AN ENDEAVOUR TOWARDS THE TEACHING OF JOHN RUSKIN AND WILLIAM MORRIS

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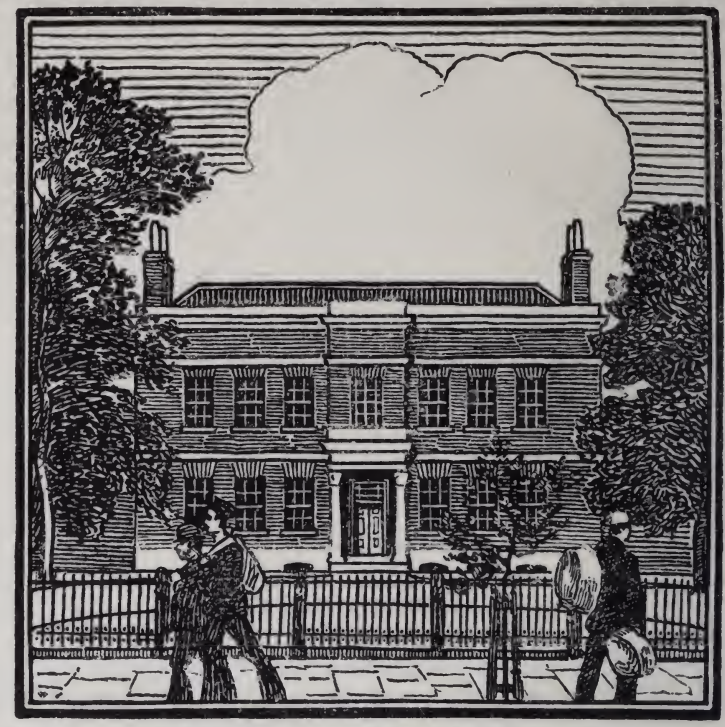

BEING A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE WORK, THE AIMS, AND THE PRINCIPLES OF THE GUILD OF HANDICRAFT IN EAST LONDON, WRITTEN BY C. R. ASHBEE, AND DEDICATED BY HIM LESS IN THE WRITING, THAN IN THE WORK THE WRITING SEEKS TO SET FORTH, TO THEIR MEMORY. AN. DOM. MDCCCCI.

I. THE FIRST BEGINNINGS OF THE GUILD AND SCHOOL OF HANDICRAFT IN EAST LONDON.

PERHAPS AS THE GUILD of Handicraft has now been in existence for some twelve years, it may not be inexpedient to give some account of it in writing. No record, either of its work & progress, or of the ideas upon which it was founded, has ever yet been given, & I am anxious in reply to the many requests received at Essex House to offer something that may meet this want.

To those who were acquainted with the beginnings of the Guild, the various educational undertakings connected with it between the years 1888 and 1894, the first workshop on the top of a warehouse in Commercial Street, & the classes for the study of design & the reading of Ruskin, carried on by me at Toynbee Hall in the years 1886 and 1887, it will be known that the Guild as originally conceived was the productive side of an undertaking that was also educational. From the volume of the Transactions of the Guild and School of Handicraft published in 1890, the following may be quoted as of interest by comparison with what has been accomplished since that date, and what we at present have in prospect.

"The Guild and School had its beginnings in the years 1886–87 in a small Ruskin class, conducted at Toynbee Hall, and composed of three

pupils. Each of these three has since been engaged in an industrial venture of a co-operative kind. Each has failed.

"The reading of Ruskin led to an experiment of a more practical nature, & out of 'Fors Clavigera' and the 'Crown of Wild Olive,' sprang a small class for the study of design. The class grew to thirty, some men, some boys; and then it was felt that design needed application, to give the teaching fulfilment. A piece of practical work, which involved painting, modelling, plaster casting, gilding, & the study of heraldic forms, gave a stimulus to the corporate action of the thirty students, and the outcome of their united work as dilettanti was the desire that permanence might be given to it by making it work for life & bread. From this sprang the idea of the present Guild and School.

"Very undefined at first, the notion was that a School should be carried on in connection with a workshop; that the men in this workshop should be the teachers in the school, and that the pupils in the school should be drafted into the workshop as it grew in strength and certainty.

"Wisdom pronounced the experiment from a business point of view as entirely quixotic, & precedent for it there was none. The little Guild of three members to begin with, & the larger school of some fifty members, was, however, started in its present form; the top floor of a warehouse in Commercial Street was taken for two years, to serve as a workshop and school-room combined; it was polychromatized by the pupils, and the Guild and School celebrated its inauguration on

June 23rd, 1888. A kindly public gave the funds for supporting the school for two trial years; while the Guild, launching as an independent venture, announced its intention of taking up three lines of practical work: woodwork, metal work, and decorative painting, and intimated the ambitious hope that it would one day take over the school, for which purpose, when formulating its constitution, it laid by a first charge on its profits."

When this was written, the two sides of the experiment, the productive and the educational, were closely allied. It is possible that they may become so again, but probably not in the same manner as formerly, and probably only through some gradual process of internal growth. At the moment of writing a class in design is being conducted at Essex House by Mr. C. Spooner. It has been started by the men themselves and is attended by some eight or ten cabinet makers, metal workers and blacksmiths. In section II. of this book also where I deal with the future of Essex House as a centre of craftsmanship I have pointed to certain uses of an educational nature to which the house itself may, it is hoped, shortly be placed.

Social & municipal conditions, however, it would seem, are not at present favourable to the carrying on conjointly of a productive workshop and of a school of a public nature. We claim, however, to have established the principle, and though it may, owing to circumstances, have had to be partly modified & abandoned, its working has none the less been proved a success.

Our main educational efforts for the moment are devoted to giving our craftsmen the best possible chances to develop their skill & learn their trade right through, and not merely in sections; to giving our young apprentices as good a training as modern conditions allow, to making as effective as possible the instruction that our Guildsmen are called upon to give under distant County Councils and public bodies, and to giving such teaching in different crafts as is asked of us by amateurs, provided this does not interfere with the productive efficiency of the workshops.

II. THE SCHOOL OF HANDICRAFT.

THE history & development of the School of Handicraft was described in a pamphlet issued in 1895, 'A nine years experiment in technical education: being the last report of the School of Handicraft, Essex House, 1895,' when, owing to the failure of the Technical Education Board of the London County Council to keep its word with the School Committee, & the impossibility of carrying on costly educational work in the teeth of state aided competition, it was considered advisable to close the school. The position then was briefly this. The school was costing about L.300 a year. This amount was found in part by voluntary contribution and in part by the Guild or productive society which was practically its financial guarantor. When the negotiations with the Technical Education Board of the London County Council for the support of the school fell through, the Guild found itself a creditor of the school to the extent of about L.400. With any reasonable prospect of a healthy continuance of the educational work there would have been no great harm in letting this go on, but the action of the Board was so discouraging that both the School Committee & the Committee of the Guild felt that the wisest course was to close the school. This was done, and the debt of L.400 has, in the course of the last four years, been gradually cleared off. It was finally

extinguished in December, 1899. Since the closing of the school as a public undertaking the educational work has been limited to the pupils and apprentices of the Guild & to all those who might be willing to have special teaching at Essex House and were ready to pay the fees necessary for the purpose. Not a few have availed themselves of this privilege.

