

THE ARTIST & THE CAPITALIST

The Artist The Capitalist

WILLIAM MORRIS and RICHARD MARSDEN

by

FLORENCE BOOS

with a foreword by JACK WALSDORF

Including a facsimile and transcription of
a William Morris manuscript letter to

Richard Marsden, and portraits
of Morris, Marsden, and
Charles Rowley.



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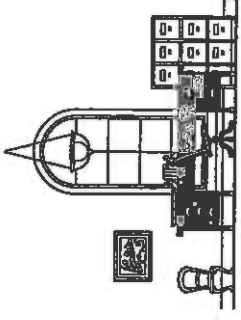
To all who share
Morris' ideals of fellowship and
"art for the people."

FLORENCE BOOS

"...letters . . . the most beautiful, the most
immediate breath of life. . ."

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

JACK WALSDORF



Foreword

MY PART IN THIS STORY begins with an offer ignored. The offer, dated 10 October 2006, read in its entirety, "Dear Mr. Walsdorf, Would you be interested in this, I think, quite remarkable letter of William Morris?"

¶ It was so understated that I chose to ignore it for more than a few weeks. This inaction on my part is inexplicable, as William Morris has been a passion of mine for more than forty years. Perhaps I was put off by the price. Perhaps the offer came at a time of financial stress. Whatever the reason, when at length I called the dealer, Marvin Sadik in Maine, I knew that if his answer was "Sorry, sir, that's now sold," I would have kicked myself for my tardiness. However, to my surprise, he not only indicated that the letter was still for sale, but that he had been holding it back in anticipation of my reply.

¶ The letter arrived in early November 2006. I read it at once, then reread it with growing excitement. It certainly was "quite remarkable." I knew immediately that, if it was indeed unpublished, scholars and collectors alike would want to know of its content. Here is Morris, in one seven-page letter,

laying out important political views, rebutting a printed review of one of his lectures, referring to his reading of John Ruskin, and finishing with a postscript that begins "I notice a little article in your paper on Indigo & Madder," and goes on for more than a page to write about the ancient history of dyes.

While the letter was of great interest, its envelope was missing. The addressee's name was added, in another hand, at the top of page one in light-blue pencil: "To Richard Marsden, Manchester," an addition that needed further research. And Morris' reference at the top of page two to "my friend Mr. Ch. Rowley of your city" was yet another clue to follow.

My research began in my own William Morris library. Once far larger, the collection, which I had built up when I wrote my bibliography on William Morris, had been reduced over the years by two sales. The first of these was to the University of Maryland in 1985, when some seven hundred private-press and limited editions were shipped to College Park; the second was in 1996, when the Colophon Book Shop of Exeter, New Hampshire, sold some two hundred of my Morris-related books. Still, with well over four hundred books remaining, I thought I might find something on either Mr. Marsden or Mr. Rowley.

Unfortunately, the pickings were thin. I tried each name in all the likely books, coming up with only two references to Charles Rowley in the classic Morris biography by J. W. Mackail (1899), *Life of William Morris*, and one in William S. Peterson's *Bibliography of The Kelmscott Press* (1984). Still more disappointing was the fact that Fiona MacCarthy's modern

biography, *William Morris: A Life for Our Time* (1994), makes no mention of either Rowley or Marsden.

My second line of search was in a ragtag collection of more than 125 old auction and dealer catalogues from the 1890s to the 1990s. I have always had a love for books inscribed by Morris, and have owned more than a couple of dozen that he had either signed or inscribed. But, as both funds and the supply of such books grew smaller, I began to collect catalogues, always checking each one I came across for books signed by Morris. If there were such a book, I would indicate its item number on the front cover and file the catalogue on a special shelf.

Thinking I just might have some older catalogues with a book Morris had signed to either Mr. Marsden or Mr. Rowley, I searched diligently—with no success! So here I was, the owner of this intriguing letter, a letter that asked more questions than it answered. Who was Mr. Marsden of Manchester? What was the title of his periodical? What lecture had Morris given, and where, and when? So many questions, so few answers. Where to turn?

Serendipity, ever the friend of the ardent book collector, was with me. As I looked through my Morris library, a postcard dated 11 January 1983 fell from a book. The book was Morris' *Socialist Diary*, edited by Florence S. Boos, and the postcard, from Ms. Boos herself, included her address in Iowa City. A quick call to Directory Assistance resulted in her phone number.

Telling Florence Boos as much as I could about the letter, I added that I hoped that enough could be found about it,

about the lecture, and about the people involved for a private-press book to be produced, with a facsimile of the letter. Her reaction was encouraging. Most fortunately, she had long been involved with the William Morris Society, and had served as its vice president. Trips to England would be necessary. She set about her investigations almost at once.

¶ Thus began a series of e-mails from France, England, and Iowa City, reporting on her progress. To hers of 6 February 2007, I replied: "With each e-mail I hope that you are nearer to the end of your quest, but it seems not to be so. At the start of all this it seemed so simple. But the fact that Morris wrote this important letter, but did not write the person's name at either the beginning or end of the letter, truly helps to make it all that much more of a mystery." At one point, she responded, "Well, we'll try to prove Handel's Elijah right in his claim, 'If with all your heart ye seek . . . ye shall surely find . . .!'"

¶ While Florence Boos' research continued, I was checking with the seller in Maine, trying to determine the letter's provenance. The reply came that the source of the letter in England was the dealer Roy Davids, whom I contacted through the help of Phil Brown of Blackwell's Antiquarian Department. Mr. Davids had bought the letter in an auction room some twelve years previously, but knew nothing further about its provenance.

¶ Meanwhile, Florence soldiered on. Her e-mail of 16 February 2007 brought this welcome news: "I have found a Richard Marsden, author of *Cotton Spinning*, published in 1886, who was also a member of the Manchester Society of Arts and, much more important, the editor of *The Textile*

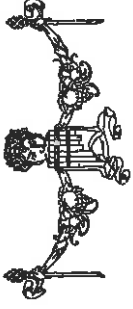
Manufacturer, published from 1876. . . . Now that I think we have found the right Mr. Marsden I can relax and work on the essay itself, Rowley, and other background matters."

¶ For my part, I needed to pique the interest of Kay and Virginia Kramer, of The Printery in Kirkwood, Missouri, in using the letter, and the related materials painstakingly unearthed by Florence, to make a fine-press book. The Kramers seemed the obvious choice, as they had published my leaf book *On Collecting William Morris: A Memoir* in 2006. After an initial request from them for "a lot of education" on the project, they decided to go ahead.

¶ I feel sure that this remarkable letter, with Florence Boos' scholarly research, will further illuminate a part of William Morris' life, his political views, and his aesthetic interests. In it, Morris clearly refutes the commonly held misconception that he wished "the world to return on its footsteps," and sets out his belief in a "new system of producing for livelihood" and in an art set free.

