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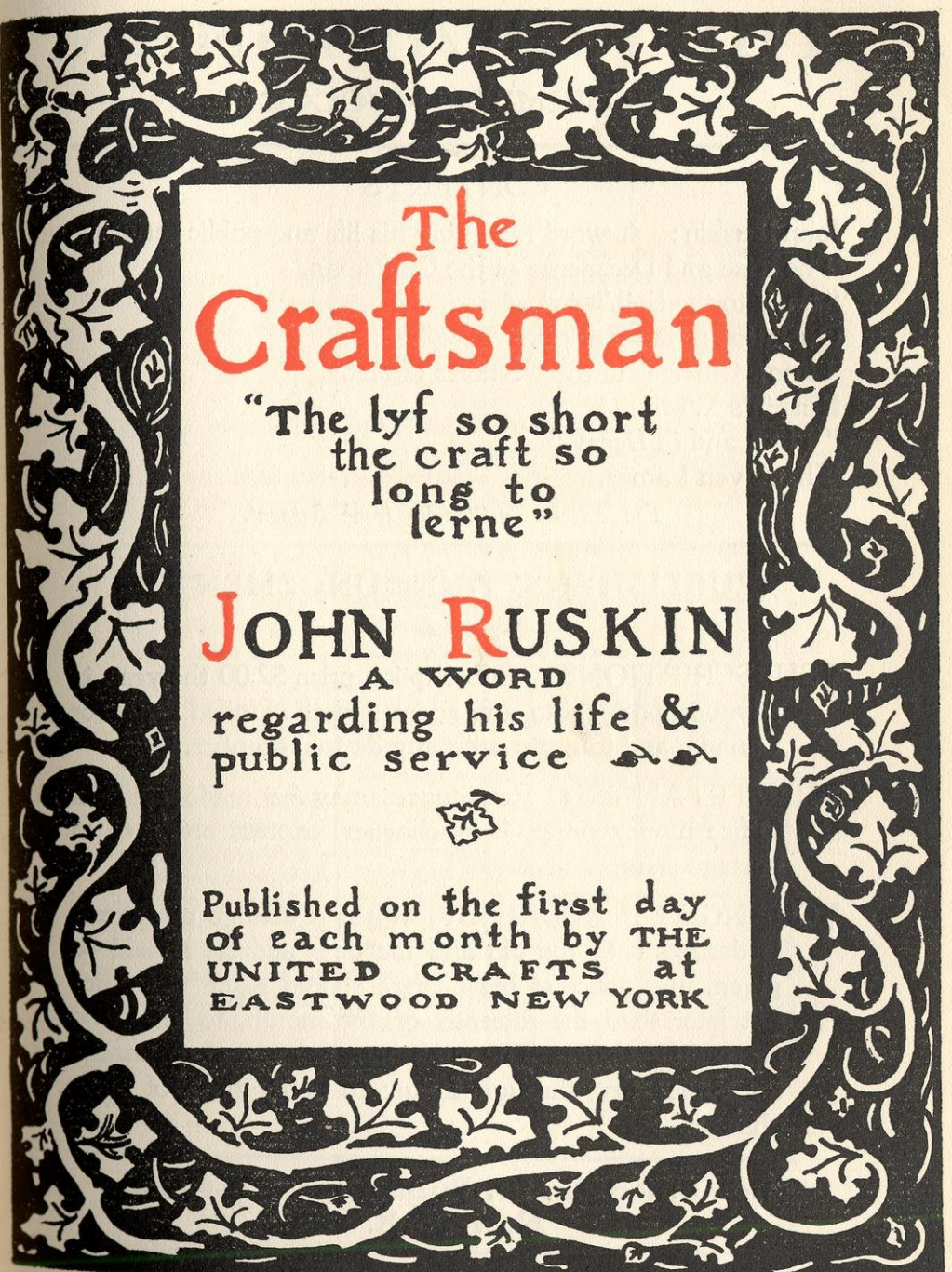
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The
Craftsman

"The lyf so short
the craft so
long to
lerne"

JOHN RUSKIN

A WORD
regarding his life &
public service



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of each month by THE
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THE CRAFTSMAN

NOVEMBER MDCCCCI

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PUBLISHERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS



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FOREWORD

THE interest and sympathy with which the first number of "The Craftsman" has been received, greatly encourage the publishers of the new magazine; giving them the assurance that they are justified in their undertaking. To have found already a wide public favorable to the aims and objects of the Guild of the United Crafts is in itself a proof that the publication has a decided reason for existence. To have received a large number of personal letters welcoming the appearance of "The Craftsman," and wishing it success in the peculiar work to which it stands pledged, has afforded the publishers a pleasure as real as unexpected.

The present number offers a tribute to John Ruskin, whose claims to the world's gratitude, although they have been long and actively discussed, have not yet been wholly recognized. But as time passes, it is more and more evident, that Ruskin the art-critic, with his enthusiasms, his uplifting power, his strong and sometimes warped opinions, must yield precedence to Ruskin, the economist. And although the reversion of the Master, when long past middle life, from art and literature to social studies has been deplored and harshly criticized, it is now certain that he had science on his side; that his understanding of the laws of life was deep and spiritual. From this modified point of view it has been thought best to consider him, rather than to follow the plan earlier announced of treating him in his relations to the building-art of the Middle Ages. So presented, he seems still to be among us; giving us of his pure and unselfish spirit, and urging us to labor for the good, the true and the beautiful.

The minor articles of the present issue are inserted, because of their relevancy to the major subject. The idea of offering a review of Mr. Bradley Gilman's "Back to the Soil" was suggested by Ruskin's desire to improve the tenements and environment of the city poor, as was manifested, a generation ago, in his investments with Miss Octavia Hill. Further, as a side-light upon the condition of the proletariat in a Latin country, a few words of comment upon M. Rene Bazin's "The Land in Decay" have been admitted.

The December number of "The Craftsman" will be devoted to a series of articles upon the Guilds of the Middle Ages and the civic benefits derived therefrom. And it will be the effort of the publishers, with each successive issue, to continue and increase the interest and value of the publication.

CHOSEN FROM THE WORDS OF JOHN RUSKIN

It is only by labor that thought can be made healthy, and only by thought that labor can be made happy.

Every artist should be a workman.

If you will make a man of the working creature, you can not make him a tool.

The profit due to the master by reason of his intelligence or moral labor is quite legitimate.

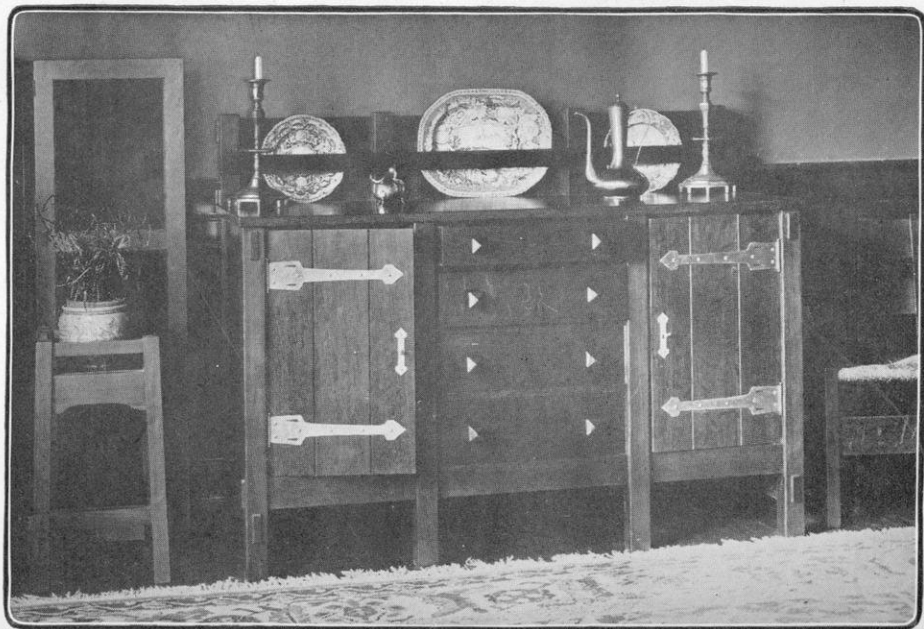
There is no wealth but life.

It is not by paying for them, but by understanding them, that we become the real possessors of works of art and of the enjoyment they give.

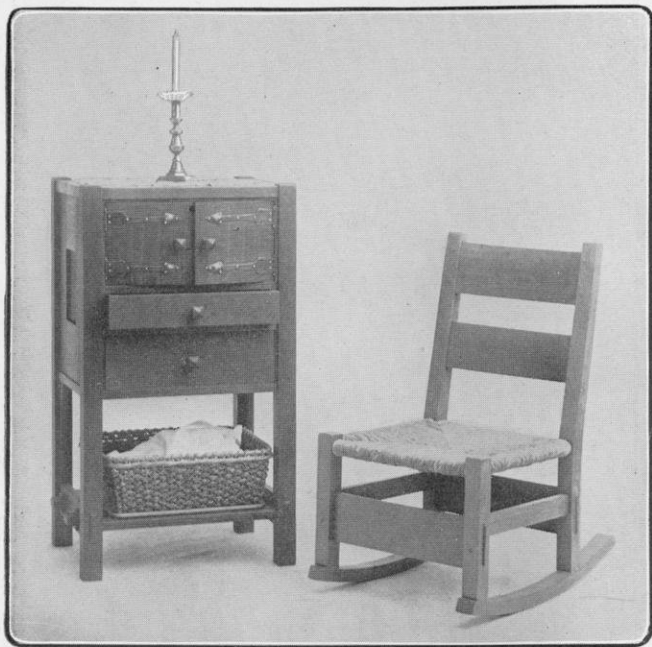
People can hardly draw anything without being of some use to themselves or others, and can hardly write anything without wasting their own time and that of others.

The function of art is to state a true thing, or to adorn a serviceable one.

There are three material things, not only useful but essential to life. No one knows how to live until he has got them. These are pure air, water and earth. There are three immaterial things not only useful but essential to life. No one knows how to live until he has got them too. These are admiration, hope and love.

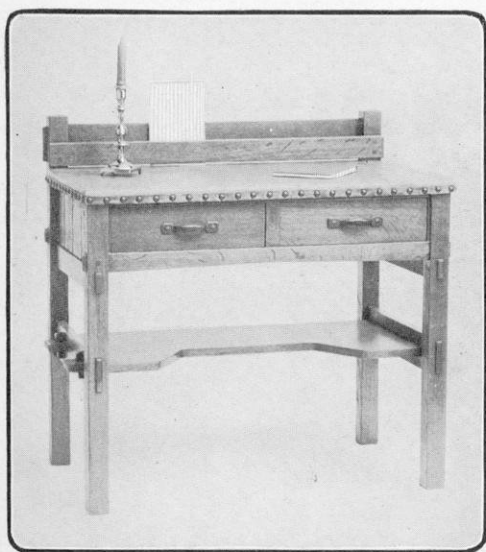


From the dining room of Mr. Gustave Stickley; nut-brown fumed oak, with copper hinges.

