not really organizing *labour,* but the battle with his immediate enemies, the other capitalists, who are in the same line of business with himself.

Furthermore, though it is true, as I have said, that the working-class are the only producers, yet only a part of them are allowed to produce usefully; for the men of the non-producing classes having often much more wealth than they can *use* are forced to *waste* it in mere luxuries and follies, that on the one hand harm themselves, and on the other withdraw a very large part of the workers from useful work, thereby compelling those who do produce usefully to work the harder and more grievously: in short, the essential accompaniment of the system is waste.

How could it be otherwise, since it is a system of war? I have mentioned incidentally that all the employers of labour are at war with each other, and you will probably see that, according to my account of the relations between the two great classes, they also are at war. Each can only gain at the other's loss: the employing class is forced to make the most of its privilege, the possession of the means for the exercise of labour, and whatever it gets to itself can only be got at the expense of the working-class; and that class in its turn can only raise its standard of livelihood at the expense of the possessing class; it is *forced* to yield as little tribute to it as it can help; there is therefore constant war always going on between these two classes, whether they are conscious of it or not.

To recapitulate: In our modern society there are two classes, a useful and a useless class; the useless class is called the upper, the useful the lower class. The useless or upper class, having the monopoly of all the means of the production of wealth save the power of labour, can and does compel the useful or lower class to work for its own disadvantage, and for the advantage of the upper class; nor will the latter allow the useful class to work on any other terms. This arrangement necessarily

means an increasing contest, first of the classes one against the other, and next of the individuals of each class among themselves.

Most thinking people admit the truth of what I have just stated, but many of them believe that the system, though obviously unjust and wasteful, is necessary (though perhaps they cannot give their reasons for their belief), and so they can see nothing for it but palliating the worst evils of the system: but, since the various palliatives in fashion at one time or another have failed each in its turn, I call upon them, firstly, to consider whether the system itself might not be changed, and secondly, to look round and note the signs of approaching change.

Let us remember first that even savages live, though they have poor tools, no machinery, and no co-operation, in their work: but as soon as a man begins to use good tools and work with some kind of co-operation he becomes able to produce more than enough for his own bare necessaries. All industrial society is founded on that fact, even from the time when workmen were mere chattel slaves. What a strange society then is this of ours, wherein while one set of people cannot use their wealth, they have so much, but are obliged to waste it, another set are scarcely if at all better than those hapless savages who have neither tools nor co-operation! Surely if this cannot be set right, civilized mankind must write itself down a civilized fool.

Here is the workman now, thoroughly organized for production, working for production with complete co-operation, and through marvellous machines; surely if a slave in Aristotle's time could do more than keep himself alive, the present workman can do much more—as we all very well know that he can. Why therefore should he be otherwise than in a comfortable condition? Simply because of the class system, which with one hand plunders, and with the other wastes the wealth won by the workman's labour. If the workman had the full results of his labour he would in all cases be comfortably off, if he were working in an unwasteful way. But in order to work unwastefully he must work for his own livelihood, and not to enable another man to live without producing: if he has to sustain another man in idleness who is capable of working for himself, he is treated unfairly; and, believe me, he will only do so as long as he is compelled to submit by ignorance and brute force. Well, then, he has a right to claim the wealth produced by his labour, and in consequence to insist that all shall produce who are able to do so; but also undoubtedly his labour must be organized, or he will soon find himself relapsing into the condition of a savage. But in order that his labour may be organized properly he must have only one enemy to contend with—Nature to wit, who as it were eggs him on to the conflict against herself, and is grateful to him for overcoming her; a friend in the guise of an enemy. There must be no contention of man with man, but *association* instead; so only can labour be really organized, harmoniously organized. But harmony cannot co-exist with contention for

individual gain: men must work for the common gain if the world is to be raised out of its present misery; therefore that claim of the workman (that is of every able man) must be subject to the fact that he is but a part of a harmonious whole: he is worthless without the co-operation of his fellows, who help him according to their capacities: he ought to feel, and will feel when he has his right senses, that he is working for his own interest when he is working for that of the community.

So working, his work must always be profitable, therefore no obstacle must be thrown in the way of his work: the means whereby his labour-power can be exercised must be free to him. The privilege of the proprietary class must come to an end. Remember that at present the custom is that a person so privileged is in the position of a man (with a policeman or so to help) guarding the gate of a field which will supply livelihood to whomsoever can work in it: crowds of people who don't want to die come to that gate; but there stands law and order, and says "pay me five shillings before you go in"; and he or she that hasn't the five shillings has to stay outside, and die—or live in the workhouse. Well, that must be done away with; the field must be free to everybody that can use it. To throw aside even this transparent metaphor, those means of the fructification of labour, the land, machinery, capital, means of transit, &c., which are now monopolized by those who cannot use them, but who abuse them to force unpaid labour out of others, must be free to those who can use them; that is to say, the workers properly organized for production; but you must remember that this will wrong no man, because as all will do some service to the community—*i.e.,* as there will be no non-producing class, the organized workers will be the whole community, there will be no one left out.

Society will thus be recast, and labour will be free from all compulsion except the compulsion of Nature, which gives us nothing for nothing. It would be futile to attempt to give you details of the way in which this would be carried out; since the very essence of it is freedom and the abolition of all arbitrary or artificial authority; but I will ask you to understand one thing: you will no doubt want to know what is to become of private property under such a system, which at first sight would not seem to forbid the accumulation of wealth, and along with that accumulation the formation of new classes of rich and poor.

Now private property as at present understood implies the holding of wealth by an individual as against all others, whether the holder can use it or not: he may, and not seldom he does, accumulate capital, or the stored-up labour of past generations, and neither use it himself nor allow others to use it: he may, and often he does, engross the first necessity of labour, land, and neither use it himself or allow any one else to use it; and though it is clear that in each case he is injuring the community, the law is sternly on his side. In any case a rich man accumulates property, not for his own use, but in order that he may evade with

impunity the law of Nature which bids man labour for his livelihood, and also that he may enable his children to do the same, that he and they may belong to the upper or useless class: it is not wealth that he accumulates, well-being, well-doing, bodily and mental; he soon comes to the end of his real needs in that respect, even when they are most exacting: it is power over others, what our forefathers called *riches*, that he collects; power (as we have seen) to force other people to live for his advantage poorer lives than they should live. Understand that that *must* be the result of the possession of *riches*.

Now this power to compel others to live poorly Socialism would abolish entirely, and in that sense would make an end of private property: nor would it need to make laws to prevent accumulation artificially when once people had found out that they could employ themselves, and that thereby every man could enjoy the results of his own labour: for Socialism bases the rights of the individual to possess wealth on his being able to use that wealth for his own personal needs, and, labour being properly organized, every person, male or female, not in nonage or otherwise incapacitated from working, would have full opportunity to produce wealth and thereby to satisfy his own personal needs; if those needs went in any direction beyond those of an average man, he would have to make personal sacrifices in order to satisfy them; he would have, for instance, to work longer hours, or to forego some luxury that he did not care for in order to obtain something which he very much desired: so doing he would at the worst injure no one: and you will clearly see that there is no other choice for him between so doing and his forcing some one else to forego *his* special desires; and this latter proceeding by the way, when it is done without the sanction of the most powerful part of society, is called *theft*; though on the big scale and duly sanctioned by artificial laws, it is, as we have seen, the ground-work of our present system. Once more, that system refuses permission to people to produce unless under artificial restrictions; under Socialism, every one who could produce would be free to produce, so that the price of an article would be just the cost of its production, and what we now call profit would no longer exist: thus, for instance, if a person wanted chairs, he would accumulate them till he had as many as he could use, and then he would stop, since he would not have been able to buy them for less than their cost of production and could not sell them for more: in other words, they would be nothing else than chairs; under the present system they may be means of compulsion and destruction as formidable as loaded rifles.

No one therefore would dispute with a man the possession of what he had acquired without injury to others, and what he could use without injuring them, and it would so remove temptations toward the abuse of possession, that probably no laws would be necessary to prevent it.

A few words now as to the differentiation of reward of labour, as I know my readers are sure to want an exposition of the Socialist views here as to those who direct labour or who have specially excellent faculties towards production. And, first, I will look on the super-excellent workman as an article presumably needed by the community; and then say that, as with other articles so with this, the community must pay the cost of his production: for instance, it will have to seek him out, to develop his special capacities, and satisfy any needs he may have (if any) beyond those of an average man, so long as the satisfaction of those needs is not hurtful to the community.

Furthermore, you cannot give him more than he can use, so he will not ask for more, and will not take it: it is true that his work may be more special than another's, but it is not more necessary if you have organized labour properly; the ploughman and the fisherman are as necessary to society as the scientist or the artist, I will not say more necessary: neither is the difficulty of producing the more special and excellent work at all proportionate to its speciality or excellence: the higher workman produces his work as easily perhaps as the lower does his work; if he does not do so, you must give him extra leisure, extra means for supplying the waste of power in him, but you can give him nothing more. The only reward that you *can* give the excellent workman is opportunity for developing and exercising his excellent capacity. I repeat, you *can* give him nothing more worth his having: all other rewards are either illusory or harmful. I must say in passing, that our present system of dealing with what is called a man of genius is utterly absurd: we cruelly starve him and repress his capacity when he is young; we foolishly pamper and flatter him and again repress his capacity when he is middle-aged or old: we get the least out of him, not the most.

These last words concern mere rarities in the way of workmen; but in this respect it is only a matter of degree; the point of the whole thing is this, that the director of labour is in his place because he is fit for it, not by a mere accident; being fit for it, he does it easier than he would do other work, and needs no more compensation for the wear and tear of life than another man does, and not needing it will not claim it, since it would be no use to him; his special reward for his special labour is, I repeat, that he can do it easily, and so does not feel it a burden; nay, since he can do it *well* he likes doing it, since indeed the main pleasure of life is the exercise of energy in the development of our special capacities. Again, as regards the workmen who are under his direction, he needs no special dignity or authority; they know well enough that so long as he fulfils his function and really does direct them, if they do not heed him it will be at the cost of their labour being more irksome and harder. All this, in short, is what is meant by the organization of labour, which is, in other words, finding out what work such and such people are fittest for and leaving them free to do that: we won't take the trouble to

do that now, with the result that people's best faculties are wasted, and that work is a heavy burden to them, which they naturally shirk as much as they can; it should be rather a pleasure to them: and I say straight out that, unless we find some means to make all work more or less pleasurable, we shall never escape from the great tyranny of the modern world.

