

different tasks for all the workmen according to their ability, but each to some extent expressed his own will in what he did. To Morris this chapter was a gospel and all his own ideas about art grew out of it; indeed he was unjust to the art of the Renaissance, not merely through a caprice of personal taste, but because it seemed to him that at the Renaissance the whole society of Europe took a wrong turning, by following which it had arrived at the dull follies of the industrial age. He knew, of course, that there were great artists at the Renaissance, but in their work he saw a foreboding of what was to come of it. For him it expressed, however splendidly, a state of mind which seemed to him wrong; and he refused to be dazzled by the triumphs of Michelangelo, as by the victories of Napoleon.

If he had been a critic, this prejudice of his against the Renaissance would have been a mere prejudice harmful to his work; but he was to be an artist, and afterwards a revolutionary, that is to say a man of action in both stages. Therefore he rightly and naturally judged all art and all ideas by their practical value to himself. And even when he was an undergraduate at Oxford he saw what