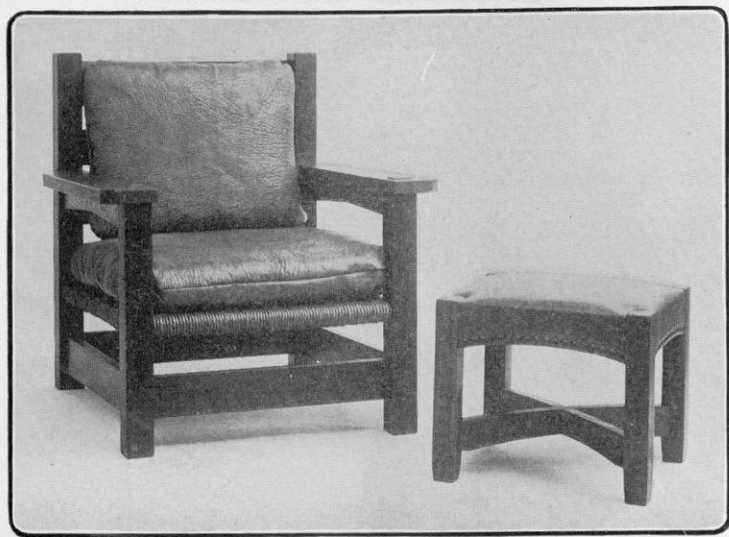


Work Cabinet in dark fumed oak; hand-wrought copper hinges; work basket in green rush; cedar thread tray inside of drawer.

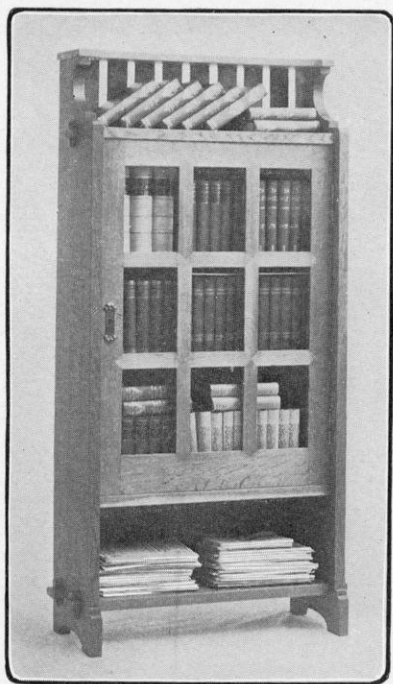
Sewing chair in dark fumed oak, with rush seat.



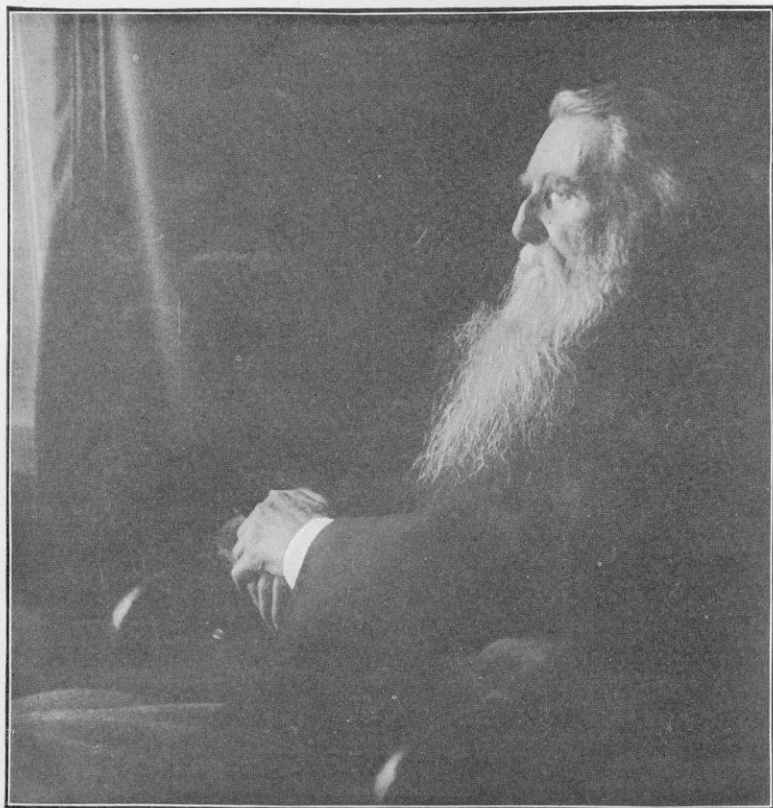
*Writing-table in gray oak ; top in sage green leather ;
wrought iron pulls.*



*"The Eastwood": large chair in fumed oak; seat in United Crafts soft leather;
Rest in same wood and leather.*



Book-cabinet in oak.



He appeared wherever there was an artist soul to be comforted, or a flame of enthusiasm to be kept alive.

JOHN RUSKIN

TO attempt to cast new light upon "the sage of Coniston" would be an effort from the very first doomed to failure, in view of the many and distinguished writers who have considered him from the artistic, the literary, the economic, or yet the purely human point of view. But to assemble and concentrate the judgments brought to bear upon this "old man eloquent" by late and authoritative critics, such as M. de la Sizeranne, Mr. Frederic Harrison and Professor Geddes of Edinburgh,—this would appear to be a task promising somewhat useful results. For it is they who have classified and codified the utterances and the decisions of Ruskin, which represent a production of fifty years, and which touch upon subjects and interests almost as varied as human thought itself.

The readers of Ruskin may be divided into those who admire him to the point of unreasoning adoration; those whose attitude toward him is one of perplexity and doubt; and those whom he at once fascinates and exasperates. The first class, largely composed of women, is best epitomized by the group whom M. de la Sizeranne saw one morning in the luminous shadow of the great Dominican church of Florence: "girlish forms, with grotesque profiles, wearing sailor hats and little white veils, and all carrying bunches of mimosa in their hands." One of the young girls was reading from a small red and gold book, while the others, according to her direction, and with the precision of a Prussian platoon, formed face to this or that figure of the old mural paintings. These were of that division of spiritually cultured souls whom the profound morality, the fervor of sympathy, the harmonious, peaceful phraseology of Ruskin overpower to the degree of silencing in them all critical faculty. The second class of the readers of Ruskin comprises those whom the writer,

orator and patron of village industries has, at some point, touched and quickened in his threefold teaching of aesthetics, morals and social reform. These are, almost without exception, men, who in the art-lover and critic, irritated, nay even frenzied by hyperaesthesia, recognize a prophet foretelling better social and economic conditions for the English-speaking race. The third class is composed of materialists who, returning again and again to the charge, seek in Ruskin vulnerable points for their blunt and unskilful attacks. For such as these he is the man of genius who spoke contemptuously of all the highest practical achievements of the nineteenth century; who regarded modern commerce as a complex system of thieving, and who saw in great industrial cities naught save the working-models of hell.

Upon examination, it is seen that the devout students of the "Mornings in Florence" and the critics of "Fors Clavigera" and "Unto this Last" are equally distant from the truth; that the right point of view, as is usual, lies midway between the extremists. The all too emotional youth who mistake religious rhapsody for art-criticism, fail as utterly to recognize the value of the life and influence of Ruskin as do those of grosser type who stamp him as a madman seeking to turn Time back upon itself. It is true that he was, to an extent, ill-fitted to his age and position. As to time, he presents a singular paradox; since he was at once a survival of a past age, a man of the thirteenth century, and again one whose piercing gaze into the future was rewarded with glimpses of fact which were denied to all but the chosen few of his contemporaries. It would seem indeed that many of his most characteristic utterances prove that the fables of yesterday are the truths of to-day. What were regarded as absurdities by the public of his middle life have recently become intelligible; assuming in spite of a note of over-statement, much of scientific value. Ruskin, the dreamer and

rhapsodist, has gained the new and irrevocable titles of economist and sociologist. And in reviewing his life and work, we find his evolution to be parallel with that of the great scientists, his contemporaries. In common with the biologists and geologists whose names are become household words in the two hemispheres, he passed, with his mind opened and disciplined by contact with nature, beyond to the supreme study of his fellow beings. He lacked the training of the men with whom he may be compared, nor did he create for himself opportunities equal to those which led to the successes of the others. Early environment gave direction and prescribed limits to his development. The quiet home, with his imaginative father and deeply religious mother, the ancient university at which he passed his most formative years, kept him apart from those freer and less exalted minds who advanced more rationally and patiently to their conclusions. But yet, the spirit of his time awakened within him, as a seed germinates in the warmth of spring. He apprehended facts which, equally from vehemence of spirit and from lack of specific training, he was unable to state with precision. For him, intuition often supplied the place of genuine knowledge, as we may learn by even casual reference to his writings. As an example of his intuitional power in economics, may be cited a passage of the "Munera Pulveris," in which he assigns "values" with apparent waywardness. It reads:

"Intrinsic value is the absolute power of anything to support life. A sheaf of wheat of given quality and weight has in it a measurable power of sustaining the substance of the body; a cubic foot of pure air, a fixed power of sustaining its warmth; and a cluster of flowers of given beauty, a fixed power of enlivening or animating the senses and heart."

In the old school of economists, such statements could not do otherwise than to excite mirth and contempt; for air and beauty were barred out

from the things representing wealth. They were removed from the arena of Supply and Demand. Therefore, they were forces unrecognized in that unsentimental community formed and held together by "enlightened self-interest," which was Adam Smith's conception of society. But now the scientists have revolutionized economic studies; bringing to bear upon the subject their knowledge of physical laws and of living beings. A half-century ago, Auguste Comte constituted sociology upon the basis of the natural sciences; later, Herbert Spencer corroborated the work of the great Frenchman; so that now physics and chemistry, biology and medicine, psychology and education have ranged themselves on the side of Ruskin, and must be taken into account by one who would accurately define "wealth" and "values." Ants and bees, beavers and men, living alike in communities, are recognized as subject to similar physical laws. Pure air, beauty and other intangibles are known to have definite and intrinsic "values," which can be reduced to exact mathematical statement. Life and energy are proclaimed as the great capital of the universe, and the things which maintain and protect them are regarded as of the greatest moment. The block of coal and the loaf of bread are so much fuel and food, with their heat-giving and life-sustaining power measurable in actual units of work. So too, the cluster of flowers and the sun-beam act as sensory stimuli, the force of which can be determined by instruments.

Ruskin is thus justified; for purblind as he was, when gazing upon the every-day scenes about him, he was clear and true of vision, when his eye was fixed upon a distant and pure ideal. The economists, now become sociologists and philanthropists, recognize the importance of food and light. The zoologist arrests the development of the tadpole by subjecting it to darkness; the physiologist with his sphygmograph, shows how the pulse bounds at every

beam of sunshine, while the medical profession is hastening to apply these results to the development of human life in towns. Thus Science and Sentiment, which have been so long regarded as antagonists, are found to be friends and lovers, and Ruskin is the high-priest before whom the union has been acknowledged. They who now regard him solely as the man of art and letters, as one of the greatest masters of English prose, have yet to learn that he was among the first to seize the vital principles of the science upon which depends the happiness, comfort, nay even the future existence of the human race. His advocacy of the principle that intrinsic value lies in the power of anything to support life is his great claim to consideration and remembrance. His greatest thoughts are epitomized in sayings like these :

“Production does not consist in things laboriously made, but in things serviceably consumable; and the question for the nation is not how much labor it employs, but how much life it produces.”

