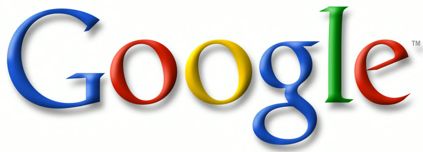

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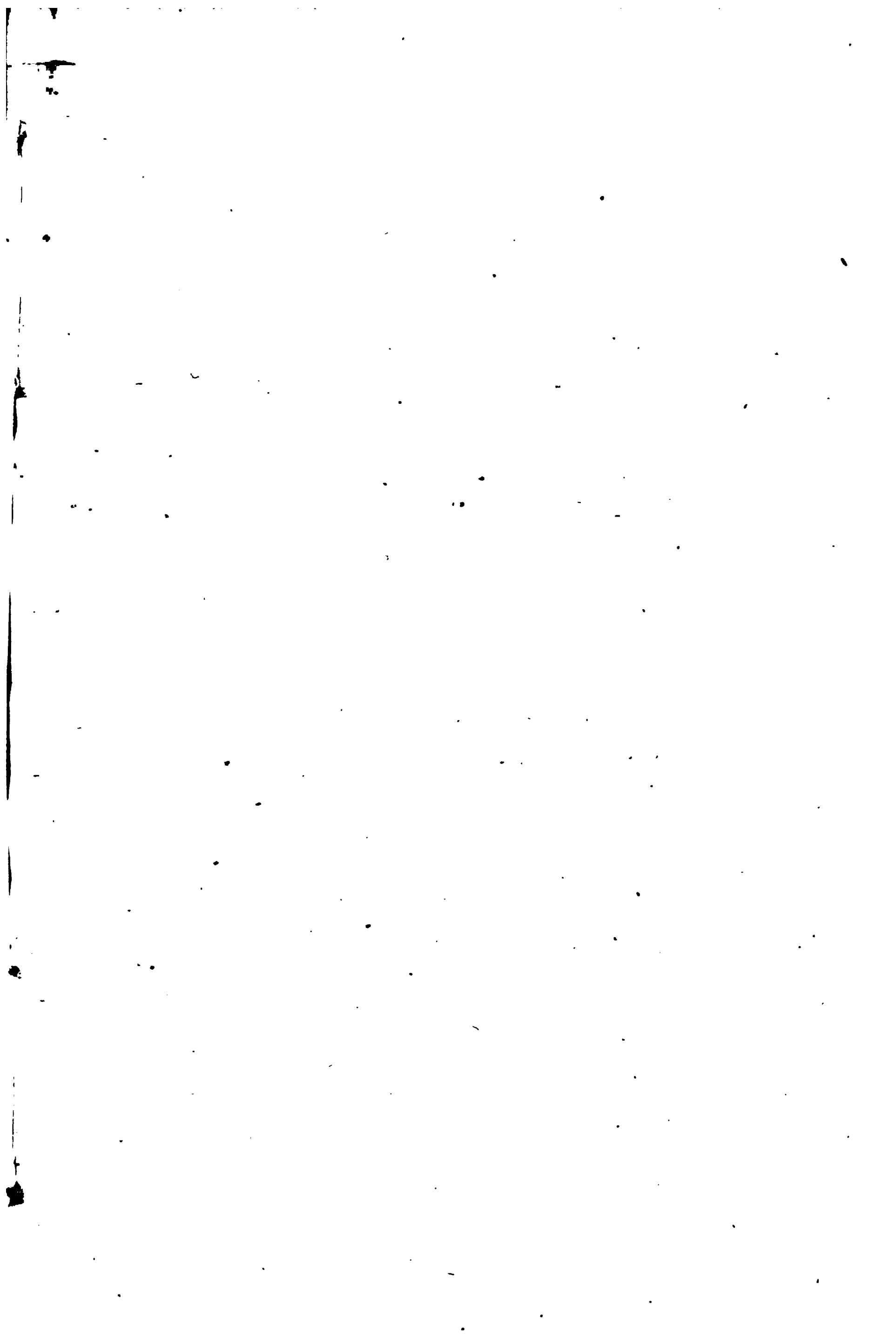

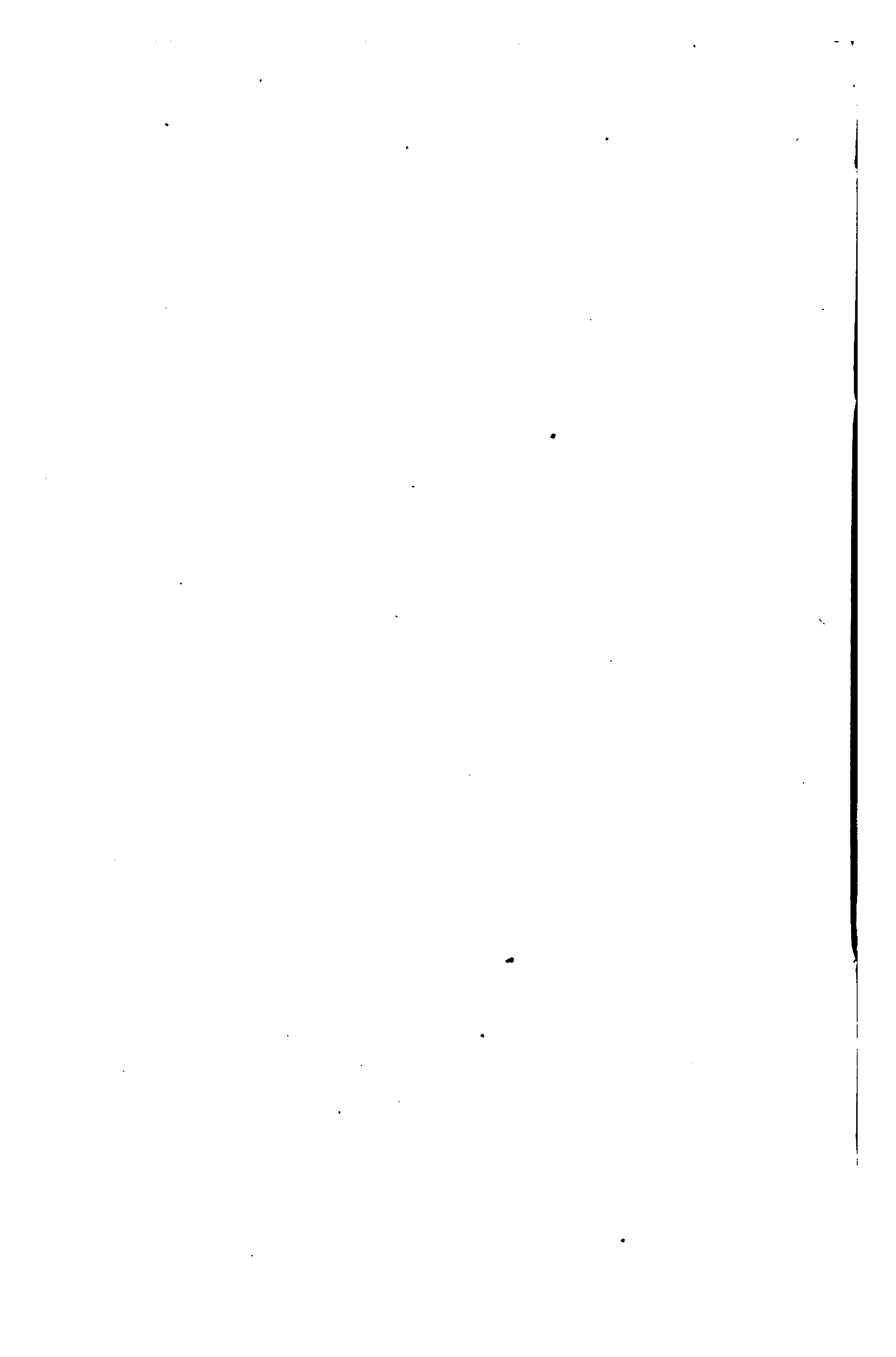

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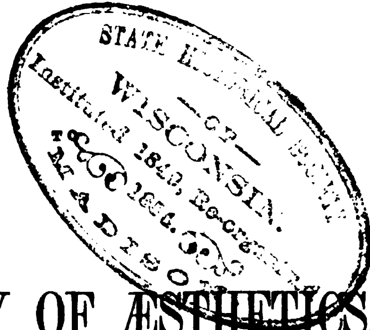

THE STUDY OF ÆSTHETICS.

BY JAMES C. MOFFAT,
PROFESSOR OF GREEK IN THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY, PRINCETON.

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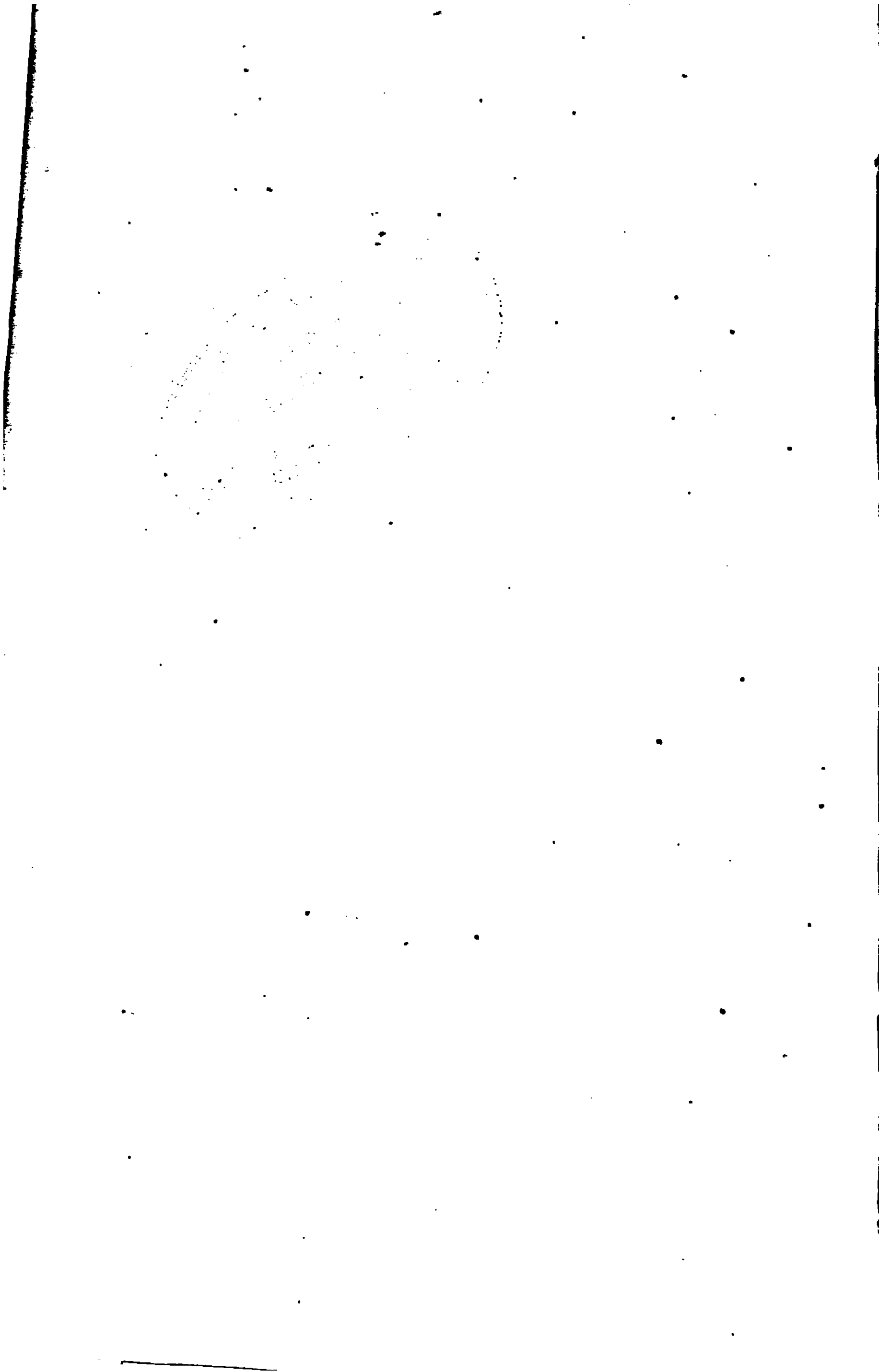

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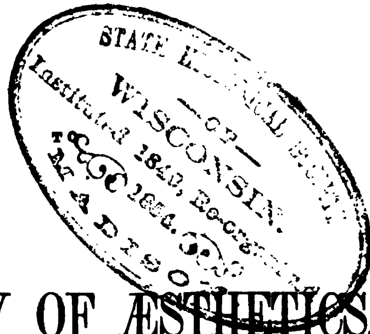

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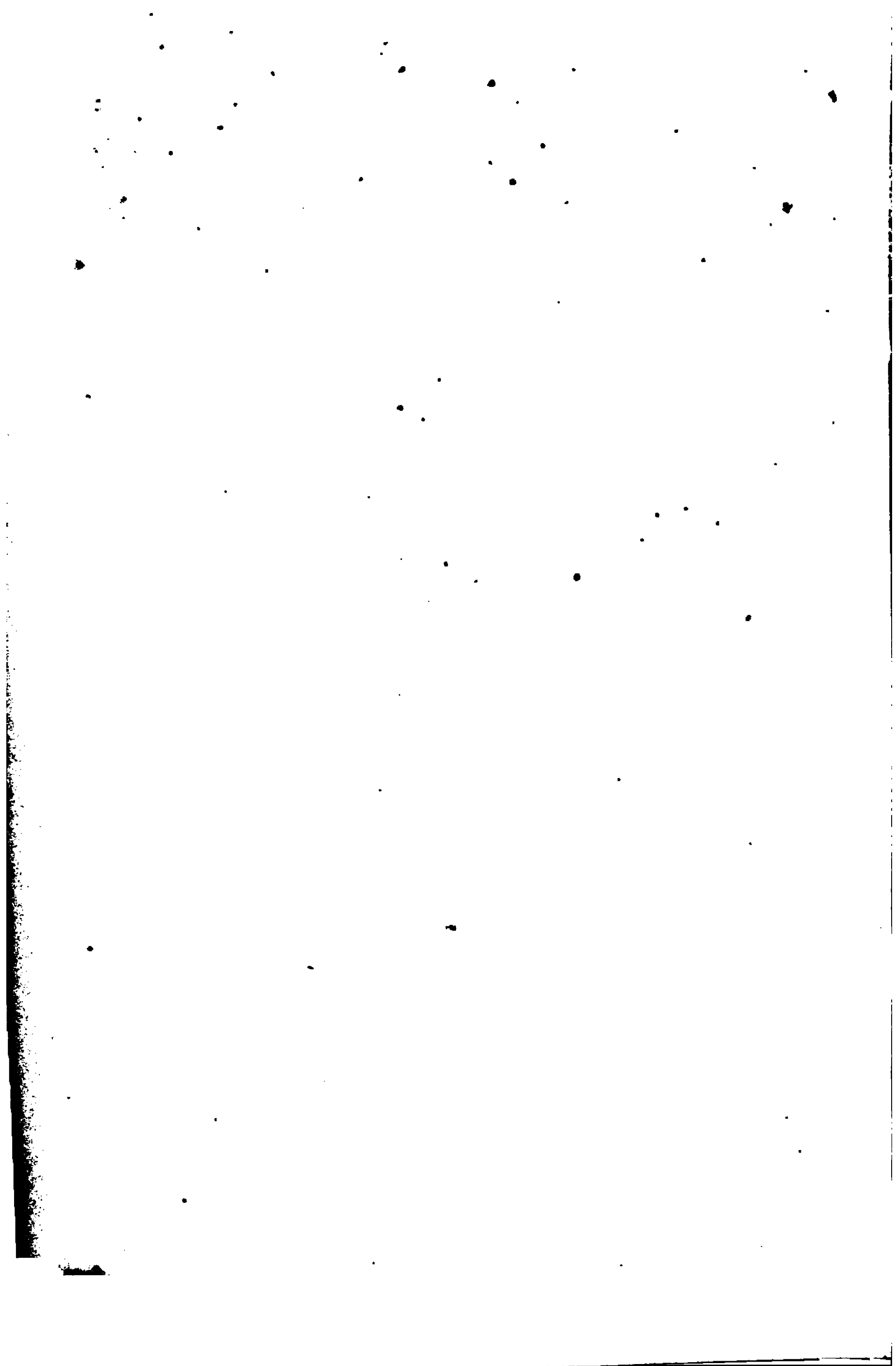

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PREFACE.

The design of the following treatise is to draw a line around that portion of philosophy which pertains to Art, indicating the main sources of the wealth which it contains, and the limits which its cultivators have assigned to themselves.

Human nature is a border land where two great empires meet—that of matter on the one hand, and of mind on the other. Partaking of both, we fluctuate between the two. Essentially invisible spirits, as truly belonging to the unseen now as we shall when the mortal frame is laid aside, we yet have no means of intercommunication, except through matter. What eye ever beheld that being who understands and reasons, and desires and fears? We look upon the signs, and listen to the words he employs, and the body he animates stands before us; but himself is as intangible to all our senses as the inhabitants of heaven. And yet we have the most elaborate animal structure to maintain, and all the wants of animals to meet, to even a greater extent than is common with them.

Human nature is thus involved in a struggle which is two-fold. One pertaining to time, another to eternity; one to comfort here, another to blessedness hereafter; one to the wellbeing of the body, another to the satisfaction of the mind: and, in view of both, it is affected with hopes and fears, pleasures and pains. Now, that region of pleasure, in contemplation alike of the present and the future, is the department of human experience to which the Philosophy of Art is addressed.

To those who deem the provision of material sustenance the highest service that man can perform for his fellow-man, all discussion of this kind must appear an affair of no practical value—a mere waste of words. If, when he had eaten, and drunk, and found clothing, and a comfortable place to dwell in, man could repose in perfect gratification of all the requirements of his nature; if even in the lowliest vale of poverty, he did not feel more urgent wants than hunger and thirst, such materialistic views might be correct; but the domination of the spirit over the body being in man such as it is—prompting, restraining, and controlling, in myriads of cases to the utter disregard of material ease, and frequently to the denial of every bodily gratification, and the very destruction of the mortal frame—he must be poorly acquainted with his race who conceives that it can be adequately provided for after the manner of domestic cattle. What is honor, for example, but one of those dreams, as he calls them? It can not feed a man, nor clothe him, nor make a blade of grass grow, yet for that same intangibility thousands and tens of thousands have sacrificed every material consideration, and even life itself. For some gratification of taste, for the exercise and development of their

intellectual powers, what privations have not men submitted to, and those the very last of their race whom it would be proper to call foolish or visionary. If it would be cruel to ridicule the complaints of hunger in the destitute of daily food, still more so is the contempt which the materialist inflicts upon the craving spirit: inasmuch as the body, at the worst, can only die and have its calls silenced in the grave, but the unhealed ailments of the soul are everlasting, and must be augmented by duration. This fact, it is true, assumes the highest importance in relation to the moral element of humanity, but it also belongs in some degree to every faculty of the immortal nature. Aspirations after truth and beauty, the work of imagination and of reason, as well as of conscience, occupy a large portion of the existence of every human being, and the larger in proportion as the individual is stronger and better; and for eminence therein do men especially choose to hold each other in honor. But for them, indeed, we should have no natural intimation of our superior destiny. If there was nothing in man that led him to desire the spiritual and unseen, he could have no internal assurance of an interest in such things, and most rationally should he, like other brutes, content himself with material existence, and go down to death as hopelessly as they. Those very features of our nature which rise above all temporal utility, and whose products are generally treated with such contemptuous neglect by the political economist, are the stamp of our superiority, the surest mark of the immortal.

Art, in itself considered, is neither moral nor immoral. It belongs to an entirely separate class of things. But its associations are inevitably, in many cases, either for or against the right. And a conviction that intrinsically, and

if rightly studied, it is calculated to sustain the cause of religion, not by a stupid worship of its productions, but by the refinement which it effects upon the mind, tending to a fuller apprehension of the Divine perfections, has had much to do with the present attempt.

None can be more truly aware of the inadequacy of his work than the writer himself; but having in the course of his professional labors been led to make these remarks upon the subject, he gives them to the public in hope that they may contribute some little to the great current of thought which is now flowing in the same direction, and perhaps even by their deficiencies, provoke others, better qualified, to undertake works more completely systematizing, and more fully unfolding the riches of this interesting department of science.

AN INTRODUCTION

TO

THE STUDY OF ÆSTHETICS.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

DEFINITIONS.

THAT faculty of our spiritual nature whereby we combine the similar, and set apart the dissimilar, is our guide alike to the highest achievements of science and to every excellence in the domain of art. Being the representative in mind of a great law pervading and governing matter, in seeking its affinities in outward things, it constitutes the clue by which man is enabled to explore the labyrinths of nature, as well as the rule whereby he may reconstruct after the model of her works. To unfold the native working of that faculty, and to direct its application to the productions of genius, is the object of Æsthetic Science.

The term *Æsthetic* is not indeed perfectly satisfactory, but we have no better. *Theoretic*, which has been proposed and advocated as a substitute, by Mr. Ruskin, is greatly inferior, being etymologically defective, as properly applying only to intellection, and redundant, as embracing much that does not belong to Art, while it is already an English word, appropriated to an entirely different idea. Whatever may be said against *Æsthetic* is due to its derivation, and can have no force to prevent its usage from extending to all the departments of knowledge to which it is applied. Not yet appropriated to any different or shallow sense, there is no reason why its meaning should be confined by a foreign etymology. A word yet unperverted by the popular tongue, and so completely in the hands of science to expand and shape according to her own demands, it would be foolish to reject upon the mere deficiency of its Greek original. What its parent was not to the Greek, it may become to us, as readily as a hundred others have done.

The word *Art* I shall also employ in a sense somewhat wider than its popular acceptation, including under it not only painting, statuary, and other departments ordinarily so designated, but also poetry, oratory, and some other productions of letters. I am aware that many will remonstrate against such a classification, because they have a confused notion of Art as something factitious, and of writing as a faculty that comes by nature. They will properly

enough praise the art of the painter and statuary, and yet never think of the word in connection with literature but as meaning something low and dishonest, and akin to the arts of the gambler, the horse-jockey, and the juggler; thus confounding art with trickery, a vulgar abuse of the word, for which there is no excuse in the necessities of our language.

The word *Art* is properly used both to designate a kind of intellectual effort, and the results thereof. In the first case it means the conception of some worthy end, and the disposal and modification of things to answer the end designed. In the second, it is applied to the works of man, as contradistinguished from those of God, which are called nature. It is also employed, in a more limited manner, to designate the application of scientific principles, and in that case differs from science, as application from investigation. By science, we inquire into, discover, and classify principles; by art, we carry those principles into practice. The principles of science become rules of art. Thus, chemistry is a science, but pharmacy is an art; the art of making lenses has sprung from the science of optics, and the science of anatomy has instructed the art of both the surgeon and the statuary. Art is the end or object of science, and science is the foundation of art, or the fountain from which its rules are drawn. That is but a futile science, unworthy of the name, which is capable of producing no offspring in art, and it is impossible to attain an honorable rank in art without a knowledge

of the corresponding science. They lay an unnecessary and an embarrassing yoke upon their genius, who enter the lists of art without scientific preparation, expecting success in blindly following the works of others, or in confining themselves to an untutored struggle with their own crude notions.

The arts have been variously classified in different ages, and by different writers. By the ancient Romans they were all placed under the heads, *liberal*, and *servile*, from the fact that some had accidentally been cultivated from early time by freemen, and others by slaves. Merchandise and all mechanic arts were placed among the servile; among the liberal were put grammar, rhetoric, logic, and war. In later times, when freemen had turned their attention to handicrafts, and no longer esteemed it disgraceful to be mechanics, the name *servile* was dropped, and *useful* substituted, while *liberal* continued to be applied to the other class. More recently, the terms *fine*, *elegant*, or *ornamental*, have been employed. Thus, we now commonly hear the arts spoken of as the useful, and the fine or ornamental; as if the one class were not useful, and the other not fine or ornamental; while no such distinction is actually regarded in the distribution of them. For example, calico printing and carpet weaving are classed with the useful, while architecture and gardening are assigned to the fine or ornamental; yet there is as much obvious ornament in many calico and carpet patterns as would be tolerated in a house, and

more than would be deemed proper in a garden; and certainly a house is as useful as a carpet. The classification proceeds upon no intrinsic distinction or difference of objects. All the arts are useful, and ornament is not essential to any of them. For convenience in determining the bearing of my own remarks, I shall venture to arrange them in two great classes, according to the leading object contemplated by each. In the first, I would dispose all such as have for their object the improvement or comfort of man's material being, as agriculture, spinning, weaving, medicine, surgery, etc.; in the second, all those whose chief end is the cultivation of the human spirit, as painting, sculpture, music. The former are founded upon the principles of natural philosophy; the latter upon the laws of human feeling. In like manner the artist is he who designs, the mechanic he who executes according to directions. Thus the designs of the Gobelin tapestry are the works of an artist, but the hand that executes them in the loom is generally that of a mechanic. The mere exercise of acquired habits of manipulation, as well as the materiality of the ends contemplated, are mechanic, while every design, to augment the treasures of beauty, and every manual effort for the single purpose of embodying that design is Æsthetic. Those arts, therefore, in which material ends are chiefly contemplated, may with propriety be designated mechanic; while the term Æsthetic would mark all which address the mental taste. In the

latter, an effect upon the feelings is the single and immediate object, whereas in the former, an emotional effect is regarded, if at all, as only an incidental and non-essential thing. Objects of the one class may attain their end without being beautiful, the other only by means of beauty; and any art, no matter what its origin, when it attains such excellence as to regard beauty as a main object, becomes thereby of the Æsthetic class. Consequently, literature, which has been so often excluded, has an eminent claim to a place there; for, while wielding a profound influence over the material well-being of man, it makes its address directly to the spirit, and all its effects upon the body are produced through the medium of the mind.

In the prosecution of this subject, it is proposed to treat in the first place of radical principles; of the mental faculties addressed by art exercised in criticism and in production; and thirdly, of the objects and specific character of the more eminent Æsthetic Arts.

—Ruskin, Modern Painters.

SECTION II.—Fundamental Law of Art.

Inquiry into the nature and sources of Beauty is the most important, as well as the most difficult part of Æsthetic study: the most important, as being concerned with the fundamental law of Art, and the most difficult, because forming a department of mental science in

which the opinions of philosophers have been as diverse as their respective points of view. Among Greeks, the beautiful was subject of frequent discussion; yet they have left more proofs of skill in embodying than in analyzing it. The Romans made little advance in its elucidation, and men of the Mddle Ages left it to slumber with the arts to which it had given birth. Within the last hundred and fifty years, attention has been recalled to this pleasing branch of philosophy, and many essays have been written upon it, especially in the French, English and German languages. Though differing from each other more or less, they all necessarily belong to two classes, of which one considers Beauty as a quality of objects, and the other, belonging entirely to human emotions. Again: of the latter class, some represent it as due to a separate mental power; others resolve it into some other faculty; while a third believe that it springs from an aggregate of emotions. Hutcheson, who wrote in the earlier part of last century, held that Beauty is the result of uniformity amid variety; nor is it difficult to present plausible grounds for such a belief. Hogarth assumed it to be something external, and by a variety of examples endeavored to prove that it consists chiefly in a waving line approaching to the likeness of the letter S. An analogous line, the spiral, he designates the line of grace. The features of animal and vegetable bodies, and the varieties of the natural landscape, furnish most of his proofs and illustrations. His theory

affects to some extent his own works, and in regard to the examples employed is certainly correct, but comes far short of explaining the whole subject; or in other words, of ascertaining the immediate antecedents of Beauty. Professor Gerard perceived that the beautiful could not be confined to forms, much less to forms of any given outline, and therefore wrote of it as being of different classes, and producing pleasure by different principles of human nature. To some extent this view is also correct, but, although more comprehensive than that of either Hutcheson or Hogarth, comes equally far short of the true point of inquiry.

