

## William Morris

### The Arts and Crafts of To-day

"Applied Art" is the title which the Society has chosen for that portion of the arts which I have to speak to you about. What are we to understand by that title? I should answer that what the Society means by applied art is the ornamental quality which men choose to add to articles of utility. Theoretically this ornament can be done without, and art would then cease to be "applied" - would exist as a kind of abstraction, I suppose. But though this ornament to articles of utility may be done without, man up to the present time has never done without it, and perhaps never will; at any rate he does not propose to do so at present, although, as we shall see presently, he has got himself into somewhat of a mess in regard to his application of art. Is it worth while for a moment or two considering why man has never thought of giving up work which adds to the labour necessary to provide him with food and shelter, and to satisfy his craving for some exercise of his intellect? I think it is, and that such consideration will help us in dealing with the important question which one more I must attempt to answer, "What is our position towards the applied arts in the present, and what have we to hope for them and from them in the future?"

Now I say without hesitation that the purpose of applying art to articles of utility is twofold: first, to add beauty to the results of the work of man, which would otherwise be ugly; and secondly, to add pleasure to the work itself, which would otherwise be painful and disgusting. If that be the case, we must cease to wonder that man should always have striven to ornament the work of his own hands, which he must needs see all round about him daily and hourly; or that he should have always striven to turn the pain of his labour into a pleasure wherever it seemed possible to him.

Now as to the first purpose: I have said that the produce of man's labour must be ugly if art be not applied to it, and I use the word ugly as the strongest plain word in the English language. For the works of man cannot show a mere negation of beauty; when there are not beautiful they are actively ugly, and are thereby degrading to our manlike qualities; and at last so degrading that we are not sensible of our degradation, and are therefore preparing ourselves for the next step downward. The active injury of non-artistic human work I want especially to fix in your minds; so I repeat again, if you dispense with applying art to articles of utility, you will not have unnoticeable utilities, but utilities which will bear with them the same sort of harm as blankets infected with the small-pox or the scarlet-fever, and every step in your material life and its "progress" will tend towards the intellectual death of the human race.

Of course you will understand that in speaking of the works of man, I do not forget that there are some of his most necessary labours to which he cannot apply art in the sense wherein we are using it; but that only means that Nature has taken the beautifying of them out of his hands; and in most of these cases the processes are beautiful in themselves if our stupidity did not add grief and anxiety to them. I mean that the course of the fishing-boat over the waves, the plough-share driving the furrow for next year's harvest, the June swathe, the shaving falling from the carpenter's plane, all such things are in themselves beautiful, and the practice of them would be delightful if man, even in these last days of civilization, had not been so stupid as to declare practically that such work (without which we should die in a few days) is the work of thralls and starvelings, whereas the work of destruction, strife, and confusion, is the work of the pick of the human race - gentlemen to wit.

But if these applied arts are necessary, as I believe they are, to prevent mankind from being a mere ugly and degraded blotch on the surface of the earth, which without him would certainly be beautiful, their other function of giving pleasure to labour is at least as necessary, and, if the two functions can be separated, even more beneficent and indispensable. For if it be true, as I know it is, that the function of art is to make labour pleasurable, what is the position in which we must find ourselves without it? One of two miseries must happen to us: either the necessary work of our lives must be carried on by a miserable set of helots for the benefit of a few lofty intellects; or if, as we ought to do, we determine to spread fairly the burden of the curse of labour over the whole community, yet there the burden will be, spoiling for each one of us a large part of that sacred gift of life, every fragment of which, if we were wise, we should treasure up and make the most of (and allow other to do so) by using it for the pleasurable exercise of our energies, which is the only true source of happiness.

Let me call your attention to an analogy between the function of the applied arts and a gift of Nature without which the world would certainly be much unhappier, but which is so familiar to us that we have no proper single word for it, and must use a phrase; to wit, the pleasure of satisfying hunger. Appetite is the single word used for it, but is clearly vague and unspecific: let us use it, however, now we have agreed as to what we mean by it.