And again :

“There is no Wealth but Life, Life including all its powers of love and joy and admiration.”

Nor is it an Utopian dream to await a day when the theory of intrinsic values shall be generally understood, as Ruskin himself apprehended it; when the coal wealth of the world shall be no longer the object of subjective desire, and therefore of exchange value, but rather the fixture and embodiment of a definite quantity of stored energy; when the wealth of nations shall be recognized as dependent not upon the massing of great individual fortunes, nor yet in the increase of miners' wages, but rather in the relations of actual supply to existing and future demands. To-day the economic writings of those who by training and temperament are fitted to plan and prepare the future development of the race, teem with the thought of Ruskin expressed in

calmer mood and more intelligible and accurate form, as when a Scotch professor writes :

“Man if he is to remain healthy and become civilized, must not only aim at the highest standard of cerebral, as well as non-cerebral excellence, but must take especial heed of his environment; not only at his peril keeping the natural factors of air, water and light at their purest, but caring only for the production of wealth, in so far as it shapes the artificial factors, the material appliances and surroundings of domestic and civil life into forms more completely serviceable for the ascent of man.”

Thus the social and moral ideas of Ruskin, shooting like stars across the chaos of his voluminous writings, are proven to be of the eternal stuff of truth. His passion for beauty betrayed him often into extravagance of speech; his adoration for divine nature induced him to intemperate and insensate ideas, as when he cried out in his wrath :

“I should like to destroy most of the railways in England and all the railways in Wales. I should like to destroy and rebuild the Houses of Parliament, the National Gallery and the East End of London, and to destroy, without rebuilding, the new town of Edinburgh and the city of New York.”

But it is to his lasting honor that works of art did not make him forget the workers. He was, in his love and sympathy for humanity, a man of the highest type of his time; penetrated with the social significance of art and conscious of its vital relations to the life of the masses. His French critic, M. de la Sizeranne, so often before quoted, has perhaps best of all his appreciators understood him in writing :

“Each day which passes now, like a leaf which falls from a tree, reveals a little more of the heaven that he conceived. As our life becomes more analytic, more wandering and more restless, as we gain

greater knowledge and more store of imagination and of human pity, so we feel more sympathy for Ruskin's science, his cosmopolitanism and his social theory."

To this fine appreciation may be added the regret which must be felt at times by all Ruskin's admirers as they enter into his moods of depression, despair and violent anger; as they are made to feel how sorrowfully and savagely he desired to aid the world, which he believed to have scorned and rejected him; as they sometimes find him mistaking the great plantation of society for a field of thistles in which the uprooting must be ruthless. But against this impression may again be set an uplifting tribute to his spirit—this time offered on the occasion of his eightieth birthday in the "London Daily Chronicle," and written by Mr. Frederic Harrison, who says:

"In this most voluminous and most versatile of modern writers (may we not say of all English writers?), there is not one line that is base, or coarse, or frivolous, not a sentence that was formed in envy, malice, wantonness, or cruelty; not one piece that was written to win money, or popularity, or promotion; not a line composed for any selfish end, or in any trivial mood. Much of the seed he scattered with such fervid hopes has fallen on stony ground. But his spirit has passed far wider than he ever knew or conceived."

Corroborating the final thought of this tribute, there is a phase of Ruskin's public work which will receive far greater recognition and honor in the future than was possible for it to attain in the past: that is, his influence as a teacher. His Oxford lectures, at the time of delivery, were described as disjointed, erratic, lacking in point, abounding in fanciful ethics, still more fanciful theology, and violent criticisms upon art, letters and life; while their power of attracting and holding great audiences was ascribed solely to an unrivaled beauty of diction and the constant tide of emotion which surged throughout

their course. But to-day they are known to contain ideas upon popular education which are sound, practical, and certain to be utilized in the time to come. He stood for a radical reform: holding that technical and industrial training should, to a great degree, supersede literary studies; that observation of facts and reasoning therefrom should count for more than verbal memory, and that practical tests in life should outweigh competitive examinations. And these ideas, reduced to their lowest terms, are those which are now forcing themselves alike upon pedagogues and people. The school of Cram is giving place to the school of Culture; the world is coming to realize that the student, in order to become the citizen, must investigate nature, or wrestle with the facts of history and society; that the people, in order to become happy, must be made to feel pleasure in their work by means of the wide diffusion of artistic taste and knowledge; such diffusion being always productive alike of masters to create and of amateurs to admire, encourage and support.

Another measure, more purely economic, which was strongly advocated by Ruskin, is advancing rapidly in favor, as its great usefulness and necessity becomes more and more apparent. It relates to that much-agitated question: the division of labor. Following his instincts, Ruskin insisted that every artist should be a workman; and this in order that there should be no loss or lapse of power between the conception and the execution. Such, also, we may say in passing, was one of the strongest convictions of William Morris, who refused to allow his own designs to be worked out by another, and who himself supplied the practical details for the drawings of his artistic-double, Burne-Jones, to the end that their beauty should not perish in the hands of machine-like artisans. To apply the converse of Ruskin's maxim is to follow his meaning faithfully. He taught that every workman should be an artist capable of conceiving the object at whose making he labors, capable also

of fashioning its every part. Under such conditions, the workman would take pleasure in his work, since it would so become the product of his brain and skill, his very own, born of his enthusiasm and of his struggles, and for that reason dear and sacred to his heart. In the England of Ruskin's middle life, these doctrines were received with indifference, ridicule or opposition, as they were strongly at variance with the prejudices and interests of the ruling classes. For Birmingham, Manchester, and the other great industrial towns, stood as representatives of the subdivision of labor, which ensures great and rapid financial returns, while it just as certainly and as quickly causes the degeneration of the workman, by robbing him of his ambition, his hope and his critical faculties, and thus lowering him to the level of an automaton. With the passage of time and the greater enlightenment of the people, Ruskin's belief in this matter has gained adherents from the ranks of those who are most capable of forming intelligent opinion. And here again is science called to witness and corroborate facts occurring in the social and economic world. It is recognized in biology that "function makes the organ;" furthermore, that a highly specialized function dwarfs and lames the remaining powers of the organism. What then is to be expected from a man, the play of whose intelligence is confined to the endless repetition of a single mental process, and whose physical exercise is restricted to the working of certain unvarying sets of muscles?

The question is not difficult to answer. The individual will develop morbidly, and his mind will offer a resting-place for destructive and chaotic ideas, which, like the temptresses in *Macbeth*, ever float over the wastes of blighted human ambitions. And, like *Macbeth*, being not without personal claims to dignity and power, he becomes an insurrectionist, perhaps even a pervert and criminal. He is, indeed, alone responsible for his crimes once they are committed; but it is right and just

that society should protect him from a mental disease more awful than any scourge, or plague, or Black Death that has ever decimated the world's population. And once again, as science with its anti-toxins and systems of sanitation annihilates the enemies of physical life, so Sociology, understood in its highest sense—that is, the study of our companions and brothers—can finally render our strongholds of civilization immune against the evil germs which pollute, vitiate and destroy the vitality of the human mind, and which bear names awful to the ear by their suggestion of negation and chaos.

To-day, indeed, Science is proffering her aid to all students of economics: offering her eloquent parallels and correspondences, devising and putting into effect measures which demonstrate the agreement and unity of physical and metaphysical laws. But it is to the glory of art and of our English tongue that two men devoted to the religion of beauty, long ago espoused the cause of the artisan, and wrought patiently and grandly for his happiness and elevation. If William Morris, through his fiery spirit, was betrayed, at times, into violence of speech against existing authority, he was far too sane and sound of mind long to linger among active malcontents. All his efforts and work tended toward the reconstruction of society upon the basis of intelligent labor and the co-operation of the different classes. In Ruskin reverence and hero-worship were developed to the same high degree as in "his master," Carlyle. He writes, in the spirit of the thirteenth century, and approaching closely the quaint expression of Dante:

"I desire that kings should keep their crowns on their heads, and bishops their croziers in their hands, and should duly recognize the meaning of the crown and the use of the crozier."

He was submissive to the right, but everywhere and always, he lifted up his voice

in condemnation of abuses. Outrages and insults against beauty angered him to the point of frenzy, but even these he forgot in the presence of human grief. He sincerely loved his kind, caring for the health and the culture of the worker; for the ennoblement of his function in the body social; for the purification of his environment. It was Ruskin's misfortune to labor alone and somewhat desultorily, but his ideas, co-ordinated and subjected to method, have borne fruit in college settlement and model tenement. To extend his propaganda of art, he spared himself nothing in mind, body or estate, as his laborious writings, his protracted journeys and the spending of his large fortune bear witness. His art-ideals lay in the Middle Ages, when the great monuments rose, not, as now, largely from personal luxury, but rather from the encouragement and enthusiasm of combined aesthetic effort, when, as in all truly organic periods, the artistic support came not from the treasure of a Maecenas, but from the small purses of the common people. He laid bare the function and spirit of art when he wrote :

“ Great nations write their autobiography in three manuscripts : the book of their words ; the book of their deeds ; the book of their art. Not one of these books can be understood unless we read the other two, but of the three the only one quite trustworthy is the last. The acts of a nation may be triumphant by its good fortune, and its words mighty by the genius of a few of its children, but its art can be supreme only by the general gifts and common sympathies of the race.”

As an art critic, the services of Ruskin to England were great, since he turned the most matter-of-fact nation of the world toward aesthetic thought, multiplied amateurs, taught his countrymen to appreciate landscape, and, by his treatises : “ The Seven Lamps of Architecture ” and “ The Stones of Venice,” reformed the building art of the kingdom. As he advanced in life,

his heart grew softer, his blood warmer and his brain quicker. And as long as England shall exist, he will not wholly die.



THE RISE AND DECADENCE OF THE CRAFTSMAN:

AN HISTORICAL NOTE.

BEFORE the appalling words of John Stuart Mill: "It is doubtful whether the use of machinery has yet lightened the day's toil of a single human being," one may well stand aghast. They were pronounced with the deep conviction of despair; they proceeded from a high type of mind, and from one who had given his life to the study of social science. Their pessimism is so sincere as to go far toward making the statement authoritative. On the other hand, it must be remembered that Mill was a man of emotion; that to his "stern science" he added affection, pity and passion, which were often fanned into white flame. His systematic intellect was dominated by his great heart. But although his utterance would seem to contain a note of exaggeration, it still commands, after the lapse of forty years, the respectful attention of men of thought. Therefore, with this somewhat depressing opinion as a clue, it may not be an idle act to advance a few steps within the labyrinth of that intricate and vexed problem: the present condition of the artisan.