To the same head may also be referred the theories of Winkelman and Sir Joshua Reynolds. Burke concludes that Beauty is, for the greater part, some quality of bodies acting mechanically upon the mind by the intervention of the senses, and then specifies some of those qualities: such as smallness, smoothness, gradual variation, and delicacy. Augustine resolved the pleasures of Taste into that which springs from the recognition of order and design; Hume, into the sense of ability; and Diderot attributed them to the perception of relation. Reid conceived that Beauty originally dwells in the moral and intellectual perfections of the mind, and that hence the notice of it in other things is derived. According to Alison, whatever excites the imagination to pursue a train of recollections of previously experienced moral pleasure is beautiful, and Beauty is nothing but that delightful

reminiscence. This theory is more comprehensive than any of the preceding, and is advocated with eminent elegance of style and manner. He has been followed by Knight and Jeffrey: the former varying from his master by advocating the intrinsic beauty of certain colors, and the latter by rejecting the necessity of a train of suggestions, but neither contributing any improvement to the theory; and the one immediate cause which must be the antecedent of the one effect, is left undefined by all of them. Jeffrey's essay sets out with great clearness, precision, and assurance, but at the most important stage becomes an utter jumble of reiterated contradictions, confounding beauty with pleasure, and emotion with sensation, advocating that beauty is only reflected emotion, that there is no unity in it, that is, of the same kind as the original emotion, and consequently, that what we call beauty is nothing but an exercise of memory. He grants that some sensations are pleasant, and then denies that any are pleasant; says expressly that one taste is as good as another; and having failed to establish any general law, is obliged to confess that a Dutch *lust haus*, painted all over with every color of the rainbow, is as *truly* beautiful as the finest work of art. Were it not that his work has demonstrated the weakness of the theory, we could have wished that he had saved himself trouble by saying at once, there is no beauty; that the word is only another name for the recollection of anything pleasant, and that there is

nothing pleasant, except what one has found to be pleasant on a former occasion—something like telling a young lady that she has no chance of getting married until she is a widow. Dugald Stewart, in despair of ascertaining any common principle of beauty, concluded that it is only a word, a common name, whereby we designate many things totally unlike.

Brown took a most important step in the investigation, by recognizing one emotion, to which all varieties of beautiful objects are referred.

The practical objection to most of these and other theories on the subject lies in the fact, that they fail of presenting a science competent to guide and sustain the purpose of the artist through the whole field of his labor. They are all defective, exceedingly. Of what use is it to an artist to be told, for instance, that a curve line is beautiful, if his art has nothing to do with lines; or that a combination of uniformity and variety is beauty, if left uninstructed in the proportions of that combination; or that littleness is beauty, when perhaps he is an architect, engaged to build a large and beautiful house; or to be taken out into the mid ocean of speculation, if he is left there without rudder or compass?

There is, however, one encouraging feature presented by the common language of men, and by even the advocates of conflicting theory, when their theory is not before their eyes, in the remarkable unanimity regarding a great number of objects, that, however

they come to be so, they are beautiful. The examples adduced in one essay are, in the main, the same employed in all others, however different the doctrines they advocate. Though many refuse to grant that beauty is a quality of the external world, yet none will deny that a green meadow in spring is a beautiful object, nor that its color, for some reason or other, is an ingredient going to make up its character as such. Certain outlines, as the circle, the ellipse, the waving curve, and the perfectly straight line, are also said to be beautiful; similar is the verdict upon many sounds and intervals of sound, as the first, third, and fifth of the scale, and the relations between them; upon certain shapes, a fine human figure, for example; upon such proportion of parts as appears in the structure of Grecian temples; upon certain relations of numbers; upon the perception of eminent utility; upon clear views of truth; upon noble, generous, or tender emotions. Now, why do all critics grant that these things are beautiful? although some have difficulty to reconcile the acknowledgment with their theories! Evidently because compelled by consciousness, and because they know the world in general has the same consciousness, which it would be fruitless to contradict.

It is utterly futile to attempt to resolve this great fact into a figurative usage, or, rather, objectless perversion of an English word. For the same objects are characterized by the corresponding epithet in all the languages of civilized man. The Greeks called them

Kala, the Romans *pulchra*, the French *beaux*, and so on, all applying to the same things their respective words of the same meaning as the English word beautiful. The matter does not depend upon the accidents of any language, but enjoys the assent of all. It must, therefore, be due to the universal observation of some reality connected with the perception of all these objects. For it is not possible that the universal language of man should be false to the consciousness of man. If it should be advanced that the common name represents only the common feature of pleasureableness, the reply is obvious, that we already have a full supply of words for that purpose. We speak of pleasure, and pleasureable, and pleasant things, and the pleasant in things, and of the pleasant and the beautiful, as expressing different conceptions, and of the things to which they refer as frequently standing toward each other in the relation of cause and effect. The word beauty must represent something which occurs to the mind of man as a reality, however little we may have succeeded in defining it to each other as such. It is either some faculty of mind, common to all those thinkers, or some quality of things, common to all the specimens mentioned. But it cannot be the existence of any common quality in the objects. For what quality is common to the green of the fields, the outline of a circle, the human figure, the proportions of arithmetic, the ideas of utility, of truth, and the emotions of gratitude and love! If not a quality of the objects, then it must be

some condition of the sentient being, an emotion of the observing mind.

Taking this conclusion to be correct, we shall use the word beauty to mean an emotion; beautiful, to characterize an object calculated to awaken the emotion; and *the beautiful* shall be employed to designate the immediate antecedent of the emotion, whatever it may be—the unknown quantity proposed for solution.

Sensation takes cognizance of the properties of external things; but emotion always follows an intellectual state of perception or conception. The operation of perception and sensation is between the mind and the external world; but the intercourse of conception and emotion is entirely within the mind.

Now, the points demanding elucidation appear to be these: the peculiar nature of the emotion called beauty; what is its immediate intellectual antecedent; how it becomes to be connected with such a variety of objects; what is the particular feature contemplated in each class of objects; and what practical rules can be obtained.

—Lessing's Laocoon.

CHAPTER II.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EMOTION OF BEAUTY.

It does not belong to philosophy to account for the fact of existence in any part of nature. The properties and relations of things are subject to inquiry, but existence is the bottom upon which our sounding lead must rest, and beyond which it can not go. For the fact of an emotion which we call beauty, no reason can be assigned save the Creator's will; and any one may recognize and distinguish it from all other feelings, by brief consultation with his own heart. Not that all are endued with the same susceptibility, for there is the greatest diversity; but it is difficult to conceive of any human being who has not experienced it in some degree, so as to recognize its peculiar features when mentioned.

Beauty is a highly pleasurable emotion, yet by no means to be confounded with pleasure. There are pleasures which are turbulent, stormy, gross; but none such receive from popular language the honor of this name. A beautiful object may at first excite by the surprise attendant on novelty; but, when contemplated

in its own proper and unmingled light, the state to which it disposes the observer is that of repose—a state in which imagination wanders, uncommanded, from the agreeable impressions of the sense to all the associations which they recall, selecting from the most diversified experiences a wealth of homogeneous delight. Beauty, though a principle of great power in the human spirit, is calm and gentle in its operations. Though near of kindred to sublimity, the difference between them furnishes enough of contrast to aid in the description of both. They agree in conferring a pure and elevated delight, the noblest handmaid of religion; but while the one is quiet, the other is bold; the one soothing, the other exciting. Beauty leads in her train admiration and love; sublimity is attended by wonder, reverence, and awe. Nor is the difference of their effect upon the physical man less distinguishable. Sublimity produces a tension of the muscles, and nervous excitement, which soon wears out the subject of it. Such was the grandeur of conception and style of the celebrated Robert Hall, that often his audience unconsciously arose from their seats; and when Massilon, preaching on the fewness of the elect, pictured the entrance of the Saviour to judgment, and the separation of the righteous from the wicked, the whole assembly arose simultaneously, in deep and solemn silence. But not even Hall or Massilon could have maintained that degree of excitement beyond a brief period. The mortal frame can not long endure such overpowering

emotion. The effect of beauty, on the other hand, is to relax the muscles and incline the body to quiescence. The visitor to Lake Como or Geneva may on other occasions be roused to energy in proclaiming their perfections, but in presence of the objects of his admiration, he prefers to remain at rest, to gaze in silence, and enjoy the contemplation, for hours. Prolonged meditation produces no exhaustion, being itself conducive to tranquillity, and calculated to calm all the troubles of the spirit. Or, to recur to the more common experience of him who in hours of reverie yields to the control of feelings arising in the course of unrestrained suggestion, while visions of beauty pass before his imagination, he naturally seeks an attitude of rest, and, for the period of their duration, continues forgetful alike of motion and the flight of time; but should a sublime idea flash upon him, the effect is immediately apparent in a more erect attitude, if he does not even bound to his feet and stride across his room, to aid, as it were, in expressing an emotion which is too great for him. In a few moments the excitement has passed away, and he sinks into quiet contemplation of the resultant beauty, which is always the ultimate effect of an object truly sublime. So mirth, or grief, or joy, or surprise, may prompt to activity; but when they result in beauty, the mind naturally subsides into repose.

Hence, whatever other excellence a work of art may have, without the element of repose it is greatly

defective: not that it must necessarily embody an attitude of rest; but such is the most desirable spiritual effect. How profoundly was this felt by the great Athenian sculptor, whom Aristotle designated skillful in beauty, when he conceived the immortal tranquillity of those works which stamped the generic character upon the gods of Greece.

"Motion may be beautiful, as well as rest; but it must be such as to leave upon the observing mind no impress of laborious effort. There are valuable ends to be attained by the representation of action; but that pleasure can not be other than imperfect, which arises from the study of a Discobolus arrested in the act of throwing his quoit, or of a boxer stretching out his fist to all eternity. Whatever images of action or endurance a work may contain, in order to the effect of beauty, they must all harmonize in the expression of one idea, on which the spirit can dwell with satisfaction."

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CHAPTER III.

OF THE BEAUTIFUL.

Upon noting carefully the operation of the senses, it will be found that there are some objects which pain the organs, and others that are productive of gratification. A sudden glare of light thrown upon the eye, is productive of acute suffering; also, rapid alternations of bright light and deep darkness; so piercing and jarring sounds, as intimated by the very names applied to them, are painful; while a mild, steady light is grateful to the eye, and soft, pure, and distinct sounds to the ear. A very pungent taste hurts the tongue and palate, and certain smells the nostrils, and I need not add, that there are substances which pain the surface of the body; while on the other hand, there are many tastes, smells, and objects of touch, conducive to the comfort of their respective organs, and consequently pleasant. Mankind, in the common use of language, have declared that such are not beauty and ugliness, but merely pleasure and pain. They are only sensations: and we have seen already, that beauty can not be a sensation. But all our acquaintance with

the external world has been made through the senses. Consequently, our notions of it must be associated, in greater or less degree, with the gratification or pain of the organs whereby they have been admitted. In many cases, this pain or gratification is so slight, as to form a very feeble item of consciousness, of little or no practical effect. But in others, the pathological nature of the sensation is distinctly perceived the moment that attention is turned to it, and others even compel the interest of the whole thinking being. Many of our ideas of the external world are associated in the mind with distinct conceptions of pain or pleasure. These pains and pleasures, I have said, are not beauty and its opposite, neither does the common understanding of men so esteem them; but when the mind perceives a certain class of sensations to be pleasurable, it immediately enjoys a higher delight from the recognition of that conduciveness to its own well being. A person is often heard to remark of an article of food, that he likes it, because its taste is pleasant to him; or of a sound, that he dislikes it, because it is grating to his ears; expressions distinctly referring to a consciousness, that liking and disliking are secondary states of mind, and subsequent to a perception of the nature of the sensations. Another remark, no less common, that a green field is beautiful, for the eye can rest upon it with such pleasure and refreshment that it never tires of the sight, is quite as plain an assertion of the individual consciousness that the emotion of beauty is

subsequent to a perception of the nature of the sensation. Such, indeed, is our habit of speaking, concerning the emotión, as far as attendant upon any object of sense. It is both common and natural for all persons, those who have no idea of philosophy, and make no pretension to it, as truly as those who do, to assign reasons for thinking such objects beautiful. A young lady will exclaim at sight of a beautiful flower, and immediately, by way of expressing and explaining her emotion, dilate upon the softness or brilliancy of its colors, the smoothness of its petals, the delicacy of its outlines, and the sweetness of its fragrance: thus instinctively confessing that her feeling of its beauty results from her perception of those pleasant sensations. Such is not the case in regard to the sensations themselves; none but a philosophic mind ever thinks of accounting for them. We simply say that they pain or they please, they hurt or they gratify. Blue is grateful to the eye; a true fifth is pleasant to the ear; mignonette yields a delicious fragrance; honey is sweet; and the petals of the rose are pleasant to the touch: but why they are so we never add, unless when disposed to philosophise, and then find it no easy matter. We never instinctively give an account of why we have those feelings. But as soon as we maintain that any of these things are beautiful, then we naturally assign as a reason, some of the sensations they produce. The chord of the fifth is beautiful, because it is pleasant to the ear. A soft blue is beautiful, because it is pleasant to the eye.

The sensation is not confounded with the emotion; but the former, or rather a recognition of the former, is assigned as the cause of the latter. It is because I perceive a color to be pleasant, that I feel it to be beautiful. There are several steps in this mental process; the enjoyment of the sensation, the perception of the relation between the object and that enjoyment, a decision of the judgment that the object is calculated to produce such pleasure, and lastly, the emotion of beauty. So far then, I think we may conclude that the immediate antecedent of beauty is an intellectual state of mind; namely, a perception of the relation between primary pleasure and certain things suited to produce it. Again, there are pleasurable, intellectual, and moral states of mind, as the approbation of conscience, the perception of truth, the recognition of right, and attachments formed by habit, none of which are beauty, though all result in it. We do not say of the pleasure arising from following a clear train of evidence, that it is beauty, although we call its cause beautiful. So we speak of an eminently wise decision, of a pure and noble action, of an ingenious invention, as beautiful, although we do not confound the pleasure of justice, of generosity, or invention, with beauty. But when the mind has experienced these pleasures, and their causes, it immediately enjoys the ultimate emotion. On the other hand, if, in the contemplation of any of these things, there occurs an impediment to the primary pleasure, or any shortcoming of the object that should cause it, the

emotion of beauty will not follow, because the mind now perceives a want of capacity to create the necessary antecedent pleasure; and with this may be joined, in the case of known objects, disappointments: while the new may fail of producing the emotion, because their effects are yet unknown.

The elements of sensation and of emotion are few. But we combine the one with the other, associating external things with our feelings, and attributing our feelings to external things, and frequently even decompounding them, until the pleasures and pains of taste become innumerable, and it is difficult to return, for a moment, to the simple elements. Associations accumulate upon our primary feelings, as the sand of the desert upon the temples of Egypt, and when we would throw them off, they continually roll back again, and hardly leave us time to read the old inscription beneath; or, like the harmony of colors, in nature, where every tree, and bough, and leaf, every item of wood and lawn, borrows so much from all the rest, that it is difficult to say what proportion of the general effect is due to each of the primary tints, or to point out a place where a simple color appears. But no matter what tie unites a pleasurable feeling with its antecedent, the experience of the senses, or the accidents of association, to the mind that perceives the relation, it becomes a source of beauty. And consequently, just as truly as men may be mistaken in judging of the relations of things, may they err in matters of taste.

The young British officer in India, who supposed himself bitten by a cobra capello, was overwhelmed for a time by the dread of sudden death; but finding himself mistaken as to the fact, and that the reptile which had alarmed him was perfectly innocuous, became immediately ashamed of measures which would have been nothing more than proper had his first belief been correct. So one may be delighted with an object which afterward he finds is not at all calculated to give the pleasure he had imputed to it. He of course changes his mind. This last opinion is correct, his former was not. The emotion will always come in the right place, but the preceding judgment may be wrong, and the emotion brought up in view of a false object; consequently, the capacities of men for enjoying and correctly judging of the beautiful must be exceedingly various, although one end is contemplated by all. The finer a person's senses are, the larger his grasp of mind, the more sensitive his feelings, the sounder his judgment, and the more extensive his knowledge, the greater and truer will be his stores of Æsthetic delight; while, on the other hand, those of duller senses, of narrow intellect, obtuse feelings, wavering judgment, and little imagination and knowledge, may seem to be utterly devoid of it. Still, even in the humblest intellect, whenever the emotion appears, it will be found in the same place, the subsequent of a judgment upon the fitness of something to give primary pleasure.

CHAPTER IV.

ONE EFFECT FROM APPARENTLY MANY CAUSES.

If the preceding remarks are just, the difficulty which many have experienced in dealing with the vast diversity in the objects of beauty, must be entirely obviated. Viewed through this lens, what was formerly nebulous is resolved into a number of bright points, all directing their rays to one common center. For many objects by different means are found to be productive of pleasurable feelings, feelings which are of different orders, and agree only in being pleasurable. And beauty, contemplating only the relation between the mental state and the object which causes it, may succeed the observation of a great diversity of things. Pleasant is the gratification of the love of order; and contemplation of things adapted to that end, if unimpeded by other considerations, is invariably followed by the emotion of beauty. A perception of eminent utility has the same subsequent, because there is a pleasure in seeing a thing answer the end for which it was made; and objects of instinctive love, because of their association with an agreeable feeling. And if

the first perception of an emotion as pleasant becomes the antecedent of beauty, the recollection of that emotion must be attended by the same subsequent. Or, something in itself indifferent, or even disagreeable, may be followed by the feeling of beauty, from association with pleasant things. In all these examples, and in all others that I can conceive of, where beauty exists, it will be found to be the same, and in the same immediate connection. The invariable subsequent of the same antecedent, or, in other words, one effect of one cause. For though pleasures are different, and their immediate antecedents different, the perception of the relation existing between the pleasure and its cause is the same intellectual operation in all cases, and followed by the same kind of delight. So hope and fear are also feelings following a perception of relations existing between the human spirit and objects of its cognizance. Fear of the sword, fear of rattlesnakes, fear of a steamboat explosion, and fear of ghosts, are not different emotions, although arising in view of very different objects and very different sensations. Sensation is the portal by which visitors from the external world are admitted to the mind, and emotion is the result of the judgment formed upon their character. This mental process, in many cases, hardly occupies an appreciable duration; in others, it involves lengthened observation, reflection, and comparison.

Is, then, all we call pleasure productive of beauty? Evidently not. Those turbulent pleasures, which excite and disturb, are inconsistent with what is observed of the distinctive features of beauty, and, in experience, are not found to produce it; or at most, in a feeble degree. The turbulent and exciting features of pleasure must be removed, and a state induced upon which the mind can repose. It must be a pleasure conducing to calm the spirit, one whose recurrence can be contemplated without any alloy of agitation or disapproval. The ingredient entering into the composition of its antecedents must be harmonious. Any one discordant with the tone of the rest will ruin the general effect. But there is in almost all our emotions a degree which is pleasing. Even in grief there is a strange deep gratification, which sympathy or association sometimes revives, without its original attendant, pain. For the healthy memory is blessed with the faculty of retaining pleasures longer than pains. And that emotion in which pain was originally predominant, is frequently recalled as only a sober, sadder joy.

CHAPTER V.

SENSATIONS MINISTERING TO BEAUTY.

If beauty then is an ultimate emotion, to which there are many avenues, it will not be enough for either critic or artist to know the end, without knowing also the paths by which it is to be reached. Let us therefore, in the next place, endeavor to scrutinize more particularly the different classes of pleasures which minister to beauty, with the view of securing a foundation of practical rules. And to this end, we must confine our attention to the primary pleasures, and the objects that produce them.

Among objects of sensation, the most important, in an æsthetic point of view, are those of sight and hearing, these two senses being the most active and copious reporters to the mind. The former is cognizant of colors and outlines, and by aid of touch, with shapes, and by other helps, with distance, motion and direction; all of which are abundant sources of pleasure. All colors being modifications of light, certainly enter the eye, and having penetrated several of its materials, are painted upon the retina. Here is a distinct physical

connection with the object of the sense, which can not exist without affecting the organ, either to its comfort or discomfort, in many cases. The mind, so quick to perceive all the affections of its sentient dominion, must, together with the modification of light, apprehend also the state of the organ by which it entered. When again, the same color is observed, the same pain or pleasure is recalled, and being actually repeated in greater or less degree, is enforced upon the mind until the very conception of the color calls up the recollection of its attendant pleasure or pain. The colors most agreeable to the structure of the eye, absolutely considered, are the perfectly pure primitive colors, as they are separated from the rays of the sun by a prism. Perhaps there is no healthy eye to which they fail to be agreeable. A fact which, though it will be denied by the followers of Alison and Jeffrey, is asserted by the general voice of mankind, and by the slaves of theory themselves, when not constantly guarding their words in view of their theory. Whenever these colors appear in nature, in the plumage of birds, in the cleavage of minerals, in the rainbow, or on the evening sky, they are hailed as causes of delight. But it would not be consistent with the infinite profusion of nature to limit her beauties to any given number. The few primary colors are combined into an endless diversity, not all to be characterized as beautiful or indifferent. This remark of colors will apply also to outlines, inasmuch as they must be drawn in some modification of light.

But in addition, there is some distance to be followed by the motion of the eye, which will be pleasant or not, according as it coincides with the natural and easy motion of the organ, or not. A circle, for example, is pleasing, the eye following with ease its course, pursuing invariably the same direction until it returns into itself and the whole is complete. Any perfect curve, following one law through its whole extent, is agreeable; and so is a perfectly straight line, in itself considered. A square is ungainly, but a quadrangle, especially that in which the length is about twice the breadth, is more pleasing; though when considered in itself, and not in the light of some purpose to be accomplished by it, not to be compared with a regular curve. For, though the eye soon detects its principle, and adapts itself thereto, yet its lines are not the continuation of the same direction, and the motion of the eye is several times changed in following it. In some cases this quality of the angle and correspondence of opposite lines, is pleasing. Association will enhance or counteract according to circumstances; but what I now speak of is the primary sensation alone.

Perhaps, for the reason already assigned, the most beautiful of all curves is that which deviates but slightly from a straight line, or that which is produced by waving an extended cord. The ellipse and parabola are both more agreeable than the circle. Indeed in the finer productions of Grecian architecture, the circle seldom appears in any of the moldings, but instead of it the

spiral, parabola, ellipse, or other curves of easier outline.

Motion in a regular curve, or straight line, is for the same reason most agreeable to the eye. Indeed, the force of the primary pleasure could be more satisfactorily illustrated under this head than the former; for the physical effects of different kinds of motion, and motion in certain directions, are more marked than those of lines.

These simple elements, though originally few, are in nature continually recurring, combined and modified into a thousand sources of delight. We find them in the winding course and motion of streams, in the changing light upon their waters, now mirror-like repeating all the features of earth and sky above them; now dark and solid as steel, and again curved into the blending light and shade of waves; in the general outlines of the plumy forest, as well as in every tree, which repays the studious eye with its own lines and hues of beauty; in every leaf that moves to the breath of spring; in the design of the landscape diversified by hill and dale, by rolling champaign, extended plain, and far blue mountain, by a variety and multitude of curve and color, defying imitation; in the shapes and tints of clouds, infinitely diversified, and changing without end; in the colors of the sky, from the deep azure of night to the molten gold that glows around the sun; in the chaste soft light of stars, and the gladder beams of day; throughout the vast domain of nature we are

unceasingly meeting with such elements, and the pleasing results of their harmonious combination. They appear alike in calm and storm. The snowy foam and the bold curve of the breaking or recoiling wave, the trees bending in the gale, the piled clouds flying across the heavens, the gorgeous masses of thunder cloud, and the wildest fury of nature, present also features which, viewed in the light of the sensations they produce, become beautiful. For although repose is a feature of beauty, it is not necessarily such of beautiful things; it is of the observing spirit, not necessarily of the object observed. Irregularity and ugliness appear indeed in nature, but her law is beauty, from which she departs occasionally only by way of enhancing its value. And many things which are not beautiful from this cause, the Author of Nature has made such to our hearts by association with our moral feelings. Of all artists, but especially the painter and sculptor, these sources of the beautiful in material things demand the most careful study—study which cannot be too extensive or minute. In the sensations produced by the simple sounds and intervals constituting the basis of music, we are as truly conscious of pleasure as in any moral feeling with which they may be associated. Sounds which are distinctly perceived to be at variance with that system, we reject as painful, without the slightest allowance for any association. No association whatever can make an obvious discord beautiful, or, in other words, can make the sensation of discord pleasant.

Infinite as is her variety, nature is delicately sparing of discordant sounds. Walk out into the fields in a summer evening, and listen to the thousand voices raised in the happiness of animated nature: you will find them blended together in perfect harmony. Accidents, the sounds of human labor, may introduce a discord, but the native voices, though infinitely numerous, flow altogether in a clear rippling ocean of music. Even inanimate sounds are harmonized by the same law of a benevolent Creator; and the little stream that murmurs by, or the hoarser waterfall, chime sweetly in tune with the living sounds. Those which are originally harsher, are often softened by the distance they have come, the intervening space purifying them from their discordant ingredients, as if the atmosphere itself were constructed with a view to musical effect. So of the choir which fills the woods with the more varied notes of a morning in spring; all are found to be most truly in accordance with the principles of music. And so also of every other sound in nature which we call beautiful. The beautiful in sounds can be produced only by obedience to these laws, which cannot be said to depend in any degree upon association, because they are absolute and invariable, can be calculated in figures, and measured by the length and tension of a cord. The associations of men are infinitely varied, yet all who enjoy music, enjoy it on the same principle. Some may have less quickness to perceive sounds than others, but what they do perceive of melody pleases them, and what they

distinctly perceive of discord, displeases, and often in defiance of association.

Many songs, wedded in memory with the days of our childhood and youth, when we heard them sung by plain, rough voices, still move our affections when sung by the same voices, for the associations atone, to some extent, for the defects of the singing. But let a more skillful musician, of sweet and flexible voice, take up the air and develop its pure music, and at once we recognise superior beauty, though the plain voice has all the advantages of association, and the fine one relies solely upon the truth of musical science.

Nor is the musical faculty anything unique in human nature. It is perfectly in accordance with the whole tendency of the mind, which seeks and seizes upon the system of nature, finding its affinity therewith, and never can be satisfied in combining what it perceives to be heterogeneous elements. It is only the expression by the ear of that which is more variously expressed by the eye, uttered in their own feebler voices by the other senses, and embodied in the harmony of all the powers of the thinking being.

The pleasures of the other senses are not so directly and extensively the ministers of beauty, because they are more concerned in affairs of the body than of the spirit; but when we remember that they must pass through the alembic of the mind before they come to us in art, we shall find no reason for excluding their contributions from the treasury of delight. Although

we do not apply the term beautiful to the immediate objects of physical taste, we may have the conception of a pleasant taste brought in such a connection as to contribute to beauty, and speak as properly of the beauty of Lamb's "Dissertation on roast pig," as of Wordsworth's "Intimations of Immortality." In the case of touch, taste, and smelling, it cannot be necessary to prove that the pleasure they communicate originates in the real gratification of the organs. For I suppose that none will deny it. And, as a general rule, the better the article is calculated to effect its primary purpose of sustaining the healthy development of the sentient being, the greater is the gratification of the senses by which it is received.

Thus, all these primary pleasures and pains are set by the Creator at the various gates by which the nourishment for mind and body is received, that they may judge of what is conducive to the well being of both, may reject the evil, and choose the good; while beauty is an emotion subsequent to a perception of the latter, and a higher reward of its attainment.