By the way, need I apologize for introducing so gross a subject as eating and drinking? Some of you perhaps will think I ought to, and are looking forward to the day when this function also will be civilized into the taking of some intensely concentrated pill once a year, or indeed once in a life-time, leaving us free for the rest of our time to the exercise of our intellect - if we chance to have any in those days. From this height of cultivated aspiration I respectfully beg to

differ, and in all seriousness, and not in the least in the world as a joke, I say that the daily meeting of the house-mates in rest and kindness for this function of eating, this restoration of the waste of life, ought to be looked on as a kind of sacrament, and should be adorned by art to the best of our powers: and pray pardon me if I say that the consciousness that there are so many people whose lives are so sordid, miserable, and anxious, that they cannot duly celebrate this sacrament, should be felt by those that can, as a burden to be shaken off by remedying the evil, and not by ignoring it. Well now, I say, that as eating would be dull work without appetite, or the pleasure of eating, so is the production of utilities dull work without art, or the pleasure of production; and that it is Nature herself who leads us to desire this pleasure, this sweetening of our daily toil. I am inclined to think that in the long-run mankind will find it indispensable; but if that turn out to be a false prophecy, all I can say is that mankind will have to find out some new pleasure to take its place, or life will become unendurable, and society impossible. Meantime it is reasonable and right that men should strive to make the useful wares which they produce beautiful just as Nature does; and that they should strive to make the making of them pleasant, just as Nature makes pleasant the exercise of the necessary functions of sentient beings. To apply art to useful wares, in short, is not frivolity, but a part of the serious business of life.

Now let us see in somewhat more detail what applied art deals with. I take it that it is only as a matter of convenience that we separate painting and sculpture from applied art: for in effect the synonym for applied art is architecture, and I should say that painting is of little use, and sculpture of less, except where their works form a part of architecture. A person with any architectural sense really always looks at any picture or any piece of sculpture from this point of view; even with the most abstract picture he is sure to think, How shall I frame it, and where shall I put it? As for sculpture, it becomes a mere toy, a tour de force, when it is not definitely a part of a building, executed for a certain height from the eye, and to be seen in a certain light. And if this be the case with works of art which can to a certain extent be abstracted from their surroundings, it is, of course, the case a fortiori with more subsidiary matters. In short, the complete work of applied art, the true unit of the art, is a building with all its due ornament and furniture; and I must say from experience that it is impossible to ornament duly an ugly or base building. And on the other hand I am forced to say that the glorious art of good building is in itself so satisfying, that I have seen many a building that needed little ornament, wherein all that seemed needed for its complete enjoyment was some signs of sympathetic and happy use by human beings: a stout table, a few old-fashioned chairs, a pot of flowers will ornament the parlour of an old English yeoman's house far better than a wagon-load of Rubens will ornament a gallery in Blenheim Park.

Only remember that this forbearance, this restrain in beauty, is not by any means necessarily artless: where you come upon an old house that looks thus satisfactory, while no conscious modern artist has been at work there, the result is caused by unconscious unbroken tradition: in default of that, in will march that pestilential ugliness I told you of before, and with its loathsome pretence and hideous vulgarity will spoil the beauty of a Gothic house in Somersetshire, or the romance of a peel-tower on the edge of a Scotch loch; and to get back any of the beauty and romance (you will never get it all back) you will need a conscious artist of to-day, whose chief work, however, will be putting out the intrusive rubbish and using the white-washing brush freely.

Well, I repeat that the unit of the art I have to deal with is the dwelling of some group of people, well-built, beautiful, suitable to its purpose, and duly ornamented and furnished so as to express the kind of life which the inmates live. Or it may be some noble and splendid building, built to last for ages, and it also duly ornamented so as to express the life and aspirations of the citizens: in itself a great piece of history of the efforts of the citizens to raise a house worthy of their noble lives, and its mere decoration an epic wrought for the pleasure and education, not of the present generation only, but of many generations to come. This is the true work of art - I was going to say of genuine civilization, but the word has been so misused that I will not use it - the true work of art, the true masterpiece, of reasonable and manly men conscious of the bond of true society that makes everything each man does of importance to every one else.