Among the Americans, a nation of proverbial creative genius, machinery and so-called labor-saving inventions are produced with a fertility rivaling that of the earth in the Golden Age. The effect of such fertility is not to lighten the task and relieve the mental fatigue of the workman, as it might first appear. Rather, it is depressing and disastrous. Industrial improvements, so-called, induce the division and subdivision of labor. As a secondary result, the workman becomes a specialist. Through disuse of his art or trade as a whole, he loses his skill. His judgment and reason, no longer called upon to meet constantly varying demands, gradually fail him. The co-operation of his brain and

hand ceases. His muscular power weakens. The intelligent, alert and vigorous workman declines, until he seems to form a part of the machine which he operates; his human intellect obeying a mechanical power, his individuality forfeited, and his physical liberty confined within narrow limits. Thus it would appear to the student of history as if Time had turned back upon itself, forcing the class born to labor into its primitive condition of servitude, with the difference that the master and the slave are no longer man and man. For under the modern industrial system, the dominant power is the machine, while the man, as the subservient force, is threatened with all the evils peculiar to the servile state: he possesses nothing in which he can feel the legitimate joy of ownership; his task is compulsory, involving neither the activity of creation, highly pleasurable in itself, nor the responsibility of one who produces and sends out into the world a reflection of his own powers; finally, in the natural revolt of one hampered, harassed, and despoiled, if his character be not upright and firm, he practices the petty deceptions, the small thefts of time, the dishonesties which creep into the work of one whose labor is not made light by hope. Indeed, with all considerations allowed for the changes wrought by religion, science and general progress, the artisan of to-day is the evolutionized representative of the character around whom the action of the classic comedies revolves. The playwrights of Athens and Rome, in their studies of manners and customs, lavished their highest art upon the delineation of the chattel slave who tricked his master and lived by his wits, dividing his life between the tears wrung from him by the bitterness of his lot and the sinister gayety excited by his specialized, self-conscious power to deceive and betray. And the similars of this slave were those who chiefly carried on the industrial production of their time; thus, as a necessary consequence, forcing their work into disrepute, and removing the crafts from their natural place beside the higher intellectual arts.

In the later classical period, industrialism fell into an open contempt which lasted until the social system was itself dissolved and chattel slavery abolished.

With the new order of society, there arose, in the early Middle Ages, the new laborer: the field-serf, who having performed certain definite duties toward his lord, was free to earn his living within the limits of his own manor. The feudal system, replacing the worship of the city—that is, centralized power—by setting up codes adapted to particular districts and magistrates, created individualism: a spirit, which at first purely a political principle, gradually penetrated into the most obscure relations and interests of life, casting all sorts and conditions of men into the struggle for existence. Thus the serf, to a degree independent, was committed to improve his position as best he might, amid the conflicting rights of king, clergy, lord and burgher. And then, for the first time, there appeared, in the interests of labor, signs of co-operation and combination among the producers and the distributors of articles of use and consumption. Hence, the formation of the Guilds, which, as the expression of the new spirit, were naturally developed in England and Denmark, the countries least affected by classic institutions. These bodies corporate, formed in times of licence, marauding and blood-violence, were at first benefit, or insurance societies, organized against the exactions and cruelties of the feudal lords—the “crag-barons,” as Ruskin picturesquely calls them. In the second stage of their development, which followed closely upon the first, the Guilds stood for the protection and freedom of commerce: establishing connections between trading-points remote from one another, improving methods of finance, and assuring the safety of merchandise in transit upon the highways.

The Merchant Guilds becoming aggressive and powerful, commanded universal respect, and in raising themselves to a position of dignity, carried

with them the interests under their protection. Their primary object was, as we have seen, to develop and facilitate commerce, but this very object entailed the production of goods and wares which should maintain the credit and integrity of the carrier merchants. The consequent importance of industrialism awakened a new life within the commercial bodies, out of which now arose the Craft-Guilds, whose object was the regulation and practice of the lesser arts in freedom from feudal exactions.

Under the protection of these last-named bodies, the artisan reached a development which is unique in history. His honored position in the rich, laborious, teeming, artistic cities of the Low Countries, or again in the Florentine Republic, is too well known to merit more than a passing reference. But yet it can not be too often repeated to the glory of industrialism that the craftsman and the merchant who distributed the wares and goods of the craftsman, supplied the wealth, the intelligence and the integrity of that most famous of mediaeval Italian towns, whose citizens, while constituting "a nation of shopkeepers," conducted the political and diplomatic affairs of Europe: negotiating national loans, receiving royal crowns in pawn, acting with great acceptability as ambassadors to sovereigns temporal and spiritual, until they deserved the compliment paid them by Pope Boniface VIII., when he declared that they were "the fifth wheel of creation."

Throughout the thirteenth century, the artisan developed, together with the parliamentary and university systems and that superb style of architecture which is misnamed Gothic: three movements containing the highest elements of civilization, as standing for the dignity, the enlightenment and the beauty of human life. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, the supremacy of the craft-guilds over the earlier and more purely commercial bodies was complete; their power being wisely exercised in efforts to foster ingenuity and

art, to maintain absolute industrial and commercial integrity, and to promote fraternity among the workmen—in short to realize a democratic ideal. To form a conception of the intense vitality of these institutions, we have but to turn to Wagner's opera of "The Mastersingers," wherein the busy, joyous, useful life of old Nuremberg is reflected as in a mirror; or yet again to the great picture of Rembrandt falsely called "The Night Watch," which is now acknowledged to represent one of the great companies or guilds of Amsterdam marching under the banners of its patron saint. So, from such historical documents as these we may gather materials with which to reconstruct the life of the mediæval craftsman. He was, we are sure, a self-respecting man, since he owned no superior but his art. He used his talents and skill not only to gain his livelihood, but even yet more freely to produce beautiful things simply to rejoice in them, and this pure pleasure served him as an extra wage. He was master of his time, his tools and his materials, and therefore had no temptation to squander them. As the sole maker and designer of his wares, he was directly responsible for their quality, and for this reason he was genuinely interested in them. He produced directly for his friends and neighbors, who needed his chests and chairs, his fabrics or utensils, his weapons or instruments. He had consequently no inclination to enter, as a gambler, into the haphazard of supply and demand. There was no division of labor, and universally, until early in the sixteenth century, the artisan was an artist, joining the useful to the beautiful, and adapting the whole to the common uses of life.

The date assigned for the beginning of the decadence of the craftsman coincides with that of the Reformation. At that time, in many of the most important districts of Germany and the Netherlands, art was divorced from the Church, and the creator of art: labor, was robbed of its greatest attractions and incentives.

In England, conditions were similar, but even worse, since the rapacity of Henry VIII. countenanced the brutal despoilment of the cathedrals, those sacred monuments of mediæval art and craftsmanship. Beside, the entire island, which, up to that time, had been a country of tillage cultivated for livelihood, then became a grazing country farmed for profit. The cult of utility, as hostile to beauty, was instituted, and rapid changes occurred in the condition of the workman, as well as in the exercise of the handicrafts. Among the losses then sustained by the skilled artisan may be counted one too great to be calculated by any medium of exchange; that is, the loss of pleasure in work; of that beneficent element which had been the means and the foundation of the long union between the crafts and the great intellectual arts. The workman came from his bench or his loom set up in his home, where he had lived a full life of labor and love and healthful merriment, to be herded with others of his kind in a great pen-like workshop, there to suffer in the interests of economy of space, fuel, lighting, and the other comforts of existence. Closely upon this change there followed another and a greater one: the division of labor, which, during the Middle Ages, had been theoretically unknown; the master craftsman acquainted with every detail of his calling, then representing the unit of production. Therefore, the change which occurred in the sixteenth century may be briefly explained as the transfer of the unit of labor from the master craftsman, active, independent and creative, to a group of workers, each member of which depended on every one of the others, and was individually helpless. Under this system, when strictly enforced, we find the workman condemned to a life equaling, by its monotony and restrictions, that of the famous prisoners of romance: we find him, throughout the long years of his service, pledged to the making of a trifling part of some insignificant article of commerce.

The division of labor became

the parent of a long line of unhappy consequences. As the craftsman had worked for his livelihood, his pleasure and his friends, so the new unit,—the group of artisans,—now worked for a profit, for that indefinite and fluctuating quantity called the public, and for the production of commercial, rather than artistic articles: conditions which were clearly understood through both knowledge and sympathy by William Morris, when he wrote:

“Art as well as mere obvious utility became a marketable article, doled out according to necessities of the capitalist who employed both machine-workman and designer, fettered by the needs of profit. The division of labor so worked that instead of all workmen being artists, as they once were, they became divided into workmen who were not artists, and artists who were not workmen.”

The Workshop System, most typical in England during the latter half of the eighteenth century, was superseded in the nineteenth and in the same country by conditions of still greater rigor. Economic changes, which in the short space of fifty years had advanced the thickly-populated island to the first place among manufacturing countries, generated the Factory System: a regime responsible for the lowest stage in the degeneration of the craftsman, and under which the human laborer, who had already played the part of a machine, was forced, by the rapid multiplication of mechanical devices and the demands of the world-market, to render slave's duty to this Moloch-god of industrialism.

The very thought of such duty is revolting to the free mind. The slave of the machine must follow its movements at the peril of his health, sanity and life. He finds a crazing sameness in its appearance and its action. He has little or no responsibility in the worth or the worthlessness of the work which he is aiding to accomplish. He is in all things the opposite of the master craftsman: matching inventiveness with sterility,

and the alertness of perception with that dullness of despair which breeds negation and revolt.

To annihilate this distressing and dangerous type created by the nineteenth century will be one of the first and greatest duties of the period just now beginning. The movement initiated by Ruskin and William Morris will be vigorously carried forward by other no less sincere disciples of the Religion of Beauty, until the time shall again come when "every artist shall be a workman," and every workman an artist in his own field of activity. The advancement of the cause demands thorough and practical measures. In our own country and colonies we must profit by the experience of England, lest with us industrialism also secure its sacrifice of human happiness, energy and joy. The trades and crafts must be raised from the disrepute into which they fell through the division of labor. The laboring classes must be wisely guided by State and School until, self-respecting and thoroughly enlightened, they shall be heard to declare: "We are men, and nothing that is human is foreign to us."

In this work, art must be the prime factor, and a practical knowledge of drawing be made the basis of all the handicrafts. Thus, through the widened avenues of perception, Beauty will pass to relieve fatigue, to create pleasure for the toiler, and to show things in their true proportions and relations: in a word to re-incarnate the citizen spirit of the Middle Ages in a community purified by Science from all superstitions.

“BACK TO THE SOIL”

IS the significant title of a work of fiction recently published in Boston, which deals with one of the most important social problems of the present day: the question of relief for the city poor.

Those who, as their way has led them through the crowded tenement districts of our American towns, have felt themselves possessed by great sorrow and a complete sense of helplessness, will welcome this book as affording a promise of better things. And it is indeed an expression of timely solicitude and thought, since late statistics show that it is neither London nor Peking, but New York itself which, in certain of its quarters, contains the most densely inhabited area in the world: a single tenement in Third Avenue harboring three thousand persons, the population of a large village.

The severe student of Sociology may object to the work of fiction as a means of diffusing accurate ideas; but, on the opposite side, it may be urged that the emotional element has borne a large part in all reforms and progress. To draw an illustration from the same field of work, one has but to recall that the romance of Sir Walter Besant, “All Sorts and Conditions of Men,” had as its direct result the building of the “People’s Palace” in London and the improvement of the entire East End. By a singular coincidence, the Rev. Edward Everett Hale introduced the English novel in America, sixteen years since, and he to-day writes an eloquent foreword for the newer book which deserves to accomplish an equal amount of good in our own country. Dr. Hale asks the readers of “Back to the Soil” to receive it, not as another Utopia, but as a real contribution to the scientific sociological work of the new century. With the conciseness and point that are his characteristics, he sums up the difficulties of those who attempt to relieve the overcrowding of population; here quoting Mr.

