

human nature to be infringed by such differences of local circumstance. Whatever those circumstances may be, the fact remains that in proportion as a man approaches towards the condition not only of "earning his subsistence by some kind of labour," but of "living on all its sides the life natural and proper to mankind," his capacity to appreciate true art tends to increase. On the other hand, when a class settles down into an artificial way of life,—loses touch with nature, becomes confused in its perceptions of what is good and what is bad, and prefers the condition of a parasite to that of a producer,—its capacity to appreciate true art must diminish. Having lost all clear perception of the meaning of life, such people are necessarily left without any criterion which will enable them to distinguish good from bad art, and they are sure to follow eagerly after beauty, or "that which pleases them."

The artists of our society can usually only reach people of the upper and middle classes. But who is the great artist?—he who delights a select audience of his own day and class, or he whose works link generation to generation and race to race in a common bond of feeling? Surely art should fulfil its purpose as completely as possible. A work of art that united every one with the author, and with one another, would be perfect art. Tolstoy, in his emphatic way, speaks of works of "universal" art, and (though the profound critics hasten to inform us that no work of art ever reached everybody) certainly the more nearly a work of art approaches to such expression of feeling that every one may be infected by it—the nearer (apart from all question of subject-matter) it approaches perfection.

But now as to subject-matter. The subject-matter of art consists of feelings which can be spread from man to man, feelings which are "contagious" or "infectious." Is it of no importance *what* feelings increase and multiply among men?