This is, I say, the unit of the art, this house, this church, this town-hall, built and ornamented by the harmonious efforts of a free people: by no possibility could one man do it, however gifted he might be: even supposing the director or architect of it were a great painter and a great sculptor, an unfailing designer of metal work, of mosaic, of woven stuffs and the rest - though he may design all these things, he cannot execute them, and something of his genius must be in the other members of the great body that raises the complete work: millions on millions of strokes of hammer and chisel, of the gouge, of the brush, of the shuttle, are embodied in that work of art, and in every one of them is either intelligence to help the master, or stupidity to foil him hopelessly. The very masons laying day by day their due tale of rubble and ashlar may help him to fill the souls of all beholders with satisfaction, or may make his paper design a folly or a nullity. They and all the workmen engaged in the work will bring that disaster about in spite of the master's mighty genius, unless they are instinct with intelligent tradition; unless they have that tradition, whatever pretence of art there is in it will be worthless. But if they are working backed by intelligent tradition, their work is the expression of their harmonious co-operation and the pleasure which they took in it: no intelligence, even of the lowest kind, has been

crushed in it, but rather subordinated and used, so that no one from the master designer downwards could say, This is my work, but every one could say truly, This is our work. Try to conceive, if you can, the mass of pleasure which the production of such a work of art would give to all concerned in making it, though years and years it may be (for such work cannot be hurried); and when made there it is for a perennial pleasure to the citizens, to look at, to use, to care for, from day to day and year to year.

Is this a mere dream of an idealist? No, not at all; such works of art were once produced, when these islands had but a scanty population, leading a rough and to many (though not to me) a miserable life, with a "plentiful lack" of many, nay most, of the so-called comforts of civilization; in some such way have the famous buildings of the world been raised; but the full expression of this spirit of common and harmonious work is given only during the comparatively short period of the developed Middle Ages, the time of the completed combination of the workmen in the guilds of craft.

And now if you will allow me I will ask a question or two, and answer them myself.

1. Do we wish to have such works of art? I must answer that we here assembled certainly do, though I will not answer for the general public.

2. Why do we wish for them? Because (if you have followed me so far) their production would give pleasure to those that used them and those that made them: since if such works were done, all work would be beautiful and fitting for its purpose, and as a result most labour would cease to be burdensome.

3. Can we have them now as things go? Can the present British Empire, with all its power and all its intelligence, produce what the scanty, half-barbarous, superstitious, ignorant population of these islands produced with no apparent effort several centuries ago? No; as things go we cannot have them; no conceivable combination of talent and enthusiasm could produce them as things are.

Why? Well, you see, in the first place, we have been engaged for at least one century in loading the earth with huge masses of "utilitarian" buildings, which we cannot get rid of in a hurry; we must be housed, and there are our houses for us; and I have said you cannot ornament ugly houses. This is a bad hearing for us.

But supposing we pulled these utilitarian houses down, should we build them up again much better? I fear not, in spite of the considerable improvement in

taste which has taken place of late years, and of which this Congress is, I hope, an indication amongst others.

If the ugly utilitarian buildings abovesaid were pulled down, and we set about building others in their place, the new ones would assuredly be of two kinds: one kind would be still utilitarian in fact, though they might affect various degrees and kinds of ornamental style; and they would be at least as bad as those which they replaced, and in some respects would be worse than a good many of the older ones; would be flimsier in building, more tawdry, and more vulgar than those of the earlier utilitarian style. The other kind would be designed by skilful architects, men endowed with a sense of beauty, and educated in the history of past art, and they would doubtless be far better in form than the utilitarian abortions we have been speaking of; but they would lack the spirit of the older buildings of which I have spoken above. Let that pass for the moment. I will recur to it presently.

For one thing I am sure would immediately strike us in our city rebuilt at the end of the nineteenth century. The great mass of building would be of the utilitarian kind, and only here and there would you find an example of the refined and careful work of the educated architects - the Eclectic style, if you will allow me so to call it. That is all our rebuilding would come to; we should be pretty much where we are now, except that we should have lost some solid straightforwardly ugly buildings, and gained a few elegantly eccentric ones, "not understood of the people."

How is this? Well, the answer to that question will answer the "why" of a few sentences back.

The mass of our houses would be utilitarian and ugly even if we set about the work of housing ourselves anew, because tradition has at last brought us into the plight of being builders of base and degrading buildings, and when we want to build otherwise we must try to imitate work done by men whose traditions led them to build beautifully; which I must say is not a very hopeful job.