Frederick Law Olmstead, the sanitary engineer and architect, who once said to him that much as he himself had been praised for his work in the ruralising of the cities, he considered the complementary work of the urbanising of the country to be an enterprise far more important in the life of America. Later, referring to the necessity of co-operation in this great labor for humanity, Dr. Hale reaches a climax of enthusiasm in the following inspiring sentence :

"It must be observed that whatever is done must be done in accord—by a considerable number of people, who are, from the beginning, to bear one another's burdens, and whose success depends, as most success depends, on the victory of—together."

Indeed, Dr. Hale and the book are so thoroughly unified, that the name of the venerable writer might be accepted on the title page, instead of that of its author, Mr. Bradley Gilman. For "Back to the Soil" but continues and develops, by the aid of the great advance in science, suggestions contained in the work of Dr. Hale's middle life, notably in his short stories—like "The Rag Man and the Rag Woman"—which, under a humorous form, deal with aspects of city poverty.

Beside the introduction, Mr. Gilman himself offers a word of preface in which he quotes Carlyle as saying in his essay on "Chartism:"

"Our terrestrial planet—ninetenths of it yet vacant, or tenanted by nomads—is still crying, 'Come and till me, come and reap me!'"

But the author recognizes that this cry of Mother Earth falls on deaf ears in the slums, since the desire for companionship overpowers all the material wants of the city poor. He therefore offers an ideal of a rural community of working-people, in which he employs a unique method of grouping the homes as closely as possible, and of adding "minor industries" and "small handicrafts" to relieve the monotony of farm

duties and give a wholesome and agreeable variety of work.

From his scheme of a farm-colony, Mr. Gilman rejects "Socialism," or "Communism," as destructive of the natural incentive to labor: that is, the hope and pride of ownership; setting correspondingly high therefore the principle of a free co-operative "Individualism," by which the people benefited become self-supporting, after a year or two of dependency and instruction.

The economic questions treated in "Back to the Soil" are the fundamental ones found in every primary work upon labor and capital; but presented as they are here with colloquial charm and even pathos, they take on a human interest which the college student would deny that they possessed.

The explanation of the "law of competition" as given by Mr. Gilman will serve as an example. He illustrates it by the concrete case of two rival printing-houses, one of which introduces labor-saving machinery, diminishes its force of workers, and so causes wide-spread misery. The statement is simple and probable; one indeed that might appear in a text-book, and which is comparable in dryness with the mathematical formulas introducing x and y . But it is ingeniously woven into a *tete-a-tete* of a husband and wife: a clergyman whose emotions are tempered with New England common sense, and a woman whose charitable work among the hopeless poor has doubled her natural powers of compassion. So, throughout the book, the characters are simply the organs of principles: theorizing, offering schemes, arguing with one another until some measure incident to the foundation or the furtherance of the farm-colony is accepted or rejected. But this continued narrative, devoid of the element of action, does not pall upon the reader, although it may now and then suggest the parts of the hero and the listening friend, as they are

played in the old drama. Here monotony is prevented by the seriousness of the subject, and the reader follows with interest from the first page to the last. The diversity of temperament in the projectors of the scheme is portrayed with no ordinary skill. The individuality of each is sharply defined, so that the work of each is clearly apparent in the combined result, just as in the Wagner opera, the orchestra makes known the progress of the action by the use of musical phrases, which describe each character and are invariably heard when he participates in the plot. Thus, for example, practical philanthropy is incarnate in Dr. Barton; finance is represented by a fine type of self-made man; the educational element by "a sweet girl graduate" and the connecting links between the benefactors and the beneficiaries by Patrick and Bridget, who epitomize all the best qualities of the Celtic race: alertness of perception, unflinching good humor, and resources of strategy and wit that are denied to other peoples.

The impression made by this assemblage of elements—for so one must call and consider the characters of the book—is an impression of practicality. Each of the persons having a voice in the direction of the farm-colony, has already proven his capability in similar work pursued for his individual interest. As an expert, he is entitled to respect and earnest attention. He has previously made the costly experiments sure to sadden the career of all intellectual toilers, by the expenditure of time, passion, or money. He is consequently careful of the rights, pleasures and property of his brother-man involved in his own action. It is, perhaps, this pervasive flavor of practicality which lends a readable quality to the book; for in works of fiction we are liable to scorn the didactic and the plainly pointed moral, demanding a degree of excitement for the imagination; just as in the sister art of painting, we do not seek for lessons in history and literature, but rather

for sensuous pleasure derived from the harmony of line and color.

Another attractive feature of "Back to the Soil" lies in the names of its chapters which announce questions in economics and sociology simply treated and adapted to the popular understanding.

The interest of the book begins and centers in "A Lesson Drawn from a Pie;" this chapter giving the story of a family supper, at which the cutting of a pie into wedge-shaped sections suggests the general plan of the farm-colony, afterward known as "Circle City."

This form,—each wedge representing the land occupied by a colonist,—is presented as obviating the worst conditions of rural life: that is, the isolation and loneliness which drive the slum-colonist back to his swarming tenement, and from which the strong native-born youth flee in desperation, leaving agriculture to the indolent and the old.

The farms of "Circle City" bear toward their apex a dwelling-house, from which they all run widening back to a certain point. Beyond this, the apportionments begin to vary; the grazing farms occupying a large area, while the market-gardens, which require careful working and much fertilising, are kept within narrow limits.

The circle is itself inscribed within a great square, allowing the farms to open like fan-sticks, which are not necessarily of the same width, but hold among themselves the fractional relations of halves, fourths, eighths and sixteenths.

The centre of the land—a comparatively small circle described within the larger one—is reserved for a park in which are situated a church, a club room, schools and a department store: in a word, all the necessities of modern civilization. And thus, the first great requisite of lower-class life being assured by

means of the thickly settled community, the dependent interests: water facilities, drainage, fuel supplies, lighting apparatus, means of communication and transit are assured with comparative ease. The funds are supplied and controlled through a syndicate formed and headed by the self-made capitalist, who to the instincts and desires of a money-getter joins the warm heart of a friend of humanity. Finally, the colonists are chosen from among both foreigners and native Americans, without distinction of race or creed; Patrick and Bridget largely selecting, as well as instructing the candidates, who at first are subjected to a government best described as a wise paternalism.

The perfected scheme in working order is shown in a chapter named "Ab urbe condita," the simple life of full activity and high purpose therein described putting to shame the frivolous existence of the fashionable street and the society column. At this stage in the life of the colony, the problems of citizenship and complete ownership are confronted, and paternalism is exchanged for a state of society tending to develop the latent capabilities, talents and tastes of the individual colonists; the communistic principle being in all things avoided, as one destructive to the sense of responsibility and the incentive to labor. And as in all attempts toward the betterment of social conditions, the chief hope is found to be in the children. For it is they who first receive and then give out and propagate the vitalizing effects of new truths. In the pages of "Back to the Soil," we find the children interesting their parents and elders in the wonderful life of nature which free space discloses and science explains. And so it is intimated that with these children of the proletariat—the class necessary to the state for the production of offspring—lies the approaching and happy solution of the great problem of city overpopulation.

QUOTATIONS FROM RUSKIN

“ I know not if a day is ever to come when the nature of right freedom will be understood, and when men will see that to obey another man, to labor for him, yield reverence to him or to his place, is not slavery.”

These words, characteristic of the despairing spirit of their author, are found in the second volume of Ruskin's "Stones of Venice." And they are not surprising, in view of the time in which they were written; for no mental vision, however clear and acute, could, in the middle nineteenth century, announce the changes in thought and belief which the next fifty years were to produce. The scientific movement was then incipient and the principle of the "survival of the fittest" as yet unrecognized. But now that deep probings into the mysteries of life have shown that one law everywhere prevails, and that force, when beneficent in itself, is the ruling power of the universe, we catch the first faint flush of the dawn which was denied to Ruskin.

Under natural laws there can be no slavery. It is only by perversion and usurpation of law that tyranny comes into being. And tyranny, like all other evil, is self-destructive. "Right Freedom" therefore consists in obedience to such things as are permanent: that is, just and true in themselves, and in the denial of all that is subversive of order and disturbing to harmony. Obedience is a law as old as the universe, and one that will be in force until time shall cease. The strong must gather about them and absorb into themselves the weaker, and the process must ever go on for the maintenance of all that makes for good, pleasure, and even for life itself. In the great producing time of nature, sterile blossoms appear on the same branch and side by side with those that are destined to bear fruit. But they fall away, after offering their small gift of beauty to the

universe. Later, the fruits on the way toward maturity are attacked by their natural enemies in the insect world, or by the elements turned hostile: they are stung and so thwarted in their growth, or they are beaten by hail, or torn by the wind. They succumb, and their share of nourishment in the organism to which they belong, goes to perfect and round the existence of the more robust children of the tree. This process of development and decay is natural, and therefore one which must prevail, whether it be pleasing or painful to the individuals subject to its laws.

It can indeed be said that the "survival of the fittest" in nature corresponds to "individualism" in political and social science—and, further, it may be urged that individualism reached its highest development in that organic and strongly vitalized period: the Middle Ages. The early Teutons, in their respect for strength, raised aloft on a great shield the most stalwart and powerful man of their tribe, and, by this ceremony, created their war-lord. They owed him their personal allegiance, and obeyed his code. He administered justice within his "gau," or district, and when powerful enough to conquer the nobles about him, he became the king, or cunning-man: that is, the able man of a larger territory, named after him a kingdom. This obedience to power, so notable in the earlier centuries, developed and grew complicated with time, until it resulted in the complete feudal system, which was a series of individual compacts, wherein the stronger and the weaker were grouped in pairs; the stronger lending protection, and the weaker rendering service; both acts resulting in mutual benefit. Antagonistic to centralization of every form, the Teutonic principles prepared the great development of the thirteenth century, which saw rich, powerful, independent towns founded in northern and central Europe; the parliamentary system attain a rapid maturity; the trade-guilds perfected; and the great universities receive their

charters. And all these results were, in specialized ways, the fruits of obedience, reverence for authority and regulated labor. The towns were, in many instances, the offspring of the great league for the furtherance of commerce, and they were governed by citizen-bodies, headed by a master-mind. The parliaments, the universities and the guilds were equally manifestations of the spirit of liberty directed by law. One temper of intellect, although a diversity of gifts, characterizes the men of that period, who rose to permanent fame, whether they were sovereigns or saints, poets or scientists.