JACK WALSDORF

THE ARTIST & THE CAPITALIST



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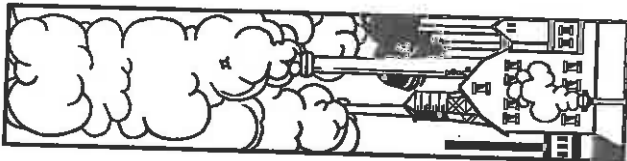
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Art Under Capitalism

MORRIS VS. MARSDEN

MORRIS IN 1883-84

IN January of 1883 William Morris joined the Democratic Federation (later Social Democratic Federation), and declared himself a socialist. Other literary and artistic figures of the time held egalitarian views, but his active engagement in promoting socialism was unusual: in August of the same year, he wrote in a letter to an acquaintance that "I am . . . one of the people called Socialists," and . . . bound as by religious conviction to preach that doctrine whenever I open my mouth in public."¹

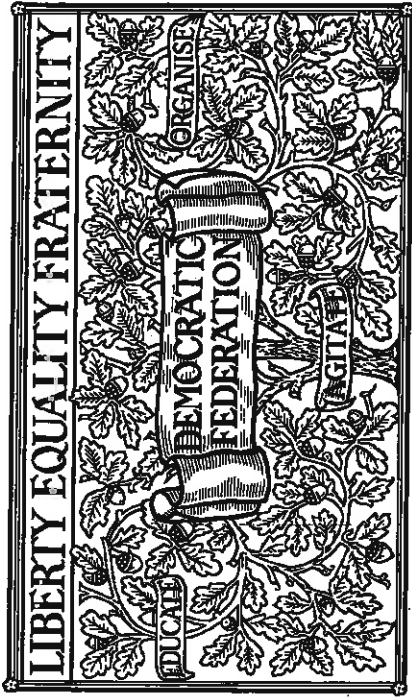
"Preach" he did, to the dismay of many of his friends—in 1883 to organizations such as the Hammersmith Liberal Club, the Irish National League, the Russell Club, and the Manchester Royal Institution. He invited comrades to Kelmescott House, composed the first of his "Chants for Socialists," sent invitations to join the Democratic Federation to Swinburne and Ruskin, cosigned a Democratic Federation publication entitled *Socialism Made Plain*, and read Marx's theoretical works² as well as Sergius Stepniak's *Underground Russia*. Dur-

~ I ~



William Morris

act 52.



Designed by William Morris

ing the year he also drafted "Art, Wealth, and Riches," "Art and the People," "Art Under Plutocracy," "Useful Work *versus* Useless Toil," and "Art and Socialism" for delivery in public meetings.³

♣ Morris' personal life in this period had already burdened him with other cares, and these had begun to displace his literary and artistic aspirations. In June of 1883, for example, he wrote to Rosalind Howard that his daughter Jenny's epileptic seizures might be in remission, but she suffered a severe relapse in August,⁴ and he later told Georgiana Burne-Jones that his "anxiety . . . has made a sad coward of me. . . . [T]he grief aforesaid is too strong and disquieting to be overcome by a mere inclination to do what I know is unimportant work, [but] the propaganda . . . is part of a great whole which cannot be lost, and that ought to be enough."⁵

♣ Morris also struggled with the hostile or apathetic audiences and bitter disputes every activist encounters in service to his ideals, for "small as our body is, we are not without dissen-

sions in it."⁶ In his response to an invitation to visit the United States from the poet Emma Lazarus, best known as the author of the inscription on the Statue of Liberty,⁷ he replied that "private business mixed with the work of our propaganda" would keep him in England, but also that "as to the agitation I hate it very particularly, but get more and more of it."

♣ Another sort of barrier had to be crossed when Morris read a version of "Art Under Plutocracy" to a comfortable educated audience at the Russell Club in Oxford, a society of Liberal undergraduates with Radical sympathies, on November 14 of 1883, with the elderly John Ruskin in attendance.⁸ He and his friend Edward Burne-Jones had recently been elected Honorary Fellows of Exeter College, and he had written Charles Faulkner in October that "The Dem: Fed. has made up its mind to have a shy at Oxford,"⁹ but added later that he may have been "too careful - I fear mealy mouthed."¹⁰ His self-reproachful fear may have been groundless, for James Bright, the Master of University College and Morris' host, had risen after the event to denounce his attempt to spread "socialist propaganda" in the College's halls.¹¹

♣ Morris later delivered "Art Under Plutocracy" at Wimbleton on November 16, and then again on December 4 in Cambridge,¹² where "a storm of mingled hisses and applause compelled him to pause for some minutes."¹³ Accounts of his socialist commitment appeared in several Oxford and Cambridge papers and the *Pall Mall Gazette*,¹⁴ he wrote *The Standard* in response to a correspondent who challenged his sincerity,¹⁵ and he told Georgiana on November 22 that "I have

been living in a sort of storm of newspaper brickbats, to some of which I had to reply.¹⁶ The full text of the essay itself finally appeared in the radical/socialist periodical *To-Day* in early 1884. Complete copies of the essay can be found in *Architecture, Industry and Wealth* (London: Chiswick Press, 1902) and *The Collected Works of William Morris*, Volume 23, ed. May Morris (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1915) as well as www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1883/pluto.htm.

¶ Shortly before Christmas of 1883, Morris took Jenny and her attendant to visit his mother in Hertfordshire, and he spent the rest of the holiday with Jane and May in Hammer-smith, where on January 12 he drafted three letters in service to the cause. In the first, he gave Emma Lazarus permission to publish an account of her visit to Merton Abbey the previous summer.¹⁷ In the second, he politely explained to Jane Cobden, a suffragist leader and the daughter of Richard Cobden, that he could not speak on behalf of Women's Suffrage at Clay Cross in Derbyshire, for he had already agreed to speak the same day somewhere else. But he also added an astringent remark which expressed his growing contempt for Parliament: "[a]s to the House of Commons; 'tis no use; they don't *mean* to do anything, in the woman's suffrage question or any other; 'tis nothing but a sham fight between the parties, and the radicals are as bad as any others...."¹⁸ (Subsequent events largely bore out his assessment that "they don't *mean* to do anything," for it took hunger strikes, demonstrations in the street, and suffragist support for the 'Great War' to prod Parliament into granting enfranchisement to British women 34 years later.)

RICHARD MARSDEN

¶ In the third extant letter Morris wrote on January 12 of 1884, he responded to the prominent Manchester champion of industrial capitalism, editor of *The Textile Manufacturer* and "Memb. Soc. Arts," Richard Marsden. Among other things Marsden (1826-1903) was an authority on the history of textiles, and his published works (*Cotton Spinning: Its Development, Principles and Practice, with an Appendix on Steam Engines and Boilers*, London: George Bell, 1884, reprinted 1886, 1897, and 1903; and *Cotton Weaving: Its Development, Principles and Practice*, London: George Bell, 1895) offered careful drawings of cotton fibers and the machines and processes of Marsden's trade.¹⁹

¶ Marsden had sent Morris a copy of the December 15, 1883, number of *The Textile Manufacturer*, in which he attempted to rebut the views Morris had expressed in "Art Under Plutocracy" in terms which sometimes resorted to heavy-handed pastiche: "Unto this last! What will Mr. Ruskin say in the next edition of 'The Stones of Venice'? A large cotton mill has been opened in beautiful Venice." Fortunately, "[t]here [was] no cause . . . for the Society for the Preservation [sic] of Ancient Buildings to take alarm,"²⁰ since the mill would not desecrate older sections of the city.²¹

¶ Nominally deferring to "Mr. Morris" as someone who "when . . . writing or speaking deserves attention,"²² Marsden began his polemic, entitled "Art in the Future" (reproduced on pages 25-33), with a neutral summary of Morris' critique of "the influence exerted by our mechanical inventions, manufacturing industries, and extensive commerce."

[Morris] could not help thinking that there was a feeling of despair as to what art would be in the future, and by art he meant all the surroundings in which they lived. When art was healthy all men were artists; but now the inborn instinct of beauty was thwarted at every turn, and the loss of decorative art was a grievous one. The repression of the instinct for beauty was affecting the whole face of the earth, for under the present state of society there seemed to be a love of dirt and squalor, especially in London and other large towns. . . . He was one of the people called Socialists, and he believed that Socialism would take the place of competition among men in the conditions of life, and that thus would art revive. . . . He thought the middle classes did the country little credit, for they lived in a sort of swinish comfort, and disregarded art. There was a general feeling arising as to the necessity of the lower orders banding themselves together by means of working men's associations.²³

¶ Marsden based part of the rebuttal which followed on an assertion that nineteenth-century art had far outstripped its antecedents.

