THE true craftsman rarely begins the labors of a new day without making a rapid survey of yesterday's accomplishments, for it is thus that the unity of the work is maintained, thus that each successful stroke provides inspiration and each blemish a warning. Something of this desire of the craftsman to note the progress made, to gauge results and gather for our guidance all of inspiration and admonition contained in our experience, prompts us, as we write the first words of a new volume of The Craftsman, to take “a backward glance over traveled roads” before entering the new path to which they have led, and which we hope, will lead in its turn to a broader field of usefulness.

Rarely, if ever, has a periodical with anything like the serious purpose of The Craftsman been launched with so little preparation and knowledge of the conditions of periodical publication. At this date there can be no harm in confessing that in the beginning there was little to justify the venture except the urge of a great, vital impulse; a feeling that in our work as makers of things aiming at the union of simplicity and beauty, certain experiences were constantly involved and problems encountered which seemed of profound significance, and for the serious discussion of which existing periodical literature seemed to offer no opportunity—notwithstanding its bewildering array. Like the burgeoning of the trees in springtime, our thought developed and The Craftsman appeared.

By a coincidence, the first issue appeared in October, the anniversary month of the death of William Morris, from whose teachings we received our first inspiration. On the artistic side we sought to extend the principles so vigorously asserted by Morris, that the luxury of taste should be substituted for the luxury of costliness; that beauty does not imply elaborate ornamentation, and that simplicity, individuality and dignity of effect must be the cardinal principles of all lasting and worthy art and work. Upon the socio-economic side our experience has led us to the full acceptance of the dictum that, “It is right and necessary that all men should have work to do which shall be worth doing, and be pleasant to do; and which should be done under such conditions as would make it neither overwearisome, nor overanxious.” In so far as we could be said to have a programme at all, it consisted solely of these few simple principles. Perhaps it would be fair to say that at first we had no thought of going outside of the arts and crafts in our interests, except so far as extending sympathy and friendliness to all honest and constructive efforts aiming at the social ideal of the freedom of the workman
from commercialism. Our problems were essentially of the workshop.

But life’s fabric is woven of many threads in a complex pattern. Into its warp and woof enter all kinds of influences, conditions and experiences—physical, mental and moral. We soon found that we could not treat art as a thing apart from other phases of life and remain practical. When we asked ourselves why it was important that things should be well and beautifully made, why we should strive for greater simplicity in art and work, Life itself answered the question. At once it became apparent that things are of no importance except as they affect the lives of men, either of those who make them, those who own them, or those who behold them. Things are of no moment in themselves. Only their influence upon our lives is important. They are means to an end, and that end is richness of life. So men became of more importance than things in our programme, life more important than art. To stop short at advocating better work and better art, and refrain from carrying the principle underlying these on to the advocacy of a more reasonable way of living would have been as foolish and vain as to build a bridge where no one would ever need to cross. We should have been no whit wiser than the hero of our nursery days, who boldly “marched up the hill and then marched down again.”

Ever holding ourselves open to the reception of truth, our working and thinking led us to realize the fundamental and important relation between the things men make and the lives of those who make them; between the craftsmanship which engaged us day by day in the shop and the larger craftsmanship of life itself. Making beautiful, honest things, no matter what they may be, is of importance only in so far as the things themselves, and, more especially, the making of them, contribute to the development of beautiful and honest living.

In thus enlarging the scope of our interests we were not denying the principles with which we began, but adhering to them, with sincerity and whole-hearted devotion. Sometimes our friends did not understand. They interpreted our title too narrowly and thought we were going too far afield when we discussed many of the problems of philosophy, ethics, politics, economics and statecraft. They did not see that things must always be subordinate to men and that nothing that is human can be arbitrarily excluded from our interest without impairing our lives.

In its inception the arts and crafts movement was a protest against commercialism on its purely material side. The things produced in a commercial way were barren of the beauty common to things wrought by hand. But it was easy for commercialism to defend itself against such criticism. It could reply, in fact did reply, “Very well. Give us your models expressing your ideas of grace and beauty and we will reproduce them so faithfully with our machines that you will not be able to distinguish the copies from the original. Nay, we will go further: we will improve upon every detail, carrying your own ideas to perfection. Do you protest against the ornament with which our furniture is covered? Very well, we will leave off the ornament! Do you claim for your straight lines or simple curves that with their simplicity goes a subtle beauty, and a satisfying power our complicated commercial forms have missed? Very
well, then we will make by means of our machinery lines straighter than anything ever drawn by mortal hand, curves more perfect than Michaelangelo could make.”