It was unity such as this that Ruskin had in mind when he wrote the sentence quoted, regarding labor and obedience. He desired with his whole heart, and yet despaired utterly. In his love for mediaevalism, in his distrust of his own times, he did not foresee the possibility of the advent of a new age which might renew the power of the old, purified from the defects wherein lay the seeds of its decay. But such a consummation may be even now preparing. Its prime factor and cause must be the education of the masses—not theoretical, abstract and diffuse, but technical and concrete; an education designed to awaken and foster love for the multiple and multiform life of the universe; a balanced development of all the mental powers from the reason to the imagination, to the end that negative and destructive ideas may be recognized and rejected; a knowledge of history, to the end that the progressive relations of man to man may be studied, and the ascending evolution of these relations acknowledged; finally, a practical, if elementary, acquaintance with certain forms of art, to the end that the pleasures of life may be increased, and the routine of daily existence so modified by the influence of joy in form and color that there shall be neither time nor room for discontent. Under these conditions, individualism will flourish. The man, whatever his occupation, will respect himself and his work. His influence will run abroad like

an electric current, so that life will become simpler because filled with more intense love and devotion. He will grasp eagerly after constructive social ideas, leaving anarchism to the ignorant and prejudiced, who are of low or arrested mental development. He will yield reverence to person and place, simply because in so doing he will recognize something akin to the power which he shall feel in himself, and from a high and enlightened sense of duty, obey in his every act.



*There should be less pride felt
in peculiarity of employment and more in excellence of
achievement.*

“Stones of Venice,” vol. II., page 169.

Though written years since, and in England, no more timely words than these could be urged upon the American workers of to-day. It would seem that they were uttered with the prescience sometimes characteristic of Ruskin when he turned towards things hidden far within the future. At all events, they apprehend and describe perfectly the false feeling, the lack of manliness and dignity with which many of our artisans practice their crafts; envying the holders of professions and ignoring the useful and pleasurable possibilities of their own condition. These discontented ones have perhaps failed in the grammar, or the high school—a failure often due to a lack of sympathy between teacher and pupil; they lose courage and believe themselves inferior to their companions; they take up without enthusiasm some industry or trade, simply as a means of livelihood; despising it and themselves, giving out wretched work, and reducing themselves to the level of machines. To such an extent does “peculiarity of employment” influence the mind of the average American that he practically

ignores "excellence of achievement." If he be a father, he desires for his son an academic degree, even though it should be won by a fraction of class standing; he designs him for a profession, although at the risk that the indifferent student become a "briefless barrister," or a physician without patients. Father and son unite in their hatred of the phrase: "Only a business man;" ignorantly misjudging the acumen, forethought and patience required, in these days of fierce competitive strife, to gain even a modest place in the commercial or industrial world. Thus in the eyes of the every-day man a misty idea of the dual of the Greek noun or the ability to distinguish between Themistocles and Aristides assumes a far greater value than practical skill in the production of useful articles, or the power to command the subtle and ever-changing relations between supply and demand.

To-day, then, the crafts are largely dishonored among us, and the mercantile man, if his name be not written over a great department store, is ignored. And these facts do but prove that false ideas prevail. For the past is ever an earnest of the future, and economic truths are as stable as the world itself. It was industrial and commercial honor that raised the Florentine Republic to civic heights never elsewhere attained during the Middle Ages, and never since equaled. The cloth-dressers of the Calimala and the petty tradesmen of the Mercato Vecchio, nameless though they are to-day, accomplished more for progress and civilization than the most famous popes and emperors of the same period, who changed the geography of Europe at will, and played with armies as at a game of chess. The burghers of Florence sat in their shops, trading and acquiring riches, but with the classics at hand, from which to draw culture and delight in the intervals of business. They sharpened their wits upon one another on the exchange, or the market place, and then went forth as ambassadors and world arbiters. A little people of mer-

chants and craftsmen ruled the Peninsula and inspired the respect of the greater European sovereigns. The memory of that people is a valuable one to all who desire the well-being and real pleasure of the modern working classes. Let manual skill be cultivated, let the dignity of labor be once again appreciated, let the hard day of toil be lightened by some hope or pastime, and a new economic career will be prepared for our country, untroubled by strikes, and worthy to serve as a new historic precedent.



TIME'S CHANGES IN THE DESTINIES OF ART

THAT art is one of the essentials of human life may be proven by its adaptability to time, place and circumstance. Under the form of personal ornament, it is rightly characterized by Carlyle, in his "Sartor Resartus," as the first spiritual need of the "barbarous man;" for food and shelter, however primitive having been provided, the savage turns to gratify his finer sensuous instincts by the use of brilliant color and by the adornment of his few household goods, his weapons and his clothing. His so-called "play-impulse" leads him to imitate the things that please him in the nature by which he is surrounded. He comes to recognize the touch of the Divine Hand in sky and water, bird and plant. His delight in his rudimentary painting and carving and building turns him aside from crime and violence. To him art is God's gift, the most powerful means of his ascent and civilization.

In his stage of fetich-worship, man uses art to glorify the objects that he adores, to declare the powers that protect him; as we find by reference to Egyptian symbolism, wherein the hawk, the crane and the cat, nature's scavengers and hunters, are represented as national deities. And such indeed they were; for had they not done their work of extermination upon the scourges of animal and insect life that followed the inundations of the Nile, there had remained but one inhabitant of the land, and that inhabitant malaria.

In the ancient world, certain highly gifted races having become dominant, polytheism being greatly favored through the mixture of races,—each of which stood for its own gods,—the development of commerce producing great wealth at the centers of civilization, art became the handmaid of luxury. With the faculties of the imagination and manual skill at their fullest, aesthetic expression reached its maximum. But

when Greece had been absorbed into Rome, and Rome had lost its political ideals, then beauty came to be measured by costliness, and art fell to its lowest decline; since it can flourish in organic periods only, side by side with faith, love of country and pure emotions, whatever be their source and direction.

Under the deep, restorative influence of Christianity it rose again, appealing in a new form to a new world lighted by hope. It passed wholly into the service of religion: in the East slowly settling into the inactivity and languor native to the region; in the West, retiring into the monasteries, as into arks of safety, to escape the deluge of barbarians. When six centuries rolled away, in which waiting had passed from the anxious to the apathetic state, fear of invasion and fear of the end of the world ceased; the new nations and governments consolidated, and the great churches and cathedrals sprang into being as votive offerings for preservation. During the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the mysteries of the Christian faith, and the story of man's origin, fall and redemption, as taught by the Bible, furnished abundant and rich material for artistic expression. The great Italians and Germans flourished, displaying their racial traits and their personal genius, but all uniting in glorifying a common creed and a single church. The exalted and the positive, the ascetic and the carnally-minded, wrought together fraternally, preserving the traditions of their elders and believing their art to be all-satisfying, complete in its aims and final in its form.

With the Revival of Learning and the development of free thought consequent upon it, art was released from a service of centuries. It came to be regarded as a means of realizing life. It reflected the spirit of the age in its exuberance, its frank paganism and its acceptance of material from the most opposite and varied sources. But the spirit of the age was negative, and negation is essentially destructive. Denial by force of

repetition loses its note of sincerity. So the art of the Renaissance, at first ingenuous, then strong, impetuous, and splendidly tyrannous, degenerated into a vain display of form, which, since it contained no message from man to man, failed long to hold the respect and the attention of the world.

In our own time, we have seen art assume a phase, which has but one historical parallel. As in the days of the cathedral builders, it becomes the teacher of the handicrafts. All honor then be to the two sons of Oxford, who, a half-century ago, turned toward mediaevalism as to the true fount of a popular art, and with voice, influence, wealth and personal sacrifice, gave their knowledge to the world, and the impetus to the movement which is now forceful in England, America and France. These men went to their work in no spirit of imitation, but seizing the significance of a period in which the "lesser arts of life" co-operated with the higher intellectual ones, they felt that were this union again effected, there would result from it benefits to society similar to those which prevailed in the age of the nameless masters of Nuremberg and Amiens, Strasbourg and Cologne. They understood, with the clearness of their intellect, that art as the teacher of the handicrafts is also the friend of the people, creating beauty out of the commonplace, leading the adult away from the sordid cares of life, and giving to the child room for the exercise of his imitative and imaginative powers, which otherwise are harmfully restrained and dwarfed. Ruskin and Morris having gained the attention of the most matter-of-fact of civilized nations, in an age of industrialism, proceeded to labor for the increase of pleasure in life: pleasure of the craftsman in his work; of the farmer in the country by which he is surrounded; of the entire people in a simplicity, order and symmetry to result from a wise and economical choice of the material objects which serve the needs of daily existence. Art so understood and so

received to the heart of the people, corresponds to the words of Cicero, when, in his plea for the poet Archias, he described the joys of literary attainment :

“ These studies nourish youth,
delight old age, adorn prosperity and offer a refuge and
solace against adversity.”



RUSKIN'S WORK

A Few of the Things Accomplished or Attempted by Ruskin, in the Interests of Art, the Workingman and Humanity.

At Brantwood, Coniston, in the lake region of England, he devised a costly engineering scheme, involving the reclamation of large tracts of land, in order to attract laborers from the surrounding towns.



In the belief that the taste for art must be spread among the masses, he assisted his friend Rossetti in teaching drawing, at the evening classes of the Workingman's College, London, during the years 1854-58.



He became widely popular as a speaker upon economic and art subjects, and delivered courses which were freely given and enthusiastically received, at the South Kensington Museum, Manchester, Bradford, and Tunbridge Wells.



He was Slade Professor at Oxford from 1869 to 1879. At the latter date he retired, owing to a long and dangerous illness; but being re-appointed on his recovery in 1883, he found his audiences so greatly increased that he was forced to lecture in the theatre of the museum. Later, even this auditorium was crowded to the doors by students, graduates and women, and it then became his custom to give each lecture twice. Finally, having followed too freely the vagaries of his genius, the master was persuaded by his friends to retire

from his chair. In doing this, he sent a characteristic letter to the vice-chancellor, in which he attributed the reasons for his action to the facts that the University refused to buy Turner's picture: "The Crook of Lune," and that, by a recent vote, it had sanctioned vivisection.



He endowed richly from his own fortune, a mastership for the Art School, at Oxford, and presented it with a series of valuable educational drawings. He made similar gifts to the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge; while to other causes and objects his donations were generous and frequent. He inherited £175,000, and died comparatively poor.



He founded an art museum at Walkley, which, in 1890, was transferred to Sheffield, the city of artisans and cutlery. To this museum he presented an authentic and fine example of Verrocchio; which gift he considered peculiarly fitting, as the Italian master was himself a noted worker in iron.



Among his efforts for the diffusion of art knowledge, the most important and successful was, no doubt, the great enlargement of the collection and the classification of the works of the Early Italian Painters in the National Gallery, London.



He founded Saint George's Guild, or Order, which was intended to be a return to a primitive agricultural life; all modern machines and manufactures to be banished therefrom. The object of

the association was to promote good and honest work. The vows of the initiates, based upon belief in the goodness of God and the dignity of human nature, inculcated honor, honesty, industry, frugality and obedience. The scheme, benevolent in idea, was ill-suited to the times in which its execution was attempted, and Ruskin, blind to the causes of its failure, became more and more bitter in his detestation of the art, manners, trade, commerce, impulse and movements that he saw about him.



“THE LAND IN DECAY”

AS the novel is beyond question the voice of the spirit of the times, it is interesting to note the similarity of the questions which are now treated through the medium of fiction in countries as widely different from each other as are France and America. Even a cursory examination would seem to prove that both peoples are less interested in the tragedies and comedies of sentiment than in subjects social and psychological. In France, the peasant, the laborer, the artisan, the student is fast usurping the place of the high-born guilty lover, who has so long been one of the three characters indispensable to the plot and action of imaginative literature. The first fruits of this change are found in almost every important work of fiction that has been produced during the last six years. The “Affaire Dreyfus,” involving the vexed and intricate Jewish question, the ambitions of the clergy, the national and Jesuitical systems of education,—these are some of the subjects treated in the social novel, which is, as yet, a form of art somewhat new, crude and harsh, although it promises to fulfil all that Auguste Comte long since predicted of its future power over the people.