[I]n the palmiest days of [Athens and Rome] there may have been periods when sculpture and architecture attained a higher degree than could be justly claimed for . . . the present day. . . .²⁴

¶ But the effreteness of these refinements had led to "immorality, idleness, filthiness, mendicancy, and lawlessness." Moreover, any efforts to

. . . retrace [the] steps [which led to these 'higher' forms of art] . . . would [therefore] be the greatest misfortune that could befall civilised mankind. The mechanical age upon which the world has entered is destined to confer blessings ten thousandfold greater than any that have yet been

conceived by those who have set themselves up to declaim against its influence. It is our mechanical inventions that have rendered life worth living by emancipating mankind from the drudgery of the coarsest labour. . . . This freedom may not yet be fully attained, but no doubt can be entertained that it will be completely achieved. That it will also spread into regions and amongst races of people who have hitherto as yet hardly felt its influence admits of no discussion. Commerce spreads these advantages widely abroad, and Mr. Morris takes a short-sighted view of this grand development of the age when he assumes that its highest result is the accumulation of money in the hands of the few who are successful. . . . It is thus that civilization, which has been greatly enhanced by the development of our mechanical industries and our commerce, improves the condition of society, it has yet further conquests to make in this direction, and no one will dispute its ability to accomplish the task, or doubt its prospects of ultimate success. That which has been already accomplished is an absolute guarantee that the rest will follow. . . . As compared with any era in the past, it would be quite safe to affirm that the present age [i. e., in Britain] is superior to all its predecessors in every quality that constitutes the artistic character — that is, on an average.²⁵

¶ In a remarkably Orwellian cooptation of Morrisian ideals, Marsden concluded that

art . . . [will therefore] not, as in the past, be the privileged possession of a few, reposing on the slavery of the many . . . [and] it will . . . find a soil in which it can flourish in the homes of the multitude. . . . The aim and end of all true art is to spread beauty everywhere.²⁶

¶ Marsden wrote in a period of economic depression, and his argument was conspicuous for its refusal to acknowledge

obvious parallels between the excesses of the British "Empire" and those he decried in imperial Rome, or address the squalor, inequality, and immiseration his triumphant "mechanical industries and . . . commerce" had brought to many in nineteenth-century Britain. Replete with begged questions and *ignorationes elenchi* ("absolute guarantee," "quite safe to affirm," "no one will dispute," "admit . . . of no discussion"), Marsden's letter and enclosure were nominally polite gauntlets thrown in Morris' face.

¶ In reply, Morris began with dry thanks for Marsden's "interesting periodical," praised an article in it on the history of dyeing ("Botanic Origin of Some Textile and Tinctorial Plants"²⁷), and offered some results of his own research into early uses of indigo and madder.

¶ More substantively, he offered a socialist's response to Marsden's *de facto* social Darwinism and right-Hegelian view that the world-historical-spirit had attained its apotheosis in nineteenth-century industrial Britain:

... I think that the revolution cannot stop at any given point, as many members of the middle-class think it should: they think it an advantage that the bourgeoisie . . . should have overcome the privileged classes, and there they want to stop the evolution, and are oblivious to the fact that they, being now the masters, have opposed to them a class which has been born out of the great industrial revolution . . . and that the evolution *must* be carried on till the present system of producing for profit is merged into (gives birth to rather), a new system of producing for livelihood.

¶ Morris' "*must*" here was the modality of social justice, not left-Hegelian 'historical necessity.' For only a radically egalitar-

ian form of socialism

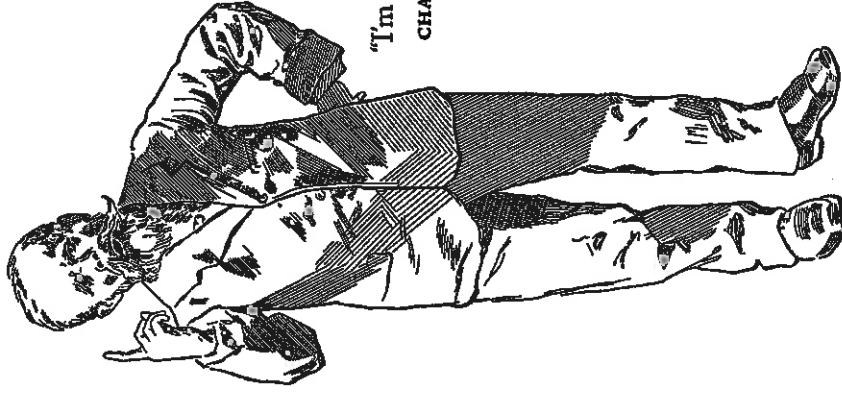
will . . . set art free once more. . . . This assured hope . . . I first gained from reading some of J. Ruskin[']s extraordinary passages in which the sudden insight flashes out like an inspiration I have had strengthened in me by experience of commercial and manufacturing dealings. . . .

CHARLES ROWLEY & THE ANCOATS BROTHERHOOD

¶ In his letter to Marsden, Morris mentioned that he had been invited to speak by "Mr. Ch. Rowley of your city." Charles Rowley, a frame-maker and Mancunian Liberal Councillor, campaigned vigorously for "municipal socialism"—museums, transportation, art schools, technical schools, municipal libraries, and public utilities — and Morris lectured to his Ancoats Brotherhood many times in the years that followed.

¶ Though he did not advertise himself as a "Memb. Soc. Arts.," Rowley was a friend of Ford Madox Brown, Frederick Shields, and Dante G. Rossetti, as well as Morris, and a deep and unpretentious lover of the arts. He devoted separate chapters to each of these figures in *Fifty Years of Work Without Wages*, a memoir he published in 1911.

¶ The Ancoats Brotherhood, an association Rowley formed to bring education and recreation to the people of Ancoats, one of Manchester's poorest districts, evolved over time into a strikingly beneficial set of programs for mutual aid and popular education. Rowley tried to "go for the best and make it plain" for his youthful and little-educated audiences,²⁸ and visitors to the group's Sunday afternoon lecture series included artists and reformers such as Morris, Madox Brown, Thomas



"I'm not arguing, I'm telling Thee!"

CHARLES ROWLEY

I have only one subject to lecture on, the relation of Art to Labour: also I am an open and declared Socialist, or to be more specific, Collectivist, and whatever I say would be coloured by my opinions on these matters: if you think under these circumstances a lecture from me would come within the scope of your scheme, and be acceptable as an expression of opinions for which of course you would not be responsible, I should be very happy to be one of those who lecture to you.²⁹



Designed by Walter Crane

Hughes, Walter Crane, Peter Kropotkin, and George Bernard Shaw, who quipped that Rowley was "the only man who could induce any sane man to go to Manchester."

§ In his recollections, Rowley recalls that he first heard Morris speak on the topic of "Art, Wealth, and Riches" at the Manchester Royal Institute on March 6, 1883, and invited him afterwards to speak at one of the Sunday afternoon lectures.