Having mentioned the difference between the competitive and commercial ideas on the subject of the individual holding of wealth and the relative position of different groups of workmen, I will very briefly say something on what for want of a better word I must call the political position which we take up, or at least what we look forward to in the long run. The substitution of association for competition is the foundation of Socialism, and will run through all acts done under it, and this must act as between nations as well as between individuals: when profits can no more be made, there will be no necessity for holding together masses of men to draw together the greatest proportion of profit to their locality, or to the real or imaginary union of persons and corporations which is now called a nation. What we now call a nation is a body whose function it is to assert the special welfare of its incorporated members at the expense of all other similar bodies: the death of competition will deprive it of this function; since there will be no attack there need be no defence, and it seems to me that this function being taken away from the nation it can have no other, and therefore must cease to exist as a political entity. On this side of the movement opinion is growing steadily. It is clear that, quite apart from Socialism, the idea of local administration is pushing out that of centralized government: to take a remarkable case: in the French Revolution of 1793, the most advanced party was centralizing: in the latest French Revolution, that of the Commune of 1871, it was federalist. Or take Ireland: the success which is to-day attending the struggles of Ireland for independence is, I am quite sure, owing to the spread of this idea: it no longer seems a monstrous proposition to liberal-minded Englishmen that a country should administer its own affairs: the feeling that it is not only just, but also very convenient to all parties for it to do so, is extinguishing the prejudices fostered by centuries of oppressive and wasteful mastership. And I believe that Ireland will show that her claim for self-government is not made on behalf of national rivalry, but rather on behalf of genuine independence; the consideration, on the one hand, of the needs of her own population, and, on the other, good-will towards that of other localities. Well, the spread of this idea will make our political work as Socialists the easier; men will at last come to see that the only way to avoid the tyranny and waste of bureaucracy is by the Federation of Independent Communities: their federation being for definite purposes: for furthering the organization of labour, by ascertaining the real demand for commodities, and so avoiding waste: for

organizing the distribution of goods, the migration of persons—in short, the friendly intercommunication of people whose interests are common, although the circumstances of their natural surroundings made necessary differences of life and manners between them.

I have thus sketched something of the outline of Socialism, by showing that its aim is first to get rid of the monopoly of the means of fructifying labour, so that labour may be free to all, and its resulting wealth may not be engrossed by a few, and so cause the misery and degradation of the many: and, secondly, that it aims at organizing labour so that none of it may be wasted, using as a means thereto the free development of each man's capacity; and, thirdly, that it aims at getting rid of national rivalry, which in point of fact means a condition of perpetual war, sometimes of the money-bag, sometimes of the bullet, and substituting for this worn-out superstition a system of free communities living in harmonious federation with each other, managing their own affairs by the free consent of their members; yet acknowledging some kind of centre whose function it would be to protect the principle whose practice the communities should carry out; till at last those principles would be recognized by every one always and intuitively, when the last vestiges of centralization would die out.

I am well aware that this complete Socialism, which is sometimes called Communism, cannot be realized all at once; society will be changed from its basis when we make the form of robbery called profit impossible by giving labour full and free access to the means of its fructification—*i.e.,* to raw material. The demand for this emancipation of labour is the basis on which all Socialists may unite. On more indefinite grounds they cannot meet other groups of politicians; they can only rejoice at seeing the ground cleared of controversies which are really dead, in order that the last controversy may be settled that we can at present foresee, and the question solved as to whether or no it is necessary, as some people think it is, that society should be composed of two groups of dishonest persons, slaves submitting to be slaves yet for ever trying to cheat their masters, and masters conscious of their having no support for their dishonesty of eating the common stock without adding to it save the mere organization of brute force, which they have to assert for ever in all details of life against the natural desire of man to be free.

It may be hoped that we of this generation may be able to prove that it is unnecessary; but it will, doubt it not, take many generations yet to prove that it is necessary for such degradation to last as long as humanity does; and when that is finally proved we shall at least have one hope left—that humanity will not last long.

Of the Origins of Ornamental Art

Perhaps it may at first sight seem to some of you that ornamental art is no very important subject, and that it is no great matter what its origins were: but I hope to show you before I have done that it is a subject of very great importance, and that it is well worth while to consider what its origins were, since it may lead us to finding out what its aims are, or should be; which in its turn may lead us to thinking of matters of the deepest importance.

First of all I must say that though the phrase is generally accepted it is not a good or descriptive one; for all art should be ornamental, and when it is not ornamental, and in the degree in which it is not, it fails of a part of its purpose: however, the phrase is used, and understood to mean a certain kind of art other than pictures or sculptures which tell a definite story and are meant to represent according to some standard or another certain facts of external nature.

What then is this body of art which is something different from what we nowadays call pictures and sculpture?

It is the art of the people: the art produced by the daily labour of all kinds of men for the daily use of all kinds of men: surely therefore we may at the outset suppose that it is of importance to the race of man, since on all sides it surrounds our life and our work.

What is the end and aim of human labour? Is it not first the continuance, and next the elevation of the human race? If therefore it has gone astray at any time from its due aim, and no one surely will be so rash as to say that it never has, it has erred in turning its force to the production of things which are not useful either for the continuance or the elevation of the race of man.

Let us consider then what things human labour produces for the service of the world. Broadly speaking they may be divided into two kinds: first those which serve the needs of the body, and second those which serve the needs of the mind; such things as food, raiment, and shelter, and the tools for obtaining these on the one hand, and on the other,

poetry, music, the stored-up knowledge of the fashion of the universe which we call science, and of the deeds of men on the earth which we call history, and also the pictured representations of that history however wrought.

These two kinds of productions, between them make up the wealth of the world; the things that are made to satisfy the necessities of a healthy body and a healthy mind.

But furthermore the wealth made for the service of the body can again definitely be divided into those things which perish at once in the using, as food and fuel and the like, and those which are made to last some time and serve our needs day after day or year after year, as raiment and houses and so forth.

Here then you see between the rude arts, whose end is the production of mere food and raw material, and the exalted arts, which should satisfy the cravings of our minds, lies a mass of wealth-producing labour of a special character, which is that side of human labour to which I wish specially to draw your attention tonight; this labour is called in what I should almost venture to name our modern jargon the Industrial Arts.

Now all the things produced by these arts or crafts might be made without any reference to anything but their first obvious use: the house might have been just so many walls and so much roof: so much stone and timber, uncarved, unmoulded, unpainted (except for weather-defense); the cup might have taken the first convenient form it would from the potter's hand; the cloth might have remained undyed, unfigured, and in all this men's bodies would have felt no lack; while their minds would have been free to exercise themselves with music and poetry and pictured images of the past, or with the gathering of the knowledge of what is and what has been.

But men would not have it so; from the very first they have striven to make their household and personal goods beautiful as well as useful; the rudest savage no sooner learns how to make anything than he learns also how to ornament it: before the earliest dawn of history this instinct for ornament existed as clearly as it did in the palmy days of Italian art: as you know implements exist of men who dwelt in Europe ages before any of the races we name now, on which were carved, with no little skill, the forms of the beasts of the forests they wandered in, and in which life must have been so hard and beset with so many dangers that we may well wonder that they had time or courage to think about art: so divine a thing is the spark of human intelligence.

What does all this mean? why did they do it and take all this trouble? Who taught them?

Indeed their teacher is not far to seek: whatever lived or grew about them: nay the mountains, the rocks themselves, the 'bones of the earth' as the Northmen called them, had something about them which they

must have dimly known for beauty; the things which were useful to them for food and fuel and clothes were ornamented: the day and the night, sunrise and sunset which showed to their dim minds as beings of passions like themselves; the serpent whose lurking malice and swift wrath they feared, and whom they worshipped lest he should slay them: all these had been fashioned fair and lovely by forces of which they knew nothing: and they, the latest-born and maybe the most terrible force of nature, how could they choose but take up the links of the chain and work as nature worked about them: many things she compelled them to, and this also.

This then was the birth of popular or ornamental art, the birth of man's intelligence.

Now the works of art I have just been alluding to belong to times of whose history they alone give us any glimpse, and we can have but a faint idea of anything that might have gone on between those days and the dawn of history, the dawn of civilization: of that dawn itself we know but little indeed, yet are to a certain extent helped out by the consideration of the various backward peoples of our time, some of whom at least one cannot help thinking might have had a chance of developing gradually into a condition somewhat like our past civilization if it had been their doom to be born into the world at a time when civilization has taken the form which it has now; the commercial form, under which all Society rests on a gigantic system of usury, pitiless and implacable, which is prepared to crush out of existence all peoples and communities that cannot speedily adapt themselves to its laws.

However that may be we can learn something from these survivals, if so they be, from the earlier condition of the world joined to the few historical hints we have left of that earlier condition, of the dawn of history: the lesson they teach us as to the growth of popular art seems to me to be something like this: the period is that of a state of things when Society has begun, when every man has had to give up some of his individuality for the sake of the advancement of the whole community: in that community division of labour has begun, though there is none of it—or scarcely any—in each occupation: a man has no longer to be his own provider in everything; the strong and young fare afield to hunt or fish, or herd the beasts of the community, or dig and sow and harvest in the strip of communal tillage, while the weak, the women, and the cripples stay at home to labour at the loom or the wheel, or the stithy. So far at least has the division of labour gone. Now, rough as the hunter's life may be, he will have his joys however fierce and rude in his contention with wind and weather, his stealthy watching and final victory over the quarry: and the herdsman and tiller, although he has to take his share of rough torment from storm and frost and sun, yet has his eyes on beautiful things forever, and his ears often delighted by the multitudinous voice of nature as he goes to and fro through the changes

of the year, nursing his hope of the harvest which is to be. With all such men, hunters, fishers, herdsmen, and husbandmen, it was well, and still may be, if they are not oppressed, but are allowed to have their due share of the goods which they have toiled to produce.

But how did it fare with their brethren, who sat within doors, paled by the lack of sun, down-hearted from want of air, with no excitement or promise of victory to stir their blood; surrounded by the blunders, the clumsiness, and the squalor of man instead of the order, deftness, and beauty of nature: hard indeed it seems it must be for them to forego all the brisk life and stir while they sit bowed over the loom and every minute's work is like that of every other minute, no change or hope but in finishing the web that they may begin another; or to keep for ever moulding the pot of ugly grey or brown clay, no one of which is better or worse than another (unless it be quite spoiled): or to have no aim before them as they begrime themselves in the stithy but to make a knife that will cut like everybody else's knife: it is hard that they should be unwilling martyrs to the comfort of the commonwealth while others were leading a merry life, that they alone should miss the glory of the tales of perils and daring by flood and field, or the shouts [and] laughter that welcome the happy end of the vintage or the harvest. Their case surely must be that they are the slaves of slaves and as they sit at their dull tasks what can they hope for save the night and sleep in which to dream that they have grown strong and warlike, and the masters of such as they are in their waking hours?

Nay it was not so bad as that: whatever burdens folly and tyranny laid upon mankind in those rough times, this burden of dull and wasteful labour, unrelieved by any thought of what might be good in the work itself; unrelieved by any hope of praise for the special excellence of the work, was not laid on the craftsman for many ages, except in the quasi-penal labour which was laid on hostile conquered tribes under the ancient civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia; for the most part very different was the tale from the full one I have been telling of: labour found out a solace and a glory for the handicraftsman from the earliest times.

