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IT seems to me that my address falls naturally into two parts: that I have first to speak to the general public about the Art which your School represents, and next I have to speak to the students of the School about their position and aims. As to the first part, I fear some of you may think I am telling an old story once more; a story of which you are tired of hearing, if I am not tired of telling it. For, to say the truth, we are not yet quite on the right road towards a satisfactory condition of Art. When I say 'we,' I do not mean this country in especial; for, indeed, at home here we are somewhat better off than in other civilized countries, though at first sight it may not seem so, owing to the fact that in France, Germany, Italy, and elsewhere, there are still more or less survivals from the foregoing periods, during which Art was common to the whole people. But those survivals are being extinguished under our very eyes, and in the course of a few years there will be nothing more interesting, e.g., in the peasant life of Italy, than in that of England or America. All nations of us must go through the mill in which the commercial period is grinding us; and England has at least this advantage: that she was thrown into the hop-
per first, and as a consequence is showing signs of consciousness that there is a future for Art. In short, we are willing to rebel against the tyranny compounded of utilitarianism and dilettantism, which for the greater part of this century has forbidden all life in Art. Only as yet we do not quite know what form our rebellion is to take; nor do I feel that in this business I can do more than generalize; for, in fact, if we already knew in detail what to do toward the furtherance of Art, that would mean that we were practising Art, & should not want to talk about it: people do not talk about matters that are going smoothly.

As to my generalizations, I can only say, first, that, in order to have a living school of Art, the public in general must be interested in Art; it must be a part of their lives; something which they can no more do without than water or lighting. We must not be able to plead poverty or necessity, as we do now, as an excuse for ugliness or dirt. If we raise a building, whether it be palace, factory, or cottage, it must be a thing well understood that it must be sightly: if a railway has to be run from one place to another, it must be taken for granted that the minimum of destruction of natural beauty must be incurred, even if that should increase the expense of the line largely; disfiguring waste of coal-pits or manufactories must be got rid of, whatever the cost may be; and so on. And, mind you, all this need of real public convenience, which is the only
possible foundation for Art in modern times, is quite possible to be done; and it will be done, so soon as people care about it. To put the matter quite plainly, as things go now we are, as a community, contented to be publicly poor so long as some of us are privately rich; therefore, though the income of the country is enormous in figures, no man of us can go a few yards from his own door without seeing the tokens of quite desperate public poverty. Now I admit that within the last dozen of years there are signs of healthy discontent with this monstrous discrepancy between our powers and our practice; and in one direction, especially, a new spirit has arisen, which, to begin with, has given us instruments through which the revolt against stupid utilitarianism can work. I am alluding to the development of municipal life amongst us. Without flattery, and as a matter of fact, I can say that of course I know how this city has for long taken a leading part in this development. But now we are seeing, what I think some of us scarcely expected to see, London playing its part therein; and that, in spite of its being so weighted by its unmanageable size, & its position as a centre of government, of politics, and of intelligence; that is to say, in spite of its being the very representative, of all places in the world, of the commercial epoch. Whatever mistakes the London County Council has made, or will make, I am sure that it is awake to the fact that it owes to the citizens some account
of the external decency of our brick-and-mortar county; & there is a feeling in the air (which used to be neither in the air nor anywhere else) that something may be done, even in these passing years, to make life better worth living in London. In short, we Londoners, who were once but citizens of the world, are now learning to be citizens of London also, as we surely ought to be; for, indeed, we have a certain amount of our own business to attend to, as well as other people's business.

All things considered, then, I believe, in a growing sense, that it is a disgrace to a period in which civilized mankind has attained to such mastery over the forces of Nature, that the commonwealth should be poor. Again, I say that such a feeling is, and must be, the basis of modern Art striving to free itself from the thraldom of utilitarianism, and 'the Correggiosity of Correggio.' How are we to work on that basis? In considering the question, I will, for a while, look upon the hopes of Art in these islands as the subject matter; & it is a more than sufficiently big one. And, first, let us dispose of the dictum, which used to be popular in diletante circles, that the English are essentially a non-artistic people. I must call that a good deal less than a half-truth, & you have only got to go to the first (unrestored) mediæval building you can get at to test that view of the subject. As a matter of fact, until Art failed throughout civilization, the English had a very definite style of Art of their own,
which closely expressed their thoughts and their lives, and of which beauty, almost, it seems to us, unsought for, was an essential part; while as far as our own days go, it is, as I have said before, to non-artistic England that some glimmer of insight into the possible future of Art has come. In short, it is no use going further afield than this country to find the artists and craftsmen that we need: when you find them you will undoubtedly find that they have shortcomings which those of other countries have not; but also they will have their own special excellencies, which we had better make the most of.

Now, further, I believe that the capacity for Art, and the desire for it, are not yet extinct among us; yet they are mostly dormant. People in general, who do not earn their livelihood by using their eyes, do not use them; which, of course, considering the state of the popular arts amongst us, saves them a great deal of suffering, & probably lengthens their lives. But I fear that we cannot leave them to their negative happiness: if we are to make anything of Art, we must awaken in them that 'divine discontent' which is the mother of improvement in mankind. I have already admitted, indeed, that this awakening is beginning; but to me it seems that it is only amongst a very few, and chiefly amongst artists in the narrower sense of the word, that this discontent is the result of the actual use of the eyes. With the others of the discontented, it is
the result of intelligent reasoning: what might be called political understanding, as opposed to artistic. I do not undervalue this side of things, & it is indeed necessary that those who live chiefly by the eyes, should be able to use their intelligence also in dealing with matters of Art; but, nevertheless, the essential thing is that people generally should be capable of receiving impressions through the eyes, & this process should be a joy to them, just as their receiving impressions from their palates, or their ears. This is, of course, only stating the obvious fact, that the pleasure taken in Art is primarily sensuous; an obvious fact, yet not so obvious but that it is generally forgotten now-a-days.

Well, this being so, the necessity for using our eyes, if we are to be artists, having been admitted, the question comes, How are we to get people to use their eyes, always keeping in mind the fact that for some time after they have begun to do so they will be a torment to themselves and their neighbours? as I am.

That is the real question we have to consider this evening. And I begin to answer it by saying that we who have not lost the use of our eyes should go on pestering the rest of the public until we have more or less convinced them that it would be a good thing for them to recover the capacity of seeing, just as it would be a good thing to recover the use of their legs if they were lame; and remember that, as in the case of eyesight, the non-seeing ones