§ In his reply, Morris wrote Rowley that:

MORRIS TALKS TO
THE AMATEURS BROCHERWOOD

"Useful Work <i>versus</i> Useless Toil"	January 21, 1884
"Art Under Plutocracy"	January 22, 1884
"At a Picture Show, 1884"	September 20, 1884
"Art and Labour"	September 21, 1884
Unidentified lecture	September 27, 1885
"Of the Origin of Decorative Art"	September 26, 1886
"Art and Industry in the Fourteenth Century"	October 2, 1887
"The Society of the Future"	December 2, 1888
"The Revolt of Ghent"	December 1, 1889
"A Lecture on French and English Cathedrals"	October 4, 1891
"Socialism up-to-date"	October 4, 1891
"Town and Country"	January [?], 1893
"The Dangers of Restoration with Special Reference to Westminster Abbey"	October 22, 1893
"Makeshift"	November 18, 1894

Source: "A Calendar of William Morris' Platform Career,"
Unpublished Lectures, LeMire, 240-289.

Rowley must have reassured him, for Morris spoke to the Brotherhood twice that January — on "Useful Work *versus* Useless Toil" at the Churnett Street Hall on the 21st, and on "Art Under Plutocracy" at the Memorial Hall on the 22nd. The table on the facing page lists the titles of all the talks given by Morris to the group and the dates of delivery.

Rowley, in his forties at the time, may have thought that Morris' disdain for half measures and hopes for an imminent revolution were unrealistic, but he shared his deep anger at the physical destruction Marsden had glibly ignored.

On the coal-beds of Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire we have a population of some seven millions, and no tree — nothing that the Almighty could call a tree, though there are thousands of blackened sticks.³⁰

Those of us who are born in [the present social order], and come to be horrified with it, do not know how to rid us of it except by leaving it. That is obviously no remedy. . . . Morris would have none of this absurd toleration — sweep the beastly thing away, and live like men, was his one and only policy.³¹

Rowley was also a sincere admirer of Pre-Raphaelite art who valued the works of Morris and Company, supported public financing for the Manchester School of Art, organized the city's first Arts and Crafts exhibition in 1880, and described a replica of the Exeter College "Adoration of the Magi" in the Manchester Art Gallery as "one of the chief glories of our city."³² As for Morris himself,

[a]fter my friend Professor J. W. Mackail's classic *Life of Morris* there seems nothing to say except each of our personal recollections of the most all-round gifted man of the

nineteenth century. As a personality he was bigger than all his work—that of course is what makes his work so engrossing. As a man, Morris leaves a unique impression; his robustness of mind and body, his sterling handsomeness, his dignified simplicity, the great trait of being no respecter of mere personages, his varied gifts and the pains he took to make the best of them, total up to an indescribable focus of energy and accomplishment.³³

¶ Rowley also caught the tension between Morris' bluntness of temper and his eagerness to collaborate:

He would do superb stained glass for Christ Church, but the new Gothic horrors he simply loathed. . . . I suggested he should meet my friend the late Mr. Thomas Worthington, who was the architect of Manchester College at Oxford. They wanted Morris Burne-Jones glass in the chapel: would he undertake it? I won't say where he would see them first before he would do it. Why didn't they erect their beasty things in Manchester? I got him to see the ever amiable Worthington, and the result is a chapel full of the most glorious works—surpassing as an ensemble anything I know ancient or modern, of their kind. His bark was worse than his bite. That was always so.³⁴

¶ An acquaintance of Madox Brown as well as Rossetti, Rowley was perhaps aware of the tensions in Morris' marriage, but he recorded the following memory of a tranquil moment of family life at Kelmscott:

After a while Morris slipped off, and soon afterwards we saw him in a summer bower with his head bowed in his wife's lap, having his hair cropped. What a subject for a picture flashed upon one—such a man, and such a woman! But wherever either or both of them were it seemed to be supremely perfect and to leave an impression never to be effaced.³⁵

¶ Two other passages conveyed the substance of Morris' commitment to egalitarian aesthetic ideals:

Mr. Balfour once complained to me that these things by Morris were only for the rich and mighty. He missed the point. Morris wanted everything fine and noble to be available for all, and especially for the worthy. The best in nature is open to us all; what is the good of the fine arts if they are not to be enjoyed with the same freedom?³⁶

¶ The second comes from an unpublished British Library manuscript,³⁷ in which Rowley responded to May Morris' request for memories of her father:

. . . Mr. Emery Walker thought that Morris would come to our workers audience at Ancoats. He came many times and we always had a noble audience of 900 or more mostly hard headed men. At our little social tea after these lectures we had the usual heckling. The same old questions were asked and the questioners were invariably floored good humouredly. . . . To many labouring men the gospel was welcome though I cannot say that Morris' wonderful and beautiful literary way of putting the case was clear to those not full of books or learning. The language, the method of production did not strike on their box. They required something far more obvious. But all the same that glowing personality has left an impression on all of us which nothing can efface. To some few of us it is all an abiding memory and a constant inspiration.³⁸

ART UNDER PLUTOCRACY

¶ One of Morris' most acclaimed lectures, "Art Under Plutocracy" was a powerful secular sermon about art and its social environment which appealed to shared associations and ideals, bluntly evoked the specter of social unrest, demanded

commitment to a radical cause, and framed that cause in a critique of aesthetic hypocrisy and social injustice.³⁹ Morris delivered this powerful lecture on five occasions to different groups as noted below.

MORRIS DELIVERS "ART UNDER PLUTOCRACY"	
Russell Club at University College Hall, Oxford (under the title "Art Under a Plutoocracy")	November 14, 1883
Democratic Federation's Lecture Hall in Wimbledon (under the title "Art Under the Rule of Commerce")	November 16, 1883
Cambridge Union Society at the Cambridge Union (under the title "Art Under the Plutoocracy")	December 4, 1883
A meeting sponsored by the Ancoats Recreation Committee at the Memorial Hall, Manchester	January 22, 1884
A meeting sponsored by the West Bromwich Institute at the Town Hall, West Bromwich (under the title "Art Under Competitive Commerce")	February 25, 1884

Source: "A Bibliographic Checklist of Morris' Speeches and Lectures,"
Unpublished Lectures, LeMire, 298.

§ It is not difficult therefore to understand why the lecturer's personal tone, urgency of invitation, and insistence on individual responsibility affronted Marsden's overweening pride in technological "development," and confirmed Rowley's hopes to create a fuller life for workers in the Ancoats Brotherhood. For it expressed Morris' ardent desire to redefine aesthetic and political "mastery" and "turn [them both] into fellowship."

§ Morris began the lecture with an offer to "take counsel" with his audience, and examine the obstacles which "may lie in the way toward making art what it should be, a help and solace to the daily life of all men."⁴⁰ More strikingly, he defined "art" and "all men" in terms which may have discomfited many listeners in his elite Oxford audience: art is "bound up with the general condition of society, and especially with the lives of those who live by manual labour and whom we call the working classes."⁴¹ Pausing to acknowledge the vigor and (market-driven) activity of the Victorian art world, Morris acknowledged that of course

there is on many sides much knowledge of the history of art ... [and] many men of talent, and some few of genius, practice it with no mean success. . . . All this is true as far as it goes. . . . And yet, I say, how have we of these latter days treated the beauty of the earth, or that which we call art? [Neglect and pollution have ravaged the countryside, and] the well of art is poisoned at its spring. . . . [C]ivilisation . . . owes us some compensation for the loss of this romance, which now only hangs like a dream about the country life of busy lands.⁴²

§ The "dream" became particularly remote when intellectual ("high") art repudiated its decorative (craft-based) origins, and

systems of what would now be called 'commodification' destroyed or corrupted collaborative exchanges and interactions between different forms of art.⁴³

§ As an artist, Morris emphasized that artists yearn for informed and sympathetic audiences for their work. For

lack of [praise and sympathy] . . . injure[s artists] in some way; makes them shy, over-sensitive, and narrow, or else cynical and mocking.⁴⁴

Moreover,

Not only are London and our other great cities mere masses of sordidness, filth, and squalor, embroidered with patches of pompous and vulgar hideousness, no less revolting to the eye and the mind . . . not only have whole counties of England, and the heavens that hang over them, disappeared beneath a crust of unutterable grime, but the disease, which . . . would seem to be a love of dirt and ugliness for its own sake, spreads over all the country, and every little market-town seizes the opportunity to imitate, as far as it can, the majesty of the hell of London and Manchester.⁴⁵

Only drastic change could heal so fundamental a malady:

That all things since the beginning of the world have been tending to the development of this system I willingly admit, since it exists; that all the events of history have taken place for the purpose of making it eternal, the very evolution of those events forbids me to believe. . . . I hold that the condition of competition between man and man is bestial only, and that of association human. . . .