For note, that the goods which the hunter and the husbandman conquered from nature mostly perished in the using, unless they were of the kind that demanded more labour on them to make them useful to man: the hunter despoiled nature of the goods she had already produced; the husbandman helped her or compelled her to yield more than she was willing to yield unhelped or uncompelled; but neither of them created anything and their gettings were consumed in the using, and the fame of them and joy in them died with them: but the craftsman by his labour fashioned something which without him would not have existed at all, and which was destined to last many years, nay for generations even: so that there needed to be no haste nor hurry in his work; he had

time to think as he wrought at it, and to what should he entrust his thought for keeping and for communicating to other men rather than to the work which was growing beneath his hands, the thing he was making of whose life he was absolute master: where then was the dullness now? The flowers of the forest might glow in his web and its beast move over it: his imaginings of the tales of the priests and poets might be pictured on the dish or the pot he was fashioning; the sword hilt, the roof beam were no longer dead bronze and wood, but part of his soul made alive forever: and now no day was like another to him: hope was with him when he left his work in the evening that he might mend the day's failure or carry on its success the next day: hope wooed him to his work in the morning and helped him through the day's weariness.

And with all this he was grown to be no longer a slave of slaves, but a master; a man looked upon as better and more useful than the hunter or the tiller of the soil, deserving of plentiful thanks from the community.

And these thanks, the glory for his creations were indeed often his on strange terms, for the type of craftsman was sometimes exalted to the rank of a god swaying the terrible forces of nature; forging the bolts of the world ruler, fashioning the furniture of the house of heaven; building the rampart which was to guard for ages the holy city of the younger Gods against the frost and fire giants of the North: but again and not without some countenance even from these older myths (note the lame and crafty Hephaestus) the type falls to the half-malignant and altogether guileful mountain spirit, conquering rather by cunning than force the huge giant and mighty warrior and still fully possessing the gift of miraculous power and creation.

Of course I do not mean to say that the primary intention was to make these craftsman-gods types of labour; Hephaestus, Thor, and Weland had no doubt a wider and simpler origin than that; but they received the special characteristics of the literary myths from ideas of handicraft and craftsmen that had been long in men's minds.

Such then it seems to me was the first origin of ornament on wares: not merely an attempt to escape from the wearisomeness of labour, but rather an expression of pleasure in the hope and sense of power and usefulness which men felt in the making of things in the childhood of the world.

Now it has been said, and surely with truth, that those men are the best and usefullest who never altogether throw off their childlike qualities even when they are grown old: and that same maxim I would apply to the race of man as well as to the individuals composing it; and if it were good that it should be so in other matters, and that the mirth and simplicity of earlier ages of the world should yet leave some reflection on our leisure, still more I think it is important that it should be preserved in our working time.

Nor indeed did that pleasure of labour fail man for many ages: I admit indeed that for a long time in the ancient world it was limited and indeed oppressed by the sternness of hieratic art; as notably for many centuries in Egypt, where the marvellous naturalism of its earlier days, in some branches at least, fell under the yoke of a stiff though far from ignoble conventionalism: but even in that period we have enough left us outside the more pompous ornamentation of temples and tombs to show that on many sides art was still free, and labour abundantly illuminated by fancy and invention: much the same may be said of that art which was passed on through the whole of the valleys of Tigris and Euphrates and even extended to Cyprus and other of the islands by the people or peoples of Babylonia, and of which happy accident has preserved so many specimens in ruin mounds of Assyria: the pleasure of the artists who wrought the bas-reliefs for Assur-bani-pal at Koycinjik is too obvious [in] the shapes of animals at least [for] it to need many words from me here.[1]

The freer peoples who formed what was then the northern and western hem of civilization were as a matter of course less oppressed in their art by hieratic conventionalism, though they were not, nor indeed needed to be, wholly free from it: under the classical peoples of antiquity popular art had to run another danger of slavery, which in truth it did not wholly escape.

In popular art the expression of man's thoughts by his hand does for the most part fall far short of thoughts themselves; and this always the more as the race is nobler and the thought more exalted; in short all the more as the art, as popular art, is more worth having, as there is more hope of continued life and progress in it: I mean that between the rough, speedily-penciled work on a piece of archaic Greek pottery, or the shorthand for a field of flowers of the Persian weaver, or the rough stone-cutting, half-pathetic, half-humorous, of the mediaeval mason, between these things and the highly finished and, in its way, perfect ingenuity of a piece of Japanese drawing or lacquer, there is a whole world of difference, the real worth being on the side of the clumsier expression of the historic workman.

Now for a long while among the Greek and kindred peoples, art was wholly in the condition of its thought being far greater than its expression, deft and graceful (as amongst early art) that expression was: then came a period when the technical excellence (of the truest kind) advanced with wonderful speed; the standard of excellence in expression grew very high, and the feeling of a people cultivated very highly within narrow limits began to forbid any attempt at expression of thought which did not approach within the limits prescribed something like

[1](Editor's Note, 1999): Morris refers to sculpted slabs showing King Assurbanipal of Assyria (ca. 668–630 B.C.) in a lion hunt.

perfection: no man must attempt to do anything which he cannot do in such a way that it is almost impossible to pick a hole in its technical qualities: thus art was in the palmy days of the classic times divided strictly into a great expressive art practiced only by those who had mastered the means of expression, and a very limited ornamental art which was but an adjunct to the higher kind and in which there was nothing to express but complete submission to certain limited and well-known rules of proportion: such a state of things among a less gifted people would have gone far towards destroying art altogether; but among the Greeks this aristocracy of art was so numerous as to give us an impression at this distance of time of a great popular art existing among them; and doubtless the rules of art must have been unconsciously so well understood among the population, that what is called nowadays bad taste did not exist among them at all; a condition of art the easier to be brought about because of the great simplicity of the life they led in which what we now call luxury made no part.

Nevertheless you must understand that perfect as their art was it was barbarously and oppressively limited in scope, going step by step indeed with their social conditions the foundation of which was mere chattel slavery: when all is said what a mass of expression of human thought, what a world of beauty that exclusiveness shut out from the light of day. Absolute perfection in art is a vain hope; the day will never come when the hand of man can thoroughly express the best of the thoughts of man. Why then should we deprive ourselves therefore of all the fancy and imagination that lies in the aim of so many men of lesser capacity than that of great masters? Is it not better to say to all who have any genuine gifts however small, 'courage! it is enough for a work of art if it show real skill of hand, genuine instinct for beauty, and some touch of originality; cooperation will show you how your smaller gifts may be used along with the greater ones.'

Well the aristocratic exclusiveness of Greek art drew on it a heavy revenge enough: I have spoken of its first period during which the worth of its thought outwent its power of expression, and of its second, when the expression having reached a point approaching perfection, the exuberance of thought in it had to be repressed to satisfy the exclusive fastidiousness of the Greek mind: there remains yet a third period during which capacity of expression having reached its highest point could go no further, and when there was comparatively little to express by this perfected means, and the classical art was become academical and in fact all but dead.

By this time all domination had long passed away from the Greek name, and the Roman tax gatherer ruled the world of civilization; after a while more by the terror of the name of Rome than by any real power in the state: lower and lower fell the art which the Romans adopted from the Greeks, till at last it was redeemed from contempt only by the

splendour, massiveness, and honest building of its great architectural and engineering works. In the meanwhile the great change drew near: the Roman landlords had turned all the people of civilization into their agricultural slaves, their hired servants and parasites, and the proletariat of the great cities who were fed on their bounty: before the operation was quite complete the state of things so brought about seemed likely to last for ever: for where was the foe to overturn it? But by the time it was complete the foe was at hand ready for its destruction: for the Roman had reckoned without his host: he had subdued all civilization and made it his private slave; and now he found that whatever was respectable and desired the preservation of society would not fight; whereas whatever was against him and the stability of society, the starving slaves, the Christians, the barbarians of the East and the North were valiant and aggressive and were ready at every point to push forward what he considered anarchy and the disruption of the world, but which was at the worst the Medea's caldron from which a new and vigorous Europe was to be born again: with that new birth of society, and faithfully following every stage of its fruitful death and change, a new art also was born: this art was at first clad in the body of the effete art which it took the place of; but yet was from the first startlingly different from it in soul and intention: as time went on it borrowed elements from the East and the North, and drew them together and moulded them into the Greco–Roman mass which was already revivified, and little by little the classical wrappings fell off from it, and left clear the strange and beautiful body of Byzantine art, the art of early Europe—of the time when feudality was shaping itself from the chaos of the ruins of old Rome.

From that city of New Rome it spread far and wide, varying at first but little except as the materials in which it was wrought influenced it by their fineness or rudeness: in Sicily, Egypt, Spain, Persia it was modified by distinct eastern elements, all of them it seems referable to that art of the East which was carried wide about by the Arabs but was by no means Arab in origin but Persian rather: this influence abode with it and afterwards reacted strongly on the art of central and northern Europe which was born more directly of old or New Rome.

In the extreme North and Northwest of Europe it met with another modifying element in the shape of the Celtic or more probably pre-Celtic art, which existed pure in Ireland, somewhat changed in England and Scandinavia by Teutonic translation: between this art, the representative of primitive ornamentation, and the elaborate fretwork of Eastern art there is a certain sort of relationship; so that it might be doubted whether the complete ornament of the Middle Ages does not owe some of its forms to this probably pre-Aryan art of Europe: but I think in fact that except in Scandinavia in the modified form abovementioned its influence on Mediaeval art was not abiding, the equally

elaborate but more logical and measured forms of the East taking its place.

However this may be it is certain that the great and in the main homogeneous art of the Middle Ages was both in form and in spirit a simple and direct development of the new-born art which sprang from the corrupt though still beautiful remains of Greco–Roman art; and it is to my mind certain also that it owed the form of that new birth to the incoming of Eastern or Persian ideas and handiwork which acted on it in a way not easy to trace I admit: that mingled art as I have said was still more permeated in some parts by the Eastern element, and in that condition in the twelfth century especially was very powerful in fashioning Mediaeval art into what it presently became: nevertheless I cannot help recognizing a certain fitness about the name Gothic for indicating the work of the Middle Ages, though at first it may seem an absurd misnomer born of the hasty glance the antiquaries of our grandfathers' time took of an art which they despised and were ignorant of. For besides that the Goths were as it were the iron of the spear that slew the Roman Empire, and from the most righteous slaying sprang Gothic Art; there is obvious in it, nay the very soul of it is that spirit of the North which makes us what we are at the best: the wild imagination, the love of nature, the scorn of pedantry, and stilted pompousness; the genuine, unashamed sentiment, and all this tempered by plenteous good humour and a love of homely and familiar things; a courage in short which is not anxious to thrust anything which is human out of sight even in the most solemn times and places: these are the characteristics of Gothic art which pierce to the very heart of all those who are capable of feeling that manly love of man and his fair earthly home which is of all things that which most makes life worth living.