I just said now that those few refined buildings which might be raised in a rebuilding of our houses, or which, to drop hypothesis, are built pretty often now, would lack, or do lack, the spirit of the medieval buildings I spoke of. Surely this is obvious: so far from being works of harmonious combination as effortless as any artistic work can be, they are, even when most successful, the result of a contrast conflict with all the traditions of the time. As a rule the only person connected with a work of architecture who has any idea of what is wanted in it is the architect himself; and at every turn he has to correct and

oppose the habits of the mason, the joiner, the cabinet-maker, the carver, etc., and to try to get them to imitate painfully the habits of the fourteenth-century workmen, and to lay aside their own habits, formed not only from their own personal daily practice, but from the inherited turn of mind and practice of body of more than two centuries at least. Under all these difficulties it would be nothing short of a miracle if those refined buildings did not proclaim their eclecticism to all beholders. Indeed, as it is, the ignorant stare at them wondering; fools of the Podsnap breed laugh at them; harsh critics pass unkind judgments on them. Don't let us be any of these: when all is said they do much credit to those who have designed them and carried them out in the teeth of such prodigious difficulties; they are often beautiful in their own eclectic manner: they are always meant to be so: shall we find fault with their designers for trying to make them different from the mass of Victorian architecture? If there was to be any attempt to make them beautiful, that difference, that eccentricity, was necessary. Let us praise their eccentricity and not deride it, we whose genuine tendency is to raise buildings which are a blot on the beautiful earth, an insult to the common sense of cultivated nineteenth-century humanity. Allow me a parenthesis here. When I look on a group of clean well-fed middle-class men of that queer mixed race that we have been in the habit of calling the Anglo-Saxon (whether they belong to the land on this side of the Atlantic or the other); when I see these noble creatures, tall, wide-shouldered, and well-knit, with their bright eyes and well moulded features, these men full of courage, capacity, and energy, I have been astounded in considering the houses they have thought good enough for them, and the pettiness of the occupations which they have thought worthy of the exercise of their energies. To see a man of those inches, for example, bothering himself over the exact width of a stripe in some piece of printed cloth (which has nothing to do with its artistic needs) for fear it might not just hit the requirements of some remote market, tyrannized over by the whims of a languid creole or a fantastic negro, has given me a feeling of shame for my civilized middle-class fellow-man, who is regardless of the quality of the wares which he sells, but intensely anxious about the profits to be derived from them.

This parenthesis, to the subject of which I shall presently have to recur, leads me to note here that I have been speaking chiefly about architecture, because I look upon it, first as the foundation of all the arts, and next as an all-embracing art. All the furniture and ornament which goes to make up the complete unit of art, a properly ornamented dwelling, is in some degree or other beset with the difficulties which hamper nowadays the satisfactory accomplishment of good and beautiful building. The decorative painter, the mosaicist, the window-artist, the cabinet-maker, the paper-hanging-maker, the potter, the weaver, all these have to fight with the traditional tendency of the epoch in their attempt to

produce beauty rather than marketable finery, to put artistic finish on their work rather than trade finish. I may, I hope, without being accused of egotism, say that my life for the last thirty years has given me ample opportunity for knowing the weariness and bitterness of that struggle.

For, to recur to my parenthesis, if the captain of industry (as it is the fashion to call a business man) thinks not of the wares with which he has to provide the world-market, but of profit to be made from them, so the instrument which he employs as an adjunct to his machinery, the artisan, does not think of the wares which he (and the machine) produces as wares, but simply as livelihood for himself. The tradition of the work which he has to deal with has brought him to this, that instead of satisfying his own personal conception of what the wares he is concerned in making should be, he has to satisfy his master's view of the marketable quality of the said wares. And you must understand that this is a necessity of the way in which the workman works; to work thus means livelihood for him; to work otherwise means starvation. I beg you to note that this means that the realities of the wares are sacrificed to commercial shams of them, if that be not too strong a word. The manufacturer (as we call him) cannot turn out quite nothing and offer it for sale, at least in the case of articles of utility; what he does do is to turn out a makeshift of the article demanded by the public, and by means of the "sword of cheapness," as it has been called, he not only can force the said makeshift on the public, but can (and does) prevent them from getting the real thing; the real thing presently ceases to be made after the makeshift has been once foisted on to the market.