Before leaving the subject of the school, it may not be out of place to say a few words as to the principles upon which it was based, & the plan adopted in carrying them out. It is not necessary to go over all the ground that has been already traversed in the pamphlet above referred to, but the school was the first of its kind I believe in England, and various undertakings of a similar nature have been since started and in some respects modelled upon it. This brief account may, therefore, serve as a guide to others.

What those of us who read our Ruskin in 1888 found, when we tried to apply his ideas to practical education, was not encouraging. We found apprenticeship defunct, the time-honoured manner by which a youth learned his craft, destroyed by subdivision of labour and mechanical production, we found the teaching function and the workshop function everywhere divorced, which for the proper study of industrial art should be united, & instead of their union we saw only the flaccid and mechanical South Kensington system by which paper designers were not exactly educated, but incubated in the 'Government Grant' hot houses. We found the application of

the principles of art to material, to its limitations & necessities, nowhere taught;—those principles, the understanding of which is the glory of every great aesthetic period, and gives to the workman the subtle sense of true craftsmanship; and we found those great democratic forces, to which we as reformers looked for a revival of English craftsmanship and a responsibility in its development, the Trade Union Movement and the Co-operative Movement, unintelligent & indifferent in all matters relating to aesthetic training. The great social purposes that appeared to us to be implied in such training, such a study of industrial art as we looked for, were misunderstood and underrated. It was only about the personality of a few great masters, and of these William Morris was the greatest, that there seemed to be anything of that life or atmosphere that gave their glory to the workshops of mediaeval England or Italy.

To imagine that by forming in Whitechapel a school in conjunction with a productive workshop, the evils we saw might be remedied, and the ends we sought attained, was audacious; but the enthusiasm perhaps condoned the audacity, and if there is one sort of enthusiasm that is more precious than another, it is that which has an educational purpose. To many, however, of those 700 pupils or instructors who, during the course of the nine years' work, passed under the influence of the little School of Handicraft, this enthusiasm has meant a great deal, has indeed I believe in some cases altered for them the entire tenor and purpose of life.

The enumeration of the different trades which I extract from the published report will show what a motley set they were:

ARCHITECTS OR ARCHITECTS' PUPILS 19
BUILDING TRADES ~ ~ ~ ~ 11
METAL WORKERS ~ ~ ~ ~ 15
Including hammered Metal Workers and Smiths.
LITHOGRAPHIC DRAUGHTSMEN AND DESIGNERS ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ 6
ELECTRIC LIGHT FITTERS, &c. ~ 4
STAINED GLASS DESIGNERS AND DRAUGHTSMEN ~ ~ ~ ~ 5
SCHOOLMASTERS ~ ~ ~ ~ 244
Training for Manual Instruction.
CLERKS ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ 9
UNSPECIFIED ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ 13
Miscellaneous Trades, not Clerks.
TECHNICAL INSTRUCTORS ~ ~ 12
As distinct from Schoolmasters, i.e., such as were giving instruction in Technical Schools on County Council Grants in the subjects they were learning at the School of Handicraft.
MODELLERS ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ 3
ARTISTS: PICTORIAL: & DESIGNERS 8
BINDERS ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ 3
CABINET MAKERS, CARVERS, TURNERS, AND PATTERN MAKERS ~ 12
FEMALE TEACHERS ~ ~ ~ ~ 4
LADIES ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ 24
Preparing or not as Technical Instructors.

PAINTERS AND SIGN WRITERS ~ 6
PRINTERS' APPRENTICES ~ ~ 3
BOYS ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ over 175

Either at School, or who may have passed into Trades during their time in the School.

These men, many of them, met together some for the study of design in its application to material, some, like the elementary schoolmasters, for the study of manual training: they learned many other things than the subjects only for which their names were entered, but technical education, the desire to give intelligent use to their hands, the application of an aesthectic sense, however dim, to material in some shape or form was always the motive which attracted them.

As for the plan of the school itself, it was carried on rather by means of workshop evenings than by definite classes, the idea being that there should be a franking fee, and that the pupils should be encouraged to attend as often as possible; in addition to this there were regular lectures & addresses from artist friends, there were social evenings in the craftsmen's club, & the link which bound the School to the Guild brought its pupils into direct contact with the Guild workmen. It was its flexibility that gave it its principal charm and its greatest strength.

The closing of the School was in many respects much to be regretted, for the school evenings brought a constant flow of life to the whole undertaking, new pupils, new faces, new ideas; with lectures, classes, and demonstrations at regular

times. All this the workmen & young apprentices of the Guild lost, nor have the new municipal undertakings of the London County Council, with the single exception of the Central School of Arts & Crafts, which to many dwellers in fürther East London is too remote, as yet provided any adequate substitute. To have had William Morris, Sir William Richmond, and Mr. T. G. Jackson down to talk, or a practical demonstration from Mr. Stirling Lee, Mr. Rathbone, or Mr. Walter Crane, all this had the highest educational value towards the training of the Guild's young craftsmen. It is questionable, however, whether the productive side of the work, the Guild proper, would not have suffered considerably by a connection, however slight, with a well meaning if narrow-minded Technical Education Board, which for the present at least would seem to be pledged to the support of large & somewhat purposeless Polytechnics. The criticism is perhaps biassed, from the point of view of the decorative arts, but there is little doubt that up to the present moment, with the single exception just referred to, nothing of any great value has been achieved for English Industrial Art in London by municipal agency.

III. THE GUILD OF HANDICRAFT BEFRE REGISTRATION.

MEANTIME the Guild had developed considerably. The three original members had increased to some fourteen or fifteen, with several apprentices & a number of affiliated workmen, working partly in the shops and partly outside, the clientèle had been steadily increasing, and the various exhibitions where its productions were displayed, brought it a continuous flow of orders, the instance of the Arts & Crafts Exhibitions alone may be cited where, on some occasions, the contents of the cases of silversmithing were sold many times over. To the two existing workshops, the wood shop and the metal shop, were added a smithy, an enamelling furnace, a lathe; and extensive orders were undertaken for architects, on building works, for the London School Board, for private customers, while the work of technical instruction received a considerable stimulus from the contracts for teaching undertaken for different County Councils who came to Essex House for technical instructors. To Surrey, Kent, Essex, Shropshire, Hertfordshire, and Ireland, instructors were sent from time to time; & we calculate that in all some three hundred different centres in the United Kingdom have been visited by Essex House workmen, acting either as teachers or inspectors of local teaching. As for the work produced in the

Guild's shops, it has been sent for many years now a continuous round of Exhibits to Manchester, Liverpool, Dublin, Berlin, Munich, Vienna, Frankfort, Paris, and the Cape.