And now understand that that which makes Gothic art all this is its *freedom:* it was above all things the art of the people; the art of cooperation: no craftsman, who is a real one, is despised in it; there is room for every mind and every hand that belongs to a real man: something to express and some means of expressing it are all that is asked for: all the time this art lasts no handicraft lacks beauty for a moment, nor is anyone set to dull and slavish toil: things grow beautiful under the workman's hands without effort it would seem, and men do not know how to make an ugly thing: nowadays when we light on a piece of the household goods of this period we pay vast sums of money for it and treasure it up in a museum; for it teaches us—*us* who know everything else, this rough piece of handiwork done by an artisan who thought that the world was like a flat dish and that the sun went round the rim of it.

If this seems strange to you, let me remind you of one kind of work wrought by these craftsmen, which is both more accessible and more impressive than their moveable household goods: I mean the buildings

which are forefathers' and among some of which it is your rare good fortune to live: a good fortune which I hope will leave its impress in many an hour of sweet, indestructible pleasure on the future lives of every one of you.

Indeed they have had a hard time of it those ancient buildings of England raised once in such hope by the 'Famous men and the fathers that begat us': pious and religious people battered and half destroyed them; not understanding that the spirit which raised them was the essence of all religions: those who fought for our liberties blindly looked upon them as the strongholds of slavery and gave over their precious stones, the work of valiant souls and free hands, to the titled thieves who stole the public lands of England: The pedant of the eighteenth century, anti-poetical, ignorant of history, supposing that no art could exist outside the middle of the classical period, despised them, botched them, degraded them: the pedant of today, self-sufficient, the slave of money, ignorant he also of that real history which is no dead thing, but the living bond of the hopes of the past, the present, and the future, believes that from his study or his office he can re-create past times, and without a word of sympathy or a day of education can get from the machine-driven workman of today work like that of the free craftsmaster of the Middle Ages: he while I speak is still busy in destroying the last remnants of our fathers' handicraft, and maybe he is the last as he is certainly the worst enemy they have had.

Yes even such a storm of folly and greed has swept continually over these glorious works into which was once builded the very soul of England: yet in spite of it all there they stand yet, a token of the hope that was, and yet shall be of the freedom and honour of labour. Bare as they have been stripped, wounded and patched up as they have been can we even think of them without being moved at the energy of cooperative art which reared them in a rude age by the hands of a scanty population?

For I say that glorious as they are in themselves they do betoken something more glorious still: for remember they do but represent the kind of building which was used throughout the country: when your chapel rose in its splendour there was not a cottage or a shed even on the way between Windsor and London which did not share in its beauty, humble as it might be. Now think what this means; we are so used to houses being generally ugly that it is difficult to imagine, every house for instance in London or the suburbs more or less beautiful; not a chandler's shop at Hammersmith or Brixton but what was a work of art: there would be education for you: education which no books could give; amusement and happiness, to the builders as well as to the occupiers of such houses that no accumulation of wealth can now give to any richest man amongst us.

And I must tell you that if we have not this it is because we do not

desire it: when we do desire it, and are ready to sacrifice greed and injustice for it we shall have this also as well as justice and good-will between man and man.

Meanwhile you see I have taken you a long way from that first dawn of popular art: centuries we cannot count lie between the day when the cave-abider scratched his drawing of a mammoth on a mammoth's bone, and the day when the English masons and wood-carvers struck the last stroke before the Reformation at St. George's Chapel yonder. During all those ages whenever we catch a glimpse of the life of the people we find the popular arts progressive on the whole, and seldom failing in their first aim of lightening the toil of man by giving him pleasure in his daily work.

A long lapse of years indeed, while from the time when Sir Tho[ma]s More wrote his eloquent attack on commercialism and land-grabbing till now, the days are few, the time short: but what has happened to popular art in that short while? What has happened to the popular arts I say in those three hundred years of struggle, mostly successful, for religious and political liberty; in those centuries of miraculous progress, during which England has grown from a semi-barbarous island kingdom into a mighty empire, the master of the minds of men as well as of their bodies?

I can tell you in three words what has happened to those arts: they have disappeared.

That is a strange story indeed and you may well doubt its truth, the change is so tremendous: but my whole opinion is this; to have popular art, or the art of the people, it must be made by and for the people, which means as I have said that man's handiwork is universally beautiful to the eye and elevating to the mind. But such art as pretends to be popular nowadays, do the hands and minds of the people fashion it? Do the people use it? Is the people rejoiced with the making and the using of it?

So far is this from being the case, that the people does not even know that such art exists or ever has existed; what pretence there is of Decorative Art is little touched by the people's hands, and not at all by their minds: they work at it not knowing what they do; like all other toilers nowadays their work is a grievous burden to them which they would cast off if they could. We cannot help knowing that not another hour's work would be done on the Decorative Arts today if it were not that the workers feared death by starvation if they left their work.

I hope you do not suppose that on these terms of labour you can have an art which has any life in it: if you do you are dreaming and will have rude awakening some day: meantime you well know what vast sums of money rich people will spend to isolate themselves from the tokens of increasing population, from the hovels in short which are being raised with such frightful speed all over civilized countries; and I do not

wonder; if I were rich I should do the same myself; I should try to escape from the consequences of the system which had made me rich.

For when it comes to explaining why the labour on which depends the well-being of the arts or in other words the pleasure of life is in its present condition of slavishness I must tell you that since the fifteenth century a great change has taken place in the social condition of the people at large, which some people ignore, and which more still are contented with as a positive gain, and which they believe has brought the world of civilization into a social state which will endure as long as the world itself.

It would be impossible within the limits of such a lecture as this to show by what gradual means this change took place; to show how the chattel slavery of the classical times melted into the serfdom of the early Feudal period; how from those serfs were gradually developed the burgesses or corporations of the mediaeval towns, the yeomen and labourers of the fields, and the craftsmen of the guilds, which classes together with the feudal lords formed the society of the later Middle Ages: it will be enough for our present purpose to state that throughout the middle ages although there was a sharp distinction between the feudal lord and his inferior that distinction was rather arbitrary than real; that difficult, and except by means of ecclesiastical preferment almost impossible as it was to pass from one grade of society to another, there was no class which was by virtue of its position refined, and none which was mentally degraded by the same virtue: at the same time although in the later middle ages this hierarchical system had reached the inside of the craftguilds, and the craftsmen were divided into the privileged masters, with their privileged apprentices, and the journeymen who were unprivileged, there was no division of labour inside the guilds save that which arose from the learning of the craft: every full-instructed workman was master of his whole craft.

Neither outside the guilds was there any violent competition in buying and selling: the greater part of the goods made by the craftsmen were made for home consumption, and only the over-plus of this came into the market: it was necessary therefore for the very existence of the craftsman that he should be skillful, intelligent, and thoughtful; nor was he driven by the exigencies of the competitive market which might demand cheapness from him at the cost of other qualities to forego the leisurely way of working which alone can produce a work of art: the universal spread of art made people good judges of wares and keen marketers moreover and cheap and nasty was in no demand.

Such I say was the condition of the artisan in the middle ages; it may be allowed that he was politically oppressed, superstitious, and ignorant—but he was an artist or free workman, using his brains for the pleasure and the solace of his working hours.

Passing over the gradual process which has changed him from what

he was in the fifteenth century to what he is today, let us look at the contrast of his position then and now, and glance at the state of Society which has produced it.

For in these days the system of hierarchical society has given place to a Society founded on what is called (miscalled I think) the system of free contract. Licence of competition almost complete has taken the place of the attempts to regulate life in accordance with a priori ideas of the duties men owe to one another. The distinctions between the classes [are] merged now into one distinction, that between rich and poor, or gentleman and non-gentleman: there is no insuperable bar to prevent a member of the poor or non-gentleman class rising into the rich or gentleman class: nay the thing is done every day, and in two generations the offspring of the person who has climbed up that ladder between rich and poor may become the equal of the greatest families of the Feudal aristocracy, most of whom, to say the truth have very slender pretentions to representing the families whose titles they bear: moreover there is felt to be no difference in cultivation and refinement between the titled gentry and the rich capitalists or their hangers-on of the professional classes: they are all gentlemen together, even when the latter are scarcely as well-to-do as some of the best-off of the lower classes.

On the other hand there is the great class of working men, among whom there is certainly great diversity as regards their wages, some of them as aforesaid earning as much as or more than *when they are at work* the poorer gentlemen; but whatever their grades may be as regards their money fortune they are all non-gentlemen, and do differ really and not conventionally from the class of gentlemen: their education, their leisure, their refinement, their religion is weighed in a different balance from [that] of the gentleman, nay they do not even speak the same dialect of the mother-tongue as he does: they are in all respects the lower classes, really and not conventionally I say, so that a working man is not fit company for a gentleman, or a gentleman for a working man.

Now this class division of the nineteenth century as opposed to that of the fourteenth was brought about by the gradual development of the system of commerce which is now complete or nearly so; the system as I said of unlimited licence of competition which supplanted the mediaeval system under which life was regulated by a conception of the duties men owed to each other and to the unseen powers.

I will not tonight give you any direct opinion as to the operation on other sides of life of these two systems, but I am compelled by my subject to state to you that the effect of this change on popular or decorative art has been to destroy it.

This gulf between the rich and poor which is in fact a gulf between civilized and uncivilized people living in the same state and under laws nominally the same, this is the gulf which has swallowed up the

popular arts; the art which raised our ancient buildings here and elsewhere, and under which every man's intelligence, were it great or small, was used and subordinated at once for the creation of a great work of art: whereas now it is accepted as a fact that whatever intelligence one of the non-gentleman class may possess is not and cannot be exercised during his working hours: in order to win that privilege he must raise himself out of his own class and become a gentleman.

Now the essence or soul of popular art is the due and worthy delight of each worker in his own handiwork, a delight which he feels he can communicate to other people, as it has been communicated to him by the thoughts of many generations of men under the name of Tradition.

If any of you care about art in any form I am sure you will allow that this reciprocal pleasure of communication is always present at the birth of a work of art: when you have been listening for instance to a beautiful piece of music could you possibly suppose that it was an irksome task to invent the sounds which were filling your whole soul with satisfaction or when you have been reading some beautiful passage of poetry, could you suppose that the strong and melodious words which were elevating your souls and opening new worlds to you, had been given forth from the writer's brain in a dull and pleasureless mood? Surely it is impossible that it should be so.

Yet remember, the artist's, the musician's, the poet's work is not easy, it is real labour enough unless he is a pretender: there are traps and pitfalls on the right hand and on the left into which his hope of creating a work of art may fall, and against which even the best man has to be laboriously on his guard: I say he is a workman or no artist: and on those grounds I claim some share of the divine pleasure of creation which accompanies it for all handicraftsmen, believing firmly that the making-good of this claim is a necessity for the world, if civilization is to be anything else than a name. For first, unless this claim is allowed and acted on, unless it is insisted upon as a necessary part of the organization of Society, it must be the *rule* that all things made by man for the use of his daily life will be ugly and base, will show wherever they are placed as mere blots on the beautiful face of the world. And second it will surely be but right and just that they should be ugly and base, for so done they will be but tokens of the enduring sorrow and slavery of the great mass of mankind: for all people not dishonest must work, and in one way or other their working hours must be the most important part of their lives: if therefore they have due hope, pleasure, and honour in their daily work their lives will on the whole be happy, if they lack that hope, pleasure, and honour their lives will be unhappy. It would therefore be unjust that art should come from the unhappy lives of the most of men: or in other words that the great mass of people should toil miserably for the pleasure of a few dishonest people.