CHAPTER VI.

INTELLECTIONS MINISTERING TO BEAUTY—TRUTH.

But the mind is not only capable of receiving impressions from the external world, it is the owner of stores within itself, which, if not more numerous, are of a higher and more enduring kind. From its own nature spring its highest enjoyments and most humbling afflictions; all the delights of sense are but childish toys, till taken up by the mind, and woven into the web of its own creation.

By combination with its hopes and fears, its warm emotions and clear conceptions of power, of relations, and of truth, the humbler pleasures of the bodily sense acquire a dignity which can never be their own. To this nobler part of consciousness, the art of literature addresses itself most immediately, employing the former as but the channels and signs, whereby impressions of the external world are to be communicated; but even those arts which must submit to the external senses, aim to reach beyond them, and to take hold upon a nobler approbation, accounting it their proudest achievement to have passed the gates of sensation, and

to have their merits acknowledged in the presence of the pure intellect. While they, however, have to struggle toward this coveted distinction by indirect and dubious means, literature claims the right of immediate presentation and hearing, both in her own name, and as the interpreter of the whole, employing a system of signs, which to the senses are as idle air, and are really meaningless, except as symbols to address the understanding. To literature, the materials of sensation are valuable as stone and mortar to the architect; but that which animates a whole production with beauty, must be drawn from the same spiritual source to which it aspires.

Truth, in every form, when clearly seen, is attended with delight. Why, it would be vain to enquire. The process, from beginning to end, is within the train of the mind's own condition, and in obedience to the laws of its organization, for which the only cause that can be assigned, is the voice of Him who called it into being.

There are no degrees of truth; but many in the approach to it. The mind may fail to descry it, and rest instead upon the cloudy form of error; or, it may be dimly perceived through an obscuring and deceitful medium, or portions may appear, gleams bright but partial may break forth, tending only to gild the clouds through which they pass, and give a plausibility and bolder direction to falsehood. Such conditions give occasion to various kinds and degrees of emotion in the

course of the search for truth, but when it beams forth in its own unclouded light, there is only one which the Creator has judged worthy to attend upon its perception. The grandeur of a truth may call forth sublimity, its unexpectedness may excite mirth, its revelations may occasionally be painful or terrible; but truth seen by itself, and obstructed from any such secondary considerations, is invariably followed by delight, which ministers to beauty. Observe the progress of the mind in arriving at the disclosure of truth, contained in a mathematical demonstration. At first all is dark, and consequently repulsive, except so far as expectation has prepared the way for pleasure. The first steps are taken with toil and little satisfaction, but suddenly one little ray of light breaks forth—you are cheered, and proceed with more alacrity. Another, and again another; each one perhaps the result of long thinking; but coming when it does come, like a flash of lightning, till the whole begins to brighten up as when the clouds are breaking away from before the disk of the sun, and suddenly, in all its clearness, the truth of the proposition beams upon you. That result has been reached by a series of efforts, each one of which admitted you to a nearer view; first dim intimations were received that truth was thus to be discovered; then partial glimpses, before a full view could be obtained; but there was no step in your course at which that truth existed in less degree than it did when you came to a full perception of it.

Truth is of independent existence, and not resulting from the organization of the mind which perceives it. The apprehension and appreciation of it may proceed slowly, on account of the obstacles obstructing human view; but when these are removed, it stands forth the same to all. Unlike emotion, which may exist in different degrees in different individuals, although the effect of the same cause, truth is invariably the same to all minds, and needs only to be distinctly revealed, to command the assent of all.

For the same reason, namely, that truth is independent of the mind of man, and of everlasting unchangeable existence, it comes upon the mind by flashes. As soon as you remove the obstacle, truth pours in its light. The only gradation is that of the steps by which the obstacles are removed. And as no truth can be apprehended, though suspicions of its existence may be acquired, until the last obstacle is removed (for to be seen as truth at all, it must be all seen), a pure truth always comes upon the mind instantaneously; not like emotion, now a little, now more, and now very much, all of the same kind; but like some unknown article of ancient art, exhumed from the ruins of Pompeii, exposing part after part, as the earth is removed exciting vague surmises in the mind of the expectant antiquary, but presenting its real figure only when the last shovelful has been removed and the whole comes into view. Or, to use another illustration, the seeker for truth is like the mountaineer

enveloped in the mists which so often hang with an almost definite boundary upon the mountain-side. He knows that there is a bright day beyond the limits of his cloudy region. As he approaches these limits the mist becomes less dense and bewildering; but still he wanders on, unrelieved from embarrassment, until he reaches that boundary, and by one step emerges into cheerful sunshine. Or, again, the rapidity with which the mind apprehends absolute truth, when all impediments are removed, is like the action of affinity in chemistry, or like the union of two drops of water when brought into contact. Observation of this phenomenon by the ancients led many to believe that such apprehension is not acquirement, but recollection; that the mind recognizes those eternal truths with which it has been familiar in a former state of existence, the moment that it succeeds in removing the obstacles of mortal error, as associated with heavenly delight, hastens to embrace them. Whatever the belief is worth, it proves their observation of the fact to which I refer.

The labor of the thinker is not, therefore, to make up a truth by putting many things together, but to dispel the ignorance from his own mind, that he may clearly see what is already existing as complete as it ever can be. And the artist who presents it clearly and distinctly, may rely upon producing delight. But no number of mere probabilities or plausibilities will ever *make* one truth.

The work of art clearly expressive of truth must be good as long as its materials endure. For its spirit is everlasting, and independent of the whim of human opinion, while that relying upon mere plausibilities is swept away by the increase of popular knowledge. In removing obstructions to the view of truth, to proceed gradually is not only on most occasions necessary, but is, when well executed, the most effective to the production of pleasure. "If I had on one hand the offer of all knowledge, without the labor of learning: and on the other access to knowledge by learning, I would choose the latter," was said by one of the most eminent German scholars and critics of modern times. Every new ray admitted furnishes a new delight to the inquiring mind, which is thus gradually predisposed to be pleased when the full glow of truth shall be poured upon it.

So far I have spoken of absolute truth, and its simple unassociated effect upon the mind. There is another sense in which the word is applied to the conditional relation of things, as the truth of statement or representation. This perhaps would be more correctly termed, as it sometimes is, fidelity; yet the more common word is not misapplied, for truth is really concerned in those relations. The fidelity of representation to the thing represented, or of the statement to the subject which it professes to state, may, without material error be represented as truth. Absolute truth is that which exists independently of the observing

mind, and is from all eternity unchangeable; as for example the truths demonstrated by mathematical science, which exist irrespective of either diagram to exhibit, or mind to perceive them. But the truth of representation in a picture is only the fidelity with which it calls up the conception of the original, or transmits the ideas of the painter: the truth of a narrative, the faithfulness of its conformity to reality. Here is truth independent of the observing mind, but not of the existence of either of its objects. Remove either, and the truth ceases to be. We can conceive of the non-existence of any landscape, as well as of the picture of it; of any event, as well as of the history thereof. Relative truth is therefore a source of delight of a separate kind from the foregoing, as perfection is never attained, and of course, the various degrees of nearness in the approach to it must constitute the measure of artistic excellence, where this is the end in view.

The state of mind immediately subsequent to an apprehension of truth is the pure and noble satisfaction which is called conviction, and, in feebler degree, assent. The artist may depend upon the latter effect, only if he succeed in producing the former; while the perception of that relation between the apprehension of truth and the delight of conviction will be followed by the emotion of beauty. So far the sequence is invariable. Yet truth, compelling the assent of all, will not produce the same degree of beauty in all,

because different minds, having different associations with, and sensibilities to any given light of truth, must be differently affected by the assent which is granted.

SECTION II.—RESEMBLANCE.

Of all the relations which the human mind lays hold upon in classifying and composing, the common favorite is that of resemblance: the emotions following its perception being of a peculiarly exhilarating nature, while extending, as it does, so widely through nature, it becomes the guide of genius to the noblest generalizations of science, and the most delightful creations of art. Often, when the assurance of obtaining truth will fail to attract the student to the labor of educing it, he may be pleasantly beguiled into his own profit by the pleasures of resemblance. Though truth is delightful, the toil of arriving at it is great, even when most lucidly set forth. For there are obstacles peculiar to each individual mind, which the author cannot foresee, and if he could foresee, could not by abstract reasoning remove; nor can he thus remove those which he does foresee, without the coöperation of the reader's own labor. But resemblance to something better known will often solve the problem immediately, while its lively delight, stimulating the imagination, rouses the reader to the completion of even what the author has left unfinished. The dryest argument derives

much of its cogency from this material; but that which goes farthest with the popular mind is woven of it throughout. The mass of men love to be floated along without fatigue, upon the easy current of resemblances. He would greatly mistake his fellow men, who should write a work for popular effect, in the manner of Cuvier's Animal Kingdom; or expect one in the style of Cavallo's Philosophy to produce the powerful effect of Chalmers' Astronomical Discourses, or the sublime generalizations of Humboldt. And yet, no less would Newton have erred had he attempted his *Principia* in the manner of Cicero. For the few of sterner reason and highest discipline prefer the straighter paths of closest logic. The latter yields a satisfaction that rests in the present attainment, requiring some extraneous feeling to prompt its repetition; the former an exhilarating delight which stimulates to further exercise of the faculty by which it was attained. Hence, books which appeal to it are popularly interesting, while others, which may be more valuable for the amount of truth they contain, are seldom opened, except by him who has made up his mind to toil.

They who write for the studious and learned, and professedly for their instruction, must confine themselves, as much as possible, to the logical unfolding of truth. For they wish not to have their thoughts diverted, nor their time misspent in collateral trains of ideas, induced by mere resemblance. Such is the objection often made to Dr. Brown's Lectures, now

when they appear as a book addressed to the learned. And the objection may be valid, although it did not lie against them as delivered, for their illustrative style was admirably suited to attract and retain the attention of the youthful audience for whom they were prepared. In writing for the young, for the popular ear or eye, or indeed any class of community not wholly enamored of scientific pursuits, we have to throw out many a lure of bright and animating resemblance. Yet likeness must be united with unlikeness in order to continue the delight, that the mind may have some occupation between the point of contemplation and entire sameness. As the motive to activity ceases, the pleasure comes to an end. Resemblances which are familiar and obvious are rejected as uninteresting; nay, comparison of farthest extremes in the same class is more gratifying than obvious likeness. To present resemblances stimulant enough to give occupation to the mind, yet not so obscure as to fatigue, must be the highest excellence of the object of this pleasure, so well adapted to the nature of a being whose happiness consists in employment, but who is averse to toil.

SECTION III.—POWER.

If any thing in mental science can be said to be demonstrated, it is the proposition, that an idea of power cannot be acquired from observation of the

outward world. This work of Dr. Brown, though operating in a way directly the contrary to that which he intended, is in reality the most complete thing from his pen; being a true and honest reduction to absurdity of the theory whereon it is founded. Assuming that the mind is an utter blank until furnished by the senses, nothing is clearer than that it never can have the idea of a cause; for the senses can take no cognizance of such a thing. All they can observe is mere sequence. Causation can neither be seen, heard, touched, tasted, nor smelled. At the same time we are conscious of ideas of power. Consequently, they exist in the mind independently of the senses. They, and the emotions wherewith they are combined, constitute a reservoir of delight, for which we are indebted directly to the springs of heaven.

Although the most efficient guide to truth, its own object indeed being one of the grandest truths, the pleasure of observing cause and effect is not to be confounded with the sudden and satisfying gleam of joy which is thrown into the mind upon the conclusion of a perfect argument. It partakes more of the stimulating nature of that attendant upon resemblance, leading the mind to step after step, in tracing effect to cause; or downward from cause to effect; and that even although no end is yet in view, no final truth nor any definite result contemplated. It is properly one of the pleasures on the way to knowledge, while that attendant upon truth is the reward of its attainment. Not

so obvious, nor so captivating as that of resemblance, it is a safer guide, and may be made to minds only moderately inquiring, the pleasantest of intellectual exercises; while in the hands of science it becomes the surest ladder to recondite discovery.

Both of these services it has performed most happily for Dr. Reid. Without any gay allurement for the popular eye, the style of Reid is the most charming of styles for the consecutive thinker. The stepping stones of cause and effect are laid so neatly, so near, so firmly, and so plainly to be seen, that the pleasure of passing along them is almost perfect. There is only needed a motive to begin perusal. Though not calculated to attract, it is a style of wonderful ability to retain a reader.

But apart from the relation instituted by it, the very conception of power itself is the antecedent of a marked and elevating pleasure. The conception of difficulty overcome, of obstacles removed, of great ends attained by seemingly feeble means, fills the heart with joy to overflowing. The career of Hannibal, with a handfull of men descending from the Alps and sweeping in unextinguishable victory over a land that could boast more than seven hundred thousand trained warriors of distinguished bravery; that of the poor orphan boy of Corsica, surmounting every difficulty, defeating every opponent by the force of his own unaided intellect, until he stands forth the greatest monarch of Christendom; that of Luther, armed with the weapons

of truth, opposing his single person to the whole power of the corrupt Church of Europe, and prevailing; or the simple means employed by Christianity in resistance to all the worst and most violent passions of men, and calmly going on in triumph; nay, the humblest individual, successfully struggling to maintain purity of virtue amid poverty and temptations, are objects of sublimity; but the ennobling admiration thus inspired is one of the purest ministers of beauty. So in any work of art, an impress of power presented by decision of manner, rapidity and firmness of execution, or achievement of a great end by apparently inadequate means, is productive of similar emotion.

Hence much of the charm belonging to the designs of Agrippa, as, for example, the Parthenon, to the works of Michael Angelo, to the speeches of Chatham, and the poems of Byron. They all leave the impression that great as they are, their authors stooped to execute them, and could have risen to vastly greater.

SECTION IV.—UTILITY.

Another relation of very great popular effect in art is that of utility. Connected with every well-aimed purpose for the service of God and the well-being of man, the pleasures of this class are of exceeding great variety in degree, from those which are scarcely above the capacity of a sagacious animal, up to the appreciation

of the noblest adaptation in the works of God. Of course, in a world where ignorance and depravity prevail, the lowest of the class must be by far the commonest. Utility is undervalued by the higher order of mind, because commonly observed in its least honorable degrees, and because the term utilitarian has been appropriated by a set of cold-hearted materialists. Rightly, indeed, do we despise the base mercenary who sees no utility in aught but money, or the sensualist who measures it by the gratification of his appetites, or even that somewhat more erect human animal, who limits it by the material wants of society. But while estimating such varieties of the pleasure at their proper value, the student as well as the artist should be reminded, that of the same class there are others of which the noblest intellect, and the purest heart need never be ashamed. Some of the most beautiful actions in both history and fiction, derive their interest chiefly from this quarter, and many an active human life has been elevated into grandeur thereby.

What more ennobling spectacle has the present age afforded than the life of Thomas Chalmers? All whose efforts, from the day he was born of the Spirit of God, until almost the hour of his departure from time, were untiringly devoted to the loftiest utility—usefulness was his unvaried aim—usefulness to the highest temporal and eternal interest of man, and to the accomplishment of the designs of God. Even in the

full tide of his popularity in Glasgow, when every mouth was full of his praise, and marks of honor awaited wherever he appeared, he was found by a friend on one occasion in the deepest despondency, not from satiety, as a worldly man might be, but from a feeling that all his labor had failed of that practical utility which constituted his single aim. And when assured by his friend of at least one soul brought from darkness of sin to the marvelous light of the Gospel of Salvation, through his instrumentality, he rejoiced more over that one soul than over all the praises of admiring thousands. A similar example is to be found in the disinterested, judicious and persevering labors of Wyckliffe; and one more beautiful than either in the career of the apostle Paul. True, in all these, some of the effect is due to the idea of generous self-devotion; still, the greater part belongs to the high estimation of the value of their labors to their fellow men. To be capable of enjoying pleasure from the contemplation of such an object is what the highest intelligence may well be proud of; and the world has reason to rejoice that if Wyckliffes and Chalmerses are few, there are still many others expending humbler abilities with similar zeal, in the same cause. Not only so, but all the walks of virtuous life are filled with causes of this sober and approving pleasure. For even the honest struggles of the humblest workman, in support of the little household dependent upon him, are not without their beauty, arising from a pleasure, which,

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if less ennobling, is not less calculated to win the tenderest sympathies of the heart.

Great discrimination is therefore necessary in the employment of such means for the production of beauty. For if few pleasures are lower than the lowest of those attendant on the idea of utility, the higher belong to a region to which only the holiest can attain, while of more moderate degrees a multitude occupies the space between.

SECTION V.—UNITY.

The human mind, although of greatly diversified capacity, and exercising a variety of powers, is so organized, that it performs, and must perform all its operations in the most systematic and simple manner. Passing from one idea to another, with more than the rapidity of light, it never embraces two at the same instant. Its work is always one. Consequently, the idea of unity is radically pleasing. Any attempt to force upon the mind, the apprehension of two or more ideas at the same instant it resents with the strongest feeling of aversion. But unity would soon become the most insipid sameness, did it consist in mere singleness of individual ideas. The mind has been instructed by its Creator to find variety of this enjoyment in single views of masses, in final causes and manifold generalizations. But as it can unite ideas only by

remarking in succession their common features, it regards with pleasure the prominence of common features, whereby the work of combination is rendered easy, as well as the tendency of various things to unite upon one effect, whereby they correspond to its own organization, and are of course the more rapidly comprehended. Variety is an essential element of unity; without it, we should have only sameness, or uniformity. Perhaps it is for the same reason that we regard with so much pleasure the appearance of design; that is, one object to which various measures are made to contribute; and still more the completion of design: namely, the actual union of all those efforts upon the one effect. To this, in the latter case, may be added the pleasure of succeeding, which enhances many of the delights now spoken of, as well as that of following the marks of intellectual operations kindred to our own, and a feeling of congeniality with the designing mind.

From the same cause, in connection with resemblance and relative truth, arise the pleasures attendant upon successful imitation. For the excellence of imitation is only the truth of resemblance, in view of a design to that effect.

But it may be asked, if unity and simplicity are native to the mind, why should any one ever work in violation of them? He who writes, for example, must have a design in writing; and his mind in composing, must be as systematic as others in acquiring. I reply,

in the first place, that design is often changed in the course of execution. If the artist could always complete his work while the first impulse is upon him, true unity would be seldom violated; but that is impossible; and change of design in the course of execution, can hardly fail of introducing incongruity, and that by very reason of the mind's singleness of action. And secondly, no man is fully aware of all his own thoughts. He immediately forgets much, and pays little attention to many things in that order which his mind is perpetually pursuing. And even if he did consult it closely, he might still be liable, unless watchful over that particular matter, to dispose the orderly suggestions of his own mind, in disorder on the paper, or the canvas. Inasmuch as he can not set down all the ideas of the train, but only such as are the most prominent, he may chance to select those which do not intimate the real course of his thinking; or those whose relations in the minds of those whom he addresses, do not correspond to his intentions; or, from want of command over language, or, from carelessness, he may employ images loosely, which do not represent exactly, his own separate ideas, and have the effect of bringing together incongruous ones, unable to unite in any mind.

It is therefore necessary to consult, watchfully, the natural order of thinking, and at the same time, the propriety of the medium of communication, and the difficulties of acquisition.

SECTION. VI.—PROPORTION.

From a combination of several of these causes of pleasure, arises another, which has, by many, been esteemed the principal or only cause of beauty; namely, proportion. Unity of design, unity of effect in the parts, utility of each part to the plan, and design completed by the combined effect of the whole, are all requisite to just proportion; an element that lies at the foundation of many a pleasure derived from art. A building, however fine in parts, having no reference to utility, and expressive upon the whole of no one conception, would come far short of beauty; would indeed be utterly worthless in both a practical and æsthetic point of view. The former is not often entirely disregarded, and where even partially met, will atone for many other faults, and when completely secured, the unity of conception follows, as effect follows cause. But the æsthetic delight is much greater where unity of effect is most prominent; as in the case of an ancient temple, where utility appears in serviceableness of the parts to production of that united whole.

Every observer of art has lingered with delight upon the contemplation of a Doric temple. And the most unskillful and unobservant of the operations of their own minds, can not leisurely behold such a structure, without some enjoyment from the perfection of its proportions. The building, to the first glance, presents only three grand parts, of which the stylobate

constitutes one; the colonnade and entablature the second; and the roof and the pediment the third. The first, consisting of horizontal planes laid one upon the other, each upper one much less than the one below it, presents the appearance of the most solid base. The whole of the colonnade and entablature, presenting one broad horizontal band, rises firmly, yet lightly, from the upper plane of the stylobate, to constitute the enclosure of the area and support of the roof, which rests upon it as easily as the head upon the human figure. Upon closer observation, these parts are found to hold a careful relation to one another. The first, the broadest and the flattest. The second, the highest and most perpendicular. The third, the lightest, and rapidly diminishing upwards. So that the higher part covers, without seeming to crush the lower, the inclosing parts sustain their load, as if it were no burden, and the stylobate is perfectly at ease in bearing up the whole. The feeling of repose is thereby forcibly impressed upon the most cursory observer, a oneness of effect from the combination of very different parts, although he may not be able to analyze his experience, or to trace the phenomenon to its sensible cause. More minute observation will refine this pleasure, while it enlarges its resources. He will find that the planes of the stylobate are proportionate to one another, that they are generally three, corresponding in this respect, to the great members of the building; that the second member consists of parts proportionate to one another,

presenting, also, three different outlines: the colonnade which tapers upwards, the archetrave and frieze, which are perpendicular, and the cornice, which projects; and the pediment is also of three parts, constituting vertically an equilateral triangle.

Still further, if the observer proceeds to measurements, he will soon find that all this general unity arises from the most minute assignment of the inferior parts, and that the measure is not furnished by any absolute rule, as a foot, or inch, but by the building itself, the unit of measure being the lower diameter of the pillar. Again, that such perfect symmetry may not produce the effect of sameness, the various parts have their distinctive features. While the whole tends to the pyramidal shape, the stylobate is flat, the colonnade interrupted by intercolumniations, each pillar presenting the beauties of one or more curves; the cornice, with its moulding, projects, and the roof slopes from the cornice of each side until its planes meet in the obtuse angle, which closes the whole. The same union of perfect proportion with characteristic difference runs throughout the minutest particulars; and long before a careful observer can finish his survey, he has begun to suspect the sources of delight in such a building must be infinite.

Similar excellence may be attained in literature, by unity of design in a whole work, by the propriety of plan to effect that design, the utility of the material employed to advance it, proportion of parts in view of

the design, and of inferior parts to the principal, of illustration and of style: then by diversity in the nature of the imagery, variety of lights, and different associations thrown in by individual words, variations of the structure, and intonation of sentences. Like the temple of Minerva, Parthenon, such a poem as the Paradise Lost will furnish the higher enjoyments of this kind the more carefully it is analyzed, its parts compared with one another, and the whole with the one design to be effected by them.

Of a similar, but subordinate nature are order and symmetry; the former implying the arrangement of everything in its proper place; the latter, that all the parts are set off in relation to one common measure, or are balanced over against each other.

Being thus founded upon the very manner of working of the human mind, no excellence of art is so imperative as unity and proportion. The work in which they are faithfully adhered to, is already marked with the stamp of art, which can not be said of any one however excellent in other respects, in which they are neglected. The noblest truths, if put together without unity and proportion, could lay no more claim to excellence in art, than a pile of stones to architectural beauty. Wherein does attractive and philosophic history differ from the dreary annals from which it was drawn? Perhaps by grace of style, but characteristically by unity of design and proportion of parts. No wonder that the eye of an artist should be beguiled

into viewing proportion as the origin of all beauty! For it certainly is that one thing without which art could have no existence. As theory and order are to science, so are design and proportion to art. But the latter are the higher, for they include the former. Design never attains its own perfection until it coincides with truth; whereas theory is merely a substitute for truth where truth is not discovered. And proportion is as greatly superior to mere order, as a well formed man is to a skeleton on wires. You may have order without proportion, as is often the case in works of science; but can not have proportion without including order. For proportion embraces both order and symmetry, and much of its own besides. Unity of design, and perfect proportion in view of it, constitute the grand requisites of art, and to the beauty of all her works are indispensable.

CHAPTER VII.

OF BEAUTY DERIVED FROM EMOTIONS WHICH ARE MORE MARKED THAN THEIR INTELLECTUAL ANTECEDENTS — CHEERFULNESS — SURPRISE — JOY — GLADNESS — CONTENTMENT — HOPE.

The feelings attendant upon all those classes of conceptions already mentioned, although highly pleasurable, are to the eye of ordinary reflection lost in their respective antecedents, so that we do not afterward recognize the real fact of the succession. But when we look out from the well known intellection upon the less commonly known feeling, we find here, as well as in the case of sensation, that perception of the relation between the idea and its succeeding pleasureable emotion is the true antecedent of beauty.

On the other hand, many of our emotions are so prominent and luminous as to absorb or eclipse their preceding ideas. In order to show the existence of the relation in such a case, we must change our point of view, and from the well known feeling look out upon the less known intellection.

As we have to do with states of mind only in as far as they are pleasurable, it comports best with our purpose

to present our specimens under the head of grave and gay. The latter, although to cursory observation the most attractive, are in reality the most limited in number, and the least satisfying classes of pleasures: and even of their own number the least showy is the most abundant in enjoyment.

The quiet cheerfulness which accompanies the healthful operation of all our faculties of mind and body, is both more satisfying and of longer duration than mirth: and even to external view is a surer mark of a man at peace with the world and his own conscience. Nearly akin to sensation, it will be found, upon faithful observation, to be the consequent of a healthy state of mind and body. None can enjoy it under bodily disease, unless endowed with that heavenly hope which can extinguish all the pains of sense; and with a conscience ill at ease it refuses to abide. It is a feeling highly productive of pleasure in retrospect and by association, throwing its own rosy light over all with which it is connected, making even the unproductive and helpless years of childhood more delightful to the eye of memory than the proudest triumphs of maturer life can be without it. This is the magician who clothes the hard creations of necessity in a robe of beauty; at whose command falling waters give forth joyous music, the woods are vocal with delight, and the mountains and barren rocky peaks are lovely in their wilderness. It times the heart to the music of the external world. Take it away, as too often is

done in this world of sin, and consequent calamity, and nature becomes like faded finery—like a theater by daylight—no trace of loveliness in all her forms, no meaning in her sounds. The murmuring waters are now but the descent of a fluid in obedience to the necessity of its gravitation; the woods are only growing timber, the wilds mere uncultivated lands, and the mind turns in weariness from all present things, without being able to repose upon the future. This feeling is seldom manifested in noisy expression; but by filling the heart with gladness it gives a corresponding tone to all the words and actions of him by whom it is enjoyed.

When the ordinary train of suggestion is interrupted by an addition to our intellectual stores, we are conscious of a sudden, brisk, but short-lived emotion attendant upon that change, no matter what the object be which causes it. If the new object come without anticipation or warning, the succeeding emotion is simple surprise, which is instantly followed by inquiry into the nature of the exciting cause, which again may result in feelings of either pleasure or pain. If not only unanticipated, but contrary to all that could be anticipated, the feeling becomes astonishment; and if the object be also great in itself, or contradictory to what was previously known, it merges into wonder. If it comes expected, it either corresponds to expectation or it does not. If it does, surprise is brief and feeble, and soon gives way to the emotions naturally arising

from contemplation of the subject; if it does not, we have an immediately succeeding feeling of disappointment.

The mental activity thus aroused is pleasurable, and unless the exciting cause be in itself disagreeable, will be productive of more enduring delight. For by awakening inquiry concerning them, the capabilities of the subject are discovered and brought to bear upon the mind.