[A] spirit of association . . . will one day abolish all classes and take definite and practical form, and substitute association for competition in all that relates to the production and exchange of the means of life.⁴⁶

§ Defining art in alternative Ruskinian terms as "man's expression of his joy in labour,"⁴⁷ an association emphasized by Ruskin's presence at the lecture, Morris argued that pleasure in work derives from

three elements: variety, hope of creation, and the self-respect which comes of a sense of usefulness; to which must be added that mysterious bodily pleasure which goes with the deft exercise of the bodily powers.⁴⁸

As to the hope of creation, the hope of producing . . . a thing which needs you and can have no substitute for you in the making of it — can we any of us fail to understand the pleasure of this?⁴⁹

§ However debatable Morris' conception of the social order of medieval Europe may have been, he associated with it a limiting ideal in which the "unit of labour was an intelligent man,"⁵⁰ and "the harmonious cooperation of free intelligence" created results "which alone of all art can claim to be called Free."⁵¹ Since then,

a newer idea . . . has . . . obtained complete victory, namely, that [manufacture] is carried on for the sake of making a profit for the manufacturer on the one hand, and on the other for the employment of the working classes.⁵²

§ Craftsmanship had depended on continuity, but the new system rewarded discontinuous repetition of actions by "operatives," who were less valuable than the machines they tended. Moreover, it exploited the random disruptions of technological fashion, in which

the method of manufacture . . . alters not merely from decade to decade, but from year to year,⁵³

an iron law of planned obsolescence much prized by Marsden and his peers. Morris foresaw a dystopia in which a few highly skilled experts "directed" machines and unskilled men, women, and children tended them,⁵⁴ and he concluded that "the happiness of life is sickening in the house of civilization."⁵⁵

§ Morris was not a Luddite, but an opponent of alienated labor and the forced consumption it sustains. The primary effect of mechanical invention has been to save the cost of labor, he argued, not the worker's labor itself:

Look round the world, and you must agree with John Stuart Mill in his doubt whether all the machinery of modern times has lightened the daily work of one labourer.⁵⁶

§ Under the present system, wares and commodities which sicken and poison but drive consumption may falsely be considered 'profitable,' and in some specious sense therefore 'desirable.'

§ In advancing his argument that capitalism — plutocracy — has deepened the horror of poverty for present and future generations, Morris appealed once again to his audience:

... it would be an insult to you to suppose that you are contented with the state of things as they are; ... contented with the squalor of the black country, with the hideousness of London, the wen of all wens, as Cobbett called it; ... contented, lastly, to be living above that unutterable and sickening misery of which a few details are once again reaching us as if from some distant unhappy country, ... but which I tell you is the necessary foundation on which our society, our anarchy, rests.⁵⁷

§ Faced with such pervasive corruption, he argued, the palatives of middle-class reformers are insufficient. We should

admit that "[p]overty driven below a certain limit means degeneration and slavery pure and simple,"⁵⁸ and that capitalism relies on a permanent underclass:

... under all that [the middle-class and its habits] still lies and will lie another class which we shall never get rid of as long as we are under the tyranny of the devil take the hindmost; that class is the Class of Victims. Now above all things I want us not to forget them (as indeed we are not likely to for some weeks to come)⁵⁹ or to console ourselves by averages for the fact that the riches of the rich and the comfort of the well-to-do are founded on that terrible mass of undignified, unrewarded, useless misery, concerning which we have of late been hearing a little, a very little ...

§ Lest the unhappy and starving workers be blamed for their problems, Morris reminded his audience that

the failure in the game of life which entails on a rich man an ambitious retirement ... drags a working man down into that hell of irredeemable degradation.⁶¹

§ He argued that "[our present] system is after all nothing but a continuous implacable war,"⁶² and its orderly surface is a mask, which concealed

the waste that comes of the anarchy of war, ... [H]ow neat and comforting the steady march of the regiment; how quiet and respectable the sergeants look; how clean the polished cannon; neat as a new pin are the store-houses of murder. ... [A]ll the while its whole energy, its whole organized precision is employed in one thing, the wrenching the means of living from others. ...⁶³

§ At this point, Morris compared those who lived heedlessly on others' labor to the brutish brothers of Keats' "Isabella

and the Pot of Basil," a subject also familiar to his Oxford audience from J. E. Millais' and Holman Hunt's paintings:

Half ignorant they turn an easy wheel
That sets sharp racks at work to pinch and peel.

¶ Finally, he argued that solidarity of working-people was the only force that could "overthrow this terrible organization so strong in itself, so rooted in the self-interest, stupidity, and cowardice of strenuous narrow-minded men. . . ."⁶⁴ Mindful of the fears such imagery evoked, he pled with his audience to

combat . . . a doctrine [of overthrow] by supplying discontent with hope of change that involves reconstruction. . . .⁶⁵

I well know that the middle class may do much to give a peaceable or a violent character to the education of discontent . . . hinder it, and who knows what violence you may be driven into, . . . advance it, strive single-heartedly that truth may prevail, and what need you fear? At any rate not your own violence, not your own tyranny.⁶⁶

"SOMETHING BEFORE WE DIE"

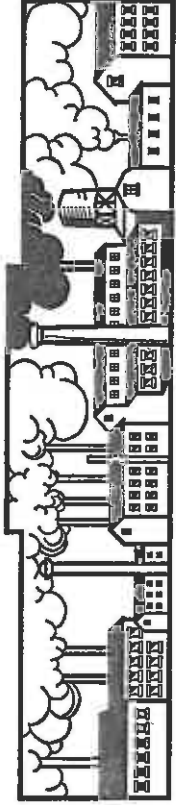
¶ Morris spent much of the rest of his life trying to "mak[e] Socialists" through persuasion and education,⁶⁷ and "give a peaceable . . . character to the education of discontent," in his tireless work for the Socialist League and his creation of literary works such as "The Pilgrims of Hope," *A Dream of John Ball*, and *News from Nowhere*. As he put it in the essay's ardent conclusion,

. . . art is long and life is short; let us at least do something before we die. . . . One man with an idea in his head is in danger of being considered a madman . . . a thousand and society begins to tremble, a hundred thousand and there

is war abroad, . . . [but] why only a hundred thousand? Why not a hundred million and peace upon the earth? You and I who agree together, it is we who have to answer that question.⁶⁸

¶ These lines anticipated the narrator's spectral hope expressed at the end of *News from Nowhere*, that

. . . if others can see it as I have seen it, then it may be called a vision and not a dream.⁶⁹



Art in the Future

A CAPITALIST'S PERSPECTIVE

THE SYNOPSIS of Mr. William Morris' lecture at Oxford given in our notes, very fairly and correctly represents the views he propounded on that and several occasions subsequently where the same address appears to have been delivered under various titles. It may also be taken as representing the opinions that widely prevail amongst artists and literary men regarding the influence exerted by our mechanical inventions, manufacturing industries, and extensive commerce upon art, which Mr. Morris defined as "all the surroundings in which men live." It is needless to say that we cannot agree with men holding such views. We believe them to be totally wrong in both the essence and extent of their conclusions, and the cause of their errors is the limited range of view their standpoint affords them both of space and time, as we will endeavour briefly to show.