Fortunately, you see, as far as the arts go that cannot be; it is a

question of art and the happiness of the worker, or lack of art and his unhappiness.

In these days, then, in which man has obtained so much domination over the forces of nature, in which so much of what passes for wealth produced, in which Society taken as a whole either is or could be so rich: in these days what are the conditions of life for the working classes, that is to say for most men which would produce beauty and happiness for the world?

First, no honest or industrious man must be under Fear of poverty: the sordid troubles which this fear produces destroy imagination and intelligence, or turn them into other channels than the hope of giving *pleasure* to the world: every man therefore must be certain of earning a due livelihood, by which word I understand all things necessary for his mind as well as his body.

Second, all men must have due leisure: rest for body and mind; time for following according to their bent other occupations than the mere bread-winning one even if it be pleasant: and if their bread-winning work is of such a rough nature as of necessity to lack art or expression of pleasure in it, the daily hours of such labour must be *very* short.

Third, it follows from this last remark that all work in which art, or pleasure, is impossible should be done without as far as may be, that it should be looked on as a nuisance to be abated, a sickness of Society; as far as possible it should be done by machines: and machines should never be used for doing work in which men can take pleasure: whereas at present, as we all know too well, men do the work of machines, and machines of men—both disastrously.

Fourth, those who are to produce beauty must live amidst beauty: their homes and surroundings must be clean, orderly, and in a word beautiful: this *should* be no hard matter to accomplish since the whole world is beautiful save where man has made it ugly.

Fifth, all men should be educated, and have their due share in the stored-up knowledge of the world, so vastly greater now than in the days of art, but so much more unequally shared. All men I say should be educated not down to their 'station in life' as people call it, that is according to the amount of money their parents may have, but according to their capacity.

Sixth, when all these claims are allowed and acted on the last claim I make for labour will come of itself: that is, that there should be an end of class distinctions: that is to say that all crafts should be honourable and honoured, and that every man should be able to rise to eminence and fame by the exercise of his own craft, the work he understands best; whereas at present he can only rise to eminence by deserting his craft, by taking an undue share of the wealth of the world as wages for doing lighter work than his fellows; by becoming a capitalist as the phrase goes.

I will now sum up these conditions briefly: first, extinction of poverty; second, leisure; third, avoidance of wasteful work; fourth, care of the beauty of the earth; fifth, education according to capacity, and sixth, abolition of class distinctions—real, mind you, not formal.

To my mind these are the conditions of life for working men, or really for all men, under which we can have in these days once more popular art, or a happy life for most men. Is it worth while to strive to bring about this happy life? If it be, can we say that the price to be paid for it can be too high, whatever it may be?

You will have understood if you have followed my statement of the due conditions of labour that in my belief that price is the reconstruction of Society; for no mere palliatives of the evils of the present system will bring about those conditions. Furthermore I admit that such a great change would involve the sacrifice from many of us of things now much cherished: yet as I believe that those who uphold the present conditions of labour on the grounds of self-interest do so rather from stupidity than malice, so I think that their loss, or punishment, if you will, will be rather imaginary [than] real when the change comes: I think what we shall chiefly have to sacrifice will be the encumbrances, the troubles, the sorrows even which we now cherish as part of our wealth.

As to the means by which the Reconstruction is to be brought about, I must for more than one reason say nothing of them tonight; save this: that you yourselves in one way or other will as time goes on have offered to you opportunities of helping forward or of hindering that reconstruction; times when you will have to choose between the right hand and the left, and to range yourselves for or against the progress of the race of man: such chances are solemn times in the history of every man and it behooves us when we meet them to choose not influenced by our apparent self-interest but by our real sense of right and wrong: you may think that but a truism; yet I must tell you that in such matters it is the commonest thing to be said to anyone who thinks he ought to join some movement for the bettering of his fellows, 'what will *you* do if this change happens': to my mind it is manhood and not rashness to answer such an objection by saying, what shall I do? Why have my fair share like my fellows.

I believe the time is at hand when each one of us of the well-to-do and rich classes will have to choose whether he will strive to have the great mass of men his equals and friends, or to keep them down as his slaves: when that time comes may we all remember this, that wretched and shameful as is the condition of a slave, there is one condition more wretched and shameful still—that of slave-holder.

The Society of the Future

In making our claims for the changes in Society which we believe would set labour free and thus bring about a new Society, we Socialists are satisfied with demanding what we think necessary for that Society to form itself, which we are sure it is getting ready to do; this we think better than putting forward elaborate utopian schemes for the future. We assert that monopoly must come to an end, and that those who can use the means of the production of wealth should have all opportunity of doing so, without being forced to surrender a great part of the wealth which they have created to an irresponsible owner of the necessaries to production; and we have faith in the regenerative qualities of this elementary piece of honesty, and believe that the world thus set free will enter on a new cycle of progress. We are prepared to face whatever drawbacks may accompany this new development with equanimity, being convinced that it will at any rate be a great gain to have got rid of a system which has at last become nearly all drawbacks. The extinction of the disabilities of an effete system of production will not, we are convinced, destroy the gains which the world has already won, but will, on the contrary, make those gains available to the whole population instead of confining their enjoyment to a few. In short, considering the present condition of the world, we have come to the conclusion that the function of the reformers now alive is not so much prophecy as action. It is our business to use the means ready to our hands to remedy the immediate evils which oppress us; to the coming generations we must leave the task of safeguarding and of using the freedom which our efforts shall have won them.

Nevertheless, we do partly know the direction which the development of the world will take in the immediate future; the evolution of past history teaches us that. We know that the world cannot go back on its footsteps, and that men will develop swiftly both bodily and mentally in the new Society; we know that men in general will feel the obligations of Society much more than the latter generations have done, that the

necessity for co-operation in production and life in general will be more consciously felt than it has been; that the comparative ease of life which the freeing of labour will bring about will give all men more leisure and time for thought; that crime will be rarer because there will not be the same temptation to it; that increased ease of life and education combined will tend to free us from disease of body and mind. In short, that the world cannot take a step forward in justice, honesty and kindliness, without a corresponding gain in all the material conditions of life.

And besides what we know, a knowledge without which we should not take the trouble to agitate for a change in the basis of Society, we cannot help guessing at a great deal which we cannot know; and again, this guessing, these hopes, or if you will, these dreams for the future, make many a man a Socialist whom sober reason deduced from science and political economy and the selection of the fittest would not move at all. They put a man in a fit frame of mind to study the reasons for his hope; give him courage to wade through studies, which, as the Arab king said of arithmetic, would otherwise be too dull for the mind of man to think of.

There are, in fact, two groups of mind with whom Social Revolutionists like other people have to deal, the analytical and the constructive. Belonging to the latter group myself, I am fully conscious of the dangers which we incur, and still more perhaps of the pleasures which we lose, and am, I hope, duly grateful to the more analytical minds for their setting of us straight when our yearning for action leads us astray, and I am also, I confess, somewhat envious of the beatitude of their dreamy contemplation of the perfection of some favourite theory; a happiness which we who use our eyes more than our reasoning powers for noting what is going on in the world, seldom or never enjoy.

However, as they would and do call our instinctive vision dreaming, and as they almost always, at least in their own estimation, have the better of us in argument when we meet in friendly battle, I must be careful what I say of them, and so will for the present at least only deal with the visionaries or *practical people.* And one thing I must confess from the beginning, which is that the visions of us visionary or practical people differ largely from each other, and that we are not much interested in each others' visions; whereas the theories of the analysts differ little from each other, and they are hugely interested in each others' theories—in the way that a butcher is interested in an ox—to wit, for cutting up.

So I will not attempt to compare my visions with those of other Socialists, but will simply talk to you of some of my own, and let you make the comparison yourselves, those of you who are visionaries, or let you unassisted by me criticize them, those of you who are analytically given. In short, I am going to give you a chapter of confessions. I want to tell you what it is I desire of the Society of the Future, just as

if I were going to be reborn into it; I daresay that you will find some of my visions strange enough.

One reason which will make some of you think them strange is a sad and shameful one. I have always belonged to the well-to-do classes, and was born into luxury, so that necessarily I ask much more of the future than many of you do; and the first of all my visions, and that which colours all my others, is of a day when that misunderstanding will no longer be possible; when the words poor and rich, though they will still be found in our dictionaries, will have lost their old meaning; which will have to be explained with care by great men of the analytical kind, spending much time and many words over the job, and not succeeding in the end in making people do more than pretend to understand them.

Well now, to begin with, I am bound to suppose that the realization of Socialism will tend to make men happy. What is it then makes people happy? Free and full life and the consciousness of life. Or, if you will, the pleasurable exercise of our energies, and the enjoyment of the rest which that exercise or expenditure of energy makes necessary to us. I think that is happiness for all, and covers all difference of capacity and temperament from the most energetic to the laziest.

Now, whatever interferes with that freedom and fulness of life, under whatever specious guise it may come, is an evil; is something to be got rid of as speedily as possible. It ought not to be endured by reasonable men, who naturally wish to be happy.

Here you see is an admission on my part which I suspect indicates the unscientific mind. It proposes the exercise of free will on the part of men, which the latest scientists deny the possibility of, I believe; but don't be afraid, I am not going into argument on the matter of free will and predestination; I am only going to assert that if individual men are the creatures of their surrounding conditions, as indeed I think they are, it must be the business of man as a social animal, or of Society, if you will, to make the surroundings which make the individual man what he is. Man must and does create the conditions under which he lives; let him be conscious of that, and create them wisely.

Has he done so hitherto? He has tried to do so, I think, but with only moderate success, at any rate at times. However, the results of that moderate success he is proud of, and he calls it *civilization*. Now, there has been amongst people of different minds abundant discussion as to whether civilization is a good thing or an evil. Our friend Bax in his very able article on the subject, did, I think, really put the matter on its true footing when he pointed out that as a step to something better, civilization was a good, but as an achievement it was an evil. In that sense I declare myself an enemy of civilization; nay, since this is to be a chapter of confessions, I must tell you that my *special* leading motive as a Socialist is hatred of civilization; my ideal of the new Society would not be satisfied unless that Society destroyed civilization.

For if happiness be the pleasurable exercise of our energies and the enjoyment of necessary rest, it seems to me that civilization, looked at from the static point of view, as Bax phrases it, tends to deny us both these good things, and thereby tends to reduce man to a machine without a will; to deprive him gradually of all the functions of an animal and the pleasure of fulfilling them, except the most elementary ones. The scientific ideal of the future of man would appear to be an intellectual paunch, nourished by circumstances over which he has no control, and without the faculty of communicating the results of his intelligence to his brother-paunches.

