

ROYAL CORTISSOZ
ART AND COMMON SENSE
 CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS, 1913

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I

ART AND COMMON SENSE

THERE are some impenetrable mysteries about a great work of art. The creative impulse behind it, the skill of eye and hand indispensable to its making, its strange garment of style — which is doubly strange because it proclaims both the individuality of the artist and the indefinable tie of distinction binding all the masterpieces of all the arts together in a common glory — who shall designate the origin of these things or dogmatize about the processes whereby genius makes them do its bidding? Genius itself cannot read the riddle. But so long as men care for art they will go on talking about it, as they have been talking about it since art began, for there is no greater happiness than that which is to be found in disinterested talk about the things of the mind. Whether we get any forrader or not — and in spite of the mysteries there is always progress to be made in this elusive subject — depends altogether upon just that point, whether we are disinterested or not. Everything lies in the method of approach and there, I think, is the source of much of the confusion prevalent to-day, the explanation of certain errors characteristic of many