Now we won't concern ourselves about other makeshifts, however noxious to the pleasure of life they may be: let those excuse them that profit by them. But if you like to drink glucose beer instead of malt beer, and to eat oleo-margarine instead of butter; if these things content you, at least ask yourselves what in the name of patience you want with a makeshift of art!

Indeed I began by saying that it was natural and reasonable for man to ornament his mere useful wares and not to be content with mere utilitarianism; but of course I assumed that the ornament was real, that it did not miss its mark, and become no ornament. For that is what makeshift art means, and that is indeed a waste of labour.

Try to understand what I mean: you want a ewer and basin, say: you go into a shop and buy one; you probably will not buy a merely white one; you will scarcely see a merely white set. Well, you look at several, and one interests you about as much as another - that is, not at all; and at last in mere weariness you say, "Well, that will do"; and you have your crockery with a scrawl of fern leaves and convolvulus over it which is its "ornament." The said ornament gives

you no pleasure, still less any idea; it only gives you an impression (a mighty dull one) of bedroom. The ewer also has some perverse stupidity about its handle which also says bedroom, and adds respectability: and in short you endure the said ornament, except perhaps when you are bilious and uncomfortable in health. You think, if you think at all, that the said ornament has wholly missed its mark. And yet that isn't so; that ornament, that special form which the ineptitude of the fern scrawl and the idiocy of the handle has taken, has sold so many dozen or gross more of that toilet set than of others, and that is what it is put there for; not to amuse you, you know it is not art, but you don't know that it is trade finish, exceedingly useful - to everybody except its user and its actual maker.

But does it serve no purpose except to the manufacturer, shipper, agent, shopkeeper, etc.? Ugly, inept, stupid, as it is, I cannot quite say that. For if, as the saying goes, hypocrisy is the homage which vice pays to virtue, so this degraded piece of trade finish is the homage which commerce pays to art. It is a token that art was once applied to ornamenting utilities, for the pleasure of their makers and their users.

Now we have seen that this applied art is worth cultivating, and indeed that we are here to cultivate it; but it is clear that, under the conditions above spoken of, its cultivation will be at least difficult. For the present conditions of life in which the application of art to utilities is made imply that a very serious change has taken place since those works of co-operative art were produced in the Middle Ages, which few people I think sufficiently estimate.

Briefly speaking, this change amounts to this, that Tradition has transferred itself from art to commerce - that commerce which has now embraced the old occupation of war, as well as the production of wares. But the end proposed by commerce is the creation of a market-demand, and the satisfaction of it when created for the sake of the production of individual profits: whereas the end proposed by art applied to utilities, that is, the production of the days before commerce, was the satisfaction of the genuine spontaneous needs of the public, and the earning of individual livelihood by the producers. I beg you to consider these two ideas of production, and you will then see how wide apart they are from one another. To the commercial producer the actual wares are nothing; their adventures in the market are everything. To the artist the wares are everything; his market he need not trouble himself about; for he is asked by other artists to do what he does do, what his capacity urges him to do.

The ethics of the commercial person (squaring themselves of course to his necessities) bid him give as little as he can to the public, and take as much as he possibly can from them: the ethics of the artist bid him put as much of himself

as he can in every piece of goods he makes. The commercial person, therefore, is in the position, that he is dealing with a public of enemies; the artist, on the contrary, with a public of friends and neighbours.

Again, it is clear that the commercial person must chiefly confine his energies to the war which he is waging; the wares that he deals in must be made by instruments - as far as possible by means of instruments without desires or passions, by automatic machines, as we call them. Where that is not possible, and he has to use highly-drilled human beings instead of machines, it is essential to his success that they should imitate the passionless quality of machines as long as they are at work; whatever of human feeling may be irrepressible will be looked upon by the commercial person as he looks upon grit or friction in his non-human machines, as a nuisance to be abated. Need I say that from these human machines it is futile to look for art? Whatever feelings they may have for art they must keep for their leisure - that is, for the very few hours in the week when they are trying to rest after labour and are not asleep; or for the hapless days when they are out of employment and are in desperate anxiety about their livelihood.