Therefore my ideal of the Society of the future is first of all the freedom and cultivation of the individual will, which civilization ignores, or even denies the existence of; the shaking off the slavish dependence, not on other men, but on artificial systems made to save men manly trouble and responsibility: and in order that this will may be vigorous in us, I demand a free and unfettered animal life for man first of all: I demand the utter extinction of all asceticism. If we feel the least degradation in being amorous, or merry, or hungry, or sleepy, we are so far bad animals, and therefore miserable men. And you know civilization *does* bid us to be ashamed of all these moods and deeds, and as far as she can, begs us to conceal them, and where possible to get other people to do them for us. In fact, it seems to me that civilization may almost be defined as a system arranged for ensuring the vicarious exercise of human energies for a minority of privileged persons.

Well, but this demand for the extinction of asceticism bears with it another demand: for the extinction of luxury. Does that seem a paradox to you? It ought not to do so. What brings about luxury but a sickly discontent with the simple joys of the lovely earth? What is it but a warping of the natural beauty of things into a perverse ugliness to satisfy the jaded appetite of a man who is ceasing to be a man—a man who will not work, and cannot rest? Shall I tell you what luxury has done for you in modern Europe? It has covered the merry green fields with the hovels of slaves, and blighted the flowers and trees with poisonous gases, and turned the rivers into sewers; till over many parts of Britain the common people have forgotten what a field or a flower is like, and their idea of beauty is a gas-poisoned gin-palace or a tawdry theatre. And civilization thinks that is all right, and it doesn't heed it; and the rich man practically thinks, 'Tis all right, the common people are used to it now, and so long as they can fill their bellies with the husks that the swine do eat, it is enough. And all for what? To have fine pictures painted, beautiful buildings built, good poems written? O no: those are the deeds of the ages before luxury, before civilization. Luxury rather builds clubs in Pall Mall, and upholsters them as though for delicate invalid ladies, for the behoof of big whiskered men, that they may lounge there amidst such preposterous effeminacy that the very plush-

breeched flunkies that wait upon the loungers are better men than they are. I needn't go further than that: a grand club is the very representative of luxury.

Well, you see I dwell upon that matter of luxury, which is really the sworn foe of pleasure, because I don't want workmen even temporarily to look upon a swell club as a desirable thing. I know how difficult it is for them to look from out of their poverty and squalor to a life of real and manly pleasure; but I ask them to think that the good life of the future will be as little like the life of the present rich as may be: that life of the rich is only the wrong side of their own misery; and surely since it is the cause of the misery, there can be nothing enviable or desirable in it. When our opponents say, as they sometimes do, How should we be able to procure the luxuries of life in a Socialist society? answer boldly, We could not do so, and we don't care, for we don't want them and won't have them; and indeed, I feel sure that we cannot if we are all free men together. Free men, I am sure, must lead simple lives and have simple pleasures: and if we shudder away from that necessity now, it is because we are not free men, and have in consequence wrapped up our lives in such a complexity of dependence that we have grown feeble and helpless. But again, what is simplicity? Do you think by chance that I mean a row of yellow-brick, blue-slated houses, or a phalangstere like an improved Peabody lodging-house; and the dinner-bell ringing one into a row of white basins of broth with a piece of bread cut nice and square by each, with boiler-made tea and ill-boiled rice-pudding to follow? No; that's the philanthropist's ideal, not mine; and here I only note it to repudiate it, and to say, Vicarious life once more, and therefore no pleasure. No, I say; find out what you yourselves find pleasant, and do it. You won't be alone in your desires; you will get plenty to help you in carrying them out, and you will develop social life in developing your own special tendencies.

So, then, my ideal is first unconstrained life, and next simple and natural life. First you must be free; and next you must learn to take pleasure in all the details of life: which, indeed, will be necessary for you, because, since others will be free, you will have to do your own work. That is in direct opposition to civilization, which says, Avoid trouble, which you can only do by making other people live your life for you. I say, Socialists ought to say, Take trouble, and turn your trouble into pleasure: that, I shall always hold, is the key to a happy life.

Now let us try to use that key to unlock a few of the closed doors of the future: and you must remember, of course, in speaking of the Society of the future, I am taking the indulgence of passing over the transitional period—whatever that may be—that will divide the present from the ideal; which, after all, we must all of us more or less form in our minds when we have once fixed our belief in the regeneration of the world. And first as to the form of the position of people in the new

Society—their political position, so to say. Political society as we know it will have come to an end: the relations between man and man will no longer be that of status or of property. It will no longer be the hierarchical position, the office of the man, that will be considered, as in the Middle Ages, nor his property as now, but his person. Contract enforced by the State will have vanished into the same limbo as the holiness of the nobility of blood. So we shall at one stroke get rid of all that side of artificiality which bids us sacrifice each our own life to the supposed necessity of an institution which is to take care of the troubles of people which may never happen: every case of clashing rights and desires will be dealt with on its own merits—that is, really, and not legally. Private property of course will not exist as a right: there will be such an abundance of all ordinary necessaries that between private persons there will be no obvious and immediate exchange necessary; though no one will want to meddle with matters that have as it were grown to such and such an individual—which have become part of his habits, so to say.

Now, as to occupations, we shall clearly not be able to have the same division of labour in them as now: vicarious servanting, sewer-emptying, butchering, letter-carrying, boot-blacking, hair-dressing, and the rest of it, will have come to an end: we shall either make all these occupations agreeable to ourselves in some mood or to some minds, who will take to them voluntarily, or we shall have to let them lapse altogether. A great many fidgety occupations will come to an end: we shan't put a pattern on a cloth or a twiddle on a jug-handle to sell it, but to make it prettier and to amuse ourselves and others. Whatever rough or inferior wares we make, will be made rough and inferior to perform certain functions of use, and not to sell: as there will be no slaves, there will be no use for wares which none but slaves would need. Machinery will probably to a great extent have served its purpose in allowing the workers to shake off privilege, and will I believe be much curtailed. Possibly the few more important machines will be very much improved, and the host of unimportant ones fall into disuse; and as to many or most of them, people will be able to use them or not as they feel inclined—as, e.g., if we want to go a journey we shall not be compelled to go by railway as we are now, in the interests of property, but may indulge our personal inclinations and travel in a tilted waggon or on the hindquarters of a donkey.

Again, the aggregation of the population having served *its* purpose of giving people opportunities of inter-communication and of making the workers feel their solidarity, will also come to an end; and the huge manufacturing districts will be broken up, and nature heal the horrible scars that man's heedless greed and stupid terror have made: for it will no longer be a matter of dire necessity that cotton cloth should be made a fraction of a farthing cheaper this year than last. It will be in our own

choice whether we will work an extra half-hour a-day more to obtain a clean home and green fields; nor will the starvation or misery of thousands follow some slight caprice in the market for wares not worth making at all. Of course (as I ought to have said before) there are many ornamental matters which will be made privately in people's leisure hours, as they could easily be: since it is not the making of a real work of art that takes so much ingenuity as the making of a machine for the making of a makeshift. And of course mere cheating and flunky centres like the horrible muck-heap in which we dwell (London, to wit) could be got rid of easier still; and a few pleasant villages on the side of the Thames might mark the place of that preposterous piece of folly once called London.

Now let us use the key to unlock the door of the education of the future. Our present education is purely commercial and political: we are none of us educated to be men, but some to be property-owners, and others to be property-servers. Again I demand the due results of revolution on the basis of non-ascetic simplicity of life. I think here also we must get rid of the fatal division-of-labour system. All people should learn how to swim, and to ride, and to sail a boat on sea or river; such things are not arts, they are merely bodily exercises, and should become habitual in the race; and also one or two elementary arts of life, as carpentry or smithying; and most should know how to shoe a horse and shear a sheep and reap a field and plough it (we should soon drop machinery in agriculture I believe when we were free). Then again there are things like cooking and baking, sewing, and the like, which can be taught to every sensible person in a few hours, and which everybody ought to have at his fingers' ends. All these elementary arts would be once again habitual, as also I suppose would be the arts of reading and writing; as also I suspect would the art of thinking, at present not taught in any school or university that I know of.

Well, armed with these habits and arts, life would lie before the citizen for him to enjoy; for whatever line he might like to take up for the exercise of his energies, he would find the community ready to help him with teaching, opportunities, and material. Nor for my part would I prescribe for him what he should do, being persuaded that the habits which would have given him the capacities of a man would stimulate him to use them; and that the process of the enjoyment of his life would be carried out, not at the expense of his fellow-citizens, but for their benefit. At present, you know, the gains held out as a stimulus to exertion, to all those who are not stimulated by the whip of the threat of death by starvation, are narrow, and are mainly the hope that the successfully energetic man shall be placed in a position where he shall not have to exercise his energies: the boredom of satiety, in short, is the crown of valiant exertion in civilization. But in a social condition of things, the gains that would lie before the exercise of one's energies

would be various and wide indeed; nor do I in the least in the world believe that the possibility of mere personal use would, or indeed could, limit people's endeavour after them; since men would at last have recognized that it was their business to live, and would at once come to the conclusion that life without endeavour is *dull.* Now what direction that endeavour would take, of course I cannot tell you; I can only say that it would be set free from the sordid necessity to work at what doesn't please us, which is the besetting curse of civilization. The suggestion of a hope I may, however, make, which is of course personal—which is that perhaps mankind will regain their eyesight, which they have at present lost to a great extent. I am not here alluding to what I believe is also a fact, that the number of people of imperfect mechanical sight is increasing, but to what I suppose is connected with that fact, namely, that people have largely ceased to take in mental impressions through the eyes; whereas in times past the eyes were the great feeders of the fancy and imagination. Of course people use their eyes to prevent them from tumbling down stairs or from putting their forks to their noses instead of to their mouths, but there as a rule is an end of the use they are to people. I am in the habit when I go to an exhibition or a picture gallery of noticing their behaviour there; and as a rule I note that they seem very much bored, and their eyes wander vacantly over the various objects exhibited to them, and odd to say, a strange or unusual thing never attracts them, no doubt because it appeals to their minds chiefly through their eyes; whereas if they came across something which a printed label informs them is something familiar, they become interested and nudge each other. If, e.g., ordinary people go to our National Gallery, the thing which they want to see is the Blenheim Raphael, which, though well done, is a very dull picture, at least to anyone not an artist; and they do this because they have been told that the—h'm! the—the—well, the thief that owned it managed to squeeze an exorbitant sum of money out of the nation for it. While, when Holbein shows them the Danish princess of the sixteenth century yet living on the canvas, the demure half-smile not yet faded from her eyes; when Van Eyck opens a window for them into Bruges of the fourteenth century; when Botticelli shows them Heaven as it lived in the hearts of men before theology was dead, these things produce no impression on them, not so much even as to stimulate their curiosity and make them ask what 'tis all about; because these things were done to be looked at, and to make the eyes tell the mind tales of the past, the present, and the future.