The use which is made of this short-lived pleasure, in the art of book-making, is too well known either to require exposition or condemnation. In the other arts its shallowness is also apparent, yet not so much so as entirely to prevent even painters from making, occasionally, an extravagant demand upon it. The inexplicable architectural piles, the unprecedented attitudinizing in some of the works of Martin, are nothing more than surprizing, and the clap-trap of the ordinary novel and play belongs confessedly to the humblest department of art.

Novelty is neither a quality of objects, nor an emotion, but only a relation existing between a new object and the mind's previous knowledge; and the first feeling which arises upon the perception of new objects has no regard to their real nature, but only this relation, that is, to the fact that the object has not been known before. But this relation must, from its nature, be of very brief duration, as also the subsequent emotion; so that, although in itself essentially

pleasurable, it may be counteracted by that immediately succeeding. Indeed, surprise is so quickly lost in whatever emotion follows it, that we habitually speak of pleasant surprise, and unpleasant surprise, as if they were radically different feelings. But in novelties which have been anticipated, unless there are reasons apparent why evil should be feared, a healthy mind expects some addition to its enjoyment, greater than the mere momentary exhilaration of first perception. And in the case of those which have not been anticipated, the immediately succeeding inquiry into the real qualities of the object, avails to the production of a similar expectation. The mind is thereby introduced to new sources of real and permanent pleasure, and these again reflect a pleasing light upon the occasion and means by which we were first made acquainted with them. In itself, though of short duration, it furnishes to art a valuable element. And the various emotions which succeed, according as expectation is met or not, open a wide field of delight or pain.

The joy arising from the attainment of some expected good, when conceived of as meeting or surpassing expectation, or upon the discovery of a good where none had been expected, or where evil had been feared, is a principle of great value and of frequent use in literary art. The unraveling of a plot sometimes opens into it, as in the Merchant of Venice, with a delight perfectly triumphant.

Gladness, an inferior degree of the same emotion, is of more frequent occurrence, and is more easily evoked. To it are addressed the great mass of fictitious productions which are said to end well.

The feeling of contentment, into which joy and gladness subside, if confirmed by experience, or which arises as the result of a conflict with expectations inadequately met, abstractly considered would hardly be deemed an element of much artistic value, and certainly great skill is required to work it up effectively; yet the beauty evolved thereby in the works of Miss Bremer is universally admitted.

The real value of novelty in art, is, however, to be found less in any distinct and separate emotion, than in the fact that all our emotions are more vivid and active when awakened by first impressions. The effect of familiarity with any class of objects, not possessing considerable variety in themselves, is to bring the mind nearer to apathy in regard to them. We can not be indifferent to any new object, because none can be presented for the first time without exciting expectations either of pleasure or dissatisfaction. New objects, whose appearance excites the hopes of new enjoyment, are pleasurable. If further acquaintance confirm the promise of their appearance, they take their place among æsthetic objects on their intrinsic merits, or on the same, are rejected. Those whose first appearance fails of exciting hope, or awakens fear of dissatisfaction, do not produce agreeable emotion while new, although

upon further inquiry, they may be found intrinsically pleasant.

The blame commonly attached to an endless desire of novelty is therefore just. For it implies that the person who cherishes it is incapable of judging of the real nature of things, and lives wholly in expectations excited by external appearances. When we know the value of something new to us, from testimony or some of its effects, no blame can be attached to the ardent pursuit which it merits. Because then it is not a mere vague excitement which is sought after, but a permanent good, rationally anticipated.

Youth may know from testimony, and observation of its effects on others, the value of Science. Their desire of new acquisition is therefore rational and noble, and their enjoyment of the novelty of each new idea, a dignified and appropriate reward of their labor. But the man who is perpetually changing from one thing to another, for no other reason than a vague expectation of something better, is evidently living in the dark as to the very end and nature of his own existence, and is justly held in derision.

Notwithstanding that the love of mere novelty, or, in other words, of novelty for its own sake, is characteristic of feeble and ill furnished heads, in view of art it is well to bear in mind that what men have once learned, no matter how long it has been forgotten, they do not choose to be taught. He who presents not new materials, or, at least, a new form or order, which is

better than the old, must not expect much favor at the hands of the present public. The pleasure of novelty is an effect almost too greatly desired by our day, and is often permitted to keep out of view real and enduring excellencies. Yet, I believe it a better extreme than the stagnant sameness of the preceding century. In the times of Louis XV. of France, and of George I. and II., and a part of the reign of George III., of England, the stream of art crept along through a flat and shaven meadow, where, year after year, the same kind of produce was got up in the same old way. Methods and topics which had once obtained applause were resorted to again and again, in hopes of the same result. And, as long as readers were few, and consisted chiefly of persons educated within the same narrow circle, that work was at least approved which appeared in a symmetrical form. But when a more active and diffusive spirit of inquiry had got abroad, and men began to hope for better things in government and society, art could not escape the prevailing innovations. And the dislike of long prevailing sameness, which then took possession of the public mind, still maintains its sway. Its requisitions are hard; and many unworthy devices are resorted to in order to meet them. Oddities of manner and eccentricities of style are effected, with the view of giving the air of novelty to old ideas —artifices which eventually meet the condemnation they deserve. When the effect, however, is produced by a real novelty of idea, it merits high praise;

because it announces a true addition to the realm of human thought. But even in that case, a work must possess more of artistic excellence if it would retain the approbation of the public. The author of a good idea poorly wrought out, may expect to be superseded by him who can express it better.

So benevolent has the Creator exhibited himself in constituting the mind of man, that it derives pleasure not only from the good which it has, but also which it has not. The good which is only conceived of, is capable of awakening in the mind various degrees of pleasure, according to the probability of its attainment. Desire, hope and confidence agree to contemplate the future, but differ in the amount of enjoyment they confer; the first not necessarily implying guarantee of attainment, the second based upon reasonable probability, and the third settling down into almost the calmness of possession. As in view of the unexpected there is a disagreeable suprise followed by aversion, as well as agreeable surprise followed by joy, so in view of the expected, there is apprehension and fear as well as desire and hope. In the present connection it is enough to say that hope contemplates only objects of desire; and every object of desire when conceived of as attainable, becomes an object of hope. In many cases, it requires only a feeble probability to change desire into hope, and thus enable one to secure pleasure from that which he may never actually possess, and of which he must have been entirely destitute but for

hope. And if a stronger degree of evidence exalts it into confident expectation, oftentimes the real extent of the good is fully anticipated, if not surpassed. Hope, therefore, while it stimulates to high exertion and to the noblest deeds, often draws from the future blessings which no present shall ever bestow, and no other human power create.

> "Can Wisdom lend, with all her heavenly power,
> The pledge of Joy's anticipated hour?
> Ah, no! She darkly sees the fate of man—
> Her dim horizon bounded to a span;
> Or, if she hold an image to the view,
> 'Tis Nature pictured too severely true.
> With thee, sweet Hope, resides the heavenly light,
> That pours remotest rapture on the sight;
> Thine is the charm of life's bewildered way,
> That calls each slumbering passion into play.
> Waked by thy torch I see the sister band
> On tip toe watching, start at thy command,
> And fly where'er thy mandate bids them steer,
> To pleasure's path, or glory's bright career."

No other emotion contributes so much to the consolation of the afflicted. No earthly circumstances can shut it out from the mind, not even the prospect of a life of misery—not death itself. For the mercy of God has extended the vision of Hope far into eternity, and when failing to rest in this state of being, it is often enabled to take a more extensive view of that beyond the grave. Nothing can entirely darken the soul which leaves it hope, and all the pleasures must be extinguished by its departure. But, well for

suffering humanity, no feeling is more tenacious of its place in the human breast. The word despair is employed by way of hyperbole, to express how deeply we feel the diminution of hope: but the reality can never be said to exist as long as death is future. This subject, therefore, demands the careful attention of all who design to effect any valuable end through the feelings of men. In literature, its influence is wider than one, at first sight, would suspect. It is the principle chiefly addressed in all practical works on religion. A lower degree of it gives their life to all essays on practical morals. From it, all encouragements to exertion and endurance derive their power. In fiction, our favorite character derives no little of his influence over us from our hope of either being or enjoying something similar; and even that hope, which endures only for the time of reading, and ceases with the unraveling of the plot, has a valuable effect in keeping attention pleasantly engaged, and thereby furnishing an opportunity to the author, of inculcating truths which otherwise would never have been read. Of the buoyant cheerfulness it can confer, any one may be aware who will reflect upon some of the commonest items of human experience. Revert, for instance to the days of boyhood, when our hopes were both more numerous and less checked by doubt and fear. Were not our anticipations of pleasure often embodied in gestures and language appropriate to the highest degree of joy upon actual possession? The soberer and

more extensive hopes of manhood are expressed more gravely, but their effect upon the heart is similar, availing, even though no external sign declare their existence, to kindle it up with an animation, a delight which few realities on this side of death bestow.

Having called attention to these features of the subject, I need not enter upon any argument to prove that it is a valuable source of beauty, constituting, indeed, no feeble rill, but one of the deepest rivers which pour their waters into that great ocean. The beauty of those visions which it brings before the youthful eye, has become proverbial. Nay, the superiority of their beauty to that of anything which real life contains, is no feeble proof of the heavenly descent of the mind which conceives them. Never was philosophic truth more eloquently and appropriately embodied than in the celebrated lines in which the poet Campbell opens his poem on this subject.

The methods whereby the pleasures of hope may be called up in the mind, are so vast and unlimited as to defy enumeration, and most of them so obvious as not to require it. Laws of nature, probabilities of life, examples of success, and promises, when made by an authority apparently able to perform, are each, in the temporal pursuits of man, capable of calling up anticipations of a prosperous future; but chiefly examples drawn from human life. The lives of our forefathers are the lights that kindle up our brightest hopes, if they also teach us how to limit them. There

is needed to the heart of emulous youth, only the mention of some instance of honorable distinction, to awaken the hopes of future renown. And in holy things, though the subjects are nobler and the pleasures higher, the methods are the same. Whoever would move the hopes of the pious in the breast of the sinner, must adduce the promises of God, and examples of conversion—how Matthew was called, how Saul was chosen, and how sinful "Mary wept and was forgiven."

SECTION II.—OF THE RISIBLE.

Mirth, though often dependent upon novelty, and associated, on different occasions, with a great variety of mental states, is possessed of certain peculiar features which have rendered abortive every attempt to resolve it into any other emotion. Many feelings are of equally extensive, and some of greater influence over the life of man; but none are more striking in their manifestations, or so attractive to the common mind. Laughter, the appropriated expression of mirth, is an effect of the mind upon the body, peculiar to man being, at the same time, one of the most trustworthy indexes of individual character. The boisterous, the coarse, the jeering, and the chuckling laugh, are the surest marks of low, or at least of unamiable, dispositions, while the good humored, hearty, yet gentle laugh,

is worth more than a certificate of good morals from the soundest authorities.

In pursuing inquiry into its intellectual antecedents, and the objects whereby it is capable of being excited, I shall apply, in accordance with common usage, the word *mirth* to that emotion the expression of which is laughter, and *mirthful* to the object viewed as exciting the emotion, leaving *the mirthful* or *the risible* as the unsettled subject of discussion. Louis XIV., being extremely harrassed by the repeated solicitations of an aged officer, for information, said one day, loud enough to be heard: "That gentleman is the most troublesome officer in the service." "Sire, that is precisely the charge your Majesty's enemies bring against me," replied the veteran.

A gentleman in a coffee house writing a letter, and perceiving an Irishman behind him, concluded thus: "I would say more, but a tall Irishman is reading over my shoulder, every word I write." "You lie! you scoundrel," said the self-convicted Hibernian.

A person once stated that he had once seen a juggler set up a ladder on open ground, and mount it by passing through the rounds, and stand upon the top erect. Another replied that he had no doubt of it, as he had seen one do the same; but with this addition, that when he arrived at the top, he pulled the ladder up after him.

"Such is the pressure of the times in our town," said a Birmingham manufacturer, to his agent in

London, "that we have good workmen, who will get up the inside of a watch for eighteen shillings." "That's nothing compared to London," replied his friend; "we have boys here who will get up the inside of a chimney for a sixpence."

An English Bishop was setting out to the colony of New South Wales. The Rev. Sydney Smith, as he shook his hand at parting, said: "Farewell, my dear brother; I hope you will agree with the man that eats you."

The same witty clergyman, in a review of a work on Natural History, has the following: "The sloth, in its wild state, spends its life on trees, and never leaves them but from force or accident; the eagle to the sky, the mole to the ground, the sloth to the tree; but what is most extraordinary, he lives not upon the branches, but under them. He moves suspended, rests suspended, sleeps suspended, and passes his life in suspense—like a young clergyman distantly related to a Bishop."

Upon examining carefully the state of mind occasioned by the first presentation of subjects like these, I think it will be found that the first and leading particular is the sudden detection of the incongruity of things brought together as if allied. The story of a man standing on the top of a ladder and pulling it up after him is, in the first instant of apprehension, deemed practicable, from its apparent similarity to an action which is both very easy and very common—that of ascending a wall by a ladder, and then pulling

it up after one. But in the next instant its real impossibility is perceived, and these ideas, brought instantaneously together, are followed by that state of mind which is called mirth.

The reply of the old officer to Louis XIV., seems, at first glance, to ruin his cause, by confirming the King's opinion; but the instant the sentence is finished, we perceive that he could have said nothing better to the purpose, or to secure his ultimate object.

Getting up the inside of a watch is a process entirely different from getting up the inside of a chimney; but they are classed together by the sameness of the words employed to express them. The Irishman's contradiction of the fact that he had read the written assertion which he contradicted, seems, at first glance, the best way to clear himself of the charge; whereas, an instant of reflection shows it to be quite the contrary. The French officer's reply presents an incongruity between his real intention and that of the King, under an apparently similar assertion. It seems at first to be wrong; but is afterward found to be right. In the case of the inquisitive Irishman, the incongruity lies also between the apparent bearing of the assertion and its real effect. But now, that at first sight seems to be right, which is immediately afterward found to be wrong. The former is a production of wit, the other is called a *bull*. The former is the result of quick perception of resemblance, where other eyes, at first, do

not detect it; the latter is a mistake committed by one who rests in a superficial resemblance, where there is intrinsically none—hence the one is an excellence, the other only a blunder. But on account of the amusement it affords, the bull is often affected by men of wit, with agreeable success; of this latter kind is the story of the ladder. The response of the Londoner to his correspondent, differs from both, as it turns entirely upon the two-fold acceptation of the phrase "get up." This is called a pun, the peculiarity of which lies in uniting the incongruous ideas under one word or phrase, which, of course, must always be capable of a double meaning. And as the incongruity is not the offspring of real belief, but only of fancy, the effect is not so great nor so durable as that of either of the preceding.

In connection with the saying of the Rev. Sidney Smith, first quoted, the mental process is more complicated. First, there is the double meaning of the word *agree.* We think him about to wish his friend the happiness of harmony in his diocese, and agreement of opinions with his new associates; but at the close of the sentence, it appears that he refers only to agreement of food with the stomach. So far it is a pun. Secondly, there is a seeming belief in a popular notion, which neither he nor his friend really entertained. And thirdly, the occasion, without being of sorrowful solemnity, was grave and affecting. In the second quotation from the same Reverend wit, he also launches from a

pun into humor, which has but too much depth of reality.

It has often been remarked, that awkwardness in a grave and solemn personage, is more laughable than in one of a livelier character. The dignity of the person and the rusticity of the attitude or action, are inconsistent. For the same reason, any little oddity taking place in church, will create an inclination to laughter in all those whose minds are about equally balanced between the solemn and the gay. So in writing, a passage, otherwise beautiful or sublime, may be rendered ludicrous by the introduction of one mean or common particular. Byron, in his Don Juan, often aims at producing mirth by this cheap device.

> "Sooner shall this blue ocean melt in air,
> Sooner shall earth resolve itself to sea,
> Than I resign thine image, Oh! my fair!
> Or think of anything excepting thee;
> A mind diseased, no remedy can physic—
> Here the ship gave a lurch, and he grew sea-sick."

His intention is often too obvious. Some other writers have succeeded better without intending. When such an effect is the result of intention, it is called *burlesque;* when unintentional, it is not honored with any other name than the genuine one of stupidity.

The risible can be produced by intonation or emphasis, as well as by words. We are told that a preacher, once upon a time, mistaking the place of emphasis on

the following words, read them from the pulpit in such a manner as to work a very different effect from that he intended: "And he said unto his sons—'saddle *me* the ass,' so they saddled *him*."

Again, there are certain collocations of material things, which move the feeling of mirth. And the same might be remarked of a great many looks, gestures, attitudes, situations, dresses, etc., to which the terms fun and buffoonery are applied.

Now in all these classes of objects—thoughts, words, acts, actions, and material things, there seems to be one common feature, namely—*the sudden suggestion of incongruity*. They all agree in bringing incongruous ideas together in the mind, either suddenly, or, at least, as novel. I say suddenly, for it must be obvious in all risible things, that they come upon the mind unexpectedly, and that they lose their force to him who can anticipate their points distinctly; while those who are familiar with them by repetition, are often at a loss to find wherein their mirthfulness lies. Mirth is of short duration, and can not bear familiarity with its objects. Surprise is one of the essential conditions of its being.

One may, as Hobbes says, laugh at what, regarded in another light, are infirmities—even his own; but not because he perceives them to be infirmities (for in that light they can only give pain), but on account of their inconsistency with what he knows to be correct; and in

the case of his own errors, on account of the incongruity which he now perceives existing between his actions and knowledge then, and his knowledge now. Is it not true that one will sometimes laugh heartily upon first hearing of the error of a friend, and a few minutes afterward, in view of the same circumstances, feel deeply sorry? Yet these contrary emotions can not have the same intellectual antecedents. In the former case, one suddenly perceives incongruity; in the latter, he contemplates an infirmity. In cases of immediate danger, again, we may at first be impressed with fear, and stimulated to solemn energy, and when the danger has passed by without harm, or the fear turned out to be groundless, feel an irresistible inclination to laugh. This however will never take place if the danger be really great, and likely to occur again. For the strong and overpowering passions, for the period of their duration, extinguish the relish for wit, inasmuch as they overbalance that gay equilibrium of mind in which we can lightly contemplate things fantastically combined. Solemn circumstances, to those who have no corresponding feelings, are favorable to mirth; true solemnity of feeling destroys it.

As to the final cause, mirth seems to have been implanted by the Creator to act the part of a pleasant monitor to intimate the approach of error, and mark vividly its distinction from truth, to enable us to feel the force of absurdities, to guard us against

inconsistencies, and thereby aid in the moral advancement of the individual and the race; also, to give a higher zest to society, and the more intimately to bind man to man.

SECTION III.—ARTISTIC USE OF MIRTH.

Notwithstanding the levity of its character, we must not suppose mirth incapable of doing valuable service in connection with any earnest feeling. Many grave emotions, which yet permit to the mind control of its faculties, and even the cause of truth, not unfrequently, finds it a useful auxiliary. This may occur whenever the emotion or view subserved is not of absorbing and melancholy interest. Certain truths are of this nature, in themselves earnest, but such as we can well conceive of men as being both happy and virtuous without a knowledge of. As Horace says, who carried the principle a little too far, "What is to hinder one from teaching truths of that kind in a jocular manner?" The methods whereby truth is unfolded and a witticism constructed are radically the same; and where the solemnity of the truth is not such as to quench the levity of the wit, the union of the two is very natural; nay, in some cases almost inevitable.

Of moral feelings, kindness and contempt, although the contraries of one another, agree in frequently employing mirth as a medium of expression. When

employed in the service of contempt, it is called ridicule; and when used to awaken the kindly sympathies of our race for the little failings, harmless absurdities, and amiable weaknesses of human nature, it is known by the name of humor.

In ridicule, a previously existing contempt is the motive which dictates to wit; and whatever be the means employed, the substantial incongruity is that between the meanness of what is presented and the excellence which ought to be, or to which pretension is made. Mirth, consistently with its nature, soon passes away and leaves the mind to the emotion of contempt, if the incongruity be real; if not, to return to a more sober and correct view of the subject.

The methods by which ridicule effects its purpose are two: one by debasing things pompous, or only seemingly great; the other by magnifying things extravagantly above their real value. In both cases contemplating the same incongruity, namely, that between affected greatness and real littleness; but from opposite points of view. Ridicule differs from burlesque in the intention; the latter only having mirth for its object. If any other effect follow it is only accidental. But the express design of ridicule is to produce contempt, and mirth is employed but as a means to that end. Examples of both kinds of ridicule are furnished in the following lines from Pope:

> " And now the chapel's silver bell you hear,
> That summons you to all the pride of prayer:

Light quirks of music, broken and uneven,
Make the soul dance upon a jig to heaven.
On painted ceilings you devoutly stare,
Where sprawl the saints of Verrio or Laguerre,
Or gilded clouds in fair expansion lie
And bring all paradise before your eye.
To rest, the cushion and soft Dean unite,
Who never mentions hell to ears polite."

The whole of the Dunciad is a specimen of belittleing ridicule; also Hudibras is a still more successful effort; Hogarth frequently employed the same weapon, as in the March to Finchley, and Chairing the Member; and the Lutrin of Boileau is a homogeneous production of the pompous.

Objects truly worthy and standing in their true relations—the right thing in the right place—can not be ridiculed. Protected by their substantial consistency, they resist all honest attempts of the kind. Their worst enemy can only seem to ridicule them, by first attributing to them qualities which they do not possess, and then turning those into ridicule—a proceeding which, though virtually falsification, is not unfrequently practiced by persons of malignant dispositions. The eye of the critic must be careful to detect such imposture. And he will find the calls for caution neither unfrequent nor unimportant. Few of even the best men have escaped the assaults of malignant ridicule; and the more eminent in excellence are the more likely to suffer. The highest productions of literature and art are occasionally exposed to similar

misrepresentation. At the same time, there is an important consideration for the slanderous wit himself. Public opinion may be misled by him, while the novelty of his wit endures; but in the course of time it will swing toward the right, as the pendulum to the perpendicular, and the critic will be left to his own opinion, and the condemnation which he had attempted to call down upon another must recoil upon his own head. Milton and Wordsworth are not the only men of genius thus vindicated; nor Johnson and Jeffrey the only critics whose abuse of ridicule has been retorted upon themselves by the indignation of a public whom they for a time misled.

One of the commonest, and certainly the most harmless form of false ridicule, is parody; which consists of distorted and burlesquing imitation of some beautiful work. The excellence of the original forced into contrast with the absurdities of the imitation produces a laughable effect; but unless the original be excellent the parody is worth nothing. Consequently the latter will never degrade the former in the estimation of any discriminating mind.

The sneer and malignant sarcasm are, whether considered æsthetically or morally, the worst varieties of the species to which they belong. The prompting feeling is too intense to admit of the real lightheartedness of mirth, and too bitter to atone for that defect by any moral good. They constitute the appropriate language of devils; and accordingly Goethe, that master

of propriety in art, and Byron, his equal in genius if not in learning, have well represented their fiends as in the habitual use of the sarcasm and sneer. But however consistent with the characters of Mephistophiles and Lucifer, they ill become the intercourse of man with man.

In its legitimate exercise, ridicule is a pleasant and useful check upon falsehood, and in this world of weakness and error abundant scope is furnished thereto, without encroaching upon the sacred ground of private feelings. If properly and honestly employed, it may, by showing out the inconsistencies of the false, become a valuable test of the true. That alone can rightly be called ridiculous which is itself false, or in a false position; and the contempt essential to ridicule is never exercised safely, even to the hand that wields it, except when aimed at error, meanness and depravity.

SECTION IV.—OF HUMOR.

Occasionally we see or read of characters in whom nothing can be pointed out particularly mirthful, perhaps no one saying or action capable of affecting to laughter, and yet, upon the whole, they are very amusing. Sir Roger De Coverly seldom does or says anything calculated to create a burst of laughter, and yet all the time we read a gentle mirth is playing about the heart. It is difficult at first to say in what the

pleasure lies. It breaks out at no particular point, but follows us all the way—not everywhere equally striking, but inseparable from the character. Many of the fictitious beings created by Sir Walter Scott are of this nature, such as the Antiquary; all those of Sterne, more or less; and Mr. Dickens has furnished some of the best in the language. Lamb's Elia is also a beautiful production of this kind. That amiable author was himself a charming humorist.

The risible, in such cases, does not turn upon a word, or the simple junction of two incongruous ideas, or a single point. It belongs to a train of circumstances, consistent in themselves, but all, at various points, inconsistent with a character which is also, although peculiar, consistent with itself, and at the same time too good to suspect many of the arts of the world which the ordinary reader knows. Mr. Pickwick is perfectly consistent with himself—the same good-natured, well-meaning, single-hearted old gentleman everywhere; but his views are often so much at variance with the realities of life, that by being brought into contact with them frequently, the incongruity, which, in few points, would be noticeable, becomes so striking as to maintain a continual train of ludicrous emotion. Yet it is not simple mirth. That is transient and fitful; but here there is a consecutive train of feeling connecting all these little points of mirth, and blending them into one course of risible delight. None need to be told that such a pleasure is different

from that conferred by ridicule. It has none of the hardness and pointedness of ridicule, and is of a gentleness and delicacy more akin to pathos.

Campbell calls the connecting emotion contempt. He is either mistaken in his analysis, or unfortunate in the choice of a name. Humorous characters may be represented as contemptible—for authors are not always correct, nor is life always unmixed; but while they are contemptible they cease to be humorous, and become ridiculous. We hold in contempt only what we conceive to be mean, and mirth employed to express contempt produces ridicule. On the other hand, even veneration is not inconsistent with humor, and occasionally is introduced to highten the effect. Let a reader of the Spectator inquire of his own heart, and I think he will find that it ascribes none of its peculiar delight in Sir Roger to contempt for him. So far otherwise that the honest knight is the most respectable character of the whole Spectator club—the one whom all admirers of Addison have agreed to make their favorite, and to speak of in the most tender and sympathizing manner; nay, a dash of veneration is, in this case, an essential ingredient of the complex emotion. It is instructive to observe the delicacy with which Addison draws this character, never for a moment suffering its real worth to be lost in the risible; but so balancing the two, that while we laugh at the honest ways of the old gentleman, we only love him the more. Take for example the following passages.

It is impossible to do justice to the humorous in less extended quotation. For it is essentially the gently mirthful long drawn out:

"I am the more at ease in Sir Roger's family, because it consists of sober men and staid persons—for as the knight is the best master in the world, he seldom changes his servants, and as he is beloved by all about him, his servants never care for leaving him; by this means his domestics are all in years, and grown old with their master. You will take his *valet de chambre* for his brother, his butler is gray-headed, his groom is one of the greatest men that I have ever seen, and his coachman has the looks of a privy-counsellor. You see the goodness of the master even in the old house-dog, and in a gray pad that is kept in the stable, with great care and tenderness, out of regard to his past service, though he has been useless for several years.

"I could not but observe, with a great deal of pleasure, the joy that appeared in the countenances of these ancient domestics, upon my friend's arrival at his country seat. Some of them could not refrain from tears at the sight of their old master; every one of them pressed forward to do something for him, and seemed discouraged if they were not employed. At the same time the good old knight, with a mixture of the father and the master of the family, tempered the inquiries after his own affairs with several kind questions relative to themselves. This humanity and good

nature engages every body to him, so that when he is pleasant upon any of them, all his family are in good humor, and none so much as the person whom he diverts himself with; on the contrary, if he coughs, or betrays any infirmity of old age, it is easy for a stander by to observe a secret concern in the looks of all his servants."