A few words may be of interest as to the methods and principle of government and the form of co-operation or profit-sharing that have been developed in the Guild. We accept broadly the co-operative principle. We consider that every workman who is permanently to work for the place should have a share and an interest in it, & while we hold that the main difficulty is that of management, we believe that much of the hard business of organization can be perfectly well done by the Committee of the men themselves. To the action of this Committee most of the internal shop organization has been due, from it has sprung not only what one might call the autonomous principle, but such rules as the Guild possesses, or that are binding on its members, and to Mr. C. V. Adams, the Guild's first cabinet-maker, is due in the main the outline of the rules that have so far bound the Guild. We are indebted to him for ten years of steady and consistent organization, he was one of the three original Guildsmen, he was elected Manager in 1890, resigned in 1897, and subsequently acted as Director on the Board during the Company's first year of registration.

Until the formation of the Guild into a limited liability Company, in the year 1898, the system of government for the first ten years of its life had been as follows: A Manager was elected by the Committee of Guildsmen, and of this Committee

I was Chairman. All members of the Committee were legally co-partners with myself, & the rules made by the Committee for the division of profits or the apportionment of losses were binding upon the whole body. The Manager had a free hand in workshop discipline, but the individual Guildsman had a right to lay his case before the Committee.

When, in 1898, referring to the system in force before the formation of the Company, we were asked to fill in the return of the Labour Department of the Board of Trade on the profit sharing Inquiry, one of the questions asked was whether the system had proved satisfactory, what its general benefits might be, whether it promoted harmony between employers and employed, and so forth. As the reply given has some bearing upon the question I am considering I will give it at length.

"The system has proved eminently satisfactory. No such thing as a real labour dispute has ever happened, nor can it in the nature of things ever happen. The men feel that they are their own employers and that the business belongs to them. On the other hand the men have frequently been willing to make sacrifices for the concern, such as working at less wages rather than leave, or allowing wages to stand over when there was not enough at the week's end to meet them, or allowing their wages to be docked with a view to the increase of the whole capital.

"Two main features present themselves as considerations in conclusion, upon the general work-

ing of the concern and its bearing upon the whole question of profit-sharing.

1. The immense educational value of the Committee in everything relating to questions of responsibility, of steady work, of sound workmanship, of the application to business of Trade Union regulations and of the duties of the individual workman to himself and his colleagues.
2. The unimportance of the actual cash bonus. We have never found that the actual bonus made much difference, it is always the theoretical bonus that does the work. If a man receives good wages, the odd pound over and above at the close of the half year is unimportant beside the thought that he has a voice and a share in the management of the whole concern. The odd pound gives him no responsibility, the thought of it does."

Whether a Government Department will make much use of so small a fragment of Idealism I cannot say, but of its vital importance there is no doubt. One marvels often that this same Idealistic something is not more frequently treated by the commercial mind as a business asset: but of this I shall have more to say later. I have still to trace the growth of the concern in its more recent shape as a limited Company.

IV. THE GUILD OF HANDICRAFT AS A REGISTERED COMPANY.

COMPANIES of limited liability have an unpleasant sound in these latter days, & it took us a long time before we could abandon our entire freedom and make up our minds to register either under the Industrial Societies or the Limited Liability Companies Act. What really imposed the need upon us was the sense of responsibility among the thriftier & more far-sighted members of the Guild. Before registration all of them were jointly liable with myself, and their liability was unlimited, some of them owned their own houses & had other property, independent of their holdings in the concern. It was in many ways desirable that the liability for all should be limited. To do this, moreover, would materially assist the placing of the whole undertaking on a more permanently sound financial basis. The raising of the necessary capital for conducting a constantly growing undertaking, had from the outset been a difficulty. When the three original members first started the Guild in 1888 they borrowed L.50 to trade with, but it was felt necessary during the first two years, to increase this to L.500, for which I found the security, at the same time a fund was instituted among the men, and no profits could be drawn till L.20 stood to each man's credit in this fund. Later it was felt that this was still inade-

quate, and while further sums were found from the outside, the men decided that they would further increase their holdings by a two-and-a-half per cent. deduction weekly from wages. The proportion of capital held inside the Guild has, subsequent to the second year, averaged from 25 to 50 per cent. of the total holding.

At the time of the formation of the Company, a rearrangement was made of the bonus system, upon which profits had hitherto been divided. It was found that the old system did not sufficiently encourage the holding of capital by the men. The accumulated bonus was therefore alloted in shares, and an additional L.5 worth of shares per year of standing was allotted to each man in the concern as his share in the goodwill. In addition to this the men decided that the two-and-a-half per cent. on wages rule should continue till further notice, the accumulated amount being allotted in L.1 shares at the close of each year. This accumulated two-and-a-half per cent. represents at the present rate an annual addition to the capital of L.50, it increases with the number of Guildsmen drawing wages, and the idea is that when at any time the capital from inside and outside shall suffice for conducting the concern, this annual allotment shall be employed in extinguishing outside holdings, thus gradually leaving the members of the Guild sole owners of the business. A further clause in the Articles provides that on the declaration of profits, after one-and-a-half per cent. over the average yearly Bank rate has been paid, to outside and inside shareholders alike, any

subsequent division should be in the ratio of 2 to 1 to inside as distinguished from outside holders.

Passing from matters of finance to matters of government, clauses were inserted in the Articles to safeguard the autonomous principle of the Guild, and without going into details, they may be summed up as follows: The Workshop Committee was left intact, also the rights in the election of new Guildsmen, it was given a further power of annually appointing a labour director of its own to the Board of Directors, in whose hands lay the appointment of the Manager, and as this Director is elected by head voting while other appointments on the Board, with the exception of my own as Managing Director, are by share voting, it has been thought that the fairest possible division between labour and capital has been arrived at. For the rest, the individual workman has the right of appeal to the Guild Committee if he have any grievance against the Manager, whose powers are those usually appertaining to the office, and as in part the Board is formed by representation from the Guild Committee, he is thus further protected in the Board's decision, and this decision is final.

There are many minor rights, privileges, and responsibilities, which it is needless here to enter into, though before leaving the subject of the remodelling of the Guild a word may be added on the system of paying wages; that being necessarily the subject that the individual workman must always be most concerned with. The principle on

which we pay wages is, broadly speaking, the following. We accept the Trade Union rate wherever there is one, and for the rest, recognise the principle of inequality in human values. The man, in other words, makes a bargain with the Management on the basis of his worth to the concern. If, as sometimes it may happen, the Trade Union rate in any individual case has seemed to be in excess of a man's market value the matter has been settled in consultation between the Management and the Guild Committee.

The effort, in short, of the internal and administrative system throughout, is to give the highest possible value to labour, and to realize, as far as social and economic conditions admit, those constructive and socialistic aspirations of the English workman that have as their aim the raising of the standard of life. In this effort, and in the by no means easy task involved therein, of shaping to a legal and permanently workable form the previous ten years of experiment and endeavour, I have been materially helped by my friend Robert Martin Holland who joined the Board as one of its Directors upon the formation of the Company, and to whom this slight acknowledgment at least is due on behalf of all who have been guided and stimulated by his activity.