Or again, in times past, when what is (I suppose as a joke) called the Educational Department at South Kensington was more or less mixed up with the Art Department, I have followed up a group through the wonders of the drift of the art of past days, and perceived that their eyes never steadied once on any of these things, but that they brightened up at once when they came across a glass case in which the

constituent parts of an analysed beef-steak were neatly arranged and labelled, and that their eyes devoured little pinches of nothing in particular, with a trusting faith in the analyst which I confess I could not share, as it seemed to me that it would require a quite superhuman honesty in him not to snatch up a few pinches of road-dust or ashes and make them do duty for the recondite substances which his toil had brought to light in that familiar object. In literature you will find the same thing going on, and that those authors who appeal to our eyes to take in mental impressions are relegated by our most "intellectual" critics to a second place at least: to pass by Homer and Beowulf and Chaucer, you will find the 'truly intellectual' man elevating mere rhetorical word-spinners and hunters of introspection above such masters of life as Scott and Dickens, who tell their tales to our senses and leave them alone to moralize the tale so told.

Now I have dwelt at some length on this matter of the eyesight, because to my mind it is the most obvious sign of the march of civilization towards the intellectual-paunch stage of existence which I have deprecated already; and also because I feel sure that no special claim need be made for the art and literature of the future: healthy bodily conditions, a sound and all round development of the senses, joined to the due social ethics which the destruction of all slavery will give us, will, I am convinced, as a matter of course give us the due art and literature, whatever that due may turn out to be. Only, if I may prophesy ever so little, I should say that both art and literature, and especially art, will appeal to the senses directly, just as the art of the past has done. You see you will no longer be able to have novels relating the troubles of a middle-class couple in their struggle towards social uselessness, because the material for such literary treasures will have passed away. On the other hand the genuine tales of history will still be with us, and will, one might well hope, then be told in a cheerfuller strain than is now possible. Nor for my part can I doubt that art will appeal to the senses of men now grown healthy; which means that architecture and the kindred arts will again flourish amongst us as in the days before civilization. Civilization renders these arts impossible, because its politics and ethics force us to live in a grimy disorderly uncomfortable world, a world that offends the senses at every turn: that necessity reacts on the senses again, and forces us unconsciously to blunt their keenness. A man who notices the external forms of things much nowadays must suffer in South Lancashire or London, must live in a state of perpetual combat and anger; and he really must try to blunt his sensibility, or he will go mad, or kill some obnoxious person and be hanged for it; and this of course means that people will gradually get to be born without this inconvenient sensibility. On the other hand, let this irrational compulsion be removed from us, and the senses will grow again to their due and normal fulness and demand expression of the pleasure which their

exercise gives us, which in short means art and literature at once sensuous and human.

Well, now I will try to draw these discursive remarks to a head, and will give you a more concise and complete idea of the society into which I would like to be reborn.

It is a society which does not know the meaning of the words rich and poor, or the rights of property, or law or legality, or nationality: a society which has no consciousness of being governed; in which equality of condition is a matter of course, and in which no man is rewarded for having served the community by having the power given him to injure it.

It is a society conscious of a wish to keep life simple, to forgo some of the power over nature won by past ages in order to be more human and less mechanical, and willing to sacrifice something to this end. It would be divided into small communities varying much within the limits allowed by due social ethics, but without rivalry between each other, looking with abhorrence at the idea of a holy race.

Being determined to be free, and therefore contented with a life not only simpler but even rougher than the life of slave-owners, division of labour would be habitually limited: men (and women too, of course) would do their work and take their pleasure in their own persons, and not vicariously: the social bond would be habitually and instinctively felt, so that there would be no need to be always asserting it by set forms: the family of blood-relationship would melt into that of the community and of humanity. The pleasures of such a society would be founded on the free exercise of the senses and passions of a healthy human animal, so far as this did not injure the other individuals of the community and so offend against social unity: no one would be ashamed of humanity or ask for anything better than its due development.

But from this healthy freedom would spring up the pleasures of intellectual development, which the men of civilization so foolishly try to separate from sensuous life, and to glorify at its expense. Men would follow knowledge and the creation of beauty for their own sakes, and not for the enslavement of their fellows, and they would be rewarded by finding their most necessary work grow interesting and beautiful under their hands without their being conscious of it. The man who felt keenest the pleasure of lying on the hill-side under a rushen hut among the sheep on a summer night, would be no less fit for the enjoyment of the great communal hall with all its splendours of arch and column, and vault and tracery. Nor would he who took to heart the piping of the wind and washing of the waves as he sat at the helm of the fishing-boat, be deadened to the beauty of art-made music. It is workmen only and not pedants who can produce real vigorous art.

And amidst this pleasing labour, and the rest that went with it, would disappear from the earth's face all the traces of the past slavery. Being

no longer driven to death by anxiety and fear, we should have time to avoid disgracing the earth with filth and squalor, and accidental ugliness would disappear along with that which was the mere birth of fantastic perversity. The utterly base doctrine, as Carlyle has it, that this world is a cockney nightmare, would be known no more.

But perhaps you may think that Society being thus happy and at peace, its very success would lead it to corruption once more? Yes, that might be if men were not watchful and valiant; but we have begun by saying that they would be free, and free men are bound to be responsible, and that means that they shall be watchful and valiant. The world will be the world still, I do not deny it; but such men as I have been thinking of will surely be fitter to meet its troubles than the dwellers in our present muddle of authority and unconscious revolt.

Or again, some may say such a condition of things might lead indeed to happiness but also to stagnation. Well, to my mind that would be a contradiction in terms, if indeed we agree that happiness is caused by the pleasurable exercise of our faculties. And yet suppose the worst, and that the world did rest after so many troubles—where would be the harm? I remember, after having been ill once, how pleasant it was to lie on my bed without pain or fever, doing nothing but watching the sunbeams and listening to the sounds of life outside; and might not the great world of men, if it once deliver itself from the delirious struggle for life amidst dishonesty, rest for a little after the long fever and be none the worse for it?

Anyhow, I am sure it would be the better for getting rid of its fever, whatever came of it; and sure also that the simplicity of life I have spoken of, which some would call stagnation, would give real life to the great mass of mankind, and to them at least would be a well-spring of happiness. It would raise them at once to a higher level of life, until the world began to be peopled, not with commonplace people, but with honest folk not sharply conscious of their superiority as 'intellectual' persons now are, but self-respecting and respecting the personality of others, because they would feel themselves useful and happy, that is alive.

And as for the superior people, if such a world were not good enough for them I am sorry, but am driven to ask them how they manage to get on with the present one, which is worse. I am afraid they would have to answer, We like it better because it *is* worse, and, therefore, relatively we are better.

Alas! my friends, these are the fools who are our masters now. The masters of fools then, you say? Yes, so it is; let us cease to be fools then, and they will be our masters no longer. Believe me, that will be worth trying for, whatever may come afterwards.

Take this for the last word of my dream of what is to be: the test of our being fools no longer will be that we shall no longer have masters.

The Present Outlook of Socialism in England

The Whig revolution, which began on the fall of mediaeval society and culminated in the French revolution, on the one hand, and the establishment of the factory organization of production amidst the ruins of handicraft, on the other, seemed in the first half of this century to have stranded the civilized world on a period of academical coma, having some analogy to the great period of the classical civilization inaugurated by the accession of Augustus. In England at any rate a *modus vivendi* had been established between the employers of labor and their "hands," and free-trade and the abolition of the corn laws had so greased the wheels of factory production that, though profits were not made on the extravagant scale which obtained in the earlier years of the century, they were still very large, and the result was to increase enormously the wealth, numbers, and consequent power of the middle classes. In politics the Whigs, under the new name of Liberals, were marching on triumphantly, and of feudal survivals all but the semblance was abolished; and modern democracy, on the basis of irresistible, nay unquestionable, commercialism, seemed to be on the very point of being firmly established. It is true that in Britain religion lagged behind, and the "freethinking," which had long been accepted as an essential part of the Whig revolution on the continent, was here revolutionary and unrespectable, as an open and expressed opinion, though even then almost universal amongst intelligent persons. For the deep-seated hypocrisy of our nation (and perhaps race), which has often, wrongly as I think, been dignified with the historical title of "Puritanism," would not allow facts to be faced openly on this side of things.

As to literature and the fine arts, there had been for some time a stirring amongst the dry bones in the first, and the nonentity of the eighteenth century, of which the dullard Pope was the high-priest, had been invaded early in the nineteenth century by the men of genius of the dawning Romantic school. Poetry began again and it became once more possible to forget the miseries of real life by burying oneself in the idealities of the great inventors.

But literature, less than any of the arts, depends on its surroundings,

and the imagination of those who have steeped themselves in the life of serious periods of history, as show us by their still existing works, can free itself from the ugliness and trivialities of to-day and produce something which is not alien in idea from the living art of the past. Art, in its narrower sense, is not so fortunate, and on all hands can be oppressed by its surroundings. On this side, when the whole world is sick, the men of special talent or genius share the sickness in one way or other; either their sense of beauty is deadened, or they seek for expression of it in fierce antagonism to the life and thought of the passing time, and the present public either corrupts or neglects them. In this period of Whig ascendency, therefore, art was, let us say, lying asleep, and its condition was not ill expressed by the stupidity and emptiness of the London Exhibition of 1851—the first of the series of advertising shows which have since cursed the world with their pretentious triviality. Even the painters of pictures, the producers of art who approach nearer than others to the men of inventive literature, were sunk low indeed. Here and there was a man who rose above his fellows into something like genius, though even his aims were not high, nor his scope wide, as Turner for instance; here and there a man of unquestionable industry and conscientiousness, as Maclise; but, as for the general body of "artists" as they were called, they were about worthy of the somewhat vulgar contempt showered upon them in Thackeray's novels. In short, no man of sense ever troubled himself about "high art," except as a matter of officialism, or as a piece of affectation which his position in society forced upon him.

As for architecture and its kindred arts, people scarcely knew of the existence of such things. Stupid ugliness was worshipped under the name of simplicity or gentlemanly restraint. Beauty or incident was not so much as thought of. Even the active hatred of beauty, which the Philistine cultivates with such single-minded ardor to-day, implies a somewhat better position for the arts than the sordid dulness of the triumphant Whiggery of the "fifties."

Commerce, the only thing needful; politics, the slave of the markets; literature, existing only in rebellion; art forgotten, beauty dead: this, it seemed, was to be the ultimate gain of "The heir of all the ages in the foremost files of time."

Seemed—but, slowly as the course of events in modern times crawls along, a change has begun to show within the last twenty years. In economics the principle of laissez faire, which in the period above spoken of seemed to have been accepted as irrevocable by statesman and dustman alike, has been blown to the winds more in practice even than in theory, and collective action is admitted everywhere to be the machinery through which we must of necessity strive to make the best of our surroundings. In politics, if they have not become more democratic in the old sense of the word, the word itself has changed its meaning, and no longer signifies a consensus of the rich middle classes,

but rather the gathering of opinion of the working classes, not, it must be admitted, for the purpose of enabling them to manage their own affairs (*i.e.,* the best method for the production of common utilities), but at least to let the governing or possessing class find out what steps may be necessary to be taken to make the only useful class of the community temporarily contented.