"My friend, Sir Roger, being a good Churchman, has beautified the inside of his church with several texts of his own choosing; he has likewise given a handsome pulpit-cloth, and railed in the communion-table at his own expense. He has often told me, that at his coming to his estate he found his parishioners very irregular; and that in order to make them kneel and join in the responses, he gave every one of them a hassoc and a common prayer-book, and at the same time employing an itinerant singing-master, who goes about the country for that purpose, to instruct them rightly in the tunes of the psalms—upon which they now very much value themselves, and indeed out-do most of the country churches that I have ever heard. As Sir Roger is landlord to the whole congregation, he keeps them in very good order, and will suffer nobody to sleep in it besides himself; for if by chance he has been surprised into a short nap at sermon, upon recovering out of it, he stands up and looks about him, and if he sees anybody else nodding, either wakes them himself, or sends his servants to them. Several other of the old knight's particularities break out upon these

occasions—sometimes he will be lengthening out a verse in the singing psalms, half a minute after the rest of the congregation have done with it; sometimes when he is pleased with the matter of his devotion, he pronounces *Amen* three or four times to the same prayer, and sometimes stands up when everybody else is upon their knees, to count the congregation, or see if any of his tenants are missing."

"My worthy friend, Sir Roger, is one of those who is not only at peace within himself, but beloved and esteemed by all about him. He receives a suitable tribute for his universal benevolence to mankind, in the returns of affection and good-will, which are paid him by every one that lives within his neighborhood."

"As Sir Roger was giving me this account of Tom Touchy, Will Wimble and his two companions stopped short till we came up to them. After having paid their respects to Sir Roger, Will told him that Mr. Touchy and he must appeal to him upon a dispute that arose between them. Will, it seems, has been giving his fellow traveller an account of his angling one day, in such a hole; when Tom Touchy, instead of hearing out his story, told him that Mr. Such-a-one, if he pleased, might *take the law of him* for fishing in that part of the river. My friend, Sir Roger, heard them both, upon a round trot, and after having paused some time, told them, with the air of a man who would not give his judgment rashly, that *much might be said on both sides.* They were neither of them dissatisfied with

the knight's determination, because neither of them found himself in the wrong by it."

"I am afraid he caught his death the last county-sessions, when he would go to see justice done to a poor widow woman, and her fatherless children, that had been wronged by a neighboring gentleman; for you know, sir, my good master was always the poor man's friend." * * * "It being a very cold day when he made his will, he left for mourning, to every man in the parish, a great frieze coat, and to every woman a black ridinghood."

Such is the scrupulous reverence observed by this master of delicate humor toward his favorite character, that, even had he not formally given his opinion on humor, in the thirty-fifth number of the Spectator, we should have been at no loss to divine that he esteemed a degree of respect essential to its perfection.

Neither do I think any competent reader of Sterne likely to regard Uncle Toby with contempt, though of all fictitious characters, he is perhaps the most perfect embodiment of delicate humor. His own heart being upright, he entertains not even a suspicion of much evil that is common in the world, and consequently his pure feelings and honest intentions are often brought into incongruous connection with the base reality, necessarily giving rise to mirth—but the farthest possible from contempt. We laugh at Uncle Toby while we love him. One well known passage will be enough to establish this point.

"My uncle Toby was a man patient of injuries—not from want of courage — I have told you in a former chapter 'that he was a man of courage;' and will add here, that when just occasions presented, or called it forth, I know no man under whose arm I would have sooner taken shelter. Nor did this arise from any insensibility or obtuseness of his intellectual parts, for he felt this insult of my father as feelingly as any man could do; but he was of a peaceful, placid nature—no jarring element in it—all was mixed up so kindly within him; my uncle Toby had scarce a heart to retaliate upon a fly. 'Go,' says he, one day at dinner, to an overgrown one which had buzzed about his nose, and tormented him cruelly all dinner-time—and which, after infinite attempts, he had caught at last, as it flew by him — 'I'll not hurt thee,' says my uncle Toby, rising from his chair and going across the room with the fly in his hand; 'I'll not hurt a hair of thy head: Go,' says he lifting up the sash, and opening his hand as he spoke, to let it escape—'Go, poor devil; get thee gone; why should I hurt thee? This world surely is wide enough to hold both thee and me.'"

Judging, therefore, from the best specimen of the class, it seems to me that humor arises from the combination of the risibles with a kindly sympathy for the little mistakes of the good and amiable. I speak not, in this connection, of what is sometimes called broad humor; for that is only buffoonery, already mentioned in the proper place.

Belonging to character, and entering into all the circumstances of life, humor is a more abundant and continuous source of mirth than any other; and from its imaginative delicacy and gentle sympathies, is by far the highest order of mirthful antecedents. True humor, like genius, is always unconscious of the peculiarity of its power while in exercise, and, of course, sees in itself nothing to laugh at. In order to the highest effect, therefore, a humorous writer must assume the air of profound gravity and seriousness.

So large a knowledge of the human heart, in all its weaknesses and its strength, its foibles and faculties, its likings and dislikings, its practical imaginings and little self-deceptions, is required in order to maintain a long train of humor, that only superior genius is equal to the task. Addison, whose Spectator was conducted with the assistance of many other pens, remarked that he had put Sir Roger De Coverly to death long before his time, for fear that some other hand would murder him. And good reason had he to dread that catastrophe, for every time his fellow laborer Steele touched the picture, he added a blemish. Although he introduced the character, he had no conception of that delicate humor in which it was afterward clothed by Addison. And if Steele misconceived the aim, Budgell blundered even in what he did aim at. The greatest masters of humor, belong to the highest order of genius—for we find among them Chaucer, Cervantes, Shakspeare, Addison and Scott.

Now, I think that we speak with acknowledged propriety of beauty in the Satires of Pope, in his Rape of the Lock, in the character of Sir Roger De Coverly, and in that of Elia. And if we do not apply the same term to a well turned epigram, the reason is not of kind, but of degree. The mirthful, which best attains its immediate end consistently with subsequent approbation, is always beautiful. A perception of its fitness to give approved delight, must be accompanied by the kindred emotion. But when the associated ideas are vulgar, or when mirth is made subservient to emotions so repugnant to humanity as contempt and malignity, no perfections of its own conditions can combine them with true pleasure in any well-ordered mind. The ultimate criterion, therefore, of the ludicrous, is that by which all other matters of taste are tried.

SECTION V.—Grave Emotions.

PENSIVENESS—GRIEF—MORAL EMOTION—SUBLIMITY.

I have said that our gay emotions are of short duration, and that they quickly settle down into calmer and graver degrees, or give way to those that are essentially of a less exhilerating nature. Mirth and joy are very evanescent, and the former, though the gayer, is the least satisfactory. Joy subsides into gladness, or some milder pleasure, if it does not go out in disappointment.

Mirth, unless employed in the service of a more enduring state of mind, appears but as a meteor, and soon vanishes entirely. The cheerfulness of healthful being, the most enduring, is the least dazzling of its class, and in many of its degrees might, with almost equal propriety, be assigned to the head of *grave;* and hope, which brings the richest stores into this field of emotion, is so frequently associated with the earnest, the solemn, and the holy, that its own gayety is merged in the gravity of its subject. But, fleeting as these emotions are, we have found them all, to some extent, the ministers of Beauty. Will the same be found true of those whose external manifestations are less inviting?

Separated by only a narrow boundary from cheerfulness, lies a region of even gentler delight and pleasingness, well known to the young of reflective habits —well known, indeed, to men of feeling, in every time of life—but especially courted by those who have not yet mastered all their faculties, nor learned to direct them in some course of steady exertion—who often mistake a pensive reverie for the higher process of meditation or reflection, and who, thereby, are disposed to attach to it an importance and dignity to which it has no proper claim. For, though in itself a highly refined emotion, and for that very reason valuable, and although the occasional visitant of all youthful genius, it is only the usher to vigorous and lofty reflection. On occasion, to give way to its fascination is profitable

—the ruder passions are subdued, and the spirit is enabled to collect itself for more refined pursuits; but the man who yields up his time, hour after hour, to pensive reverie, is dissipating his intellect in that which will furnish the less enjoyment the more it is indulged, while it is unfitting him for serious intellectual labor. He is in danger of becoming a dreamer, whose views of beauty are never realized, and whose plans of usefulness are never carried into execution. Yet, if weakness has been induced in many an intellect by a morbid resignation to such a feeling, and if much that is mawkishly sentimental in literature has been its offspring, we must also confess that many of the most refined beauties of oratory, of fiction, and of poetry, have had their origin therein.

It has seldom any other occasion than a peculiar relation between the mind and body of the thinker. If called upon to give an account of his pensiveness, he would probably answer in the spirit of Henry Kirk White, on the same subject:

> "The tear-drop stands in either eye,
> And yet I cannot tell thee why—
> I'm pleased and yet I'm sad."

So wonderfully has the Creator interwoven pleasure with all modes of virtuous existence, that not even sorrow, if unmingled with self-condemnation, refuses to contribute to the stores of beauty. The truth of this apparent paradox is exemplified in the experience of every individual of our race. I allude, not more to

that remarkable gratification in the full indulgence of sorrow, which Ossian beautifully calls the "joy of grief," and of which Moore says, "Go, let me weep, there's joy in tears," than to the warmth of affection which is so often manifested by it, and to the effect which it has in deepening and strengthening the attachments of men to one another, and in giving dignity and solemn purpose to the character. The most beautiful traits of humanity have been developed in affliction, and through the instrumentality of sorrow. Art has largely availed herself of these resources. History and fiction, oratory and poetry, painting and sculpture, alike have been enriched from this fount of human emotion. Though there are degrees of grief, which to the sufferer extinguish all the light of gratification, these degrees are also, to the same individual, void of beauty; but those in which its expression is felt to be a luxury, and the whole field of sympathetic sorrow, are the richest mines in the domain of art. And resignation, though the offspring of complete humiliation under the hand of affliction, has given ground to some of the finest effects in literature. The close of Anastasius is like the mild sky of twilight clearing up after a day of storm; and *In Memoriam* is one long Autumn of submissive woe.

It is unnecessary to dwell upon admiration and love in order to prove that they constitute occasions of beauty, or that it is by being viewed as pleasurable that they become such, nor upon any of their descendants,

gratitude, veneration, respect, esteem, etc., because I cannot conceive of any human mind that is not already aware of it.

All men may not have an equal appreciation of the beauty of virtue; but it is undeniable that they differ to the same degree in experience of its pleasures; and wherever its pleasures are admitted, and to whatever extent, there and to the same extent is it a source of beauty. The use which, in every age of literature, has been made of this principle in what is called poetic justice, proves that, notwithstanding the depravity of our nature, it has not altogether lost the original impress of its Creator. And through all its degrees, up to the perfection of holiness, we find continually ascending coördinate scales of pleasure and of beauty.

I have hastily enumerated these emotions, because, while to many minds the fact that wit and humor are capable of producing beauty may stand in need of proof, none require to be convinced of the beauty of goodness. As little need I say, in this place, of such emotions as anger, hate, revenge, remorse, envy, etc., because if they are not sources of beauty, neither are they claimed by any rational being as pleasurable. There may be beauty in the way of working them up in art, but for themselves there is no place among the causes of such pleasure as the mind can contemplate, or recur to with satisfaction. Indeed it is difficult to introduce them anywhere without incurring a blemish.

But there is one emotion of this class, which from

its elevating nature, and difference of opinion concerning its true antecedent, demands a more extensive discussion. I treat of sublimity in this connection, because, however different from beauty in its own character, it can constitute an element of art only by standing to beauty in the relation of a primary emotion. Sublimity in itself excites and overwhelms, but when that excitement can be contemplated as pleasurable, beauty follows, and the mind reposes in the delight of that emotion. In such relation alone does its artistic value consist. For beauty is sovereign in the realms of art. And all other feelings, however dissimilar their own features, when they would become denizens of art, must acknowledge her sway and submit to follow in her train. The rude, the plain, the harsh, the incongruous, may sometimes enter there, but it must be in such a manner that, in combination with other things, their effects may be in some degree beautiful.

The diversity of objects to which the adjective *sublime* can be applied, is so great as to preclude the supposition that it expresses any one sensible quality of things. Objects of sight, as the ocean, snow-capped mountains soaring above the clouds, the vivid flash of lightning, or the tumultuous rush of many waters; objects of hearing, as loud thunder, the roar of fierce animals in the forest at night, or the raving of the wintry storm; and objects of conception, as the idea of infinite duration, or of boundless space, are alike

regarded as sublime. Yet these objects, though not agreeing in any one sensible quality, do agree in presenting or suggesting to the mind one prominent idea. Vastness, or exceeding greatness, is bound up with each and all of them. In contemplating the ocean, the most prominent conceptions are those of immense extent, duration and power; and when we desire to move the feeling of sublimity by describing it, these and kindred conceptions are the means which we instinctively resort to; and the highest art can employ no better, but will only dispose the same with a better effect. Thus it is that Madame De Stael descants upon the bay of Genoa:—"that superb spectacle, the sea, on which man never left his trace. He may plough the earth; or cut his way through mountains; or contract rivers into canals, for the transport of his merchandise; but if his fleets for a moment furrow the ocean, its waves as instantly efface that slight mark of servitude, and it again appears such as it was on the first day of its creation."

The greatness of human power is set forth and magnified only to form a contrast with the far superior power of ocean, and thereby enlarge the conception of its vastness. Numerical statements of its length and breadth are too definite in themselves, and too vague in the impressions they convey, to produce the desired effect. Man's own power is mighty in his own eyes; but that in comparison with which his greatest power is feebleness, becomes overwhelming to his understanding,

to his feelings, sublime. In this case, the more obvious vastness of extent and power are associated with that of duration, and with sameness of character, as opposed to the changeableness of human things. Lord Byron, in adopting and expanding the passage, confirms this view of the subject. For all his additional images go to augment the conception of greatness:

> "Thy shores are empires, changed in all, save thee—
> Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, what are they?
> Thy waters wasted them while they were free,
> And many a tyrant since; their shores obey
> The stranger, slave or savage, their decay
> Has dried up realms to deserts;—not so thou,
> Unchangeable save to thy wild wave's play—
> Time writes no wrinkle on thy azure brow—
> Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now.
>
> "Thou glorious mirror, where th' Almighty's form
> Glasses itself in tempests: in all time,
> Calm or convulsed—in breeze, or gale, or storm,
> Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime
> Dark heaving, boundless, endless and sublime—
> The image of Eternity."

The same truth is taught in the æsthetic effect of the contradictories, darkness and excessive light. The gloom of a starless night, and the intense brightness of the rising sun are both sublime. Such is also the spectacle of multitudes united for a single purpose, and of boundless solitudes where no man dwells.

Loud peals of thunder, the roar of a battery of cannon, stormy winds, shouts of multitudes, are objects of

sublimity; and yet it is clear, that mere loudness is not the necessary antecedent. For feeble sounds, in certain circumstances, produce the same effect; as the whistling of the winds among the woods at night, and the low moaning which often occurs between the gusts of the storm; and the supernatural words which were sometimes uttered in the ear of a Hebrew prophet, must have been more sublime than the loudest sounds of nature.

"And a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks, before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice."

The passage is a true climax. For what was the tempest rending the mountains, in comparison with that still small voice, which declared the presence of God?

Of sensations, by far the greater number contributing to spiritual pleasure, belong to sight and hearing. In the case of the sublime, especially, the other senses furnish a comparatively scanty supply. Touch is too limited and well defined. Yet many furnish ideas of a kindred nature, capable of being so combined by art as to enhance that effect. Physical taste and smell are also too limited in their nature, and confined to too small objects and feeble conceptions. Such expressions as "to drain the bitter cup of fortune," and "the

bitter apples of Sodom," may consist with, that is, not impair the effect of a context otherwise sublime; but are not in themselves productive of that feeling. Moreover, they are expressions which combine the effect of various associations—the power of fortune—the antiquity and miraculous fate of Sodom—and from that source derive their dignity. The real act of tasting a bitter morsel, is very far from sublime. And the "lake which burns with fire and brimstone," quoted by Burke, certainly owes none of its sublimity to the sense of smell.

In connection, therefore, with objects of sensation, it seems to me that the idea of vastness must always be present in order to the production of sublimity.

For a pillar marking the spot at Thermopylæ where the three hundred Spartans fell, Simonides wrote the following epitaph: "Thou who passest by, tell at Lacedæmon, that we lie here in obedience to her laws." The majesty of law, the highest sense of duty to country, and generous self-devotion to the last degree, unite to constitute the source of that ennobling emotion which we experience upon pronouncing these words. Of similar nature was Nelson's signal before the battle of Trafalgar: "England expects every man to do his duty." The opulent and far-ruling England was brought before the imagination, and every sailor was made to feel himself a special object of her regard. And an instance of higher degree than either is to be found in the situation and words of Luther, at the Diet

of Worms, when standing alone before that assembly, composed of the highest dignitaries of the church, and the greatest civil powers of Europe, and who held in their hands his life and death, he undauntedly vindicated the rights of conscience, and declared his adherence to the truth of God, closing in these memorable sentences:

"If I then am not convinced by proof from Holy Scripture, or by cogent reasons, if I am not satisfied by the very texts that I have cited, and if my judgment is not, in this way, brought into subjection to God's word, I neither can nor will retract anything. For it can not be right for a Christian to speak against his conscience. Here I stand. I can not do other wise. Help me God. Amen." Of which Dr. Merle D'Aubigne well remarks: "Thus did Luther, constrained to act upon his faith, led by his conscience to the surrender of his life, bound by the noblest of all necessity—the servant of the truth he believed, and in that service most free, like a vessel freighted with treasure more precious than itself, which the pilot runs upon the rocks—pronounce the sublime words, which at the distance of three centuries still make our hearts bound within us."

But it was when the dying Savior exclaimed upon the cross, "It is finished," that men witnessed the highest instance of the moral sublime ever exhibited here below; which, however, can not be felt by the

mind that fails to contemplate the greatness of the work which was finished then.

Again, when in circumstances of danger, and of great opposition, one seems to rise superior to all, from a confidence in his own resources, and indomitable strength of mind, he becomes an object of the same ennobling feeling. Even when unsuccessful, effort may be sublime, on account of the tremendous force by which it is frustrated. The spectacle presented by Hannibal in his seventeen years' conflict with the gigantic power of Rome, is one of the best examples of this kind that history affords. And second only to that, is the struggle of Napoleon with the Allies in 1813–14. Though in the end overwhelmed by multitudes, his own skill was not defeated. In every engagement where his soldiers were faithful, and his own eye could direct their movements, he came off victorious, whatever the numbers arrayed against him. The effect does not in this case proceed from the greatness of the moral end in view, for Napoleon fought only to sustain his own dominion; but from the vastness of those intellectual resources by which he succeeded, with only the shattered remnant of an army, in defeating, again and again, the combined forces of Europe; also from the magnitude of the resistance, and the interests centered in that one man. He fell; but with him fell an empire which he had made.

It will be perceived, however, that such an example

comes far short of the grandeur to which it would rise, were it connected with the attainment of moral good, and with self-devotion to that end. The littleness of self goes far to counteract its elements of greatness.

Objects of cognizance by the pure intellect, productive of the same aesthetic effect, derive their power from the same source. I need only allude to the immensity of space, of endless duration, of certain astronomical estimates, of the boundless presence of God.

It seems to me that in all these cases the exciting cause, or antecedent, of sublimity, is that intellection to which I have repeatedly referred it. Other ideas may aid the effect; but without that of vastness, the emotion of sublimity can never arise. It is that capacity whereby we are made sensible of the greatness of the Almighty; it seems to have been implanted in the mind of man as the basis of adoration—an internal sense whereby to perceive the infinitude of Him who taketh up the islands as a very little thing, and holds the waters in the hollow of his hands.

SECTION VI.—USE OF SUBLIMITY IN ART.

Were it necessary to adduce examples to prove that sublimity enters as an element in art, only by becoming a contributor to beauty, they could be furnished to

all the extent in which art has been successful in embodying the former emotion; or with perhaps more cogency from the extant examples of her failure. For every work celebrated as sublime will be found, upon fair consideration, as truly deserving of the praise of beauty; and to whatever degree it comes short thereof, to the same degree it is perceived to be faulty. The grandeur of the Apollo Belvidere conspires harmoniously with the perfection of his symmetry; the majesty of the Minerva of Phidias was the most important element of her beauty, and the Jupiter Olympus, designed to surpass that work in beauty, was successful only in so far as greater magnitude and richer symbols more profoundly impressed it with sublimity. In West's "Death on the Pale Horse," the effect, which should have been sublime, is frustrated by neglect of this principle. The horse is, indeed, a noble creation; but the thing on his back is only horrible, and the more it is contemplated, becomes the less impressive. The size of Westminster Abbey, without its Gothic proportions, would hardly entitle it to a name in art. The grandest works of Michæl Angelo are the language of a beautiful design. Even the stupendous cathedral of St. Peter's, with all its sublime magnitude, would be no boast of art without its beauty. The Paradise Lost contains many passages of sublimity; but not one which is not also beautiful. Not because the two emotions are confounded, the one losing itself in the other, but because the pure emotion of sublimity is

itself an object of beauty, and consequently external things, which give occasion to sublimity without calling up inconsistent emotions, are, for that reason, beautiful. Observe how, in the opening of book third, the vast conception results in producing, not only elevating emotion, but also that delight in which the spirit can repose:

> "Hail Holy Light, offspring of heaven, first born!
> Or of the Eternal, coëternal beam!
> May I express thee unblamed? Since God is light,
> And never but in unapproached light
> Dwelt from eternity; dwelt then in thee,
> Bright effluence of bright essence increate!
> Or hear'st thou rather, pure etherial stream,
> Whose fountain who shall tell? Before the sun,
> Before the Heavens thou wert, and at the voice
> Of God, as with a mantle, didst invest
> The rising world of waters dark and deep
> Won from the void and formless infinite."

Even in describing hell, Milton never forgets this grand principle of art, where his object is the sublime, the proper place of which no other mind ever apprehended more truly. Even Pandemonium rises

> "—— Like an exhalation, with the sound
> Of dulcet symphonies and voices sweet,
> Built like a temple where pilasters round
> Were set, and Doric pillars, overlaid
> With golden architrave; nor did there want
> Cornice, or frieze, with bossy sculptures graven;
> The roof was fretted gold,"

And Satan is still not

> "Less than Archangel ruined, and the excess
> Of glory obscured."

Dante, whose genius was certainly not inferior, on this point displays less consummate art. Several of his pictures in Hell, designed to be sublime, are only horrible. His genius would have been a safer guide had his passions been less gloomy—his spirit less vindictive. In his zeal to prepare a place for all his enemies in hell, of such a nature as he thought they deserved, he made many a scene revolting, which otherwise would have been impressively grand.

A similar error has also been propagated by certain critics, under the false idea that what is terrible, must therefore be sublime—a notion more likely to injure the works of learned mediocrity than of true genius. Burke, who most eloquently advocated the doctrine, had too fine an intuitive taste to be misled by it in practice.

In that noble hymn with which Thompson closes his poem on the Seasons, the conception is the loftiest that human thought can reach unto; and with such truth of art is it unfolded, that not one painful image is suffered to mar its fair proportions:

> "These, as they change, Almighty Father, these
> Are but the varied God. The rolling year
> Is full of Thee. Forth in the pleasing Spring

Thy beauty walks, Thy tenderness and love
Wide flush the fields; the softening air is balm;
Echo the mountains round: the forest smiles;
And every sense and every heart is joy.
Then comes Thy glory in the Summer months,
With light and heat refulgent. Then Thy sun
Shoots full perfection through the swelling year:
And oft Thy voice in dreadful thunder speaks:
And oft at dawn, deep noon, or falling eve,
By brooks and groves, in hollow whispering gales
Thy bounty shines in Autumn unconfined,
And spreads a common feast for all that lives.
In Winter awful! Thou with clouds and storms
Around Thee thrown, tempest o'er tempest rolled
Majestic darkness! on the whirlwind's wing,
Riding sublime, Thou bidst the world adore,
And humblest Nature with Thy northern blast."

And so on, through the whole piece, the same majesty of conception, ministering to the same dominant emotion—the sublime idea of an every-where-present God—dignifying the harmonious pictures of his creation, till the culmination in that incomparable close:

"Should fate command me to the furthest verge
Of the green earth, to distant barbarous climes,
Rivers unknown to song; where first the sun
Gilds Indian mountains, or his setting beam
Flames on the Atlantic isles; 'tis nought to me:
Since God is ever present, ever felt,
In the void waste as in the city full;
And where He vital breathes there must be joy.
When e'en, at last, the solemn hour shall come,
And wing my mystic flight to future worlds,
I, cheerful, will obey; there, with new powers,

Will rising wonders sing: I cannot go
Where universal love not smiles around,
Sustaining all yon orbs, and all their suns;
From seeming evil still educing good,
And better thence again, and better still,
In infinite progression. But I lose
Myself in Him, in light ineffable!
Come then, expressive silence muse His praise."

I might adduce, also, Coleridge's "Hymn to Mont Blanc," which, with a grasp of stronger power, produces a similar effect in the same way.

On the other hand, literature, as well as the other arts, presents many examples of noble conceptions marred by circumstances inconsistent with ultimate beauty as well as with greatness. The ugly may appear in a sublime picture only as a discord in music, when correctly dissolved into the surrounding harmony. Such, for instance, is the homely image of the wedge, in the following from the "Hymn to Mont Blanc:"

"Hast thou a charm to stay the morning star
In his steep course? So long he seems to pause
On thy bald awful head, O sovran Blanc!
The Arve and Arveiron at thy base
Rave ceaselessly; but thou, most awful form,
Risest from forth thy silent sea of pines—
How silently. Around thee and above,
Deep is the air and dark, substantial black,
An ebon mass, *methinks thou piercest it*
As with a wedge! But when I look again,
It is thine own calm home, thy crystal shrine,
Thy habitation from eternity!"

If not so resolved, the fate of the passage will be very different. Witness the following from the Course of Time:

> "Revealed in flaming fire,
> The angel of God appeared in stature vast,
> Blazing, and lifting up his hand on high,
> By Him that lives forever, swore that time
> Should be no more. Throughout, creation heard
> And sighed; all rivers, lakes, and seas and woods,
> Desponding waste and cultivated vales,
> Wild cave and ancient hill, and every rock
> Sighed. Earth, arrested in her wonted path,
> As ox struck by the lifted ax when nought
> Was feared, in all her entrails deeply groaned.
> A universal crash was heard, as if
> The ribs of Nature broke, and all her dark
> Foundations failed."

The subject and principal imagery in this picture are essentially grand, and if treated in a proper, workmanlike manner, could not fail of sublimity; yet that effect is first marred by an enumeration of small items, and the conclusion is so incongruous that if the design were not otherwise known, the whole might be taken for a very happy attempt at burlesque. The earth suddenly arrested in her path by the will of an unseen God, and the universal sinking of Nature, are truly sublime—but the comparison of the Divine Will, in that act, to a butcher felling an ox, is so utterly at variance with the elements of both sublimity and beauty, that its introduction by a man of ordinary taste is unaccountable; and the catastrophe of Nature

breaking her ribs is not much better, being evidently borrowed from an accident to the human frame, which may be terrible, but is very far from sublime.

A fault of an apparently opposite nature, though really sinning against the same law, is that of decking common-place subjects in style and imagery of disproportionate grandeur, which tends only to turn the whole into ridicule. Pomposity of diction, so far from elevating a mean topic, is even injurious to the naturally lofty. The incongruity between swelling language and a common-place subject, or between petty affectation and a noble subject, is calculated to move only laughter and contempt.

In these remarks I would not be understood to mean that sublimity ever changes into beauty. Such a view is at variance with all my conceptions of the human mind. But the recognition of an object as one calculated to produce the former emotion is followed by the latter, unless marred by some unnecessary addition. Terror may overpower it, disgust may counteract it, astonishment may, for a season, paralyze the powers of reflection—but whenever the vast or the infinite is contemplated in itself, and in view of the emotion it primarily awakens, the resultant feeling is that admiration in which the human spirit loves to dwell.