V. THE RELATION OF THE GUILD OF HANDICRAFT TO THE MOVEMENT FOR THE REVIVAL OF ENGLISH INDUSTRIAL ART.

PASSING FROM MATTERS of organization to another aspect of the work and aims of the Guild, there remains to consider its action where it touches modern Art & Craft. If the administrative system of the Guild is socialistic, the position taken up by it aesthetically is necessarily more of an individualistic one. The direct application of socialistic principles, as at present understood, to the production of works of art, is a matter of questionable expediency. Education and personal aptitude necessarily enter here as modifying factors.

Though any of the Guild workmen are at the service of outside customers, architects, private friends, and, subject to a rather jealous surveillance, the Trade; the works that come forth with the imprimatur of Essex House, stand on a separate footing. Some censorship and supervision are needful, & I reserve in my own hands as head designer such control as appears to me necessary for stamping the productions that bear the name of the place, with an individuality, not necessarily my own, but some one's. We try, in short, to substitute for what is known among artists as the Ghost system—the system, that is, by which one man gets the credit for another man's work—the

element of school. We may at times, and doubtless often do, lose in excellence of standard, but what we thus lose, we gain many times over in average of standard, in interest & in character, and we reap other advantages for the future, in the more enlightened training of our young apprentices and the quickened sensibilities of our workmen, qualities these of immense value where other things are being considered besides the aesthetic or the profitable development of any one man undertaking.

In his review and appreciation of the Guild of Handicraft, regarded as one of the activities in English Industrial Art, the correspondent of the German Government in 1898 summed up by stating that, "stripped of its glamour," the Guild of Handicraft was merely a business enterprise. This is, however, not the case. There is something in the glamour that Herr Muthesius missed. There are many of us in the Guild—I for one—who, if it were a mere business enterprise, would have no further interest in it. Mere business we could pursue more profitably elsewhere & unencumbered with altruism. It is just because of the nature of its constitution, and in what it seeks to produce, that the Guild is a protest against modern business methods, against the Trade point of view, against the Commercial spirit. My own experience is that the "economic man" of whom we have been taught in the text books, is a creature rarely met with in practical life, indeed I am not sure that I ever have met him; and every organizer who touches character constructively, knows that

there are other factors to be considered besides "greed" and "laziness," the two human abstractions that go to his making. The economic text book, however, is after all merely one of a series in the greater book of human nature.

In a certain sense the Guild of Handicraft owed its origin to three movements familiar enough to all who have followed or taken an active part in the constructive work of the last two decades: the socialistic movement, the movement for technical education, & the revival of English Decorative Art, or as it would be more fitting to call it, English Industrial Art. The first of these brought with it the great strikes of the eighties, the revival of co-operative productive enterprise among workmen, the reorganization of businesses such as Geo. Thomson's Woodhouse Mills at Huddersfield, & the South Metropolitan Gas Works, since their association with the name of Geo. Livesey, the legislation that gave us County and Borough Councils, and a more developed municipal consciousness generally. The second gave us a hundred & one technical experiments, the establishment of numberless polytechnics, & all that striving and aimlessness that strikes the foreign observer of modern English educational efforts. The third gave us the Arts and Crafts, the innumerable Exhibitions, efforts and experiments that have been made by eminent artists who have broken away from the narrow and conventional ideals of the Royal Academy and the Royal Institute of British Architects; the efforts of men who have left the "fine arts" on one side, and striven for what to

them appears Art proper. Of this revival of English Industrial Art, and the slow and certain influence that the energy of its leaders has had upon modern commercial production, not only in England but over the whole of Europe, I shall speak more fully below.

Of the relation of the Guild and its co-operative ideal to the technical education movement, I have already spoken; it remains to say something as to its position in regard to English Industrial Art; what has been tried is so slight, and what yet remains for endeavour, so great, so many sided! It was early evident to those of us who had the productive side of the Guild's work at heart that something else was wanting besides the mere model trade shop, that the Guild's function was not to specialize, that something must be added to what might be termed the co-operative instinct of the English workman. This something was found in the stimulus of Industrial Art. Living as we do in the midst of this revival of the Arts and Crafts it is often difficult for us fully to realize its inner meaning.

Broadly, the revival implies a rebellion against inutilities, a conviction that machinery must be relegated to its proper place as the tool and not the master of the workman, that the life of the producer is to the community a more vital consideration than the cheap production which ignores it, and that thus the human and ethical considerations that insist on the individuality of the workman are of the first importance.

To say that the Guild has ever consciously carried

through the principles thus implied were an impertinence. Under existing conditions it would often not be possible to consistently act upon them. Numberless modifying circumstances enter in; one craft requires a longer training than another, one type of workman is drawn from one class, another from another, the subdivision of labour and the exigencies of mechanical production are always with us, and so also are conventional ideas; but in the Guild of Handicraft we have sought to keep the main ends in view, and while working along the line of least resistance, have striven to shape our policy to the newer model. To this end the system by which the men are united has been made as flexible as possible.

It is inevitable that this should be so. The joiner, the cabinet-maker, the silversmith, the hammerman, the blacksmith, or his assistant the drummer, the fitter, the jeweller, the worker in metal and in leather, the modeller, the wood carver, the compositor, the press-man, the polisher, the upholsterer, the foreman of building works, all these men have their different status and value in the market, their different objective in Trade Union Ethics; varying regulations apply to the training of apprentices in the crafts they practise, and a varying method may often be advisable in the payment of their respective wage. The Guild system has had to be devised sufficiently comprehensive to meet the different requirements their employment entails, and not only this but the further employment that may yet be entailed by any extension of its work.

Here, however, it is necessary perhaps to define a principle, or at least to offer a warning. Anything in the nature of what might be called the factory system as applied to industrial Art is harmful, & by the factory system I take as implied the method of organization, by which large bodies of men work under mechanical conditions with subdivision of labour. To extend this system to the production of a work of art & attain satisfactory results is impossible. An illustration of this from the work of the School of Handicraft may not be amiss. There came to me some ten years ago to study design in the School, a young "stained glass man" whom I found to be a most capable figure draughtsman, but who otherwise had no particular knowledge of, or interest in, his subject. Further acquaintance with him revealed the fact that at his firm, a leading English manufactory of stained glass windows, one man would draw the figure, another put on the costumes of the period required, another was the colour man and so on; he himself was engaged by the firm solely to draw the figures, and as he told me he "specialised in legs." The result of this specialisation in legs may, alas, be seen in many English cathedrals and village churches.

