

which his martyrdom helped on was not to be for him yet, but for the new masters of his successors. With us it is different. A few years of wearisome struggle against apathy and ignorance; a year or two of growing hope—and then who knows? Perhaps a few months, or perhaps a few days of the open struggle with brute force, with the mask off its face, and the sword in its hand, and then we are over the bar. Who knows, I say? Yet this we know, that ahead of us, with nothing betwixt except such incidents as are necessary to its development, lies the inevitable social revolution, which will bring about the end of mastery and the triumph of fellowship.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

## ARTIST AND ARTISAN.

### AS A WORKMAN SEES IT.

To be a labourer, and to earn by dint of bodily or mental exertion that subsistence which predominating capitalism at present condemns the worker to receive, is considered by our snobbish plutocratic society of to-day to be something very contemptible and vulgar. But, on the other hand, the man who is an artist—that is to say, the man who obtains very often a very comfortable living by deft skill of hand and grandeur of conception, is looked upon by the idlers of society as an extraordinary being, and received everywhere with adulation and respect. This opinion unfortunately is shared by many working men. They look up to the artist with something more than the veneration which is due to them as individuals who certainly do a good deal towards making life more beautiful and happy. In short, while the artisan is despised as an unthinking drudge—as one of the common toiling millions—the artist is regarded as a darling of society and a great man. Let us devote a short time in endeavouring to discover who is the most necessary, the most useful and essential to the well-being of society. We will assume to elucidate this point, a man placed upon an uninhabited island, totally devoid of both the necessaries and luxuries of life. Suppose such a man approached by a person who offers upon the one hand a number of priceless artistic treasures: statues by Canova, Michael Angelo; paintings by Rembrandt, Rubens, and Vandyck; or poems by Byron and Shelley, and on the other hand offers a loaf of bread, a homely garment, a spade, etc., some of the simple products of the toil of the ordinary artisan, and see which he will choose. A man so circumstanced would at once turn to the latter. Why so? Because they are the primary necessities of existence, and without them he cannot live. It will at once be seen, therefore, that the artisan is of much more service to the community in which he dwells, inasmuch as he provides the necessities of life; whereas the artist is simply of secondary importance, he simply producing articles of luxury.

Without labour men *could not live*. Without art life *would be possible*, although I confess that life without any of that pleasure and delight which is caused by artistic effort would be very unpleasant, and in fact almost unbearable. The artisan makes life possible; the artist makes it enjoyable. Hence I contend on these grounds that the artisan should be regarded with the same amount of honour as the artist; for while the artisan makes things, the artist beautifies them. Both being equally useful to society both should be socially equal. Until this conclusion is arrived at, and as long as men will despise the labourer and the products of his labour, meanwhile worshipping the artist and art, the achievement of a state of social equality—that great object which all Socialists are endeavouring to obtain will remain unaccomplished.

JIM ALLMAN.

### AS AN ARTIST SEES IT.

I have nothing to object to in our comrade's remarks, but a word or two may be pardoned in explanation of the fact that an artist is looked upon as a gentleman (a sort of one), and sometimes receives a certain portion of the respect accorded to that class, which, however, is dealt out so much more liberally to the mere money-maker in other trades; to the landowner, manufacturer, contractor, stockjobber, or what not; in short, it is dealt out to members of the proprietary class exactly in proportion to the obviousness of their living by *owning* wealth and not *creating* it. In other words the less pretence they make to be more than mere thieves, the more they are honoured.

However, let that pass, as it must be admitted that the artists when they gain the point at which they receive any recognition from the public at all, do as hangers-on share in the plunder won by the class to which, if our workmen friends knew it, they are admitted somewhat *grudgingly*. Now, it must be admitted by all thoughtful people that the conventional flattery of the intellect, which is conventionally supposed as a separate and specially worshipful quality, to be the main-spring of the artist's capacity, is both stupid and harmful. But, like all the rest of our conventionalities, it is founded on history; it is a birth of the individualist commercial system which we are at work combatting to-day, with good hope of seeing it disappear. It is that system which has divided the old craftsman into two, artist and artisan. For, before the rise of capitalism in the sixteenth century, the artisan did not differ in kind from the artist; all craftsmen who made anything were artists of some kind, they only differed in degree, and only a few of those who had very special gifts of hand and brain have so much as left their names behind them. No one knows, e.g., the name of the man who designed Westminster Abbey, although it