Richard Marsden authored this article in the December 15, 1883, issue of *The Textile Manufacturer* on pages 500 and 501. A synopsis (referred to in the opening line above) of Morris' lecture appears in the same issue beginning on page 498. Morris' letter responds to this article.



RICHARD MARSDEN
1837-1903



According to our modern teachers, art attained its highest development in the classic periods of Grecian and Roman history, and it is the productions of Athens and Rome that are continually being held up for our admiration and imitation. Perhaps in the palmiest days of these cities there may have been periods when sculpture and architecture attained a higher degree of excellence than could be justly claimed for these arts at the present day, though we by no means admit this to be an established fact; and so of other things that the broad definition of art, as given by Mr. Morris, might include. But we contend that this excellence was strictly localised—confined to the smallest area—and affected only a few thousands of the people amongst whom it was developed. Two out of three of the population of Athens were slaves, and it is indispensible that a considerable portion of the remainder could not have been in affluence; further, the position occupied by woman in the community was one of comparative degradation contrasted with that she occupies in modern times in the leading civilised states. Where individuals of the sex came to the front they did so not by reason of pre-eminent virtues, but, if we may measure them by the modern standard, rather from the conspicuous absence of these traits. The remainder of the community was made up of the *aristoi*, the aristocracy,

otherwise the privileged wealthy and governing classes of the community. It was these men who made artistic culture the leading pursuit of their lives, who listened to the preaching of Paul and the orations of Demosthenes, and who patronised the architects and sculptors whose works excite admiration to the present day. But they only formed a comparatively small portion of the community; and it will probably be accepted without dispute that the other classes, constituting the bulk, would neither possess the means nor have the opportunity to acquire the mental training necessary to appreciate the beauties of architecture or sculpture, even when placed before them in the public places of the city, or wherever else located. In this respect they would compare very disadvantageously with the working men of to-day, much as it may be the fashion to depreciate the latter.

If we turn to Roman art, it will be found to spring from the political domination secured by that famous city in process of time over the then known world. The tribute poured into its coffers from the conquered territories enriched both the government and the citizens, whilst the one half of its population who were slaves worked for and attended to the wants of the remainder, who were thus emancipated from the necessity of supplying their own needs of any kind, and could therefore devote their time and means to the development of art in whatever form it commended itself to their individual tastes. Fortunately, history has not left us ignorant of what these were, and the comparison, measured by any standard that would be adopted now, would be highly advantageous to the present day. The Romans as a people were not enthusias-

tic admirers of art as now understood, and the best works of that period were executed by the architects and sculptors of Greece, to whom the rising importance of the future mistress of the world proved such an attraction as to draw them from their native lands in large numbers. On the break up of the political systems of which Athens and Rome were respectively the centres, art rapidly declined, or sought refuge in the monastic sanctuaries offered by Christianity, before the aggressive powers of which Paganism was rapidly declining. In this seclusion it, as it were, hibernated until the growing influence and accumulating wealth of the Christian states provided a soil in which it could again flourish.

¶ The Italian renaissance marked the revival of European learning and art. This, however, arose not from any inherent power in art itself, but simply from the riches accruing from the tribute paid by European peoples to a religious system that had brought within its control an area greater than that covered by the power of Rome in its mightiest days and which afforded the conditions necessary for its growth — these being, as previously laid down, wealth and leisure. Venetian and Florentine art sprang from similar conditions, though these had a different foundation, being based upon commercial prosperity, especially in the former city. In every other quarter where art has flourished similar favouring circumstances will be found to have preceded and accompanied its development. No attempt, however, need be made to adduce further examples in proof of this position, as our readers will be sufficiently familiar with the facts of ancient and modern history to be able to adduce them for themselves if deemed necessary.

¶ In the old days, which such teachers as Mr. Morris, Mr. Ruskin, and others propounding similar views laud as being the height of perfection, and to which men should hark back again as fast as possible, we contend that art, in the sense in which its modern apostles understand the term, was an impossibility, except to kings, emperors, political rulers of other denominations, and slave-holders. The great world of mankind was quite outside its influence — indeed, there was no point of contact between it and the artistic developments of the different periods. Even where this might be supposed to be otherwise — in the churches, where the best productions of architects, sculptors, and painters were combined — the mass of the people were so destitute of knowledge and capability of appreciating these treasures that they might as well have been blind and deaf for any influence such things could exert upon them. And so it has remained to this day. In proof of this we need only point to the condition of the populations of Greece, amidst its classic remains — of Italy, amidst ruins of a more recent date and more imposing in their grandeur — and of Spain, with its Moorish and Christian art side by side. If art possessed a self-sustaining and propagating power all these countries ought to stand upon its highest pinnacles. But in place of this what do we see? Art is dead, and the artists of to-day merely resort to its shrines in these lands in order to worship an excellence that time is quickly effacing. Further, if art possessed the refining, civilising, and humanising power, the last being understood in its highest sense, that is so widely claimed for it, surely we should have seen some evidence of its influence upon the populations of all these countries. If, how-

ever, they possess any traits that will enable them to be readily distinguished from those of other European States in which art has never reached a high degree of development, these are immorality, idleness, filthiness, mendicancy, and lawlessness. These lands, until the past few years, have been almost the only homes of brigandage in Europe. Surely the apostles of art will not be in haste to claim such traits of character as outgrowths of the principles they are assiduously inculcating! And yet, what else is left, if their theory of the origin of art and the conditions in which it will best flourish is accepted?

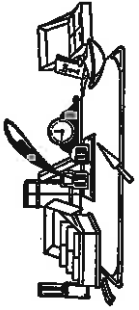
¶ As observed above, we do not concur in the views of Messrs. Ruskin, Morris, and their co-workers in the same fields. If it were possible for the world to retrace its steps, which it would be necessary for it to do to restore the ancient developments of art and learning and to realise the aspirations of these teachers, it would be the greatest misfortune that could befall civilised mankind. It would be retrogression instead of progress, and would simply enable art to flourish in the most limited areas, and exert its refining influence over the smallest numbers of mankind. The mechanical age upon which the world has entered is destined to confer blessings ten thousand fold greater than any that have yet been conceived by those who have set themselves up to declaim against its influence. It is our mechanical inventors that have rendered life worth living by emancipating mankind from the drudgery of the coarsest labour in which through all time past the vast majority of the human race have worn out their lives. This freedom may not yet be fully attained, but no doubt can be entertained that it will be completely achieved. That it will

also spread into regions and amongst races of people who have hitherto as yet hardly felt its influence admits of no discussion. Commerce spreads these advantages widely abroad, and Mr. Morris takes a short-sighted view of this grand development of the age when he assumes that its highest result is the accumulation of money in the hands of the few who are successful, and who in his eyes constitute the plutocracy whose offences against the recognised canons of art and the little encouragement they give to it are so unendurable to him. To amass a fortune may be the motive that leads most men to engage in commerce, and the influence of this factor may be so prominent in the lives of mercantile men that the greater result is thrust so far into the background that it is rendered invisible. But it by no means follows that it is safe to infer that there is no other beneficial result, even surpassing in magnitude the fortunes successful traders manage to amass. It is the function of the merchant to distribute over the face of the earth the products of our mechanical industry, thereby relieving other peoples from the drudgery of labour. In like manner to ourselves, they are made participators in the advantages derived from mechanical inventions, and are set free for other pursuits. It is true the merchant does not look at this aspect of his work, but it is of by far the greatest importance when the subject is considered from this point.