CHAPTER VIII.

ASSOCIATION AND COMBINATION OF FEELINGS.

I HAVE presented the foregoing not as constituting a complete list of the states of mind addressed by art, but only as examples to show what I believe to be the true method of obtaining correct rules to work by, as well as just principles on which to judge, in all cases where matters of taste are in question. The feelings involved may be represented as infinitely varied, and those of which I have spoken as if isolated, are not isolated in their actual occurrence, but exist in multifarious combinations, shading into one another in such a manner that it is impossible to say where one ends and another begins. They are of every conceivable degree, and the names applied to them are only signs for the more remarkable of a series—the larger waves that agitate the sea of thought, not regions of a boundary so definite that we can distinguish the very instant when the line has been crossed that separates joy from gladness, grief from sorrow, or veneration from esteem. They melt into one another insensibly, sometimes by a

longer and sometimes by a shorter process, but generally so that we can not name an instant at which we have abruptly passed from one to another. Perhaps it would be more correct to represent our emotions as infinitely more numerous than the names we have for them; as in the case of some sensations, smell, for example, where the names applied are only vague, general terms—attempts to classify feelings endlessly diversified. But to speak of them in the manner of common language, they are like the hues of the rainbow, distinct and marked enough in their individual existence, but, where they join each other, beautifully blending, one insensibly begun ere the foregoing has perceptibly diminished, and the latter still retaining a faint degree of influence when the succeeding has almost secured its highest dominion. The words, grief, joy, sorrow, and so forth, are general designations for the more remarkable states of feeling; but the mind, in passing from one of these to another goes through a multitude of kindred intermediate states on which the tongue of man has yet conferred no names.

Moreover, in obedience to the laws of suggestion, one state of mind is continually recalling some other, with which, on a former occasion, it may have been associated, so that it is often difficult to determine what amount is due to the object of present contemplation and what to some former experience. For example, suppose a person returning to the home of his childhood and youth, after an absence of many

years, and accompanied by a friend to whom the scene is new. By the former, much of the pleasure attendant upon the recognition of particular objects has always been anticipated, and the first view of the old trees beside his father's dwelling, or the green hill side on which his boyhood played, produce in him a glow of delight, as if they were clothed in beauty; indeed, to him, no matter what they may be to other eyes, they are beautiful — they bring back the emotions of his early days, and chiefly those of a pleasurable nature, which are most tenacious of the memory. Upon the latter the same objects may have quite an opposite effect. He may, at first, be able to see no beauty in any of them. But, when he perceives their charm for his friend, and listens to his enumeration of causes of delight, his own heart is touched with a similar pleasure, though less vivid and perhaps tinged with sadness. For he then inevitably reverts to the scenes of his own youth, which are perhaps far away, and imagination, drawing from the riches of his own life, endows external nature with interest, until objects really new are associated with feelings from his own experience, and he enters into a participation of his friend's delight. But though he sympathizes with him and discourses with him of all the present "affectionate and true," he is really deriving his own emotions from another and a distant scene. From different fountains spring those waters, which are now uniting

in a common stream. And yet in another and profounder sense they spring from the same fountains. For although the thoughts of these two friends turn to different scenes, yet both scenes owe the interest with which they are invested to the deep springs of the human soul. And if either friend is happy in the picture given of his boyish days, the similar experience of men may succeed in moving the other to a high degree of pleasure, and in proportion as present objects are connected with such emotions, they will partake more and more of beauty in the eyes of both.

Men in such circumstances often believe that they think alike; and yet, how different must necessarily be the degrees and combinations of their feelings, owing to the different imagery upon which their conceptions are formed, and consistently therewith, the various modifications of thought and emotion extending their influence even over the character of present sensations. Over all these, though in number inexpressible, the mind glides in perfect order, but with such rapidity that all seem to be mixed up and blended into one, of which nothing is commonly noted save the general tone. So is it continually in times of strong emotion; and only by special effort are we able, for a short period, to separate these things from one another. By this principle of association and blending, as it were, of conceptions, many objects come to be viewed as beautiful or not, on grounds entirely distinct from their

own merits; and to it must we often recur, in explaining the effects especially of literary art.

It must have been perceived that in the example given, there is not only association going on in the mind of each individual, but also a common understanding and alliance of feeling gradually instituted between them. To this process, which we call sympathy, do we owe many of our æsthetic, as well as moral delights. A person in a state of mind which might be called indifferent, upon entering a room where all are merry, and every face beaming with happiness, will soon feel the pleasing effect upon his own spirits. Without knowing the cause of the prevailing cheerfulness, he will unconciously join in it. Should the same person, in the indifferent state of mind which we have supposed, enter a house of mourning, the sorrowful countenances around would produce a corresponding sadness. We are designed by our Creator to "rejoice with those who do rejoice,' as well as to "weep with those who weep." And that human soul must be very debased indeed, which fails to reflect the light of a fellow man's emotion.

However clearly we may trace the antecedents, it is still a wonderful feature of our spiritual being, that it is capable of effecting its own states in the mind of another, with, at the same time, a capacity for receiving such impressions. As the galvanic stream which passes through one wire induces a corresponding

current in another, laid parallel and adjoining to it, so human souls enjoy such parallelism of constitution, that the affections of one readily awaken their correspondents in another.

By the aid of association we have also instituted a sympathy with external nature. Although a cloudy day is, in itself, no more sorrowful than one clothed in the brightest sunshine, yet we have connected in our minds the former with sadness, and the latter with gaiety; and sympathise with the emotions thus ascribed, speaking familiarly of the one as gloomy, and of the other as cheerful, perhaps from recollection of former sadness or tedium on rainy days, and happy rambles in the clear, warm sunlight. In some such way have we instituted a sympathy between our own hearts and all the ordinary forms and lights of the external world. To so great an extent does this principle prevail that many conceptions originally painful have become pleasant, and many, which were originally pleasant, have ceased to be so, from association and from sympathy with the feelings of our fellow men.

But all minds are not equally susceptible of every emotion. Some more readily and fully sympathize with the joyous; others with the sad. Nor is any given mind at all times equally capable of being moved by the same objects. Let a person in the enjoyment of high spirits and public display be called upon to contemplate a passage in the "Night Thoughts," what

pleasure could he find therein? On the other hand, should one mourning the death of a beloved friend have his attention directed to some of the witty conceits of Hudibras, he would only think the book trifling, and the person who annoyed him with it inhuman. A thousand such varieties of temperament, more or less marked than these, modify our capacities for enjoyment, and our views of the beautiful. The individual mind will most readily sympathize with an emotion of that class which it has most frequently experienced, and to which it has more suggestions leading: thus measuring all things by its own order and preëxisting states. A suitable frame of mind is that which alone can render criticism true and genial, while the pleasures of art, derived from all the abovementioned sources, are also subject to misappreciation and detraction, from being judged by persons in a frame of mind unsuited to the task. Many of the faults found by the critic in a work of art, are faults of his own mind—faults which he himself, in another state of feeling, would never have thought of. The best qualified mind is not always in a state duly to appreciate the merits of any given work; and some are by nature permanently unqualified. Had Dr. Johnson possessed the ordinary breadth and susceptibility of a human soul, he would have canceled, on some future reading, many of his remarks on Gray and Milton, turning, as they do, not upon blemishes of the authors, but errors and failures of his own capa-

city to perceive. Some radical defect must have disqualified Jeffrey to judge of the poetry of Wordsworth, or he could not have persisted in and republished his crudities, after an interval of thirty years. No person is competent to criticise any work of genius, if incapable of sympathizing with, and estimating aright, the spirit in which its author composed it.

CHAPTER IX.

HARMONY OF EMOTION IN A WORK.

THOUGH beauty may be reached under the guidance of so many feelings, yet any given effort to attain that end must suffer only one to take the lead, which all others enlisted shall implicitly follow. If sublimity is chosen as the guide, then all the imagery, however varied, must be of a nature accordant therewith. The complete attainment of the sublime will lead to beauty, but a failure of the former effect will inevitably frustrate the latter. Thus, in Milton's apostrophe to light, the first twelve lines are purely sublime, and although afterward a personal infirmity is introduced, and the material of what follows is drawn more from sadness, the emotion first presented is continued throughout, all the imagery being framed in relation to it; even the poet's blindness is so introduced as to enhance the effect, by way of contrast—the privation of a sublime capacity.

In Goldsmith's "Deserted Village" a picture of evening is made eminently beautiful by the successful working up of a feeling of pensive repose.

> "Sweet was the sound, when oft, at evening's close,
> Up yonder hill the village murmur rose;

> There, as I passed with careless steps and slow,
> The mingling notes came softened from below;
> The swain responsive to the milkmaid sung,
> The sober herd that lowed to meet their young;
> The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,
> The playful children just let loose from school;
> The watch-dog's voice, that bayed the whispering wind,
> And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind,
> These all in sweet confusion sought the shade
> And fill'd each pause the nightingale had made."

The key-note of this passage is given in the first line, in the words "evening's close." For the idea of evening is associated with that of rest from toil; and its influence is independently, for the most part, of a soothing nature. The succeeding imagery is admirably calculated to maintain the unity of emotion. The murmurs of the village are not represented as listened to in the street, but after they have been softened and blended by rising to some distance on the air, and they are just loud enough to detain the ear when the nightingale is silent. The listener is in a state of indolent enjoyment. He passes with careless steps and slow, and though evening has closed in, he is spoken of as in the shade: because the shade of a grove is so connected with the idea of undisturbed retirement that it might be used as its symbolical hieroglyphic. And the picture is appropriately finished by the equally fitting symbol of a summer evening, the song of the nightingale. Several trains of thought are here bound together by one common simple emotion; and the perception of separate and united fitness of all to produce

that emotion gives rise to the beauty which every one, in a suitable frame of mind, must feel upon reading the passage, while the consistently pleasing sound of the words, and smoothness of the versification, contribute their aid to the effect of the imagery.

In the following, admiration is the primary emotion, to the production of which all the particulars contribute:

> "Fair clime! where every season smiles
> Benignant o'er those blessed isles,
> Which seen from far Colonna's hight,
> Make glad the heart that hails the sight,
> And lend to loneliness delight.
> There, mildly dimpling, ocean's cheek
> Reflects the tints of many a peak,
> Caught by the laughing tides that lave
> Those Edens of the eastern wave."

It would be pleasant to accumulate illustrations under the heads of various feelings, from all the arts, but it is not necessary; every reader can supply himself with abundance from the stores of his own experience. Whatever primary emotion is addressed must be taken as a guide in the selection of imagery. If any one of the particulars composing a picture introduce an emotion inconsistent with the rest, the effect of the whole is marred.

CHAPTER X.

OF THE PICTURESQUE.

THE works of ancient art, in their simple and perfect symmetry, declared their conformity to rule; but in many of modern times, a fine effect is obtained by a course directly the opposite—that is, by concealing all design upon beauty, and by even appearing to violate her laws. As when, in laying out a garden, we avoid the regularity of straight, circular, elliptic, or otherwise formed outlines, and adopt apparently accidental curves, plant our trees not in rows or phalanxes, or any shape of recognized elegance, but in such a way as they might have grown up by nature—introducing here and there a seeming deformity, a rude grey rock, or view of a moldering ruin, and deem it a singular good feature to have an old and lofty tree, with branches shattered by the storm—we aim at a high artistic end, by a seemingly utter rejection of art. In this case, we not only conceal art, but appear even to spurn and reject it—to run wild from all its constraints; and yet, the end we seek is beauty, and the care we

take to exclude every element inconsistent therewith, is most scrupulous. While refusing to array our trees in shapes of formal order, to plant them in actual disorder will not answer the purpose. We throw them here into a careless looking group, there into a straggling column, in one place sprinkle them over the lawn, and in another, crowd them into a dark thicket; but so that the group, obstructing one view, may direct the eye to a better—that the column, though apparently an imperfect, accidental thing, may open up from some position where, unexpectedly, a majestic avenue forms a vista to some distant and effective point, and that both may present themselves from different points of view, in a variety of spirited and striking aspects; or, in short, that the various elements may so combine as to produce upon the whole one beautiful effect, which could not have been anticipated from any of the parts.

This is not the mere concealing of effort, belonging to the finish of all good works of art: it is the appearance of being wildly free from rules—the exclusion from the work, of every ostensible mark that it is a work at all—the insertion of features that seem boldly to contradict rule, and that with the very design of producing upon the whole a highly refined variety of beauty, which no obvious conformity to rules could ever attain.

Such, I think, is the nature of the picturesque. The word, like many others, very inadequate if

taken etymologically, is by common usage sufficiently defined, and appropriated to its derivative sense, while that of being like a picture has become almost obsolete. Its common acceptation now, is the disposal of heterogeneous elements into such a manner as to produce the effect, upon the whole, of beautiful wildness.

It is essential to the picturesque that, together with elements of gentle loveliness, it should embrace others which are rude, irregular, gloomy, stern, savage, surprising, or otherwise at variance with formal beauty, and yet, that all should harmoniously conspire in one pleasing result. No formal lines, nor parallelograms, nor circles of trees, however elegant, can in themselves be picturesque, because they exclude the element of irregularity. So, on the other hand, a plantation of trees actually without any order, would fail of the same effect, from want of unity. In the one case the whole would be marred by a show of art—in the other by being without meaning. The tameness of the formal, no less than of the inane, is fatal to the picturesque, which might be designated, in one expression, as *the beauty of wildness.* Contrast is an important ingredient in its composition. Sometimes the rude is contrasted with the gentle, as, in medieval society, the gentleness of ladies and of knightly courtesy with the rudeness of military occupation and of common life; sometimes wild, barren scenery with the rich and lovely—a view of a craggy mountain is opened up

through the vista of an elegant landscape; sometimes the quiet of uncultivated nature meets the eye, amid the elaborate devices of art, as when the walks of a garden lead us to a little lake, slumbering in the bosom of a wooded dell; sometimes the gay is contrasted with the gloomy, light with darkness, etc., as in the opening of the first canto of Marmion, where the busy castle and the fair river are set over against the rude and lonely mountains—and the wretched gloom of the captives within is, by a beautiful stroke of the imagination, brought into contrast with the joyous light outside—and the dark, moving figures of the warriors are relieved against the light of the evening sky. And yet, to be contrasted is not enough. All these images are conducive to graphic delineation of the calm of sunset over a feudal scene; which is beautifully finished by the still further contrast of the warder pacing to and fro to the time of his border gathering song, beneath the drooping flag, which the evening wind has scarcely strength to wave.

"Day set on Norham's castled steep,
And Tweed's fair river, broad and deep,
And Cheviot's mountains lone;
The battled towers, the donjon keep,
The loop-hole grates where captives weep,
The flanking walls that round it sweep,
In yellow lustre shone.
The warriors on the turrets high,
Moving athwart the evening sky,

Seemed forms of giant hight;
Their armor, as it caught the rays,
Flashed back again the western blaze,
In lines of dazzling light.
St. George's banner broad and gay,
Now faded as the fading ray
Less bright and less was flung;
The evening gale had scarce the power
To wave it on the donjon tower,
So heavily it hung.
The scouts had parted on their search,
The castle gates were barred,
Above the gloomy portal arch,
Timing his footsteps to a march,
The warder kept his guard—
Low humming as he paced along,
Some ancient border gathering song,

Similar illustrations might be copied in great numbers from the same poem—as from the close of the battle of Flodden, and from the death of Marmion, where, almost within sweep of the tempest of battle, Clara finds the well of Sybil Grey; from the picture of the ruined but still resisting and impenetrable fragment of the Scottish army, as

"Utter darkness closed her wing
O'er their thin host and wounded king;"

And from which the English troops withdrew,

"As mountain waves from wasted lands,
Sweep back to ocean blue;"

And from, indeed, almost all the works of its author. The picturesque is the peculiar charm of Sir Walter Scott—the field in which he has no equal. It lay at the command of Cervantes and Shakspeare, but Scott lives in it, and every offspring of his imagination is more or less colored thereby. And this secret of his singular power over other minds, was, at the same time, the spell which attracted his own to feudal life and institutions, and rendered them subservient to his purposes.

The picturesque, as an acknowledged element in art, was born in the contrasts of medieval times, when the fragments and ruins of ancient things were gradually grouping themselves together with the new and still half savage, into something like unity. Upon the revival of intellectual freedom in Europe, it appeared to some degree in all classes of productions, but most eminently in that eldest child of modern genius, the Gothic architecture. The segregating principle of ancient taste very sparingly admitted the picturesque, though often presented on the face of nature. The rude peaks of Parnassus rising over the Cyrrhæan plain and adjoining sea, with the town and temple of Delphi upon its side, must have constituted a scene truly picturesque. The vale of Tempe, the pastures of Arcadia, and many a scene in Sicily, are celebrated for just that kind of beauty; yet, with the exception of Homer and Æschylus, Greek authors made very

little of it, and by all her artists, as far as their remaining works enable us to judge, it seems to have been carefully avoided. For that charming combination of the regular with the irregular, of the rude with the elegant, in works of modern genius, we seem to be indebted to the disorganization and romantic sentiments of the Middle Ages.

CHAPTER XI.

RECAPITULATION.

FROM all the different sources of beauty now passed under review, the following results appear to have been fairly deduced.

Of simple sensations those that are gratifying to the organs are beautiful. Truth, to be beautiful, needs only to be set in clear light, or, in other words, the view of it entirely freed from obstruction. In truth relative, the representation must perfectly coincide with fact; at least there must be no discrepancy apparent. In resemblance, the like, mingled with, but easily distinguished from, the unlike, must stimulate to classification, without fatiguing. In the case of cause and effect, the perfect adequacy of the one to the other must be, not obvious, but ascertainable with little labor, and so arranged that the learner may be guided by secure steps to the truth. It appears that unity and simplicity, corresponding to the mind's organization, have in the midst of all the various particulars going to full expression of the subject idea, to be kept definite, unwavering, and unembarrassed: that design,

the manifestation of a directing reason, must be such as the fullest consideration of the end to be attained, and the available means, will justify: that utility must appear efficient to the accomplishment of the conceived design: that proportion, being the measure of parts for effecting unity of design, must appear exactly adapted to that purpose: that all agreeable emotions are necessarily sources of beauty in their own right: and that by sympathy and association they often render other objects beautiful, which of themselves have no claim to such an honor. These, if correct, are fundamental rules of art. The subordinate and specific must be developed by more minute study of the several heads.

Now, if we compare together the items of this summary, we shall be induced to take another step in generalizing. Sensations please by their adaptation to the physical organs—truth, because the mind entirely assents to it, as soon as all obstacles to the view of it are removed; truth relative, resemblance, cause and effect, when best suited to their purpose of communicating information in stimulating and guiding the mind to the acquisition of knowledge; unity and simplicity, design, utility and proportion, when most in accordance with the mind's organization and manner of working in the disposal of its knowledge, and, thereby, best adapted to aid its operations; and pleasurable emotions, for the obvious reason that they are perceived to be pleasurable.

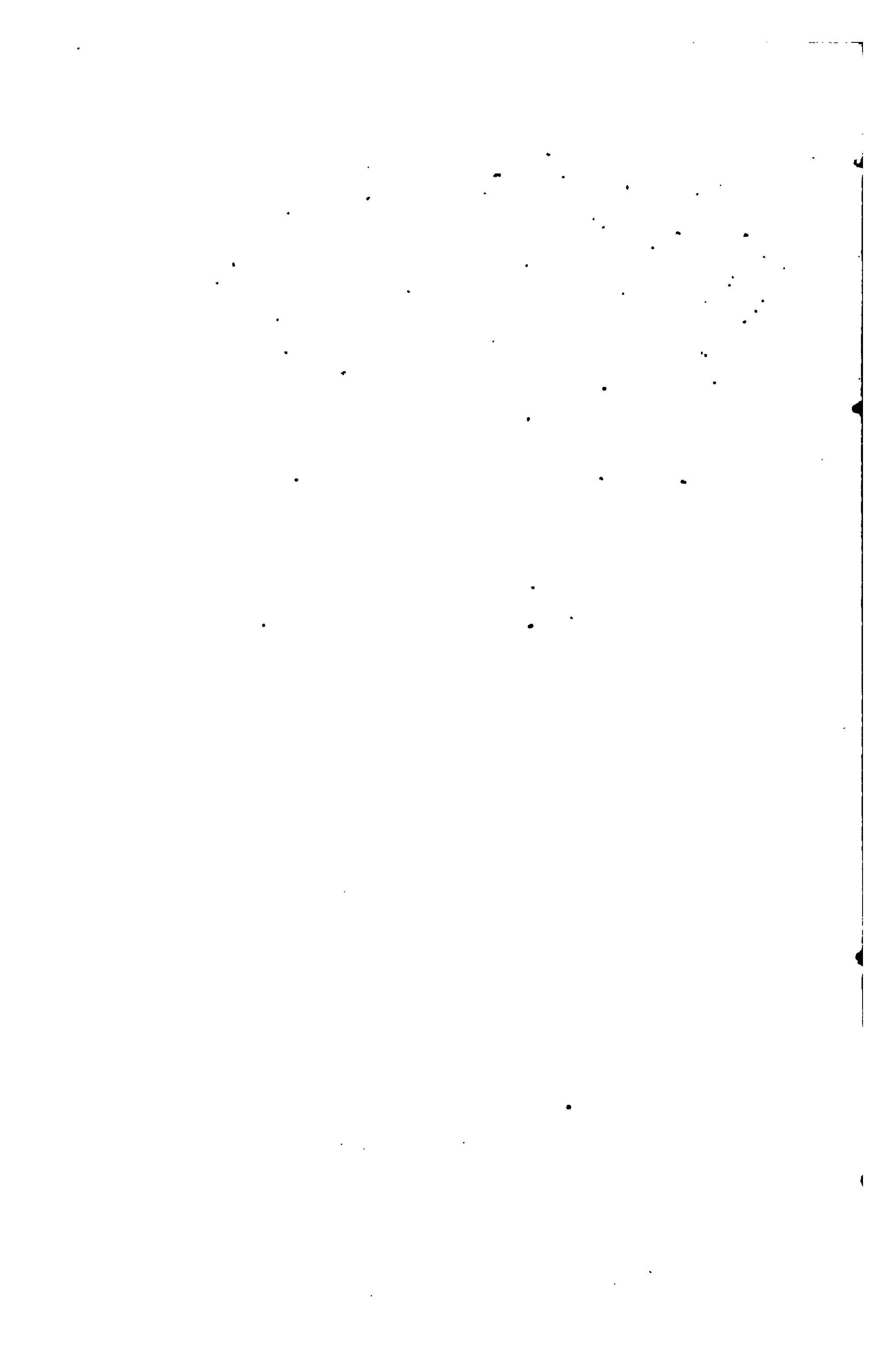
Again, in looking over these results, we find one feature common to them all. They all have regard to correspondence immediately with some state of the mind, or immediately with the organs which it employs. And this, I think, is the only feature common to them all. Hence the conclusion, intimated at an earlier stage of our inquiry, but which is presented now in a more general form, that *the beautiful* (that is, the invariable intellectual antecedent of the emotion of beauty) *is the mind's conception of conformity in objects to its own nature.* This is the one gate through which all the avenues to beauty, infinitely varied as they are, must ultimately pass. The language employed in stating this conclusion is not capable of conveying all the meaning which it is intended to bear, to any except those who have followed us through the whole inquiry; nor is it possible to adopt any form of speech which will do so to a mind not prepared by reflection on the subject. Whatever the human spirit perceives to be in accordance to its own states and order is, to it, beautiful; or still, in other words, what it perceives to give satisfactory delight, whether directly or by association.

The æsthetic mental process is entirely analogous to the moral, and the act of the judgment in the one case is as liable to err and as amenable to criticism as in the other; and if an error in the former is not followed by such severe penalties as in the latter, it is only because the interests at stake are not so vital.

To the full extent of their importance æsthetic faults are punished as truly as those which are made in morals. It is not necessary to award them imprisonment or death, nor has the Creator attached to them the pangs of remorse; but whoever commits them will certainly suffer in the diminution and lack of refinement of his own nature and enjoyments, and also from dissatisfaction and shame upon further experience.

As conscience is the rewarder and punisher of moral rectitude and error, so beauty is the supreme arbiter of all pleasure, enhancing all that it approves, delaying upon agreeable conceptions, and constituting an appropriate reward of every struggle toward excellence—the appellate court of happiness, approving of only the higher and purer of agreeable experiences, itself becoming the highest cause, while the criterion, of all delight. It is that faculty whereby we *enjoy* every form of the good and true, at once the pleasing guide to virtue and symmetry of life, and indispensable to our ideas of the divine perfections. Doubtless in the sight of God all creation is beautiful—because he has made it according to the purpose of his own will; and to man redeemed in heaven this field of happiness must forever continue to expand, as his spirit grows into higher harmony with the divine mind; but while in this state of being we must continue to be limited to objects of which we can comprehend the excellence, and to excellencies we can appreciate. The beautiful of man consists of but glimpses into the beautiful of

God—broken strains of the universal harmony—gleams of the perfection of Deity piercing the darkness of our ignorance and depravity—straggling rays from the daylight of heaven. Plato represented it as the remembrance of what the soul has known in a preëxistent state, while yet a resident of the regions of perfect blessedness, before its confinement in this material prison; and the idea though fanciful, is evidence that he had truly apprehended the nature of that divine power whereby man is elevated so far above all his fellow inhabitants of earth.



PART II.

We have now arrived at the second general head of our subject—the faculties employed in production and criticism. These are infinitely varied, and of course include the principle already treated; but all that needs to be said in this connection may be arranged under the heads of Taste, Originality, Imitation, Invention, Genius, Talent, Imagination, and Fancy.

CHAPTER I.

OF TASTE.

Taste, in æsthetic acceptation, is the faculty of criticism. And the office of criticism is to distinguish the beautiful from its opposites, and from all spurious claimants to its honors. The qualifications for this office must be the possession of a delicate susceptibility to the emotion of beauty, and a correct judgment

concerning the real capabilities of things to produce the primary states of mind which always precede that ultimate emotion. In other words, Taste is the combined action of beauty and its intellectual antecedent.

If the view of this intellectual sequence were always equally clear and unembarrassed, there would be no occasion to add another word; but many causes operate to prevent a correct judgment upon the real merits of things, as well as to hinder the just development of susceptibility. These have given rise to a variety of opinions on the subject of Taste, as to what it is, and whether all good taste be the same. The former of these questions we have already answered, although the full import of that answer can appear only after an examination of the proper objects of Taste. In treating of the latter it is common to employ the term "standard of taste," a phrase which, if it effects any thing at all, must lead astray. For it implies either the setting up of some one person's taste as the model upon which all others are to be shaped, which is unreasonable; or of some one species of excellence to which all others are to conform, which is impossible; or the measurement of the mental faculty by some material scale, which is absurd. And were it possible to establish such a model, or standard, and were it accordingly set up and acknowledged, no person could ever afterward exercise any Taste at all. Every thing bearing the name would be mere submission to authority; on which, by the way, both

authors and artists are naturally too much inclined to rely, and ask no further. Moreover, who has authority to set up such an imperial standard? Certainly no person will claim it for himself, and none other is competent to confer it upon him, save the united voice of the public, which by that very act would constitute itself the authority. And this would amount to just leaving the matter where it was, and where, in this respect, it must forever remain. We can have standard weights and standard measures; but can never realize the conception of a standard taste. With equal propriety might we speak of a standard of reason, a standard of love, or of hate, or of imagination. Strange that the notion has not been laughed out of countenance long ago.