Beyond a certain point growth becomes unhealthy, nay, destructive of that very quality of individuality which we at the Guild of Handicraft are seeking to develope. Growth, therefore, for us is to be sought rather in a number of mutually inter-dependent workshops, all of them healthy, but not too large; & in the maintenance of the co-

operative principle. To achieve this we need continuity of employment, we need individuality in our men, we need interestedness in their work. The immediate end, which is what for the most part appeals to the imagination of the Consumer is not the real end. It is better to keep your customers waiting when you are full of work, than to have your workmen starving when you are slack; with us it would be difficult, and always should be, to resort to the methods of the ordinary master, and draw largely upon the surplus labour-market in order to regulate supply. There are signs that in some cases the point has been reached beyond which it would be inadvisable without great care to extend any one or other of the shops. Where ten men work continuously together in one shop they may become genuinely interested in their craft, where fifty work together they are more likely to be primarily interested in politics and social questions; many other illustrations might be adduced to point to the benefit of having smaller shops, but from the point of view of Industrial Art the extension of the whole concern is unlimited, and I would like to see a dozen other allied Crafts taken up at the Essex House works and the men skilled in their practice become members of the Guild. Concentration of force, without its usual adjunct of subdivision of labour is the object aimed at. Indeed it is just in such a concentration that the great principle of the unity of the Arts with its attendant genius—style, expresses itself. If the awakening in English Industrial Art at the close of the century

has shown any thing, it has shown how in every branch of Art and Craft, one leading motive, inspired and guided, it may be, by some specially skilled master, prevails. Regarded from the narrower standpoint the object of the Guild of Handicraft is to supply to this end a human and economic machinery.

VI. ON THE EDUCATION OF THE CONSUMER.

DUCATION is not a matter that applies alone to the Producer, and incidentally the Guild has a further object also. In so far as it seeks to practically express what is best or most human in the revival of English Industrial Art, it appeals directly to the Consumer. It wishes to place the buyer of things, as far as possible, in touch with the maker of things. That is the corollary of the proposition which brushes aside the "Ghost system" and gives to the workman a financial stake and a human interest in the concern of which he is a part. It follows, too, from a right understanding of the purpose of Industrial Art. This purpose, from the Consumer's point of view, is not the accumulation of many inutilities, but the possession of a few good and useful things; of things that have a direct relation to a man's own life, &, by becoming his, help to shape both him and his surroundings. They prove him to be what people in the last century would have termed "a man of taste," that is to say, a man who does not buy for the sake of buying, or gather together because he is infected with "Collectomania," but who buys with understanding and deliberately expresses his individuality in each object of his choice. I do not think that any one who really grasps this inner purpose of Industrial Art, will buy without taste, for, however simple,

however cheap the object he becomes possessor of, he will esteem it less for the price he pays for it than for its relation to his own individuality. If then the individuality of the producer at one end, is safeguarded, and the individuality of the consumer at the other taken into account, and these are both brought into contact, we have, not perhaps a Utopian state of affairs, but at least something approaching sound production; we come to have something produced that has in it what John Ruskin would have called intrinsic as distinct from economic value, something that makes for the wealth of the community.

The complexity of the system under which things are produced nowadays, has brought with it a condition of affairs that is not at all pleasant for the consumer, if he is a thoughtful person, to reflect upon. Indeed if he reflects at all, he finds that his ignorance as to how, when, and where the very simplest things about him are produced, is appalling. Let him only look about his house and ask himself the question. What indeed can he reply? I think sometimes that if we at Essex House were to keep a Common-place book of all the astounding questions that the various visitors put to our people as they are at their work, together with the answers that courtesy forbids the latter to express, it would read like a dialogue from 'Alice in Wonderland.'

It is one of the objects of those who labour directly in the different branches of Industrial Art, to bring this ignorance of his home to the consumer, and while simplifying the conditions of pro-

duction to point to its difficulties as well as its purposes. Commodities, says the producer who works from the newer point of view, are not made to sell, but, and here he goes further, again girding at the political economist,—supply shall, as far as in me lies, create demand. A few years ago "General" Booth with a view to improving the standard of life of the match girls, established a match factory, advertised with the words "no phossy jaw," and offered his matches to the public at one penny a dozen more than the competing makers. The consumer was appealed to and the consumer found, not only that his conscience was suddenly pricked by the Salvation Army match, but that he was, in direct contravention of all economic laws, paying a few pence a year more to this end. The investment was, as far as concerned him, an ethical one of the greatest importance, and from that moment his education began. English Industrial Art and "General" Booth are to this extent on precisely the same plane.

It may seem paradoxical and also presumptuous to say—and yet it is not altogether untrue—that we at Essex House have for the last twelve years or so been engaged in the making of things that we consider the public ought to want, provided meanwhile that the man that makes them is the happier in their making.

VII. THE APPLICATION OF THE GUILD SYSTEM TO BUILDING.

PERHAPS an Architect may be pardoned if he desire to see a system that has proved so successful in the workshops of the cabinet-maker, the metal worker, the blacksmith, extended more widely over the larger operations of the builder. I fear the time for this has not yet come, though perhaps it is not so very far off. Indeed, if there is any branch of modern industry that is conducted more than any other with wanton, ignorant waste, that is honey-combed with peculation, or as it is often more politely termed secret commission, and carried on in a spirit of mutual distrust and covert dishonesty, or without the human interest of any one concerned in it, it is the modern Building Industry in our great towns of England. Owing doubtless to its intricate ramifications into so many different branches of trade, it is the largeness of the problem that makes it so hard of handling.

Three years ago I started, independently of the Guild, building operations of my own. I engaged my own foreman and workmen, entered into direct relations with tradesmen and local authorities, paid my own wages, and took up contracts for the execution of works. I was anxious to gain direct experience and insight into the details of building in or near London: the relation of the ar-

chitect to the builder I knew, I wanted to under~stand also the relation of the builder to the archi~tect, of the builder to the workmen & to the trade; to judge for myself how far the Co~operative sys~tem was possible, what chance there was for the expression of things human & individual with~out which I considered that good building could not, in any wide sense, be brought to life again. This individuality and the system on which it hinges, we had found possible of attainment in the shops of the Guild of Handicraft; was it also at~tainable by the Builder?

The net result of my three years' study was that the Co~operative system was not only possible, it was essential, if building in our great towns was to be saved out of the slough into which it had sunk. But I saw too that this could only be done on a large scale. The small builder, the small so~ciety stood no chance. It is questionable even whe~ther a large builder could effect it single~handed. The thing, I fancy, is only to be done, and that very gradually, by some combination of build~ers who could adopt the principle between them, who could make among them a clearing house for labour, in short, give the one absolutely need~ed factor—stability, to the labour market.

When this is once attained you can pass to the next requisite for sound production, interested~ness in the work. If the men engaged in building work are liable to dismissal within the week, how can they be expected to take interest in the work? If they take no interest in the work how can they work well? The builder, however, must be free to

dismiss or take on his bricklayers, his carpenters, his joiners, his plasterers, his tilers, his painters, his glaziers, as he needs them, and then unless some system is evolved by which the men, though discharged from one job, can still retain an interest either in it or in the whole area over which the combined trades are acting, no great results can ever be attained.

It would seem that the old Guild system of the Middle Ages, which, before all other Arts honoured that of the builder, had developed among the allied crafts that go to the making up of building, codes, rules and regulations of such a nature as gave the workman both a sense of security in his work, and a sense of joy in its achievement. There appears no reason why this should not again come about—indeed I believe it will—but only through an intelligent study of modern needs and conditions of labour.