¶ The aggregate profit made in manufacturing and mercantile pursuits is exceedingly small when compared with the amount of the "turnover," yet it is the latter that gives the true measure of the relief afforded to mankind from wearying labour. By these means, for a minimum of expenditure, men

acquire a maximum of benefit, by which they are enriched both in money and time. The former affords them means to surround themselves with the productions of art, whilst the latter secures them the opportunity to cultivate a taste for and the leisure to enjoy it. It is thus that civilisation, which has been greatly enhanced by the development of our mechanical industries and our commerce, improves the condition of society. It has yet further conquests to make in this direction, and no one will dispute its ability to accomplish the task, or doubt its prospects of ultimate success. That which has been already accomplished is an absolute guarantee that the rest will follow. If it be asked what the former consists of, it is easy to point it out. "All the surroundings in which men live" have been so much ameliorated that the average duration of human life has been considerably prolonged; the time devoted to toil has been diminished and the tale of their labour reduced; education is more widely spread than in any preceding age, and to a corresponding extent the intellectual pleasures are rendered accessible to those who previously knew not their meaning. Our homes, notwithstanding many drawbacks, are improvements upon those of past ages, and the walls therein are beginning to display the first fruits of art teaching, not, perhaps, from the professional artist, but from the husbands, wives, sons, and daughters of the household. This indicates that the time is approaching when it can be much more truly said than of any preceding age that "all men are artists." As compared with any era in the past, it would be quite safe to affirm that the present age is superior to all its predecessors in every quality that constitutes the artistic character—that is, on an aver-

age. Instead of the depreciation which has been so lavishly showered upon the artistic development, or the deficiency of it, of the day, those who aspire to the position of teachers ought to recognise its transitional character, and offer encouragement and kindly guidance towards the ideal they desire to realise. But at present they are blind leaders of the blind, who can see nothing but enemies, which they are endeavouring to thrust aside, in our modern systems of industry and the commerce which has grown out of them. They will require to open their eyes, when they will see that these are the most powerful allies they could possibly enlist in order to accomplish speedily, economically, effectually, and completely the ends they desire. Without their assistance they cannot do it at all. Yet it will be done, and must be done, through the instrumentality of these powers. When thus accomplished, art will not, as in the past, be the privileged possession of a few, reposing on the slavery of the many—neither will it be a local development flourishing only in centres of political, commercial, or social influence: whilst it grows luxuriantly in domains like these, it will also find a soil in which it can flourish in the homes of the multitude, who, emancipated from the toil to which their forefathers were slaves by the beneficent influence of mechanical industry and wide-spreading commerce, will have both the disposition, the means, and the opportunity to cherish its growth until its refining influence permeates not only their material but also their moral and spiritual lives. The aim and end of all true art is to spread beauty everywhere.



To Set Art Free

MORRIS' LETTER TRANSCRIBED

KELMSCOTT HOUSE,

UPPER MALL, HAMMERSMITH.

Jan 12th 1884

Dear Sir

I thank you for sending me your interesting periodical. I must tell you that the abstract of my lecture which appears in it scarcely gives the point of it. There was no good abstract made, and indeed it is a difficult thing to do. However that matters less, since by the kindness of my friend Mr. Ch. Rowley of your city I am to have an opportunity of delivering it in Manchester on the 22nd inst.

Meantime let me say that you somewhat misunderstand me if you think I wish the world to return on its footsteps. The very point of all I have to say lies in my seeing (as others do) that history is not accidental but is the result of necessary evolution: only I think that the evolution cannot stop at any given point, as many members of the middle-class think it should: they think it an advantage that the bourgeoisie (who are the direct development of the serfs of the Middle Ages) should have overcome the privileged classes, and there they want to stop the evolution, and are blind to the fact that they, being now the masters, have opposed to them a class which

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TO SET ART FREE

has been born out of the great industrial revolution (a part of which your periodical so ably represents) and that the evolution must be carried on till the present system of producing for profit is merged into (gives birth to rather), a new system of producing for livelihood.

Now as an artist, even apart from my sympathy with labour, I rejoice in the prospect which this inevitable change offers; because (I am speaking as an artist) I must assert, in the teeth of your remarks in the latter part of your article, that one consequence of the bourgeois victory has been that art is dormant in all civilised countries: the victory of the proletariat with its consequence, the extinction of classes, will I feel sure set art free once more. This assured hope which I first gained from reading some of J. Ruskin's extraordinary passages in which the sudden insight flashes out like an inspiration I have had strengthened in me by experience of commercial & manufacturing dealings (in a small way I admit) and also by the study of history and economics, and also by seeing, what I never hoped to live to see, a distinct Socialist agitation begun in England; which is indeed the stronghold of the bourgeois class, but which more than one great thinker has deemed for that very reason will be the first country where Socialism will take a definite and legalised form.

Pray excuse me for troubling you with this long letter, but since you have been so good as to interest yourself in my lectures, I thought myself bound to explain my position to you.

I am Dear Sir

Yours faithfully *William Morris*

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P. S. I notice a little article in your paper on Indigo & Madder: the Romans of Pliny's time though they knew of indigo as a pigment did not know how to set a vat with it, but used woad simply. Madder must be of very ancient use in northern Europe: the etymology of the word shows that, as it is Teutonic and Scandinavian, comes from Mad an earth worm alluding to the rusty red [of] their roots doubtless. Several places in Iceland are named after it; but their madder seems to have been galium the roots of which will dye a fairish colour on wool; but the real madder seems to have been grown in Ireland as the madder field is mentioned in the ancient laws (7th century say) and they would hardly have needed to cultivate such a common weed as galium.

NOTES

1. Letter to Sarah Anne Unwin Byles, August 9, 1883, *The Collected Letters of William Morris*, vol. 2: 1881-84, ed. Norman Kelvin, Princeton UP, 1987, 214.
 2. Salmon, Nicholas with Derek Baker, *The William Morris Chronology*, Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1996, 122.
 3. Salmon and Baker, 124. The meeting was held July 22; see LeMire, Eugene, "A Calendar of William Morris's Platform Career," in *The Unpublished Lectures of William Morris*, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1969, 239.
 4. To Miss Bailey, Jenny's attendant, he wrote in August that "I am sorry to have to give you double trouble over it, but I get anxious & I want also to communicate with Mr. Webb [probably Henry Webb, her doctor]." August 30, 1883, Kelvin, 222.
 5. August 17, 1883, Kelvin, 217.
 6. Kelvin, 219.
 7. March 5 [1884?], *Ibid.*, 268.
 8. The essay's original title was "Art Under a Plutocracy." (LeMire, "A Calendar," 239).
- Despite earlier claims that Ruskin chaired the meeting, Tony Pinkney has established that the chairperson was the now little-remembered Anthony H. Hawkins. Pinkney observes that Morris gave nine lectures and speeches at Oxford in this period in an effort to "win over his old university on . . . architectural and political issues." (*William Morris in Oxford: The Campaigning Years, 1879-1895*, Illuminati, Grosmont, U.K., 2007, 4).
9. October 17, 1883, Kelvin, 235.
 10. November 7, 1883, Kelvin, 243.
 11. *Oxford Magazine*, 1883, 387, quoted in Pinkney, 64. Hawkins recalled that "I am afraid he did not enjoy the meeting much. . . . Afterwards two or three political economy dons heckled him severely on points of detail . . ." (Anthony Hope, *Memories and Notes*, London: Hutchinson, 1927 in Pinkney, 65).