We have no design to appoint a great dictator of taste, whom all must obey; but simply to enquire, whether or not there is any thing like agreement among men, on this subject? In other words, are there any principles of taste generally acknowledged among men? Nor is this an unimportant question; for if it must be answered in the negative, there can be no such thing as æsthetic science, or rules to guide the labors of the artist.

It must be granted, that agreement on this head is not complete. All men do not enjoy pleasure, or the same degree of pleasure, from the same objects: what delights the uncivilized, may excite only contempt in the refined. The ornaments of beads and coarse paint,

which to the Indian's eye enhance the beauty of the human figure, are ridiculous to the European; while the Indian is incapable of appreciating many of the refined arts of his white brethren. The white man says of the Indian, that he has no taste, and probably the Indian has the same opinion of the white man; but is it not evident that they both possess that faculty, seeing that the exercise of it is the very subject on which they differ? But even in the history of civilized man, some variety has occurred from time to time in the decisions of taste. Among the Greeks, for example, the simple style of architecture, embodying the most complete repose, was deemed most beautiful. The Romans thought that simplicity too tame, and sought in all their public buildings to dazzle by luxurious ornament. The taste of the Middle Ages admired the dark and massive, and reviving Europe gave her love to the bewildering beauty and imposing grandeur of the Gothic. A similar diversity may be observed among judgments on the excellence of the other arts. In oratory, the flowery eloquence of Asia and Rhodes, the severe style of Attica, the graceful and impassioned flow of Cicero, the tawdry affectations of the later Empire, and the metaphysical quibbling of the Dark Ages, all had their admirers in their respective places and periods. And works of great popularity at one time, have, at another, sunk into utter neglect. The Euphuists of the days of Elizabeth, although they enjoyed unbounded applause in their own time, are

now so completely neglected that the very fact of their existence constitutes an item of antiquarian knowledge. Amid this variety, is it possible to prove any one more correct than another, or must they all be accounted equally just? Only a brief comparison is needed to show that they are not all equally correct. For in general, the savage, when well educated, and furnished with just views of the real relations of things, coincides with the taste of the refined: what he continues to dislike in the fashions of civilization being only what men of good sense generally disapprove of, and what he continues to admire in his native wilds being nothing more than what those born in civilization would also admire, were they equally well acquainted with these, or had associated with them equally agreeable reminiscences. The peculiar notions of the savage are therefore erroneous, seeing that they are dispelled by more extensive knowledge.

Rome was possessed of wealth and dominion, and for centuries covered the world with architectural monuments of her gorgeous taste. The more modest beauty of the works of Greece was overlooked by the sumptuous masters of the world, and those who blindly followed in their train. But after the dominion of Roman luxury, and that obscuration of the intellect of Europe which followed upon its downfall, had passed away, and attention had been called to the works of Greece, the voice of the world became once more eloquent in their praise. All the nations of modern

civilization, who can not be supposed more partial to Greece than to Rome, have with one accord confirmed the taste of the older country. Such a general and zealous return to the rules of ancient art, where there has been no power used to compel, and no common prejudice prevailing, nay, in spite of different national prejudices, can be explained only by reference to some permanent principles in human nature; while the reign of Roman taste is easily accounted for by the sovereign, political, and military influence of the imperial city, and the pride and luxurious habits of the people.

The diversity of opinion among cotemporaneous nations on matters of taste, can for the most part be accounted for by inequality of knowledge, and national prejudice. Thus the French were wont to despise Shakspeare, while they refused to study him, because he was an Englishman. They praise him now, when they give him a hearing, and take the trouble to understand him. Both French and English hooted at German literature, while it was but partially known and greatly misapprehended among them, and because they had preconceived of stupidity as inherent in all German brains. Now Goëthe and Schiller have fairly taken their places, even in French and English estimation, among the great ones of the earth. Consequently, we infer that French, German, and English taste is the same, *where no cause exterior to itself* interferes on either side.

In regard to the more *remarkable* objects of sense, the unanimity of mankind is almost perfect. Who refuses to acknowledge the green fields of spring as beautiful? And wherefore do thousands, year after year, visit the banks of the Rhine and the lakes of Italy? Persons from all quarters of the world have looked upon Niagara, and all, whatever their first impressions, finally agree as to its sublimity.

Such is also the case in regard to ancient works of literature. For twenty-seven hundred years, the poems of Homer have afforded pleasure to all who have given them intelligent perusal. The works of Æschylus, of Sophocles, of Herodotus, of Plato, etc., why have they been preserved with so much care by generation after generation, for more than two thousand years? No other reason can be assigned than the pleasure which they have furnished every intelligent reader. The temple of Minerva Parthenon, even in ruins, is a topic upon which every traveler to Athens loves to dwell. Can we doubt, that if it had been preserved in all its ancient beauty, it would still be admired with as much enthusiasm as in the days of Pericles? The Venus de Medici, the Apollo Belvidere, and Antinous, modeled to the taste of ancient times, are found to command the approbation of that of modern times. Such, in short, is the testimony of all extant works of ancient literature and art, whose merits are in their beauty. We have thus, in fact, the recorded vote of

many ages and countries on the subject, satisfactorily proving that the good taste of antiquity is good taste still; and that the leading principles, according to which such works are produced, are acknowledged, when understood, by all men. Many reasons may be assigned for partial and superficial difference; but only one can account for universally radical agreement.

There is ground, then, for the distinction of tastes into correct and false, or good and bad, and errors can be controverted here, as well as in other fields of intellectual effort, not by appeal to a standard, but by adducing *arguments* drawn from the unchanging principles of human nature, and the material world. The decision upon the accordance or non-accordance to the human spirit, of all things external to itself, is not the fickle, accidental and isolated choice of the individual; but the inevitable, universal determination of the mind in obedience to a law of its being; and the agreement of those decisions is not effected, nor to be effected by the procrustean method of measuring all by an arbitrary standard, but by the exhibition of conformity to acknowledged principles.

Such being the case, the author or artist is under no necessity of cleaving to a given model, and of reproducing forms already familiar, effects already attained; he may contemplate results hitherto undreamed of by others, and yet, if those principles are kept steadily in view, and he is able in his work completely to fill

their requisitions, he may produce what shall certainly please the correctly informed and unbiassed, and what posterity will not readily suffer to die.

Radical principles being universally acknowledged, inferior differences may be reconciled by comparison of opinions, and reasoning on the basis of common feeling. The subject is a fair field of argument. So far is the adage, that "tastes are not to be disputed," from being true, that few things are more frequently disputed, and in view of some principles, more easily disputed, than bad taste. Good taste, resulting from the union of natural sensibility with judgment, assumes a different character as one or the other predominates. Where the sensibility is active, there must be delicate taste, and warm enthusiasm toward its objects; where the sensibility is under the control of a sounder or severer judgment, there will be greater correctness and a firmer attachment to the objects preferred. The existence of both in a high degree in one mind, constitutes what is called refined taste, which is never attained without much observation and patient thought. For the first natural susceptibility can be improved and further developed by exercise, and I need not add that the judgment has to be cultivated by extensive and careful comparison.

CHAPTER II.

OF SOME OF THE MORE PROMINENT AND DANGEROUS FORMS OF BAD TASTE.

HAVING come to the conclusion that the elementary principles of good taste are the common inheritance of humanity, it very naturally occurs to enquire, why then do we see so few in whom those elements are developed in any eminent degree.

I reply, in the first place, it is due to the same cause which gives rise to that other phenomenon, that though men are generally possessed of reason, few are philosophers. Abilities of ordinary degrees are best for ordinary purposes, and the highest are not conferred upon all: and if the emotion is capable of being rendered more active by exercise, it may also become more sluggish through neglect. Secondly, the judgment is not often sufficiently trained to make any approach toward perfection in its decisions. Thirdly, indolence, the cause of various other deficiencies, induces men to forego many an intellectual pleasure, which they are fully competent to enjoy. Fourthly, ignorance of the true relations of things, leads to many a false decision

of taste. The law may be just, the judge correct, and yet if the evidence is false, the decision will certainly be wrong: and fifthly, many errors of taste are introduced by habits unconsciously acquired, and by servile imitation. The latter accounts for many fashions in dress which are in very bad taste. So unthinking and imitative of their superiors in social standing are most of those who pay great attention to personal adornment, that they will follow almost any leader who is wealthy enough to secure their respect. A few persons enjoying the advantages of superior rank and wealth, may therefore, in either good or bad taste, set a fashion in dress and style of living which the giddy ranks of ton will implicitly follow; while many sensible men, regarding the matter as utterly beneath their concern, submit to be clothed as the tailor thinks best. But even here the prostration of individual taste is not complete; and the native sense of the most thoughtless would revolt against many of our fashions in dress, were the attempt made to perpetuate them. Novelty must come to the aid of authority; the only way to keep up absurdity is to vary it. Fashions in other things owe their origin to similar causes; and consequently furnish no argument against the certainty of æsthetic principles, although they contribute to show how many people may for a time support a bad taste of which they do not approve.

It is easy, therefore, to perceive how persons indulging in bad taste themselves, may be ready to testify to

the superiority of a man of good taste. The intellectually obtuse and thoughtless need to have their susceptibilities awakened, the indolent aroused to observation, and the ignorant instructed in a knowledge of the properties and relations of that concerning which a judgment is to be made. In examining the works of a correct thinker, the critics learn to surmount their own faults, and to coincide with him whom they study; and thus feel and acknowledge the truth of what they might otherwise never have taken the trouble to discover the existence in themselves. For the action of taste is not like hunger and thirst, involuntary: we must give attention to its objects before we can enjoy them, and study its principles before they can guide our practice.

SECTION II.—OF THE PROPRIETY OF ORNAMENT.

The abovementioned faults are negative; but there is also another class, which may be called positive, in which the artist and writer are no less likely to sin. It arises from excessive ambition to excel, and to produce something finer than consistent with the nature of the materials and subject. The greater amount of errors, and those of the most offensive kind, which occur in literary and artistic productions, are to be ascribed to an undue and undiscriminating passion for ornament. The lover of simplicity seldom errs in matters of taste; but true simplicity is by no means a

common feature of humanity; and perhaps it may not be in vain to offer a few remarks upon the meaning of ornament, and the propriety of its introduction.

Though he who is fond of ornament, invariably degrades the art in which he labors, yet the word implies a high degree of beauty; and beauty being the chief end of the æsthetic arts, the question stands thus:—How can ornament, if beautiful in itself, ever be wrong? The word has several applications. The most common acceptation of it, is beauty additional to the essential beauty of the subject; but very often anything beautiful in itself, when added to another, is thought to be an ornament. Few, of any pretension to taste, will advocate the propriety of the latter; yet from false notions concerning the former, many are guilty of errors equally great in both their criticisms and original productions. I shall employ the word in that meaning, which implies an admissible principle in art, for no advantage could accrue from the discussion of a verbal abuse. Let us understand then by ornament, that which is conceived of as adding a grace to something else, though not essential to its integrity.

With this understanding let us look upon a fine house, and consider how we could make it finer, without adding to its essentials. We observe its chief component parts, the basement, walls, and pillars and roof. The first being little exposed to the eye, is hardly a proper place for ornament. The second has for its object the inclosure of the area of the house and

support of the roof. All that can be called essential to it is that it be strong and tight enough for those purposes, and the essential beauty of it must lie in the perfectness of its adaptation. But then this part of the house may consist of any of a variety of materials. It may be wood, or stone, or brick, or metal. If wood, there may be a beauty consulted in the grain or color of the wood, in the shape of the beams or boards, or the manner of their disposal, which, while it affects not the main object of the wall or pillar, may very pleasantly affect the eye of the observer. Suppose it a pillar. It may be of requisite strength to support the incumbent weight and not more, and may not occupy more space than proper; and thus be without fault; but in addition to this essential excellence, it may be of a smooth or fluted surface, at the option of the owner, nothing in the nature of things demanding the one rather than the other. It may have a base with a molding, or not. It may have a simple slab at the top, or a voluted capital, with equal fitness for the object of its erection. The volute is evidently a proper ornament. For while not more essential than the rough slab, it occupies the place with equal appropriateness, and is in itself more beautiful. So, of the incumbent parts: the beams resting upon the pillars may be plain, or may be covered with sculpture, while the most fastidious critic might find it difficult to give a satisfactory reason for the condemnation of either.

But there is a limit, beyond which ornament in

architecture is faulty. Few persons can look with unmingled pleasure upon a pillar cut into the figure of a human being. Because it is not the proper office of a man or a woman to stand all the days of their lives supporting the roof of a house; and the very thought of such a thing is painful. Neither can we behold without some degree of uneasiness, the figures of human beings perched upon the most dangerous pinnacles of the roof. Such are false ornaments; because at variance with the object of a house, which is erected, not for men to stand upon, nor to be carried upon their heads, but for them to dwell in. Thus the limit to ornament in architecture is the design of a house, and the nature of the materials employed, as well as the particular kind of house, between which and its ornaments a certain propriety must be maintained.

As architecture, so dress is imitative of nothing in nature, being a creation for the convenience of man, which nature has not supplied. Provided the chief end of dress is kept in view, and nothing is introduced at variance with that, no objection can be presented to any article of dress in itself graceful. No reason can be drawn from the nature of things why a man should wear pantaloons and coat, rather than the toga, hyke, or highland plaid, unless we say that they are respectively best adapted to the habits of the people who use them. But, the leading articles once chosen, no ornament can be proper which does not appear to conduce

to their utility, or some way or other enhance an essential beauty.

In a garden, also, many things may be properly introduced which are not necessary to the production of fruit and vegetables. The luxuriance of vegetation under careful culture, renders it perfectly proper to admit many things in a garden which are calculated only to give pleasure to the eye. Because in nature there are many objects which *apparently* have no higher purpose. This propriety is limited by the fact, that it is not the end of cultivation to contradict, but to follow nature. The ornaments of a garden must be of such a kind as result from the careful cultivation of nature, in accordance with her own principles. A garden is not a mere imitation of any natural scene, but an improvement. Improvement, however, can only be made by carrying out natural principles to greater perfection, and with less mixture than in nature. Therefore, the ornaments of a garden can never properly be of that kind so common in the Roman gardens, in the latter days of the Republic, and under the Empire, in which every thing was fashioned after the whim of the gardener, no tree or shrub was permitted to grow in its own way, but all were compelled into fantastic forms of birds, beasts, pieces of cabinet work, and letters of the alphabet—conceits which held their place in modern gardens until little more than a century ago.

It is clear that the dissatisfaction occasioned by such

objects, arises from their opposition to nature. Animals may be very beautiful in themselves, and in their proper place; but it is not the nature of a tree to grow into such a shape. The ornaments of a garden are, therefore, limited, not only by the character of the chief object, but also by a due regard to the principles of vegetable nature. Whatever, in its collocation, is evidently useless, or at variance with nature, however beautiful in itself, can never be anything but a blemish.

When, from these arts, we turn our attention to painting, we find the field of ornament greatly limited. For the chief object of painting being relative truth, nothing in it can be proper, which does not represent some other visible object, something conceived to be visible, or associated with visible objects. While in landscape it is limited in the same manner as gardening; in draped human figures, as the art of dressing; and in pictures of buildings, as that of architecture; in itself it entirely excludes ornament. Because, in order faithfully to represent visible things, it dare not add one quality or adjunct, which does not really belong to them. It must not represent a tree, or a horse, with any quality or adjunct which a tree or a horse was never known to have. It may picture any given horse as more beautiful than he really is; but that is not ornament. It may deck him with fine caparisons. That is ornament indeed; but it belongs not to painting, but to the art of harnessing horses. Painting

may combine things in more pleasing groups than they often appear in nature; but that very grouping must represent something real, however uncommon—something that can be conceived of as existing, out of the picture, and to which the picture corresponds. The arabesques found upon ceilings, upon illuminated pages of books, etc., are the ornaments of the ceilings or pages upon which they occur; but they can not be introduced into an intelligent picture, except as constituting part of the expression of the represented idea. In painting there is properly no place for ornament. For it would be destructive of truth.

In a statue of the human figure can anything be properly introduced which is foreign to the actual human figure? If it is, then the statue is not a correct representation of its subject, and so far faulty: while to include every thing necessary to the perfection of the subject, is nothing more than the proper work of the art. The whole work of statuary is confined within the limits of relative truth. Whatever it attempts, more than that, is a blemish; and of course it has no place for ornament.

In literature, all critics agree that whatever does not effect a full expression of the intended idea, is faulty, and that whatever is more than sufficient is a fault. No room can, therefore, be left for ornament in this art either. Because its whole object is to embody, or express, the author's thoughts and feelings on separate and determinate points.

I think, then, we may depend upon the correctness of this rule, that all arts having for their object the representation, or embodying of any other thing, whether of external nature, or of the human spirit, in other words, *relative truth*, are incapable of ornament: and that those of absolute design admit ornament as far as consistent with their design and the nature of their materials. Architecture admits it to considerable extent; gardening more sparingly, because to some degree imitative; while painting, statuary, and literature exclude it entirely, or admit it only to their injury. Due attention to this principle would, I think, sufficiently guard against the tawdry style of those, who

> "With gold and jewels cover every part,
> And hide with ornament their want of art;"

and which, though often condemned, is perpetually returning and obtruding itself upon the student. Unless the error can be proved by a fair exposition of the principle upon which ornament is admissible, it is difficult for the young mind, enamoured of beauty in all its forms, to withstand the allurements of that meretricious style.

But some, who will readily admit the correctness of our conclusion, as far as respects other arts, may reject its application to literature, because learned men have been in the habit of talking of ornament in literary

productions, as something admissible. By way of reply, I would request an objector to point out a passage in any writer, which can be called ornament, in the sense in which the word is properly understood. He will not find it impossible. There are too many such in some productions. But as soon as he has found one, and examined it, together with the connection in which it stands, he will discover it to be a blemish. If, for an ornament, he pitches upon some passage really beautiful, he will learn, upon examination of its nature and relations to the subject, that it is not ornament, but essential to the full utterance of the author's conception. What looks to the casual glance more like ornament than that celebrated simile, in which Ossian says, that "The music of Caryl was like the memory of joys that are past, pleasant and mournful to the soul"? Yet when compared with the connection and the object for which it was written, nothing can be farther from being a mere additional grace. It is expressive of deep feeling, and tells the character of the music more clearly and fully than any arrangement or choice of technical words could describe it to the common understanding. The poet, might, indeed, have told us in what mode the music was, and in what key; but even then, not musicians themselves could have had so distinct a conception of its nature, or of the peculiar feeling which it awakened, as every man receives who ponders the comparison, "like the memory of joys that are past."

The beauty of the figure lies in the fullness, clearness, and appropriateness with which it conveys the meaning not only to the understanding, but also to the heart.

Even rhyme and measure in poetry must appear as essential to the adequate utterance of the idea and feeling which they contain, or they become intolerable. Whoever would attain to excellence in literature, must abandon all designs upon ornament, and think only of the most effective manner of uttering the conceptions within him, so that they may move the hearts of those who read, and achieve a valuable result in the well-being of his fellow men.

CHAPTER III.

OF CRITICAL AUTHORITY.

ONE other question demands a reply under this head:—Whence does criticism derive its authority? From the dictatorial style of the anonymous and mysterious reviewers of recent times, one is haunted with the impression that they must be something more than men, enjoying revelations on the subject of taste, which it must be impious to controvert. All the leading reviews of the day are addressed to such an impression. Taking for granted that they alone are correct, and that none other has a right to any opinion at all, they never manifest the shadow of a suspicion that they can, by any possibility, be guilty of a mistake. Behind the screen of the review, and the editórial *we*, the critic, no matter how ignorant or stupid, assumes to himself infallibility, and writes as one having authority. Constituting himself a judge, and regarding the author as a culprit arraigned at his bar, he proceeds in the awful majesty of office, to pronounce that sentence which he deems must be final—incontrovertible, because he has said it. Very rarely is there any, the

least, show of reasoning on common principles, or any attempt to justify the decision by clear and cautious argument. The unknown critic is supreme; his word the law. The Edinburgh, the Quarterly, or the North American Review, spreads her broad and dark wings over the whole body of her critics; and beneath their shade, the most puny presumes to mimic the airs of a giant. Many an opinion has been maintained in a Review which the author would not have run the risk of publishing in his own name. Even the great Aristarchus of North Britain, himself, loses much authority when emerging from the anonymous stronghold in his proper person. Many a decision received as the authoritative voice of the very Delphi of criticism, hardly resisted by a murmur, bent to as the arbitration of a god, has afterward been wofully shorn of its glory, contracted in its dimensions, and treated with a contemptuous every-day familiarity, when found to be only the private opinion of Lord Jeffrey, Mr. Smith, or Mr. Macaulay.

Notwithstanding, these Reviews, and others of a similar nature, have great excellencies, and upon the whole have done good service to the cause of literature. For they are sometimes correct. And when that is the case, although the correct may not be more than a tithe of the false, there is good done, inasmuch as by their number and their diversity of interests and views, they furnish a counterbalance to each other's errors; and the truth, once defined and spoken, remains, while

the false, exposed, and in the course of time rightly estimated, molders away.

This, however, does not answer the present question. Through what means can one make himself acquainted with the principles of criticism, that he may not fluctuate from one whim to another of his own, or depend for his opinions on the mere say so of an unknown reviewer?

It is obvious that the works which have pleased many generations, must have been composed according to the principles on which men are pleased. The careful study of such works will therefore supply us with the knowledge of many such principles. From this source the most eminent critics have drawn their precepts. For example, Aristotle drew the rules of epic and dramatic poetry from the works of Homer and Sophocles. But whence did those eminent poets learn the rules which Aristotle collected from their works? Or did they write at random, and find mankind ready to receive their whims for laws? Some, for a time, might be weak enough to do so; but that centuries of thinking men should admire without a cause is inconceivable. Why did not Aristotle draw his rules from Chœrillus instead of Homer? The great critic had observed that Homer was most admired, and culled as precepts those features on which especially approbation dwelt. But Homer must have discovered the force of those principles before he composed in accordance with them. He therefore is to be esteemed as the real discoverer. The

intuition of genius, as usual, led the way, and criticism followed to define and classify.

Instead then of relying upon the bare authority of some eminent critic, whoever wishes to maintain his spiritual independence, will examine such works of permanent character for himself, and make use of the critic's rules only to guide and aid his investigations, not to stop them.

By thus carefully studying the works of approved writers of old time, one may deduce and feel the force of the most eminent laws of good writing; but he must beware of adopting the notion that ancient authors have observed and embodied every correct principle of art. Such is the doctrine of a set of pedants, who call themselves critics of the classic school; but would not be a logical inference, even had no hand wielded the pen since ancient times. Many fertile minds have recently discovered other, though not contradictory methods of conferring æsthetic delight. True, the martinets of criticism have endeavored to prove, that we ought not to be pleased with anything but obedience to ancient rules. In spite, however, of their proof, men will occasionally derive very high enjoyment from qualities of which Aristotle never conceived; and that without any disparagement to the great Stagyrite.

The rules given by Aristotle for epic and dramatic poetry, are properly only the rules of the works of Homer and Sophocles, and all other poems dealing

with similar material, and having the same object. But if a poet employs other materials, and aims at some new effect, the old rules will be found insufficient. They must be modified, or another principle discovered, which can be found only in that field whence Homer and Sophocles drew—that is, in nature and the heart of man. But, as we have seen, every writer, who would arrive at eminence, must produce something new either in matter or manner. Hence, every one who would be extensively useful, must draw the principles of his art from nature, his own heart, and experience, as well as from the practice of his predecessors. The rules derived from the experience and practice of successful authors, especially those of ancient times, are exceedingly valuable in guiding to proper sources, and right methods. It is to be presumed that the opinions harmoniously adopted by the best minds of the civilized world, for two thousand years, were not formed lightly, nor without good reason. And inasmuch as they were themselves drawn from nature, they must be well calculated to direct attention back to nature. But nothing valuable could be produced by following rigidly the baldness of the letter. The productive laws are to be found within our own hearts, and in the relations existing between ourselves and the external world. These are not created, but only illustrated by the practice of the good artist, and stated in the precepts of the just critic.

It may look like discouragement to tell the writer of the present day that he must make the same investigation for himself, which the author of three thousand years ago made; but there is no way of avoiding the task, consistent with success. At the same time, having now more helps and experiments before him, higher results may be attained by genius of inferior degree.

From the same point of view, the critic will learn that his ancient rules are not good for everything; that Aristotle or Quintilian, however excellent, is not a panacea for every literary ill, and that his own hastily formed notion is not to be taken for law: that instead of assuming an immovable position, away back on the fortifications of antiquity, or launching inconsiderate decisions from behind the entrenchments of a Review, it is his business to follow faithfully the footsteps of genius, and aid its onward progress.

And these remarks, if true in respect to literature, are, for the same reason, applicable to art in general. The new phases of humanity which are continually coming into view, demand correspondent features in art, and forbid repose in the quiet repetition of excellencies already attained. The style of Phidias has many a lesson for modern times, but Michael Angelo would not have been the world-renowned, had he learned no other. And nature is still teeming with ripening beauties, which art has not yet gathered in.

Whoever aims at the highest excellence, therefore,

needs first to make himself master of the rules already attained: secondly, to examine the foundation of these rules,—follow them to their source, that he may comprehend their spirit: thirdly, to study these sources farther, for himself, that whatever novelty he contemplates in his works, may be equally well-founded in truth. And the work of criticism is to study the creations of genius, to compare them with already established rules, and with the laws in nature to which they appeal, to judge thereby of their truth, and to give definite expression to principles in the abstract.

CHAPTER IV.

OF ORIGINALITY.

In connection with our remarks upon the radical similarity of all men in matters of taste, it was stated, that, in minor things, there is infinite diversity. Having taken notice of some diversities, which contradict generally acknowledged principles, and which are of course in error, we shall now speak of others, which do not contradict general principles, and which are not erroneous; but rather developements, in particular directions, of those principles, and that in production as well as criticism.

To the ambitious, no praise is more dazzling than that of Originality; yet few seem to have any distinct conception of what it means. Content with the notion that it refers to something which makes him superior to all other men, the candidate for this honor seems to think that he must set at nought every law by which common mortals are governed, must keep himself ignorant of all rules of art, and work out a system entirely of his own; and that he must submit to no intellectual discipline, or plodding labor, as he calls it,

for fear of cramping his genius—a delusion by no means uncommon among young men emulous of distinction in literature and art. And nothing is more likely to bar up their way to success. For even should one, by good fortune, strike upon a correct course, he has to repeat and discover for himself all that has been proved long before, and to spend years in laboring out a few truths which he might have acquired with more precision by the usual methods of study, in one hundredth part of the time. Some, in mistaking singularity for originality, give themselves up to all oddities, under the conceit that they are astonishing the world by their independence of thought, when they are merely amusing on-lookers, and grieving friends by their follies. According to this view, the original genius must do nothing as it would be done by any other human being. In dress and manner he will assume the most uncouth and ridiculous, for the purpose of being unlike ordinary mortals. And even this phase of the evil is an innocent weakness, compared with another, under which multitudes have dissipated and are dissipating their talents, in impiety and licentiousness. They would be unfettered, free, and original thinkers; and to reject everything that sober people believe, to spurn at evidence, and insult truth to her face, looks enough like original thought to pass for it, in the eyes of those who conceive of it only as something strange. From all manners, morals, and religion, which other men have maintained, the original genius

must differ, not on account of error, but of age. Right must give way to novelty, and solid merit to startling effect; tricks of style become his study, and truth is sacrificed to a silly legerdemain of execution. Thus sincerity of character, all foundations upon which moral as well as æsthetic excellence must be built, are in his mind unsettled. The man becomes incapable of distinguishing right from wrong, and without rudder or compass is hurried over the billows of excess by the gust of every passion. He may flash into notoriety for a season; but it is only like the rocket, to fall into darkness. No great moral good forms a stable ground for his productions, no correct principle sustains them. And thus a mere æsthetic mistake leads down to not only intellectual ruin, but also to temporal, and often, we have reason to fear, to eternal death.