VIII. THE ESSEX HOUSE PRESS.

COMING now to the Guild's latest venture, the Printing Press, a special word is needed. It had long been my desire to do work in this direction, but, rather than not go into the matter thoroughly, I felt it would be better to leave it alone, and with the beautiful work of the Kelmscott & Vale Presses before me, any new attempt in this direction almost seemed an impertinence. Such publications, therefore, as we had so far produced from Essex House had been printed in the ordinary commercial manner in Whitechapel. ∴ But when William Morris died, and the Kelmscott Press came to be broken up, the problem of a Press at Essex House presented itself in a new light. The Guild, however small so far the yield of its collective craftsmanship, had established a workshop tradition of its own, and as an organization it justified the hope that it might become the home of such traditions as it would be difficult for private individuals, without the marvellous power and versatility of Morris, to carry through single-handed. With the aid of my friend Laurence Hodson, to whose literary & typographical scholarship I am much beholden, and without whose assistance I should have been unable to enter into the undertaking,

∴ See separate list of the Essex House publications.

I opened negotiations with the trustees of the Kelmscott Press for the transference of the Stock and Presses to Essex House, and secured the services of some of the principal members of the staff, who had worked for many years with, and come under the personal influence of Morris. As it had been decided by the trustees that the blocks were to be deposited at the British Museum & the type not to be sold, I determined that the wisest plan would be to purchase one of the best of the Caslon 18th Century founts to start with, & set about designing a type of my own. This book is the first book printed in the new Essex House type.
The object we have in view is to print a few books and those for the most part of standard authors. There is always a demand for such, especially if the editions be limited and the work of the best. Up to the limit, moreover, a hand-printed book has the advantage over the machine printed book, & the press-work is always better, for the machine is so far not invented that can handle the stiff inks which are necessary for the production of a first rate page. During the two years in which the Press has now been established at Essex House we have printed amongst other things 'The Treatises of Benvenuto Cellini on Metal Work & Sculpture,' 'Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress,' 'Shakespeare's Poems,' 'The Hymn of Bardaisan,' Shelley's 'Adonais,' and Hoby's 'Courtier,' and it is my hope to reprint more particularly those more modern Classics, Keats, Shelley, and Browning for instance, whom an ephemeral commercial age has committed to perishable paper.

Taking up the work where Morris and Burne-Jones left it, it is our hope to have the help of those modern artists whose wood-block work is most in harmony with that standard of fine typography set by the Kelmscott Press. My friends Walter Crane, W. Strang, F. W. Sargant, Selwyn Image, Laurence Housman and J. D. Batten have promised work, & Reginald Savage has already drawn for the Essex House Press the two beautiful frontispieces of the Bunyan and the Shakespeare. That we may be able to print the Froissart that Morris left undone, is my hope, and some day also, I trust, the Bible. To Morris indeed may be attributed what one might call the reinvention of the Art of Typography, it seemed not inappropriate that his Press should die with him. It should be the aim of the Essex House Press to keep alive the traditions which he reinstituted, & to consistently apply them to whatever is best and greatest in English literature. That the Bible, as Englishmen read & love it, should have become the great classic of national life and character, after the Art of Printing had already begun to decay, is a cause for no little rejoicing to the modern printer who approaches his subject not first from the commercial point of view, but in order that he may honour it with his Art.

IX. THE CENTRE AT ESSEX HOUSE AND THE POSSIBILITY OF SHIFTING IT INTO THE COUNTRY.

UCH MORE might be said upon the various handicrafts practised or in contemplation at the Essex House shops, to work at them is better than to talk about them, and so I would prefer only to say a few words about Essex House itself—the old mansion in Bow that has for the last ten years been the centre of those various activities; and the ideas we have for its future use.

The choice of Essex House originally was determined by the same considerations that made us choose East London for the trial of our whole experiment. This, it will be remembered, was in the flood tide of University settlements, and before the days of technical education grants. In those days such a House was apt for such a purpose. A stately old place of the end of the reign of William III., with a handsome staircase, & panelled rooms still left in it, it was one of few such remaining in this grim and desolate part of London that had anything approaching a garden, or any pretensions to dignity or beauty. When we first came in there were growing about the place a couple of good box trees, three or four pears and crabs, some cherry trees, laburnum and ash, and a number of vines, besides the more usual "London trees." It has been pathetic to watch how, little by little and

one by one, these have blackened over and died. The yearly increasing charge of acids in the atmosphere in this part of London, that draws over like a sulphurous pall from the great works in & around Stratford & Bromley, that has rotted and ruined the fine mediaeval stone-work of a church like St. Mary's at Bow, and seems to destroy all that is sweet or beautiful, makes the maintenance of anything in the nature of a garden, except in a very costly and artificial manner, a practical impossibility. As the trees died too, & the need of further workshops grew, the latter have been pushed round what was formerly garden, orchards and stable, & however hard we have tried to retain the old amenities, circumstances have been too hard for us. It is next to impossible to keep tidy a small confined space where some forty men and boys labour the day through, and which is strewn by every East or West wind with the litter of a neglected & unswept district. I have, from the hand of my friend Geo. Thomson, who has drawn the frontispiece for this volume, a beautiful little painting of the original wooden smithy as it stood in 1892, a tiny tarred shanty, in among the cherry trees, with a shower of snow-white spring blossoms upon it and the light of the blacksmith's fire looking through the dusky green. There were only two smiths in it then, but it served its purpose.

The value of the old house, mainly for a school, & incidentally also for residential and social uses, was perhaps greater then to us than it is now where our work is primarily productive, and

though a good deal of sentiment and association have grown up around it that makes us loth to leave it, the eventuality of this at the end of our lease is a matter we are bound to consider. The up-keep of a country house too, even in a poverty stricken London district, is somewhat of a costly luxury, and it is questionable how fār the effici-ency of our productive work should be taxed fōr this purpose. If we stay at Essex House we shall probably stay a considerable time, perhaps for good, and we shall have to build extensively; it may be advisable to secure a freehold in another part of London, where we can build 'de novo,' to meet the requirements that we now understand, and thus our people may get to feel that they will have a place that finally belongs to them.

It is a pity in some ways to leave Mile End & Bow, there are little scraps and comforts of History about here to which one clings, far off memories of a fāmous Earl of Essex, and of Armada heroes, there is Fairlop Friday, and the beautiful Trinity Hospital of Wren and Evelyn that we of Essex House claim to have saved from destruction, and there are the remnants of Mile End Waste. One is reminded of the pregnant question that Beau-mont and Fletcher put into the mouth of a Lon-don prentice of Elizabeth's day: "Is not all the world Mile End, mother?" & his mother's equal-ly suggestive answer: "No, Michael, not all the world, boy, but indeed Mile End is a goodly mat-ter." These things have their value.

