

—for yourself, not for others—what no other man can ever know.” But I am afraid there are not many of our scholars and men of science who labour in that spirit. Far oftener it is precisely the reverse: instead of finding themselves in their work, they lose themselves more and more irretrievably; a mechanical habit of industry takes the place of vital impulse, turns out an endless succession of quite useless products, and not only considers itself thereby entitled to honour and reward but actually has its claims acknowledged. And, as a consequence, literature, art, and science are smothered almost to death under the accumulations of rubbish heaped upon them by such painful assiduity.

Think what a tranquil place the world would be without all the things that have been made with dull effort or unhappy toil. Think of the blessed absence of all the physical and mental paraphernalia by which our lives are embarrassed—the hideous household ornaments, the foolish luxuries of fashion, the empty newspapers, the depressing novels, the dreary treatises, the futile scientific researches—in fact, nearly all the products of modern intellectual and artistic commerce. It may sound a daring thing to say, but I really believe that the only art and literature unreservedly and permanently good for humanity are those that have come out of the happiness of their makers. Of course, an immense amount of very capable and clever work has been produced from other motives—from the need of money, the desire of occupation, the thirst for fame, and so on; but take it all in all, the world could get on satisfactorily enough without it. Even in the case of such excellent work, as, for instance, much of George Eliot’s—work that has been done mainly to distract thought and deaden sorrow—I should be inclined to say that, valuable and worthy of respect as it unquestionably is in its way, its loss would not be altogether a matter for regret. But if a thing has been wrought for pleasure’s sake, there is always something delightful and heartening in it: it may not be in any sense “great,” but the happiness that has brought it into being renders it charming. The great genius exercises