12. LeMire, "A Calendar," 239-240.
13. *Christian Socialist*, January 1884, 125, quoted in Pinkney, 47.
14. LeMire, "A Calendar," 239, lists accounts in *The Architect*, *The Times*, *The Oxford and Cambridge Undergraduate's Journal*, *The Oxford Magazine*, *The Cambridge Review* and *The Oxford Times*; Salmon and Baker, 127.
15. November 21, 1883, Kelvin, 248-249.
16. November 27, 1883, Kelvin, 249.
17. Kelvin, 254.
18. Kelvin, 255.
19. In 1903, the *Manchester City News* reported that Richard Marsden, editor of *The Textile Manufacturer*, had died on May 20 at the age of 77 in his home at 25 Clyde Road, West Didsbury (south of central Manchester). He would therefore have been 57 or 58 in 1884.
20. *The Textile Manufacturer*, December 15, 1883, 498.
21. Morris was one of the founders of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings in 1877.
22. *The Textile Manufacturer*, 498.
23. *Ibid.*, 498.
24. *Ibid.*, 500.
25. *Ibid.*, 500-501.
26. *Ibid.*, 501.
27. *Ibid.*, 505.
28. *Fifty Years of Work Without Wages*, Second edition, Charles Rowley. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1911, 249.
29. Kelvin, 239.
30. Rowley, 4.
31. *Ibid.*, 130.
32. *Ibid.*, 74.
33. *Ibid.*, 129.
34. *Ibid.*, 133.
35. *Ibid.*, 136.
36. *Ibid.*, 138-139.

37. Add. M. S. 45, 347, ff. 93-99.
38. ff. 95-99. Rowley's memoir begins: "The first time I came to personal touch with Morris was in 1883. A friend asked me to dine with him before he addressed a joint meeting of the Manchester Literary Club and the Academy of Arts in the old lecture theatre of the Royal Institution. It was the only time I saw Morris in evening dress. The lecture was on "Wealth and Riches." The obvious distinction of these terms seemed a surprise to the audience, but the lecturer pounded into their minds for an hour the vast and deadly differences of these symbols. We were steeped in the fact of mere accumulation and well being was too often a secondary matter. A well known banker moved the vote of thanks and abused Morris for his references to John Bright and the Manchester School. [ff. 93-95]
39. Tony Pinkney observes that "Art Under Plutocracy" brought together "three stands of [Morris'] thought — [his] conservative campaigns in Oxford and elsewhere, a Ruskinian celebration of medievalism and joy in labour, and the new socialist view of history — with a depth and eloquence . . . rarely matched elsewhere in his writings" (Pinkney, 63).
40. *The Collected Works of William Morris* (1910-1915), vol. 23, ed. M. Morris. London: Longmans, Green & Co., 164.
41. *Ibid.*, 164.
42. *Ibid.*, 164-165, 170.
43. *Ibid.*, 166.
44. *Ibid.*, 168.
45. *Ibid.*, 170.
46. *Ibid.*, 172-173.
47. *Ibid.*, 173.
48. *Ibid.*, 174.
49. *Ibid.*
50. *Ibid.*, 176.
51. *Ibid.*, 177.
52. *Ibid.*, 178.

53. *Ibid.*
 54. *Ibid.*, 179.
 55. *Ibid.*
 56. *Ibid.*, 180.
 57. *Ibid.*, 181.
 58. *Ibid.*, 183.
 59. Pinkney (61-62) notes that among other things this may refer to the recent publication of Andrew Mearns, *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London*, published in mid-October 1883 and widely circulated in Oxford.
 60. *Collected Works*, 184.
 61. *Ibid.*, 185.
 62. *Ibid.*, 185-186.
 63. *Ibid.*, 186.
 64. *Ibid.*, 187.
 65. *Ibid.*, 189.
 66. *Ibid.*, 190.
 67. Morris, William, "Statement of Principles of the Ham-smith Socialist Society," www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1890/hammer.htm.
 68. *Collected Works*, 191.
 69. *News from Nowhere*, ed. Clive Wilmer, Penguin Books, 1993, chapter 32, p. 228.

CREDITS

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 The membership card on page 2 was designed by William Morris in 1883 for the Democratic Federation, which he had joined in January of that year.
 The Ancoats Brotherhood emblem on page 10 was designed by Walter Crane. It is from Charles Rowley's *Fifty Years of Work Without Wages* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1911, 210).

The drawing of Charles Rowley (c. 1900) on page 11 is from the biographical cuttings files of the Manchester Archives and Local Studies Central Library, Manchester, UK.
 Richard Marsden's photograph facing page 25 is from his obituary published in the May 23, 1903 issue of *The Textile Mercury* on page 389. Courtesy Manchester Archives and Local Studies Central Library, Manchester, UK.
 The masthead on page 26 is from the December 15, 1883 issue of *The Textile Manufacturer*, in which Marsden published his critique of Morris' "Art Under Plutocracy." Courtesy Manchester Archives and Local Studies Central Library, Manchester, UK.

THE ARTIST & THE CAPITALIST

has been set in Jenson Old Style types, a modern interpretation of the late 15th century face originally cut by Nicholas Jenson and the face that in 1890 served as William Morris' inspiration for his own Golden Type.

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Roman numerals i through x are reserved for Florence Boos and Jack Walsdorf.

Copies 1 through 100 are offered for sale.

This is copy number 45.

KILMSCOTT HOUSE,

UPPER MALL, HAMMERSMITH.

To Richard Martin Esq Jan 12th 1884
Manchester.

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my sympathy with labour, I
rejoice in the prospect which this
inevitable change offers; because
(I am speaking as an author) I must
assert, in the teeth of your remarks
in the latter part of your article,
that one consequence of the bourgeois
victory has been that art is
dormant ~~the~~ in all civilized
countries: the victory of the
proletariat with its consequence,
~~the~~ the extinction of classes, which
I feel sure set art free once more.
This assured hope which I first
gained from reading some of
J. Ruskin's extraordinary passages

My friend Mr. Ch. Howley of
Your City I am to have an
opportunity of delivering it
in Manchester on the 22nd.
I should like to say that
I should have overcome the prejudice
of the serfs of the Middle Ages
classes, and here they want to
stop the evolution, and are blind
to the fact that they, being now
the masters, have opposed to them
a class which ~~is~~ ^{has been} born out
of the great industrial revolution
of which you are a part of which
is all representative and that
the evolution must be carried
on till the present system of
manufacturing is ^{is} proving for
profit is merged into a new

~~Exhausting~~ The sudden surge
flashed out like an inspiration,
I have had

strengthened in me by experiences
~~of~~ of Commercial & manufacturing
dealings (in a small way I admit)
and also by the study of history

and Economics, and also by seeing
what I never hoped to live to see,

a distinct ~~for~~ socialist system
begun in England; a country
which is indeed the stronghold
of the bourgeois class, at but
which more than one great thinker

has deemed for that very reason
will be the first country where
socialism will take a definite

and required them.
Pray excuse me for troubling
you with this long letter, but
since you have been so good
as to interest yourself in
my lectures, I thought myself
bound to explain my position
to you. I am Dear Sir

Yours faithfully
William Morse

P.S. I notice a little article in
your paper on Indigo & Madder.
Among the Romans of Pliny's time they
knew of indigo as a pigment

with it, but not used simply.
Madder must be of very ancient use
in Northern Europe: the Etymology
of the word shows that, as it is Teutonic
and Scandinavian, comes from Madan
earth-worm alluding to the rusty red
stain roots doubtless: several places
in Iceland are named after it; but
their madder seems to have been ^{Galium} ~~Galium~~
the roots of which will dye a fairish
colour on wool: but the real madder
seems to have been grown in Ireland
as the madderfield is mentioned in
the ancient laws (7th century law)
and they would hardly have needed to
cultivate such a common weed as
galium