My hope for the future, however, is that we may

go right out into the country. All the work we do, can, I am convinced, if the initial difficulties of transplanting and workshop building are overcome, be better done in the country than in a great town. Now, moreover, that we have a depôt of our own in the West end, No. 16 Brook Street, Bond Street, the need for being in the metropolis is not so great. But whether we may not always want some London workshop centre is questionable, and it seems certain that for the present the initial difficulties and expenses are too large.

Perhaps some day, some English landlord who has watched from his point of view the economic evil that has driven his people into the towns, has seen his farms dying away, & his small tenantry and labourers gradually dispersed, may hold out the hand to us, & make it possible for us to carry out our works in combination with some form of agriculture by small holdings, market gardening or co-operative farming. For we indeed realize, from our side, the economic evils of the town. I believe this can be done if tried on a sufficiently comprehensive and yet a sufficiently unpretending scale. The experience of my friend Edward Carpenter and others who have attacked the problem from a simple, direct and human point of view, has gone to show that this is quite possible, if two things are borne in mind. First, if some other occupation besides agriculture alone be carried on, and second, if the bulk of the produce reared be retained for the consumption of the dwellers on the land themselves. My study of the

character, habits and surroundings of the London workman convinces me too that there is a third factor which, if rightly applied, may help to solve the economic difficulties of a country district:—his potential thriftiness, his actual wastefulness. By this I mean that the workman, as I know him, is by nature capable and willing to be thrifty, but the social and industrial conditions by which he is surrounded, whether in the conventions of his home, or in the traditions of his workshop, tend to dissipate his energies, to make him wasteful, callous, thriftless. To put the case plainly, it would with careful regulation be, I believe, quite possible on the one hand to retain an existing output with a reduction of the working hours, and on the other, to save the time now spent in apparent recuperation or rest:—such rest as is found among the gas-lights of the Mile End Road, in the tram-car, the train, or in stuffy rooms at overstudy of the evening newspaper,—in tilling the soil.

I am of opinion that if our people had gardens of their own to cultivate, and worked fewer hours at their productive work, they would with a little organization produce quite as much of their handicraft as before, and in addition the bulk of the produce needed for their own consumption; while the gain in health to their families and in the amenities of life would be incalculable. Indeed, I trust it may not be taken as too quixotic in me if I say that I look forward to the time as a practical possibility when we shall see an inversion of the principles of the Truck Act, by which

wages may not be paid in kind. When we shall see groups of workmen working under healthy conditions, where they themselves control the machinery of production, and thus revert in part to the mediaeval custom of earning as wages the direct produce of the soil.

In the Articles of Association of Ruskin's Guild of St. George, some such proposal was shadowed forth, but it was never properly tried, it was never given a chance, and so far, I believe, no practical organizer has attempted it on a large scale. Newer conditions have grown up of late years that would seem in some directions to make it less the impossible dream that it appeared twenty-five years ago, but to this end the practical agriculturist must take the initiative. That the gain to a decaying agricultural district would be considerable, if some forty skilled craftsmen with their families, with independent means of subsistence, and with traditions and principles of their own settled on the soil would, I think, not be disputed. It may be that my English landlord friend is there somewhere, and that he will hold out the hand to us. When he does, I hope he will find us not too unready to reciprocate. Perhaps the end I have in view may be best accomplished by some gradual planting out, in a well chosen district, of first one workshop then another. Some district where there is waterpower, where the surroundings are favourable, and a connection with the London centre not too difficult.

Meantime my desire will be to utilize the old

mansion again entirely for educational purposes, and to place in it a series of collections embodying and illustrating the various handicrafts practised there. To this end we hope to be allowed to draw upon both private and public sources. A body of craftsmen practising a variety of crafts of their own can have no better aid in their work than to be near the work of those who set us the standards of all excellence and skill.

X. IDEALISM IN INDUSTRY.

EFORE leaving the subject of the future of the Guild of Handicraft or the influence of the movement of English Industrial Art upon the growth of its organization, it may not be out of place to touch upon a few of the deeper questions involved in such a consideration. The question as to how far the results attained, or the conclusions arrived at in the special case we are here considering may have a larger bearing upon communal life: the question of the influence of the work a man does, upon his life and his value as a citizen, the question of the influence of his surroundings and his education upon his productive power; & the question as to whether the socialistic aspirations—I use the word in the widest sense—that make the backbone of working class movements, do or do not supply those higher wants which the artist and the educator deem essential to the fuller living of life: questions, in short, of Idealism considered as an asset in Industry.

The average English workman is a materialist, his first and constant concern is to overcome the practical difficulties of existence, to increase his wages. He has a few conventional, somewhat middle class standards, of right and wrong, and he is untroubled by religious questions, he has in him an innate love of discipline and combination, he is level-headed, practical, selfish and conserva-

tive. But he has another side to him also, he is also an idealist,—the blend may seem a strange one but it exists, and this side of him finds expression in a theoretical socialism. The abstract formulae, however, of the socialism he professes have but a slender direct bearing upon the life he leads, and they touch even the problems of his labour organization but incidentally: he cons these formulae over daily in his halfpenny paper, much as the mediaeval workman said his Aves and Paternosters, but they remain to him unreal, phantasmal, insubstantial. The soul that is form, in the words of Spenser, does not in this instance make the body, it breeds only more of itself, and to that extent the body remains starved, unmade, nay, even marred.

This putting of the form & the substance of life into two separate compartments is wasteful. Wasteful to the individual in the first place, for it lessens his interest in realities—in the Art of life; wasteful to the Community, for it deprives life of that stimulus and enjoyment that go to its higher national fulfilling. Nay, more than this, it is dangerous. But we shut our eyes to this danger and think for the most part as others have done before us that the rightness of a system is justified by its existence.

There is no reason to believe, there certainly appears no analogy from the physical world to prove, that there is wisdom in thus keeping the creative and the material portions of human nature, the form & the matter, in two air-tight compartments. It is like continuously drawing off the

gases from a substance in itself life-giving which thus disintegrated grows to be on the one hand an inert mass, on the other a high explosive. Would any one who has practically and thoughtfully studied the conditions of life, physical and intellectual of an English industrial centre, for a moment deny that the danger exists or that the analogy is far fetched? It requires but the igniting spark—the pinch of hunger, for instance, resulting from an unsuccessful war—and all this idealism, so beneficent in itself, so productive if rightly applied towards a national purpose, may blow the whole social fabric to pieces.

And the right application? Even as we have drawn our analogy of the division of the idealistic and materialistic forces in the community from the typical workman as he daily comes before us, so the individual here again stands us in stead. Train up your young artisan to enjoy his work, to appreciate his life through his work, to realize his work as his own and not another man's, and he will be less interested in the socialistic formulae of his evening newspaper, he will become not only a happier person but a less selfish and visionary person, and his use to the community will be doubled. I have proved this in individual cases to my own satisfaction, not once but a dozen times, and yet the truth that a man's efficiency is increased if his Idealism can be brought to direct it, is a truth hardly proclaimed nowadays and certainly not acted upon.

