

IF I MAY

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649379767

If I may by A. A. Milne

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METHUEN & CO. LTD.
36 ESSEX STREET W.C.
LONDON

First Published in 1920

PR
6025
M 631
1920

THESE essays are reprinted, with such alterations and additions as seemed proper, from *The Sphere*, *The Outlook*, *The Daily News*, *The Sunday Express*, and the *American Vanity Fair*.

A. A. M.

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The Case for the Artist



BY an "artist" I mean Shakespeare and Me and Bach and Myself and Velasquez and Phidias, and even You if you have ever written four lines on the sunset in somebody's album, or modelled a Noah's Ark for your little boy in plasticine. Perhaps we have not quite reached the heights where Shakespeare stands, but we are on his track. Shakespeare can be representative of all of us, or Velasquez if you prefer him. One of them shall be President of our United Artists' Federation. Let us, then, consider what place in the scheme of things our federation can claim.

Probably we artists have all been a little modest about ourselves lately. During the war we asked ourselves gloomily what use we were to the State compared with the noble digger of coals, the much-to-be-reverenced maker of boots, and the god-like grower of wheat. Looking at the pictures in the illustrated papers of brawny, half-dressed men pushing about blocks of red-hot iron, we have told ourselves that these heroes were the pillars of society, and that we were just an incidental decoration. It was a wonder that we were allowed to live. And now in these days of strikes, when a single union of manual