Of these men, I say, you cannot hope that they can live by applying art to utilities: they can only apply the sham of it for commercial purposes; and I may say in parenthesis, that from experience I can guess what a prodigious amount of talent is thus wasted. For the rest you may consider, and workmen may consider, this statement of mine to be somewhat brutal: I can only reply both to you and to them, that it is a truth which it is necessary to face. It is one side of the disabilities of the working class, and I invite them to consider it seriously.

Therefore (as I said last year at Liverpool), I must turn from the great body of men who are producing utilities, and who are debarred from applying art to them, to a much smaller group, indeed a very small one. I must turn to a group of men who are not working under masters who employ them to produce for the world-market, but who are free to do as they please with their work, and are working for a market which they can see and understand, whatever the limitations may be under which they work: that is, the artists.

They are a small and a weak body, on the surface of things obviously in opposition to the general tendency of the age; debarred, therefore, as I have said, from true co-operative art; and as a consequence of this isolation heavily weighted in the race of success. For co-operative tradition places an artist at the very beginning of his career in a position wherein he has escaped the toil of learning a huge multitude of little matters, difficult, nay impossible to learn otherwise: the field which he has to dig is not a part of a primeval prairie, but ground made fertile and put in good heart by the past labour of countless

generations. It is the apprenticeship of the ages, in short, whereby an artist is born into the workshop of the world.

We artists of to-day are not so happy as to share fully in this apprenticeship: we have to spend the best part of our lives in trying to get hold of some "style" which shall be natural to us, and too often fail in doing so; or perhaps oftener still, having acquired our "style," that is, our method of expression, become so enamoured of the means, that we forget the end, and find that we have nothing to express except our self-satisfaction in the possession of our very imperfect instrument; so that you will find clever and gifted men at the present day who are prepared to sustain as a theory, that art has no function but the display of clever executive qualities, and that one subject is as good as another. No wonder that this theory should lead them into the practice of producing pictures which we might pronounce to be clever, if we could understand what they meant, but whose meaning we can only guess at, and suppose that they are intended to convey the impression on a very short-sighted person of divers ugly incidents seen through the medium of a London fog.

Well I admit that this is a digression, as my subject is Applied Art, and such art cannot be applied to anything; and I am afraid, indeed, that it must be considered a mere market article.

Thus we artists of to-day are cut off from co-operative tradition, but I must not say that we are cut off from all tradition. And though it is undeniable that we are out of sympathy with the main current of the age, its commercialism, yet we are (even sometimes unconsciously) in sympathy with that appreciation of history which is a genuine growth of the times, and a compensation to some of us for the vulgarity and brutality which beset our lives; and it is through this sense of history that we are united to the tradition of past times.

Past times: are we reactionists, then, anchored in the dead past? Indeed I should hope not; nor can I altogether tell you how much of the past is really dead. I see about me now evidence of ideas recurring which have long been superseded. The world runs after some object of desire, strives strenuously for it, gains it, and apparently casts it aside; like a kitten playing with a ball, you say. No, not quite. The gain is gained, and something else has to be pursued, often something which once seemed to be gained and was left alone for a while. Yet the world has not gone back; for that old object of desire was only gained in the past as far as the circumstances of the day would allow it to be gained then. As a consequence the gain was imperfect; the times are now changed, and allow us to carry on that old gain a step forward to perfection: the world has not really gone back on its footsteps, though to some it has seemed to do so. Did the world go back, for instance, when the remnant of the ancient civilizations was

overwhelmed by the barbarism which was the foundation of modern Europe? We can all see that it did not. Did it go back when the logical and orderly system of the Middle Ages had to give place to the confusion of incipient commercialism in the sixteenth century? Again, ugly and disastrous as the change seems on the surface, I yet think it was not a retrogression into prehistoric anarchy, but a step upward along the spiral, which, and not the straight line, is, as my friend Bax puts it, the true line of progress.

So that if in the future that shall immediately follow on this present we may have to recur to ideas that to-day seem to belong to the past only, that will not be really a retracing of our steps, but rather a carrying on of progress from a point where we abandoned it a while ago. On that side of things, the side of art, we have not progressed; we have disappointed the hopes of the period just before the time of abandonment: have those hopes really perished, or have they merely lain dormant, abiding the time when we, or our sons, or our sons' sons, should quicken them once more?