The application is indeed often evident enough. With the average commercial man it is an axiom

that one of the great benefits of national excitement or enterprise—war for instance—is that it "pulls the nation together," it may do the reverse, but the underlying truth in the dictum is that the contemplation of war, through the half-penny paper or otherwise, supplies the element of Idealism with which I am concerned. The commercial man forgets, however, that there are other things that do this equally well, and that it is owing to the meanness and dulness of the existing social system that this same Idealism as an effective force is proscribed to us. Our object, then, should be to remove this proscription, to find other channels in which to direct what we would fain not lose, and one of the best may perhaps be found in the decorative Arts. In the application to life which they bring of the searching force that sees in the joy of the producer its standard of excellence and beauty, that asks of everything it comes across, is it worth the labour that has been put into it, has it been created in joy, what useful purpose does it serve, to what end is it there? The force that weighs productive and unproductive work in a new balance—and not the balance of the political economist—the force that calls for the colour and the joy of life, and that discerns in the greater productiveness of the individual the greater productiveness also of the whole community.

It was often urged against John Ruskin that he said foolish things about the power that rules modern Industry—the machine. Those of us who have sought to apply the inspiration of his teaching to practical ends are deterred neither by the

things he said, nor the criticisms men have passed upon them. We find a truth in the husk of rhetoric, and how great this truth, any direct labour in the Industrial Arts reveals. To us it is evident that the mountain of mechanical production has to be scaled, or perhaps tunnelled scientifically. To ignore it is impossible. To this end we do not reject the machine, we welcome it. But we desire to see it mastered in Industry, and not as it is at present, to remain the master. We find when we look back to the ages from which we draw our models of excellence in production,—excellent because they were created in the joy of the producer,—that there was another force behind, that made it possible for the producer to live the life he did. In ancient Greece it was the slave, in the Middle Ages it was the serf. What we plead for is that the machine shall be so directed, so guided, that it shall do for the community what the serf in one age, the slave in another, did before. Little by little this is getting to be understood, only it may be for those that make a practical study of the details of Industrial Art to say how far the machine should be called in to help or forbidden to hinder. When we look at the question from this point of view, we see how great it becomes, how it spreads into the whole framework of society; we see what is really involved in the phrase about which there is nowadays so much cant—ethics in Art.

It is here, at the point where the replanning and the building up of the new order out of the old begins, that many of us join issue with the social-

ism of William Morris on the one hand, and the driving energy of modern Commercialism on the other. The social revolution or the war may be needful enough in their place, for our part we may be right or wrong in turning from either as a solution of economic problems, but we ask to be allowed, like Thoreau's artist in the City of Kouroo, to carve our stick in peace, to reject what will not suit us from out of the large heap of undesirable stock that is offered for our choosing. We find ourselves at the parting of the roads, we see that revolutionary or destructive socialism does not help us, and that the distinction between what is constructive and what is destructive is once and for all emphasised for us by the application of English Industrial Art.

XI. THE INFLUENCE OF JOHN RUSKIN AND WILLIAM MORRIS.

THIS little sketch of the work and endeavour of the Guild of Handicraft would almost seem to have become a review of the ideas & ideals of those of us who are promoting it. It is often easier to write about the latter than to drily review the former, but in any case the two are not altogether to be separated, perhaps also it were wiser that they should not be. It is but fair then, in conclusion, to point again to the sources whence spring whatever the Guild of Handicraft may have achieved of good or lasting, to place the tribute where the tribute is due,—the work and example of the two great Masters who have so recently been taken from us, William Morris and John Ruskin. The practical example of the former in his hand to hand fight with British Commercialism, the prophetic inspiration of the latter in his plea for the relation of Art to life & to Industry. Indeed these two men have marked an epoch, they have pointed out a new objective; for us of the younger generation it remains to give their teaching and example a wider and fuller application.

The average Englishman tells us, we must not mix sentiment with business, it is one of his every day sayings. But it is a saying that contains less truth than falsehood, a half truth to which Morris and Ruskin gave the proper value, and like many

half truths often harmful in its application. You seldom find the man who, when he has uttered the sentiment, takes the trouble to define the words that phrase it. For what does it mean? That you are to look only for your margin of profit regardless of the human efficiency of the machinery that produces it? This, if the continuance of its production depends upon the human efficiency, is surely wrong. That you are not to allow incidental considerations, inspired by some personal or eclectic morale, to hamper the working of your whole organisation? This is surely right. But that the working of the whole organisation, after a certain standard is reached, shall not be inspired by some larger purpose than merely the increasing of the margin of profit, this again is surely wrong. The great businesses of England,—I do not say the great fortunes—but the great businesses, could their histories be written, would often be found to have had in them some other than merely the pecuniary objective. They are voiceless for the most part because they have been built up by men that do not talk. But every now and then we catch a glimpse of the unexpected workings of these sentimental considerations. In one of the letters of the great house of Wedgwood which old Josiah, the potter, founded in the middle of the last century, appears the following, written to Bently on whom he is urging the partnership. "You have taste, the best foundation for our intended concern, and which must be our 'primum mobile,' for without that, all would stand still, or better it did so."

And the great house still exists in the Midlands, for all the decay in taste that later and more commercial times may have brought with them. The point to be noted is that it was a sentimental consideration that inspired its founding, and that the founders knew how to apply the sentiment. And so I fancy with many of the great businesses, they would probably be found to have in them some quality of Idealism however slight, some sense of a need towards the raising of the standard of life, some inspiration of a better taste, a more useful purpose, however misdirected, some further objective than the mere increase of the margin of profit, unconscious no doubt, but none the less present, the 'primum mobile' in the words of that wise old business man and Idealist, which, if misapplied, would stand condemned as sentiment in business, but which, if rightly applied, becomes its justification, its first principle. Indeed, looked at from the larger point of view, the point of view of founder, of statesman, is not most labour legislation, are not factory acts, Conciliation Boards, Trade Union requirements, an application of sentiment to business? However much the average practical Englishman may demur, the gradual and quiet working out of these things, the details of Industrial Democracy, Democratic ideals in their application to the life and work of man, are nothing but sentiment mixed with business. When William Morris showed how craft after craft was capable of internal revolution, how an artist might throw aside the palette and be the greater for it; when John Ruskin gave the lie to

the ethics of modern business, when he taught that there was an Art as well as a Science of Economics, when he showed to the 'Captain of Industry' how he too had spurs to win and a virgin coat of arms to blazon, then indeed it seemed to many of us that while the old order had ended, the new had hardly yet begun.

THIS RECORD OF AN ENDEAVOUR TOWARDS THE TEACHING OF JOHN RUSKIN AND WILLIAM MORRIS, BEING AN ACCOUNT OF THE WORK AND AIMS OF THE GUILD OF HANDICRAFT BY C. R. ASHBEE, IS THE FIRST BOOK PRINTED AT THE ESSEX HOUSE PRESS IN THE NEW TYPE DESIGNED BY HIM. THE BLOCK & CUTS ARE BY GEORGE THOMSON. AN. DOM. MDCCCCI.

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