Of the examples of the new social novel many are interesting to Frenchmen alone; since they treat of conditions impossible outside of France, and therefore difficult to be appreciated by foreign thinkers. Such as these illustrate but a single, more or less durable phase of national life, and, therefore, even in France, will soon lose their value, except as historical documents. One only has passed beyond these restrictions, and, by the force of genius and sympathy, is worthy to be ranked among enduring masterpieces. It is “The Land in Decay” of M. Rene Bazin, which has excited the admiration and stirred the hearts of foreign critics and readers to a degree scarcely equaled since Victor Hugo laid down

the romancer's pen. This book has been widely noticed in both England and America: in every case eliciting from the reviewer an acknowledgment of its greatness.

The sense of its power does not produce a sudden and irresistible attraction; since its idyllic character is at first deceptive, and would lead the reader to suppose that a new eclogue, worthy of a place beside the pastorals of Virgil and Madame Sand, had appeared in French literature. But while a cooler, calmer judgment corroborates this opinion, it also reveals a strength and a pathos which must make appeal to all hearts which patriotism, love of family, and the associations of childhood have ever quickened. The peasants painted by Millet and Breton, and represented in Mme. Sand's "Master Pipers," "Nanon," or "La Mare au Diable," here find worthy companion pieces. But the new types are more complex and modern than any before presented. The men are more restless, reactionary and subtle, while the women are no longer the passive, resigned beings who accept, without murmuring, the hard lot inseparable from the soil to which they are attached by birth. Both sexes have developed thought, which if not yet sound, is at least indicative of progress.

"The Land in Decay" is at once a warning and an appeal to the loyal children of France. It pictures that most fertile country, as already seriously compromised in its economic status. It shows the peasantry as wholly changed from those sturdy, courageous, abstemious sons of the soil who, it is said, drew from their savings hoarded in stockings the war indemnity of two billion francs demanded by the German Empire only thirty years since. The scene of the book is laid in Brittany, and exquisite art is displayed in fitting the characters to the landscape. Each telling episode is projected against a back-ground so realistic that one can almost seize with the senses the glow of the atmosphere, the lowing of cattle, the odors of field and farm. The

characters are all peasants and members of a single family; the romantic element being only just sufficient to weld together a plot, which has itself an economic, rather than a sentimental or domestic value. This peasant family, by name Lumineau, has, for generations, held in lease lands belonging to the local nobleman: paying to him not only rents, dues and products, but also a peculiar respect, or homage which flavors of mediævalism. So that one can almost imagine the feudal system, with its lords and vassals, as still in force in this province of Brittany, which, during the first great Revolution, remained faithful to the king, and which, from those days down to our own, has shown the greatest aversion to modern ideas.

The book pictures the old system in a decay due partly to natural causes, and partly to outside disintegrating forces which attack the younger generation, leaving the older isolated, and in despair. The army has, of course, claimed a recruit from the Lumineau family; thus, not only depriving the land temporarily of a vigorous cultivator, but furthermore opening to the youth, during his service in Algeria, ways of life and vistas of thought fatal to the happiness of a French peasant. Again, a grave accident has stricken the eldest son, sadly crippling and deforming him, rendering him unfit for marriage, and so destroying the most cherished of the family hopes. A third son and the elder daughter, discouraged by the partial failure of the land, the prolonged absence of their favorite and soldier brother, the melancholia and spasmodic violence of the cripple—above all, by the hard, constant, monotonous labor of the farm, leave, almost without warning, the paternal home to seek employment in the nearest town. The climax of calamity for the old father lies in the ravages of the phylloxera, the description of which forms the strongest and most pathetic episode of the book.

It occurs after the return of the soldier from Algeria, and when he is left alone with his

father to do more than a double share of labor. A sorrowful picture is first given of the two men uprooting from the soil of France the vine which once contributed so largely to her riches; working with pick-axes of primitive form fashioned for an extinct race of giants; laboring throughout a cheerless February day, and returning home in the gray twilight, through frozen fields, along bare hedges, beneath leafless trees and surrounded by the damp, pitiless cold; working and walking in silence, with their thoughts fixed upon "the land in decay." The sadness of the father is represented as differing from that of the son, since the elder man is inspired by a strong, tried love of the fatherland, which rises anew after every blow of Fortune. In uprooting the dead wood, he already anticipates the day when he shall plant a new vineyard, and pictures to himself joyous vintages to come in the days of his successors. In the son's heart, on the contrary, hope promises nothing, since his love and devotion has weakened. The father is the first to break the painful silence; expressing himself in the homely speech of the peasant, and lamenting his forced task. The son, divided between filial tenderness and impulse, hesitates to reply. But, at last, with a sweeping gesture which points far beyond Brittany, and carries something like a sea-chill beneath the rough woolen garments of the old peasant, he cries:

"Yes, the day of our vineyards has passed; but the grape thrives elsewhere!"

At the moment of this cry, the plans of the young man become definite, his future opens plainly before him. He begins, like the brother and sister who have preceded him, to make secret preparations for departure. But, unlike them, he does not shrink from the toil of the fields. He longs for work, but work in the midst of life, joy, hope and liberty. He steals away at night, but it is afterward known that he embarks for South America.

Three members of the once prosperous family now remain: the father, broken by misfortune and abandoned by those whose strong young arms should have arrested the decay of the land. Beside him, there are the cripple and a younger daughter, long since fallen into disgrace because of her love for a farm-laborer, who, early in the story, was dismissed for his presumption. The cripple, wrought to a frenzy by the consent of his father to allow the unequal marriage, attempts one night to visit his former betrothed, believing that she may yet accept him and so restore him to his birthright as the eldest and leader of the family. But the change of seasons is at hand, and the low marshes of Brittany are submerged in spring floods. The unfortunate loses control of the boat peculiar to the region,—the yole,—to which he trusts himself, and is found dead by his father, who, divining his intention, has followed him. A dramatic scene ensues, picturing the return of the corpse to the farm, and lacking nothing of the power of the greatest French painters. It is indeed above and beyond any art that can possibly be displayed upon canvas, because it is communicated by human speech. Characters, landscape, the time and the season are as real as those that are offered in the world of matter.

And now misfortune appears to have wreaked its full vengeance both upon the land, and upon those who are attached to it by the traditions of centuries on centuries. But were the book to close upon this climax of the father's grief, and the death or departure of all his sons, no solution would be suggested for the remedy of "the land in decay." Hope comes through a woman: the younger daughter, who has suffered no temptations of flight, and who has devoted her dowry inherited from her mother to relieve her father's pressing needs. Described as uniting in herself the virtues of the ideal peasant, and those which have distinguished the best women of her own old family, she goes to the hus-

band of her choice, who is a stranger in the region, poor, and accustomed to serve rather than to command.

This union, so ill-suited in the eyes of the prejudiced, contains the elements of salvation for the land and renewal for the family. It is the suggestion of the infusion of new hopes, new love, and new energy into a sterilized region. It has a basis and precedent in science, and therefore is valuable as an economic measure. Those born to labor, must, in self-defence, avoid the life of the towns, and the State, considering its own interests as well as their welfare, must provide that they go "back to the soil."



THE SEVEN LAMPS

THE singular and non-committal titles given by Ruskin to his lectures and books are still a frequent subject of comment among well-informed persons. For although they are always pertinent, yet their relations to the subject-matter are not such as would be readily perceived even by the careful and the imaginative. They are elaborately prepared, and the work of a scholar, who drew them from ancient, or mediæval sources of history, philosophy or language. Among the most attractive and appropriate of these titles is that of "The Seven Lamps of Architecture." To explain it, we must go back to the great Jewish symbol of Light and Law: the Menorah, or seven-branched candlestick, which is so sacred and significant in the history of the Hebrews, and which acquired a new value when it was associated by the historic Church with the rite of baptism; coming then to signify the acceptance of the illumination and of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit.

This figure, as was most natural, attracted Ruskin, for whom art was ever a faith and a religion. He adapted and extended its meaning until it stood in his mind for the perfect expression of the builder's art, wherein lay, as in the solar spectrum, seven distinct but harmonious elements.

These elements, lamps, or spirits, as he variously names them, are familiar principles treated in Ruskin's own superlative way.

The Lamp of Sacrifice would seem, if reduced to its lowest terms, to be that spirit of self-denial and self-forgetfulness which is felt by the true artist or craftsman, who sinks his personality into his work, and works not for gain, or even fame, but solely to express in visible form what his brain has conceived.

The Lamp of Truth is that spirit of honesty in building which resists falsity of asser-

tion in the nature of the material used, and the quantity of labor exercised.

The Lamps of Power and Beauty represent the constructive and decorative elements in architecture: the first showing the power of the human mind to gather, co-ordinate and govern principles discovered at large; the second imitating and reflecting the loveliness found in Nature: as for example, the Gothic system of ornament which is based upon plant-forms.

The Lamp of Life is the expression of vital energy: the impress of the mind of the master left upon his work.

The Lamp of Memory is the creative spirit of all truly great architecture: that is, the monumental, which conquers the forgetfulness of men by perpetuating the story of some great cause, leader, or victory.

Finally, the Lamp of Obedience is a wise observance of fixed principles which results in enduring work; it is the opposite of that license which builds but for a day, and is the slave of its own vagaries.



The title of the "Fors Chari-gera" has proven itself a crux to many. And this not without reason, since the work is numbered among the later writings of Ruskin, and is much less easy of access than the "Lamps" or the "Stones." It is a series of letters addressed to workingmen, and first published periodically; the series beginning in 1871. The imaginative title was suggested to the master from an old print, and is ingeniously explained by him at the outset. "Fors Chari-gera is the Fate who bears the club, key or nail:" the instrument representing strength, as the club, or nail, and wisdom as the key; the whole device symbolising the guiding or compelling forces of human life.

The "Aratra Pentelici" is a treatise on the principles of sculpture: the title attracting the lover of ancient art by its suggestions of the soil of Greece, teeming with the splendid remains of antique beauty, and with the marble which hides within itself lovely conceptions denied to all save the creative artist. "Aratra Pentelici," the plough of Pentelicus, is a title of which the imaginative power sustains the interest of the reader as he turns the pages of a somewhat technical and quite dogmatic argument.

An equal power lies in the choice of the descriptive title: "The Laws of Fesule," which points to the mountain suburb of Florence as to the generating-point and focus of the Italian renaissance of art.



"The Queen of the Air" is an exposition of the Greek myths of cloud and storm; while "The Ethics of the Dust" are a series of lectures upon crystallization. Other semi-scientific writings bear the titles of "Proserpina," which is a study of wayside flowers; "Deucalion," the name of the Greek representative of the biblical Noah, applied by Ruskin to his own observations upon the lapse of the waves and the life of the stars; "Frondes Agrestes," boughs from the fields, are extracts selected from "Modern Painters" by the author himself. And so it would be possible for us to pass on through a literary product of three hundred works, everywhere met by suggestions of that fertile chaos of ideas and impulses which represent for us the most unique personality of Victorian England.