I must conclude that the latter is the case, that the hope of leading a life ennobled by the pleasurable exercise of our energies is not dead, though it has been for a while forgotten. I do not accuse the epoch in which we live of uselessness: doubtless it was necessary that civilized man should turn himself to mastering nature and winning material advantages undreamed of in former times; but there are signs in the air which show that men are not so wholly given to this side of the battle of life as they used to be. People are beginning to murmur and say: "So we have won the battle with nature; where then is the reward of victory? We have striven and striven, but shall we never enjoy? Man that was once weak is now most mighty. But his increase of happiness, where is that? who shall show it to us, who shall measure it? Have we done more than change one form of unhappiness for another, one form of unrest for another? We see the instruments which civilization has fashioned; what is she going to do with them? More and more and yet more? To what avail? If she would but use them, then indeed were something done. Meantime what is civilization doing? Day by day the world grows uglier, and where in the passing day is the compensating gain? Half-conquered nature forced us to toil, and yet for more reward than the sustenance of a life of toil; now nature is conquered, but still we force ourselves to toil for that bare unlovely wage: riches we have won without stint, but wealth is as far from us as ever, or it may be farther. Come then, since we are so mighty, let us try if we can not do the one thing worth doing; make the world, of which we are part, somewhat happier."

This is the spirit of much that I hear said about me, not by poor or oppressed men only, but by those who have a good measure of the gains of civilization. I

do not know if the same kind of feeling was about in the earlier times of the world; but I know that it means real discontent, a hope, partly unconscious, of better days: and I will be bold to say that the spirit of this latter part of our century is that of fruitful discontent, or rebellion; that is to say, of hope. And of that rebellion we artists are a part; and though we are but few, and few as we are, mere amateurs compared with the steady competency of the artists of bygone times, yet we are of some use in the movement towards the attainment of wealth, that is toward the making of our instruments useful.

For we, at least, have remembered what most people have forgotten amongst the ugly unfruitful toil of the age of makeshifts, that it is possible to be happy, that labour may be a pleasure; nay, that the essence of pleasure abides in labour if it be duly directed; that is if it be directed towards the performance of those functions which wise and healthy people desire to see performed; in other words, if mutual help be its moving principle.

Well, since it is our business, as artists, to show the world that the pleasurable exercise of our energies is the end of life and the cause of happiness, and thus to show it which road the discontent of modern life must take in order to reach a fruitful home, it seems to me that we ought to feel our responsibilities keenly. It is true that we cannot but share in the poverty of this age of makeshifts, and for long I fear we can be little but amateurs. Yet, at least each in his own person, we may struggle against makeshifts in art. For instance, to press a little home on ourselves, if drawing is our weak point, let us try to improve ourselves on that side, and not proclaim that drawing is nothing and tone is everything. Or if we are bad colourists, let us set to work and learn, at least, to colour inoffensively (which I assure you can be learned), instead of jeering at those who give us beautiful colour habitually and easily. Or if we are ignorant of history, and without any sense of romance, don't let us try to exalt those deficiencies into excellences by maintaining the divinity of the ugly and the stupid. Let us leave all such unworthy shabbinesses to the Philistines and pessimists, who naturally want to drag everybody down to their level.

In short, we artists are in this position, that we are the representatives of craftsmanship which has become extinct in the production of market wares. Let it therefore do our very best to become as good craftsmen as possible; and if we cannot be good craftsmen in one line, let us go down to the next, and find our level in the arts, and be good in that; if we are artists at all, we shall be sure to find out what we can do well, even if we cannot do it easily. Let us educate ourselves to be good workmen at all events, which will give us real sympathy with all that is worth doing in art, make us free of that great corporation of creative power, the work of all ages, and prepare us for that which is surely

coming, the new co-operative art of life, in which there will be no slaves, no vessels to dishonour, though there will necessarily be subordination of capacities, in which the consciousness of each one that he belongs to a corporate body, working harmoniously, each for all, and all for each, will bring about real and happy equality.

### ***Bibliographical Note***

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