What answer could be made to such a counter-challenge as that? What, indeed, but to rejoin: “That is all very well in its way, but what will you do to the makers of tables and chairs while you are making the lines straight and the curves perfect? While you copy the grace and beauty of our models with your wonderful machinery, what will you do to the human beings who work the machines and are almost part of them, like so many cogs or levers? Will you make their lives graceful and beautiful like the things they make? Or will you dull their lives, narrow them, brutalize and dehumanize them? We are not primarily concerned about making beautiful things, but about developing makers of beautiful things; men and women in whose lives rise the fountains of beauty and gladness, who see the soul of beauty in the simplest flower and the farthest, faintest star; workers whose work will be full of grace and beauty because of the indwelling grace and virtue of their lives. Can you give us this human beauty by your commercial methods?”

Such was the deeper, profounder spiritual significance which the arts and crafts movement developed. The new spirit set higher than the work itself the human development of which the work was the expression. Work and character go together. It is no accident that in the great crises of history the leaders and deliverers of nations have been found among those who have toiled in the sun, whose hands have been trained as well as their brains. Nothing is more certain than the fact that creative labor gives as nothing else does a normal view of life, the faculty of seeing things in their true perspective.

The whole indictment of commercialism rests here. In its last analysis it presents itself as a subtle conspiracy against self-development. It begins with the child’s toys and ruthlessly follows every subsequent step along the pathway of life. The boys no longer make their own sleds, wagons, bats and boats; the girls no longer make dolls’ clothes, cradles and baskets. Later in life, the men never think of making the furniture for their homes, nor the women of making clothing for themselves or their families. From the baby’s first rattle to grandmother’s walking-cane we depend upon the commercial provider. Is it any wonder, think you, that the boy who gets a dollar as a gift from his father and buys a wagon or sled values it less than he would if he had made it and paid the natural price in labor and sacrifice for it, or that similar influences at every step of his growth and training will make him a man with a perverted view of life, wholly devoid of a rational sense of values? We wonder sometimes at the wanton wastefulness of people, and at their helplessness to meet the faintest attacks of adversity, but surely it is only the natural fruitage of the commercial idea!

As we survey the progress—and there has been appreciable progress—of the movement toward handicrafts during the past five or six years, and note how surely the revolt against commercialism has shifted from the mere question of how things shall be produced to the consideration of the effect of the spirit underlying the manner of production upon the development of
character, we see the result of our labors. For among all the influences which have brought about this salutary change we believe the \textit{Craftsman} has had the foremost place.

Now, much as we may deplore it, the age of handicraft is gone beyond recall. It is idle to hope for the restoration, except in a very small way, of the old apprentice system and the craft guilds. The great machines have created conditions which no propaganda will overcome. This fact the movement toward handicrafts must frankly recognize if it is to be anything more than a poor exotic in our industrial and social life. But this does not necessitate the abandonment of handicrafts; does not mean that the triumph of commercialism and the crushing out of the craftsman spirit must be accepted.

To the great body of those whose lives are divorced from normal, healthy labor; to the student, the professional man and the man of business, we urge handicrafts as a means of physical and spiritual development, rather than a way of making things. No matter how well you may make things, commercialism will make them equally well or better and cheaper than you can make them. But when you buy a table or a chair you cannot buy with it the exhilaration of exercising your own creative faculties, the physical development, the peculiar mental discipline and the joy which comes to the maker of things when his work is self-chosen and inspired by love of it. And you can never buy with a piece of furniture the satisfying pleasure which is an inherent quality of the creation of your own hand and brain. In this lies the value of handicrafts for the numberless thousands of men and women who are living ill-balanced, abnormal lives today. Our practical lessons in handicrafts are designed to point the way to a means of healthful and joyous development, not to the making of things for their own sake.

But our programme goes further back to the source of the evil. Whatever influence we may be able to exert in that direction will always be used to urge that, from the very first, parents should train their children to make their own toys, to do things for themselves, as far as that is possible, thus laying foundations of character, the divinest craftsmanship of all, in the very playthings of the children. And more and more, as we study the problem of education and its bearings upon life, we are convinced that drawing and manual training are far more important than is yet commonly recognized. The time is coming when to send a boy out into the world without training in some craft will be considered, in the moral judgment of intelligent citizenship, as a parental crime. The influence of the \textit{Craftsman}, therefore, will always be cast on the side of the development of manual training for our boys and girls in the public schools. Whatever we can do to stimulate this side of our educational system we shall do, conscious that by so doing we shall be contributing to the building of character and self-reliance in the nation.