*Smokers' cabinet and chair in dark oak ; chair cushion in United Crafts soft leather
with laced edges.*



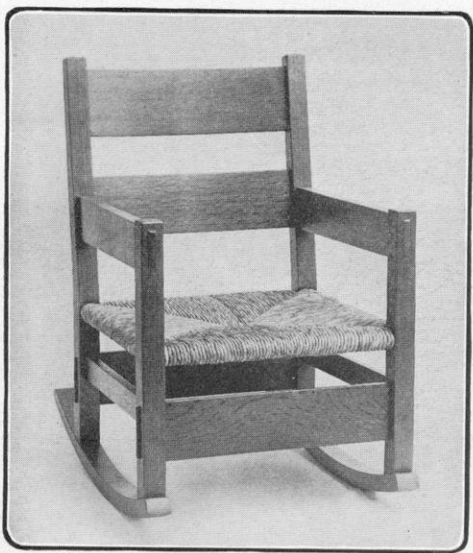
Combined exhibit of the Grueby Faience Company, of Boston, and the United Crafts, of Eastwood, N. Y., at the Pan-American Exposition, Inner Court of the Manufacturers and Liberal Arts Building.



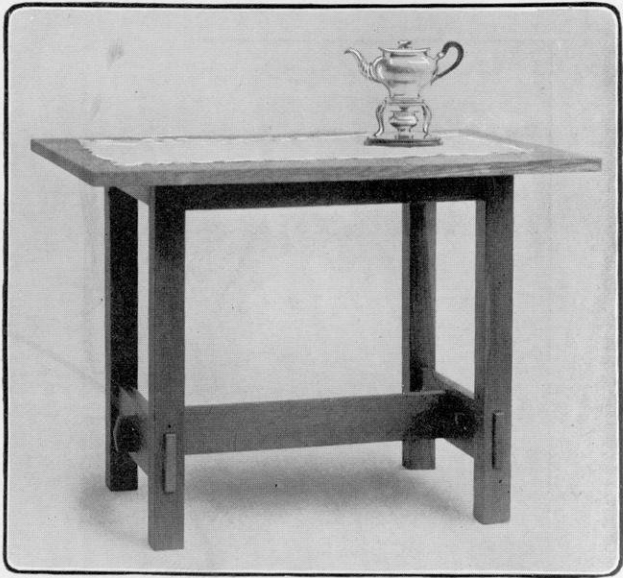
Another view of the same exhibit.



Small writing desk in green oak ; desk chair in same wood, with rush seat.



"The Thornjen" rocker in fumed oak with rush seat.



Breakfast table in dark oak.

UTILITY--SIMPLICITY--BEAUTY

THE owner of a new house often hesitates before the task of providing it with furnishings. He must, he believes, make sacrifices in one of two directions. Either he must allow the claims of beauty to usurp those of utility, and so detract from the essential qualities of his home; or he must content himself with surroundings less attractive than those of his neighbors. If he chooses the objects which he regards as beautiful, he fills his rooms with slender tables, chairs and seats, delicately constructed, perhaps charged with marquetry, and almost invariably covered with easily perishable fabrics. If, on the contrary, he decides to purchase serviceable things for everyday use, he too often acquires a collection of articles ugly in form, crude and impure in color, and the very sight of which induces depression and melancholy.

To avoid these results he has first to learn the wholesome lesson of simplicity. The home, assuming, of course, that it represents the station of its occupants, should never be encumbered with things of doubtful use, or questionable aesthetic value. The few articles necessary for the maintenance of comfort, habitual occupation and the healthful enjoyment of the senses, are the only ones to be admitted into living, bed, or dining rooms. Further, old things are best, since they have been tried and proven and not found wanting. That is: objects not such as satisfied customs and fashions which are now obsolete; but such as represent primitive ideas and therefore essentials; such as frankly state their purpose and honestly meet the needs which they were intended to supply; doing this without affectation of crudeness, and with regard to modern consideration for comfort and sanitation.

If we take, for example, the bed as often now modeled with a view to decorative effect, we shall find it raised on a dais and surrounded by heavy draperies; both of which features are relics of a past time, serving no useful end, and contrary to modern ideas of cleanliness and health. The dais and the draperies formerly protected the bed from cold and dampness, and it is most interesting to note the development of this idea of isolation, from the cupboard beds of the Brittany peasants up to the great couch of the French sovereigns. The model of the bed best

sued to the present time, when the value of pure air and the curative power of sunlight are fully recognized, is no derivative model. It must simply show solidity, simplicity, and a due regard for sanitary principles.

And so we might pass on through the list of household furnishings; condemning with justice those that copy and imitate; those that are wanting in honesty and originality; as when, for instance, a chair intended for constant use, shows the slender proportions of the style Louis Seize; or again, when decoration simulates constructive principle, as in the introduction of false mortices that fasten nothing; or when a certain combination of curves or angles appears throughout the work of a designer, until it loses all meaning, and becomes for the eye, what the refrain of a nursery rhyme is to the ear.

If then these essentials of utility, that is: adaptability to purpose, and simplicity be assured, beauty will not be slow to follow. The necessities of construction demand a sufficient variety of line to satisfy the aesthetic cravings of the eye for pure form; while the delights of color wait upon the use of our native and scarcely appreciated woods. It would seem that the American craftsman might receive, as addressed to himself, the words of our patriot poet, when he wrote:

“That is best which lieth nearest,
Shape from that thy course in art.”



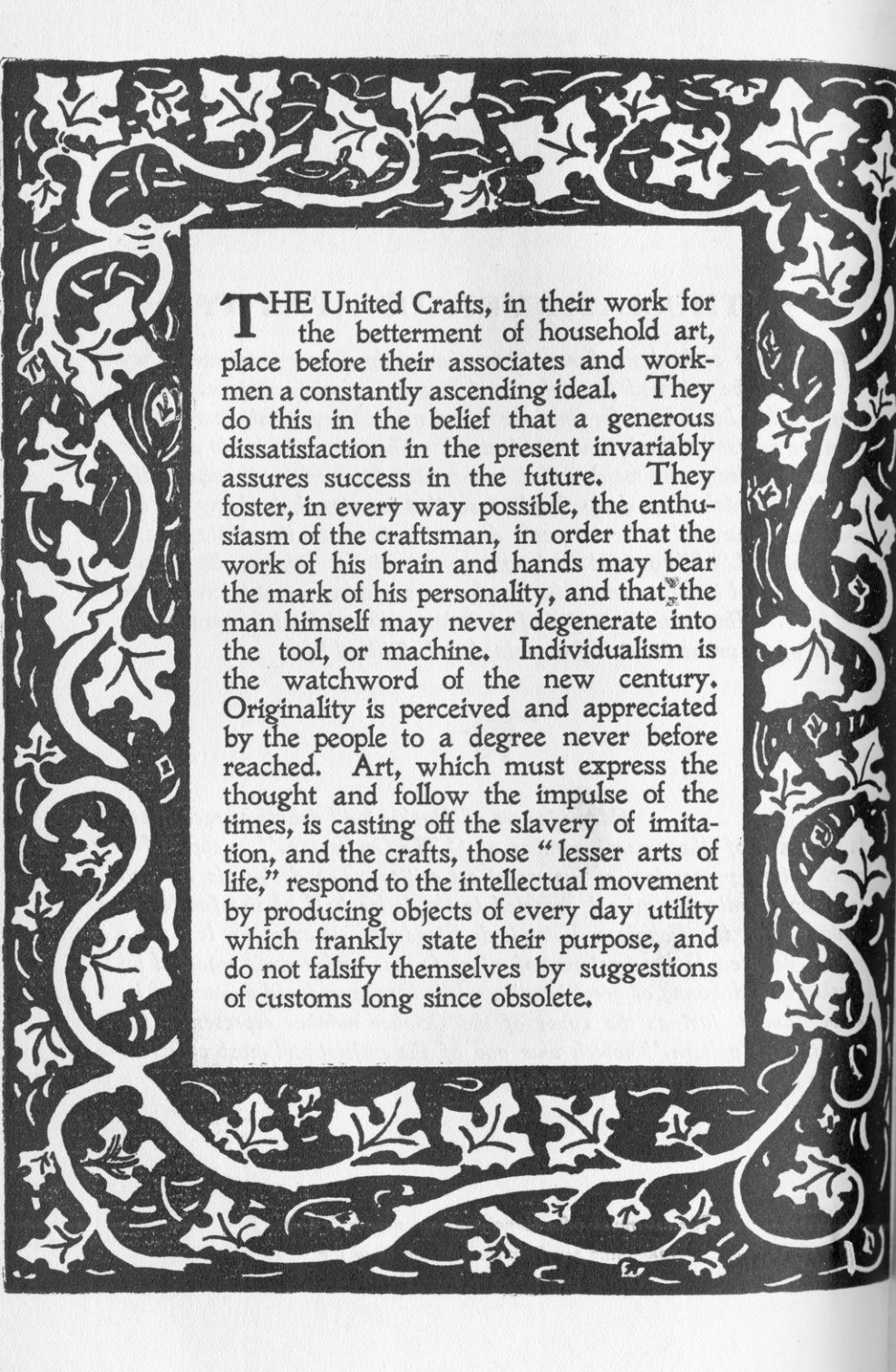
ENTHUSIASM VERSUS APATHY

TO ensure enthusiasm for good workmanship among craftsmen, they must be relieved from the hard pressure of circumstance. They must neither be pressed for time nor by want. They must be removed from the necessity of slovenly production. They must be led to perceive and acknowledge the value: that is the usefulness or the beauty of the materials which they daily handle; so that waste, that enemy of the workshop, may not enter to create dissension between the employer and the employed. They must be taught to respect the work of their own hands, so that it may come to be for them a subject of great interest, care and love. They must be made to feel their worth and dignity as producers, as one of the prime factors of organized and civilized life.



Many lovers of Ruskin will doubtless recognize, in the cover of the present number of "The Craftsman," a copy of a much-prized possession of the great art-critic. The design is derived from an illuminated missal executed in the latter half of the fourteenth century, for the Countess Yolande de Flandres. It gave the text for a lecture devoted to the treatment of plant-forms, and it was regarded by Ruskin as a drawing of great beauty. It is here reproduced because of its associations; just as the cover of the October number represented the "Daisy tile pattern," which was one of the earliest and most effective among the designs of William Morris.

The examples of cabinet-making shown in this magazine are from the workshops of the United Crafts, Eastwood, N. Y.



THE United Crafts, in their work for the betterment of household art, place before their associates and workmen a constantly ascending ideal. They do this in the belief that a generous dissatisfaction in the present invariably assures success in the future. They foster, in every way possible, the enthusiasm of the craftsman, in order that the work of his brain and hands may bear the mark of his personality, and that the man himself may never degenerate into the tool, or machine. Individualism is the watchword of the new century. Originality is perceived and appreciated by the people to a degree never before reached. Art, which must express the thought and follow the impulse of the times, is casting off the slavery of imitation, and the crafts, those "lesser arts of life," respond to the intellectual movement by producing objects of every day utility which frankly state their purpose, and do not falsify themselves by suggestions of customs long since obsolete.