In literature and the arts again there has been some stirring of the dry bones, though I cannot think it has been either deep or widely spread. Yet we have seen a man, whose poetry was once thought the very acme of wild eccentricity, dying a peer of the realm without having to make any considerable recantation; and the Romantic school so successful that it is now rather rebelled against than rebelling. In the arts, owing chiefly to the energy and genius of three young men—Rossetti, [William] Holman Hunt, and Millais,—it is at least possible for painters of pictures to live by giving their genius free scope, if they have it in them, however sore the struggle may be against their isolated position which denies them the support of a reasonable unbroken tradition. Furthermore, owing to the genuine instinct for the study of history which is a birth of these latter days, there has grown up some appreciation of the great architectural works of the Middle Ages, and a certain number of highly educated and refined men have now for some time been struggling against the hideousness of our modern streets by designing buildings which they have striven honestly and not without success to make at once beautiful and useful: though it is true that these buildings must of necessity be more or less imitative of the work of past ages; and also that the movement that has had its rise in the study of historic art has borne with it the disadvantage that the public looks with favor on the preposterous attempt to "restore," as it is called, our ancient monuments, which have suffered so much from the neglect and ignorance of the post-mediaeval period, to their (supposed) original state; for though we may have learned history enough to cease to look upon our ancestors as a set of savages whose lives and deeds sprang from no visible causes in the past, and led to no consequence in the future, we have not yet grasped the knowledge that these monuments of art sprang from the conditions of society amidst which they were produced; that the art of a people, as distinct from a few ingenious and gifted men living isolated from the people, must of necessity be an essential growth from the life of the epoch.

Indeed, it is because I have so thoroughly learned this lesson myself (as I think), that I must needs look upon the art and literature of these days as but matters by the way, and something without root or organic growth. I believe that they will flourish again, rising maybe from the scanty tradition left us, or maybe from a new birth,—which we now cannot so much as conceive of,—when a new society has been realized, the hope of which (as I deem), is the one bright spot in the century and is now growing clearer to us.

For even now at the bottom of the change above said in economics and politics, in literature and art, lies a great change in opinion, which has produced the visible new birth of Socialism; a new birth dimly foreshadowed at the time of the French revolution by the opinions and attempts of such men as Babeuf and the Utopists. The public opinion points toward a new society founded on equality of condition, and the association of equals. The first of these has been mainly in abeyance since the time of the poverty of tribal society: the second, after playing a principal part in the development of society from the beginning of the great energy of the Middle Ages, fell with them under the triple attack of bureaucracy, political nationalism, and the lust for material advancement. But, unless they are once again to become the root principles of a true society, I for my part can see nothing for it but a continuous degradation of our false society until it disappears in a chaos caused by greed and suffering.

But I repeat that the assertion of these principles is already being made, not merely by small knots of Socialist preachers, but by the working-classes generally. Trades Unionism is losing its old narrowness, and is learning that it must not champion this or that trade or occupation against the general public; that it must no longer be the carpenters against the public, or the miners against the public,—but the whole body of producers against the non-producers who exploit them; that, in short, the producers must claim the right to manage their own affairs. When this lesson is learned thoroughly, I cannot see how the claim can be resisted; and that more especially in a country like Great Britain, the very existence of which depends upon highly organized industries.

Meantime, I say, the lesson is being learned, doubtless in a rough and unsystematic way enough; yet no one who is conversant with working-class politics can dispute that the attitude of the workmen toward Socialism has quite altered within the last twelve years, and that a claim for a recognition as citizens has been put forward by them, to which all classes of society have been forced to pay some attention. Both the theory and practice of even ultra Liberals as to the relation of the workmen of the organized industries in Great Britain to their employers, in the days when John Bright was regarded by the prosperous middle class as a dangerous democrat and tribune of the people, was that the workman, as workman, was a part of the machinery of profitable production, that there were certain laws of nature that governed the action of the machine,—always in the interest of those who owned and controlled it, the successful middle class to wit,—and that the members of the machine must submit patiently to any suffering which resulted from the action of those natural laws. There was little for the workmen to complain of in this, it was thought, because it was not difficult for any of them who were above the average to rise at least into the lower middle class, and most probably into the higher ranks of it; to become in

short from a mere "hand" a foreman, the manager of the department, or often enough of a factory itself. As for what was below the average that was *its* lookout, and its complaints would not do anything to turn the course of the "natural law." This, I say, was the theory or practice of such men as John Bright and his party; but the machine for the production of profits has protested against the action of the natural law—which must of necessity degrade every man who could not struggle up into the comparatively few places which were to be had amongst the superintendents of labor,—and by various revolts, strikes and so forth, the claim of citizenship has, as aforesaid, been made by workingmen as *living on weekly wages,* and not as workingmen whose savings gave them some share in the privilege of capital.

For a long time the struggle was blind and narrow, but within the last few years it has become a conscious strife for at least some recognition of the social rights of citizens on behalf of *all* workmen willing to exercise their labor power; and, on the other hand, the possessing classes have practically admitted the necessity of a "living wage" for the workmen, even though that must be taken from the profits of the employers. A higher standard of comfort, more leisure, less precarious employment; these things at least, it is admitted, must be granted by the present system to the working-classes,—if the present system can do it—but can it? The answer to that must be found in the answer to another question: Are the interests of the employers and the employed the same? No, must be the answer, they are opposed. And if that be the case, how can the vital questions be discussed and settled with the mutual assent of the two parties to the quarrel? It is clear that they cannot be. When I mentioned the *struggle* of the working classes for citizenship I meant to use the word literally and not metaphorically. The battle must be fought out between the privileged and the useful classes, before the latter can win any solid or lasting benefits for the whole mass. And I have no doubt that it will go on with ever-increasing stress. The concessions made by the privileged classes to the useful ones will grow greater and more important, as the working-men see clearer into their position, and know what it is essential for them to claim; the privileged will concede these with much the same amount of pressure as forces them to yield to present and unimportant demands, some of which at any rate are now used for little else than banners to which to rally those who are yet purblind to the necessities of a real new society. So it will go on till it will be found at last that everything essential has been yielded by privilege, and probably the last opposition will be feeble and formal, and will be easily thrust aside.

It must be remembered that, on the one hand, the tokens that this great change in society is on the way are no longer merely the spread of academic discussion, or the setting forth of Utopias with their roots in the air, but the attempts to deal with "practical" questions concerning

the present daily life of the greater part of the population; while, on the other hand, the ideas of a Socialist society are pretty much accepted by those who can by any stretch of language be called thinking people (among whom I do not include the professional politicians). Almost the only opposition offered to them comes from sheer pessimists, or those who are not ashamed to confess their adherence to the sordid cynicism of greed. How can the new society founded on equality and association be brought about? is the real question which is asked by all those who wish for conditions of life in the civilized world which will enable all groups of society to live with self-respect and manly pleasure.

Now I have practically said that, broadly speaking, the change must come about by the useful classes getting gradually educated to a sense of their due claims and responsibilities, and, as a result, going on steadily beating down commercial and economic privilege, as their forerunners the Whigs, whose day culminated in the French revolution, beat down the survivals of feudal privilege.

As to what is going on obviously at present in the world of politics, a few words will be enough on that subject, as I cannot deem it to be of so much importance as many people think. We have recently gone through a general election in Great Britain, the results of which have made the grossest reactionists (the Tories) jubilant, and I suspect have given some pleasure, even amidst their defeat, to the ordinary Liberal politicians.

The overwhelming Tory victory has indeed seemed to some of our party to mean rather a defeat of the Whigs than of the Progressives; but, though this seems plausible in view of some of the incidents of the contest, I should rather put down the victory to a strong rally of all that is reactionary against everything which seems progressive to the reactionists, from mere Whig Liberalism to definite Socialism,—which rally, if properly organized, was sure to be successful: so that it was rather the Liberals who were defeated along with the Socialists than the Socialists along with the Liberals. In other words there was, and is, an instinct amongst the reactionaries that the Socialists have been leading the Liberals and are the real enemies, and it is a true instinct, though politics, like poverty, makes strange bedfellows, and it is rather amusing to see some of our Whig friends dismissed from their seats on the ground of their being the allies of dangerous revolutionaries.

For the rest it was clear that whenever the reactionaries chose to administer such a check to Socialism they could do so with certainty of success, since there is no Socialist party in England; it has indeed ceased to be merely a sect or a "church" as it was some fifteen years ago, but has never gained any organization; its strength, as well as its weakness, lies in its being an *opinion* rather than a party. Yet it was largely the fear of the reactionists that it was becoming a party which caused the successful attack of the election on progress generally. And to my mind the answer to that attack should be to organize a real

definite Socialist party, and, for the sake of the necessary gain, to accept the probable dangers of such a position. It is true that a widespread opinion cannot be defeated, and need not fear the temporary decision of the ballot-box; but to such a decision it must come at last, unless it is contented to act indirectly through other parties, which may throw it over at any political exigency, and must always be doing hesitatingly and blindly.

To sum up therefore as to the Socialist outlook: There is no progress possible to European civilization save in the direction of Socialism; for the Whig or Individualist idea which destroyed the mediaeval idea of association, and culminated in the French revolution and the rise of the great industries in England, has fulfilled its function or worked itself out.

The Socialistic idea has at last taken hold of the workmen, even in Great Britain, and they are pushing it forward practically, though in a vague and unorganized manner.

The governing classes feel themselves compelled to yield more or less to the vague demands of the workmen. But, on the other hand, the definitely reactionary forces of the country have woken up to the danger to privilege involved in those demands, and are attacking Socialism in front instead of passing it by in contemptuous silence.

The general idea of Socialism is widely accepted amongst the thoughtful part of the middle classes, even where their timidity prevents them from definitely joining the movement.

The old political parties have lost their traditional shibboleths, and are only hanging on till the new party (which can *only* be a Socialist one) is formed: the Whigs and Tories will then coalesce to oppose it; the Radicals will some of them join this reactionary party, and some will be absorbed by the Socialist ranks. That this process is already going on is shown by the last general election. Socialism has not yet formed a party in Great Britain, but it is essential that it should do so, and not become a mere tail of the Whig Liberal party, which will only use it for its own purposes and throw it over when it conveniently can.

This Socialist party must include the whole of the genuine labor movement, that is, whatever in it is founded on principle, and is not a mere temporary business squabble; it must also include all that is definitely Socialist amongst the middle class; and it must have a simple test in accordance with its one aim,—the realization of a new society founded on the practical equality of condition for all, and general association for the satisfaction of the needs of those equals.

The sooner this party is formed, and the reactionists find themselves face to face with the Socialists, the better. For whatever checks it may meet with on the way, it will get to its goal at last and *Socialism* will melt into *society.*

WILLIAM MORRIS

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