rose up amongst the King's Court, and doubtless was talked about enough in its time; and meantime every joiner or mason or blacksmith was doing his share of work towards the pleasure which our comrade feels is necessary to the life of man, and never dreaming of receiving any special reward for the beauty or invention in his work; although doubtless he did receive the unconventional and genuine praise and thanks of his neighbours for it, just as he gave it to his neighbour craftsmen. With the growth of the historic sense which is a gain of the present century, with the knowledge of the continuity of history which we have now learned, we have come to a conscious knowledge that the intellect of man works co-operatively and collectively; but although the workmen of the Middle Ages were not conscious of this fact, they were happier than we are in this respect, that they practised that co-operation in their production of beauty; whereas we, as long as we are under the domination of the profit-grinders, cannot do so; and the result follows which I have so often spoken of, that art is a skinny drowsy skeleton amidst the stir and enormous riches of modern civilisation; and that too in an age, which as I have just said, has discovered that it was the collective people, and not a few miraculous individuals who have produced all worthy, that is all genuine, art in the past. I say when art is hopeful and progressive there is plenty of it for every one, and every one is in some sense an artist, and those who produce beauty are not demi-gods but men, and all can understand them; it is only when beauty produced by man becomes rare that we take to deifying its producers. There is little that is mysterious about the plagiarists and compilers of the Augustan age of Rome; the authors of that mass of platitudinous rubbish, that fresh flowing well-spring of stupidity, are well known and amply ticketed. But modern research has made Homer a dim and doubtful shadow to us, while it has added clearness to our vision of the life of the people of that time, who were the real authors of the Homeric poems. Beowulf, the first and the best poem of the English race, which they bore hither across the seas with them, has no author but the people. No other authors has the splendid literature of our Scandinavian kinsmen, the best tale-tellers the world has seen, through whom we can to-day live with the people of Northern Europe in the tenth century, and know them, not as puppets of chivalry romance, but good fellows such as our living friends are to-day. Again, along with William Cobbett, contrast the dungeon-like propriety of St. Paul's, the work of a "famous" architect, with the free imagination and delicate beauty of the people-built Gothic churches, that were raised by masons who had no architect over them, and who did their work for the reward of a free life, and needed no fame as an extra; and then consider how the people build. In short, our comrade will understand me when I say that what we want is to extinguish not the artist, but the mere artisan, by destroying the flattery-craving flunkey in the one, and the brutal toil-worn slave in the other, so that they may both be men; in which case they must be artists in one way or other, that is, they must take an interest in life.

Meanwhile, I cannot see that any extra reward should be given to a man for following an "intellectual" calling. If he does his work in it well, it is more pleasurable to him than a "non-intellectual" one, and why should he be paid twice over? If he does it ill, let him be pulled out of it in the gentlest way possible, and learn to do what he *can* do. A poet doesn't need paying for his poetry (he is not paid much now), because he will write better poetry and not worse if he has an ordinary occupation to follow. As for the other mere artists, a painter for instance, I admit that he will probably have to stick to his painting if he has to do it well; but then he should be paid not for the "intellectual" part of his work, but for the workman's part of it; finishing up everything properly, doing everything as well as it can be done in all respects. This will take something out of him. But the exercise of his "intellect" will take nothing; it is mere play.

The long and short of it is this, a decent life, a share in the common life of all is the only "reward" that any man can honestly take for his work, whatever it is; if he asks for more, that means that he intends to play the master over somebody. When the workers have made up their minds to be free, he won't get that, so he may make himself easy, and get amusement out of his work as he can, if he is a "superior person." Well, I end as our comrade, with the word "equality," which will one day become a real thing and no mere word, and so cure all our troubles.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

The following advertisement appeared in a London daily this week:

**ENGINEERS' Tool Makers** (thoroughly first-class experienced) wanted; only those need apply who can bring satisfactory references from former employment, where they have worked for a number of years as tool-makers; all such references will be most strictly inquired into before any man is started. All applicants must be sober, good timekeepers, thoroughly respectable, and able to work any kind of lathe or machine usually found in an engineer's factory; their work will have to stand the test of quantity as well as quality; a week will not be allowed for an hour's job. Handy-men, engine-drivers, very old or very young men, don't apply; the Company, desiring to engage only the very best of men, will in return pay the very best of wages. Apply between 9 and 12 to the Managing Director, etc.

We refrain from giving the firm to which the pure-souled perfect applicants must address themselves; there must already have been such a crowd anxious to enrol themselves under such a brilliant banner! But we should like to learn what "the very best of wages" are that the Admirable Crichtons earn; what hours they have to work; and how they like it? After all, is not this nauseous rubbish only an adroit puff for "the Company" itself?—S.