In attempting to define the true notion of Originality, we shall set out from the meaning of the word *origin*, the beginning of anything, that from which anything primarily proceeds. Original, then, means possessing the qualities of an origin; and Originality the state or quality of being original. The latter derivative is used in both an active and passive sense, as it is applied to the mind which produces, or to the work produced. Originality means, therefore, the quality of being new; or the faculty of giving rise to some new existence. Thus, the idea of novelty is involved in it; but novelty of what? Of facts, principles, or the manner in which they are viewed and employed? For

answer to that question we must have recourse to the authorized use of the term.

In science, original discovery means only the developement of some fact not previously known; and originality in that case will apply, not so much to the mind as to the objects of its cognizance—a meaning after which we are not now enquiring. For the same philosopher who announces his discovery of some new metal, or mineral, or plant, may present no claim to originality as an author. The newspapers every day furnish us with something new in the way of facts; yet among writers of news, originality subjective appears as seldom as anywhere else. The news may be properly called original, because not borrowed from any other writer; but the bare statement of a fact which has not been previously told, does not entitle a man to the praise of original thought. Another, without communicating any fact, which could not be learned elsewhere, receives that praise by universal consent. Goldsmith deals often with the commonest of facts; and Wordsworth carefully avoids the strange and singular. In the songs of Robert Burns does the freshness lie in anything recondite—in anything which does not speak a language well known to the heart of man? Moreover, if the merit lay in novelty of facts, every work would be original to that man whom it presents with anything he did not know before. That is, the quality would lie in the reader, not in the writer; every painter, or sculptor, would be original who chooses odd

subjects. Artistic originality is subjective, always implying the exertion of peculiar power, characteristic of the producer. It does not, therefore, consist in novelty of the facts presented, and can not apply to any of the materials of art, which do not belong to the mind itself.

It has been sufficiently proved, that no care in education can produce in two minds precisely the same character; that every man has something peculiar in his intellectual structure, whereby his mind is as easily distinguished from all other minds as his body from all other bodies. The holders of certain philosophical systems may deny this position. They are welcome to do so in theory, while they are compelled to grant it in practice. For it is a truth that can not be eradicated from the daily and hourly convictions of mankind. In conversing with any person on any subject on which he has thought for himself, we find points of view more or less different from our own. And the more thoroughly both have mastered the subject, the more distinctly different will be the lights we view it in. The facts may be such as to preclude variety of opinion concerning them, and we may entirely agree as to the objective truths, and yet they will appear in different hues, as presented by one mind or the other—a fact of such universal notoriety that it would be deemed remarkable if even a demonstration of the same mathematical truth should be made out exactly in the same way by two minds acting independently. The external world

is, in itself, the same to all; yet the same feelings in relation to it do not exist in all. Intellectual character is the most marked feature of identity. At the same time, all minds, even the most original, draw the materials of their fabric from the common field. Originality, therefore, as it can not belong to external things, and cannot exist in common qualities of mind, in the great prominent features of human intellect, must consist in the finer shades of character, whereby one mind is distinguished from another; and in those alone: consequently, it is not a quality to be acquired. One can not dash off at a tangent from the common circle of things, and henceforth become original, merely because he has taken a notion to be so. It is of the essential character of the individual mind, the Creator's gift, which the man can neither acquire, nor yet entirely destroy.

In looking upon external nature, all men do not notice exactly the same things. The same general features, indeed, appear to all; but the millions of minor things, going to make up those general features, are not all thought over by any one mind. The remarks of a man who thinks for himself, are always interesting. He has, in obedience to his peculiar intellectual disposition, and aptitude, observed features which all have seen, but never *noticed* or thought of for more than an instant; and he clothes them in the style of association and of feeling peculiar to himself. All, therefore, recognize his remarks as new, while

they acknowledge their truth; for the subjects, though not by them previously thought of in that manner, are not unknown. Any one of those whom he addresses might again equally interest him by an equally true account of his observation. For every one is informed by his senses, of myriads of things of which his thoughts are only momentary; and to many things around he never directs his senses at all. He takes notice of, or pays attention to, only those items which consist with his own spiritual disposition, or habits of observation; but will readily recognize the truth of the observations of another mind, when attention is called to them. For their subjects are not beyond the range of his capacity: he only has not thought about them in a way to interest him. Thus nature is forever new, as beheld through the lens of a new mind; and every man who will only observe, and think, and utter his own thoughts in his own way, is capable of setting her in a new light before all the rest of his fellow-men. In this individuality itself, however, there is something which we can never entirely explain to others. The nature and internal operation of what is peculiar to the individual, the individual alone can understand. Though the great field of humanity and nature is common property, there is assigned to each person a small, exclusive, and unalienable possession, to which his fellow-men are utter strangers, and which they can no more enter than if a charmed circle had been drawn around it. To that extent every human being is

isolated, and alone with God in the universe; and the springs of his originality a secret that must remain forever with himself. In the possession of such a faculty, however, there can be no ground for assumption of superiority. Men differ greatly in the vigor and activity of their minds; but all possess distinctive features of mental character, and no one deserves praise for originality any more than for distinctive features of face: only in as far as he has appropriately cultivated and given expression to it does he merit praise on that ground.

Many causes conduce to prevent the full development of pure originality, of which the chief are the force of common qualities and similar circumstances of life, having a tendency to drag all into the same track, and the influence over feeble minds exerted by those of great strength and activity, amounting in many cases to an actual despotism, under which they cower through life, without daring to represent themselves in form or expression.

SECTION II.—IMPORTANCE OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE.

If these remarks are correct, the man who well knows himself, and has courage to be true, will find no need for affected singularities. In faithful obedience to his spiritual nature, originality will take care of itself. But self-knowledge is an acquisition of neither

common nor easy attainment. It is not enough to be acquainted with the principles of mental philosophy. To philosophy belongs only what is common to the race; self-knowledge must take cognizance of what is peculiar to the individual, and the very first step toward it demands a self-denial and control which few will take the trouble to exercise. As none can have any conception of what is peculiar in the mind of another, until it has manifested itself in some striking manner, nor even then completely, it follows that we are not to expect teachers to perform this duty for us. Every man who would accomplish the task of life, must examine, educate, and express himself. We must learn to distinguish between what we are, and what we have acquired; between convictions and prejudices; must acquire habits of reflection upon the working of our passions, and to this end must have them under control; observe the ground of our likings and dislikings; measure ourselves impartially with others, considering how far the same things are becoming to others and to ourselves; observe wherein we enjoy the greatest facility of execution, and compare our productions with others of a similar nature—so shall a light be reflected from the creations of the mind upon the mind itself. By such comparisons we the more readily detect our faults, in contrast with the excellence of others, and distinguish the features wherein we correctly differ, while we enlarge our knowledge of the

general rules of art, in their bearing upon ourselves. The advice of a friend is also profitable, if you enjoy the good fortune of one honest enough to tell unpleasant as well as pleasant truths. And the word of an enemy may be turned to good account. For commonly it has some foundation in truth. But without a good degree of independent self-knowledge, it is impossible to estimate rightly, or usefully apply the opinions of either friend or foe; for, as a general rule, advice ought never to be taken implicitly. Thus, there is a clearness and steadiness of perception, and force of character, acquired by the very labor and balancing of estimates and opinions, requisite to the attainment of self-knowledge; and even should one discover in himself no great strength of mind, he fortifies what he has, by the process of finding out wherein his weakness lies.

The work of defining one's individuality to his own understanding is the more difficult, that the great outlines of humanity are the same in all, and the distinctive consist in the fainter colors, and more delicate shades. As all countenances are composed of the same principal parts, formed in the same general way; and by those minuter particulars alone, which few people detect in their own faces, are they instantly distinguished by one another: so in the mind, the little things which elude our own notice contain the mystery of our individual being. Faint though the colors, in any one part of the texture, they are so firmly fixed,

that however diluted with common-qualities, they are never effaced, but taken together, give their tinge to the whole web of the individual existence.

But even when the nature of this proper self has been ascertained, much still remains to be done, in order to admit and promote a free and adequate expression. One is not to take for granted that every state of mind he experiences is in every degree right and proper. A clear distinction must be made between natural character and acquired habits; for if compliance with the one gives pure originality, oddity is the only product of the other. Yet the indolent growth of obvious externals, too often substituted for the very difficult result of profound self-knowledge, is eagerly sought after by minds of an inferior stamp, and constitutes their peculiar claim to distinction. On the other hand, great genius, whether including clear self-intuition, or finding its full exercise only after such an attainment, certainly exhibits in its productions the highest degree of purity in this respect. In the mature works of Shakspeare there is nothing of the personal habits of the actor, nothing from which we could gather any of the circumstances of his life, yet the intellectual self of Shakspeare is so faithfully embodied therein, that no competent critic would ever mistake any of them for the offspring of another mind. On the other hand, the mannerism of Coleridge was an excrescence upon his genius, which, instead of removing, he had fostered by perversities, both æsthetic and moral. The bias of

corrupt passions, and the errors of misinformation are obstacles to self-development, which few surmount; and ignorance, though unable to prevail over the noblest style of mind, slays its ten thousands of those who might otherwise fill valuable places in the realms of art. Original genius will never make up for the want of that knowledge of the external world which can be acquired only by learning. Much accumulation of facts from the wide fields of nature and human life, is needed as material whereon the mind may labor. Some there are, exceedingly afraid of knowing too much—so much as to crush their native genius—a very proper caution, if that genius is so great a stranger to its possessor as to run the risk of being mistaken for something else. But whoever is well acquainted with his own strength, and bent upon using it in an appropriate manner, will find no difficulty in abundant knowledge; and the ignorant of themselves will in vain hope to become great by remaining in unsophisticated ignorance of other things. No, emulous youth, mark well the bearing of your own existence, and then, instead of sipping cautiously and timidly at the fountains of knowledge—instead of acquiring just enough to make you vain smatterers, fear not for your originality in the most abundant acquisition. Originality belongs, not to what you acquire, but to what you produce. The sources of knowledge are the same to all; the vast stores of nature are thrown alike before the feeble and the strong; the spiritual world opens up

alike to every man who will look within his own soul; the accumulated experience of ages is accessible by labor to all—and who shall set the boundary to intellectual growth? Who shall say to any mind, thus far shalt thou acquire and no farther, where we have evidence that the Creator has set no limit? Yet this sameness in the sources of knowledge, no more involves a sameness of production, than identity of food involves identity of physical constitution. The poet Cowper pursued the same studies at the same school with Warren Hastings. Like different plants upon the same soil, they found the same nourishment, but extracted from it different elements, and sustained by it different natures.

Originality is not, therefore, a quality calculated to supersede education and study, nor inconsistent with the most extensive learning. Due respect to it demands only that while collecting, to any extent, from the outward world, we do not neglect the one which is within.

Whatever may be said of isolated thoughts, great works are not finished by inspiration or accident, not by mere stumbling into excellence, or finding it by instinct —but by the most careful study and preparation of mind for the subject. Why did Horace not write an epic poem? He repeatedly tells us, because he knew himself. Why did Silius Italicus attempt it? Clearly because he had studied Virgil more than himself. We

learn that the self-examination of Milton was long and searching; of Goëthe it was a study in which he never relaxed; and Wordsworth has expressly said, that when he turned his thoughts to literature, his first study was himself. Even the ploughman Burns, according to his own account, had pursued a similar course; by careful study with all the helps within his reach, he had ascertained and cultivated, while yet a youth, that singular intuition into man and nature —that sympathy with all the beautiful in both, which, fresh as the light of a morning in June, rests upon all his works. But farther, none can understand his duty before God who has not performed this duty to himself. His own nature, and the circumstances of his life, are the only data from which the duties of the individual can be ascertained. To rush into any work, or profession, without consulting this internal monitor, is a contempt of the will of God, as separately revealed to each man's heart.

It may not be amiss to suggest one caution on this head, before leaving it: that is, not to mistake for this duty of self-study, the very common vice of self-admiration—that egotism, which, instead of sifting and trying, and condemning, as well as applauding, is continually reposing in the sunshine of self-approbation—instead of laboring after truthful expression, is anxious only for self-display. The egotist admires without understanding the object of his admiration,

and may be a mannerist, an oddity, but can not be purely original. For he is incapable of distinguishing his own single self from any ingredient of the incoherent aggregate which he calls by that name.

Originality, then, has this merit—it is the stamp which marks the coinage of the individual mind. Any thing in a different style must be a counterfeit, a forgery upon some other intellect. It is, therefore, not only an excellence where found, but the attainment of it is a duty, imperative upon every one who feels that he has a message from his Creator to his fellow men.

CHAPTER V.

OF IMITATION.

FROM what has now been said of Originality, it will readily be inferred that Imitation is not to be recommended without some important restrictions. In its common acceptation it is a great evil, standing in the way of the imitator's improvement, while it effects nothing toward the farther development of the model. Being the offspring of a blind admiration, which fails to distinguish the false from the true, and is directed to its object only by the finger of popular applause, it can not coëxist with a profound self-knowledge; but effectually obstructs the way to such attainment, and demands of its victims the perpetual dependence of childhood. Yet obvious though its weakness, it is the commonest of things. Any time we choose to cast a glance upon the ranks of art, we may behold thousands laboring in this profitless field; carried away by admiration of some already high in popular favor, and without inquiring as to the nature of their endowments, intellectual or physical, or the circumstances of their existence, perverting all their powers in order to render

themselves as nearly as possible facsimiles of him whom they admire. In which course, should they succeed to the utmost of their wishes, they only serve to make their idol trite; fortunate if they do not render him ridiculous. For, strange as it may appear, admiring imitators cling to the faults of their models, more distinctly than to their virtues. Of all mere imitators, scarcely one can be mentioned as having, in any age, risen to either usefulness or honorable renown; while, doubtless, many, who otherwise might have contributed to the benefit of society, have thus been rendered entirely unfruitful. Why is it that, for at least one hundred and fifty years after Homer, the annals of Greece present not one name of distinction in poetry? That period was not devoid of intellect, nor of literary attempts; but the glory of Homer had so dazzled all who immediately succeeded him, that they could behold nothing in life or nature, save images of his productions. Nor, until the bold hand of Archilochus dared to break the fetters of imitation, did Greece perceive the dawn of another day of literature. And where is now the fame or the works of the Cyclic poets? Two thousand years ago they were already among the most recondite of antiquarian lore. Nearer our own time the charm of the fictions of Sir Walter Scott called forth a multitude of would-be-romancers, who for at least twenty years assailed the public on all sides with lifeless portraits of his creations. But of all who followed in his train, did one succeed in touching the

hem of his garment? Already the greater number of them are entirely forgotten, and if any one has risen to an enviable grade of distinction, it is by qualities in which he is not an imitator. In the meanwhile, minds of good ability have been squandered in these foolish efforts, and their own duties are left undone.

Imitation is a hopeless business, especially the imitation of a man of great celebrity—and few think of imitating any other. None can comprehend the higher excellencies of a mind superior to his own. What he imitates must therefore be something less than the best, and very probably, the faults of his model. And whoever, with a high degree of intellectual power, has made a vigorous use of his means, has rendered more difficult the task of arriving at distinction, to all who come after him with similar endowments. A man of celebrity has generally, in the course of earning his reputation, pretty well exhausted his proper field. Even Byron, whose talents were great, and whose career was short, began to flag before he died. Had he lived longer, some other path must have been opened, in order to keep up his popularity. The old mine was nearly wrought out, and Byron himself perceived that farther fame must be pursued by other means. What then must be the disadvantage to a young writer, who enters, at his first step, upon a field thus exhausted. In order to succeed, he must be possessed of genius of the same kind, to a much higher degree than his original. But we have no reason to

believe that the Creator has so constituted any two minds that, in following accurately the bent of their own idiocrasy, they can thus interfere. The imitator, then, gratuitously assumes a difficulty, in rejecting his own proper strength, in attempting to counterfeit feelings, tastes, and views, of which he has but an imperfect conception, becomes stiff and unnatural, the distinction of his model only making his detection the more certain, and his failure the more conspicuous. But disgrace is the smallest evil attendant upon such a course: while aiming at what only another can accomplish, those talents of his own, which the Almighty gave to be the guide and instrument of his usefulness, are running to waste; years and energies are spent to no purpose, while those very things which he could do well are entirely neglected. Life is not given to be squandered so, nor is art an empty play—a mere means of obtaining a notoriety among our fellow men. It must effect something of which we shall not be ashamed before that God by whom all genius is conferred.

Imitation is the fault, not only of those who imitate, but also of critics, so called, who teach and recommend the practice. Indeed, the critics are generally most to blame. For the excellence already produced being the only basis of their rules, they can guide to nothing but its reproduction; and generally, not conceiving of anything farther, they especially inculcate the practice, and advise the most enslaving habits of preparation

and of composition. The principles deduced from nature, and the experience of the great masters, must be acquired and made familiar. No good can be effected in disregard of them, nor without a thorough command of them; but to make use of the valuable truths unfolded or embodied by a predecessor, is a different thing from molding oneself upon the aggregate of all his qualities, in which, of course, his faults as well as his excellencies are included. But this latter is precisely the shape in which the practice is enjoined by those who advise the adoption of models. Every person has faults enough of his own without the adoption of those of others, even though such adopted faults did not sit worse upon him than his own.

Imitation may be of the manner, of the matter, of the general bearing of an effort, or of all together. The last constitutes what is called servile, blind, or indiscriminate, and is that to which the foregoing remarks have been addressed. It is difficult to adduce any example of this kind, for, although very numerous, they die almost as soon as born—and properly are they suffered to die in silence, because, from the nature of the case, they must be good for nothing.

A very few moments of reflection will suffice to show the utter impropriety of that imitation of manner, or style, so often enjoined by the advocates of a model. Why should you have a style at all? Why not compose without a style; now in one way, and then in another? Is it because the fashion so dictates, and

you are to put on a fashionable style, as you would a fashionable coat? Can any good reason be assigned, except that because you are now and always the same thinking being, the proper expression of yourself must always be marked by the same prominent features? Now, if these do not correspond to the distinctive features of your character, it is plain that the style is not yours, does not answer to you the purposes of a style. It must be an embarrassment, instead of a facility, a continually misrepresenting medium, through which you can never be understood. Better have nothing to do with it, unless you prefer to live under an intellectual mask, and wear an appearance which must ever give the lie to your real character.

Under this head I may be reminded of the schools of art, of the Lombard school of painting, of the Venitian, Flemish, etc. I grant that the influence of a few men of genius, wielded in that way, has suggested much valuable thought to others; but every one worthy of name, in any of those schools, was himself an original thinker. The mere imitators are the shame of them all. I may be reminded of the successful imitators of Addison, among whom will certainly be included the names of Mackenzie and Franklin. Of all the thousands who have imitated that author in this respect, not one has attained to eminence without more distinctive features of his own. Mackenzie, who has been called the Addison of Scotland, never attained that happy

facility which distinguished his master. On great qualities of his own he rose to fame. To the extent of his imitation he was stiff and affected. The story comes from Franklin's own pen, that in early youth he formed himself upon the style of Addison, and must, therefore, be true; but it should not have blinded the eyes of critics to the original merits of a manner so marked as that of his matured productions. So far from being a mere imitation of Addison, the style of Franklin has something in it unlike the style of any other writer in the English language. It is plain and simple; but the simplicity is that of Franklin, not of Addison. That of Addison is the garb of a gentle, poetic mind, humbling itself to praise; that of Franklin, the plain, sometimes the quaint dress of a shrewd, practical philosopher. If an English writer will imitate in this manner, I would say, let Addison be the model. From the simplest manner the least evil will accrue. But however simple the shape, however normal the man, his coat will not sit well on all shoulders.

Imitation of an author's matter may be right or wrong, according to the way in which it is done. If his ideas are adopted without essential change, and without acknowledgement, the act is one of plagiarism, and justly branded as the meanest trick of the most abandoned imitator. When the debt is acknowledged, or the idea greatly improved, the character of the

action is entirely changed. In the former case it is entirely honorable quotation, and in the other may be really invention, which the primary idea only served to suggest. Many brilliant passages in our best authors have originated in rude hints of their predecessors. The following lines from Dyer's Grongar Hill, will immediately recall to memory a more celebrated paragraph, in a later and a greater poet:

> "As yon summits, soft and fair,
> Clad in colors of the air,
> Which to those who journey near
> Barren, brown, and rough appear:
> Still we tread the same coarse way,
> The present 's still a cloudy day."

Here distinctly lies the radical idea of the opening of the "Pleasures of Hope;" but how far inferior in the beauty of its development and associations.

> "At summer eve, when Heaven's ethereal bow,
> Spans with bright arch the glittering hills below,
> Why to yon mountain turns the musing eye,
> Whose sun-bright summit mingles with the sky?
> Why do those cliffs of shadowy tint, appear
> More sweet than all the landscape smiling near?
> 'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view,
> And robes the mountain in its azure hue.
> Thus, with delight, we linger to survey
> The promised joys of life's unmeasured way;
> Thus, from afar, each dim discovered scene
> More pleasing seems than all the past has been;
> And every form, that Fancy can repair
> From dark oblivion, glows divinely there."

In a little poem of Waller, addressed to a lady who had sung for him one of his own songs, occurs the following stanza:

> "The eagle's fate and mine was one,
> Who on the shaft that made him die,
> Espied a feather of his own,
> Wherewith he wont to soar so high."

What is here only a puny conceit, has been improved into the most beautiful passage in the "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers"—that on the death of Henry Kirk White:

> "'Twas thine own genius gave the final blow,
> And helped to plant the wound that laid thee low:
> So the struck eagle, stretched upon the plain,
> No more through rolling clouds to soar again,
> Viewed his own feather on the fatal dart,
> And wing'd the shaft that quivered in his heart."

Many other such might be adduced, creditable alike to the original conceiver, and the more powerful mind which comprehended all their range and clothed them in beauty.

Again, imitation may follow the shape of a work, or the general tone and bearing of an author's ideas. When it descends to pursue all the windings of a tale, or a train of argumentation, so that the imitator as it were walks behind his model, stepping carefully in his footsteps, and following all his motions, it is called copying, and is to plagiarism as the whole is to the part. The copyist steals a whole plan, the plagiary,

single ideas. The copyist is, however, commonly guilty of all the lowest forms of imitation, in addition to that which distinguishes himself.

When only the general tone and bearing of an author's ideas are seized upon as hints to something greater, or to a fuller or more beautiful development of the same, we may have derivative excellence of a high grade. This variety holds also the relation to the improvement of single ideas, that a whole has to its constituent parts. Imitation of this kind merits the highest approbation, and has been practiced by all the greatest improvers of art, as well as by reformers in morals and religion. Such imitators follow the spirit, and not the letter of their model; they follow him to the springs of inspiration, and there revealing richer sources for themselves, create entirely new works. Thus, Dante imitated Virgil, and produced such a poem as Virgil never conceived of. Thus, Burns imitated Ferguson, and Coleridge, Bowles, and each called into being a style of poetry, to which their models never dared aspire. Such imitation may be safely recommended. It is the steadiest and surest guide to original excellence, if pursued in connection with that faithful self-analysis, of which we have already spoken. Suppose for example, that after a careful examination of himself, in view of the pursuit, one decides upon the work of history. In accordance with this kind of imitation he would read various historians, for the purpose of observing their methods and

spirit. He will compare their merits, and prefer the one who, on the whole, comes nearest to his own views of history. He will adopt a similar method in subordination to the requisitions of his own design, and the distinctive features of his own character. He will then read and re-read that author, until he has fully comprehended the spirit of his work, which he will analyse as if it were his own, rejecting what he thinks improper or at least unsuitable for himself and his design, and adopting, extending, and modifying what he finds appropriate to his purpose. He is thus guided by the hand of his predecessor a part of the way, and enabled to continue his advance where his guide can go no farther.

In a similar way may one proceed in the formation of style. Far from copying that of his master, he will criticise it, and distinguish carefully that which answers his own purpose from what does not: and in what he adopts, will introduce such modifications as to make it proper to himself, his object in working, and the general laws of composition directing his choice and discrimination. The advantage obtained in such a method is that which example possesses over bare precept, and is not only consistent with, but even conducive to the truest intellectual independence. It is a proper, a highly commendable use of the experience of our predecessors.

In concluding these remarks upon Originality and Imitation, I would remind the student that his praise

will not be according to the greatness of his subject, but to his conception of it, and the merits of his execution. There is no need to transgress the bounds of native ability in order to find a subject capable of excellence. A horse, or a dog, by Landseer, is a greater work than a historical group by a middling hand: a bust from the chisel of Powers is worth more than many a full length statue: well written fiction will earn more fame, and do more good, than a poorly written history. Wolfe has won by one little song that universal praise which Joel Barlow failed to secure by an epic. Success is not always within command; but the most likely way to secure it is not by grasping at what already appears great, but by doing in the best manner what one is best qualified to do.

CHAPTER VI.

INVENTION.

WITHIN itself the mind possesses the powers and character of its thinking, and the elements of thought; from without must be acquired all the material of its fabrics. Invention can, in no case, consist in bringing forth from the uninformed intellect creations radically new; and as little can the term be applied to the mere imitation of nature, or of the productions of other artists. Being derived from *invenio,* to find out, it must be distinguished from creation, inasmuch as while the latter implies the power of bringing into existence, invention means only the finding out of what is suitable for a given purpose. To create, can never be said of the human mind, otherwise than figuratively. It is the peculiar power of God. To invent, or find out, among his creatures, that material, which answers the purpose of our shaping minds, is the nearest approach to creation admitted to human intellect.

Invention is to art as discovery to science; the one brings forth into light what was previously unknown, but makes no other use of it than to enlarge the classified list of similar things; the former takes up the already known, the probable or the possible, and combining their elements in new shape, makes them answer the purpose of uttering some original design. Nor is new material necessary to the expression of new ideas; the old already constitutes a well known language, of great flexibility in the hands of genius, while the entirely new would be strange and unmeaning as an unknown tongue. The same elements, and the same general subject, may convey an endless diversity of ideas, as thus modified by the inventive faculty of various artists. Thus the fable of Medea becomes a very different thing, and teaches a different lesson, according as it is wrought up by Euripides, Seneca, or Corneille, and there can be little doubt that the Medea of Ennius presented features unlike either of them; and after all the hands through which it has come, if any other shall use the same subject for the expression of a nobler idea, he shall enjoy the honors of invention as truly as if it had never been handled before. Such is the endless diversity of colors assumed by the same materials presented in the light of various minds. At the same time, it must be admitted that the use of an old basis is more largely granted to the orator than to the poet, and that the remodeling of a

familiar and favorite character, or tale, no matter how much invention it displays, meets with little favor from a modern public. But the still older and well known materials of nature, if hitherto unemployed, are always new when woven into art. From inexhaustible treasures of reality the poet is expected continually to draw previously unappropriated stores.

In oratory, the use of an old fact or argument for a new purpose, a new turn given to a well known train of thought, or a new combination and a new point made from old data, are correctly set down to the credit of invention.

The painter and sculptor, though employing a more difficult language, and more limited in range of topics, are subjected to demands scarcely inferior to those made upon the poet.

In brief, however, the principal mine of invention is the artist's own spirit. If some great or beautiful native thought, which has had its birth and growth within him, be the genius of his work, and shape for itself and to its own proportions the imagery drawn from nature, the result, when complete, will be confessed the truest offspring of inventive power. The finding out of materials, and of methods of applying them to such a purpose, is the utmost of human invention: and no imitation, or description, of the most beautiful object in nature, if devoid of this spiritual interest, can be of more than secondary value.

The attempts sometimes made to secure the honors of invention by extravagances and unprecedented conceits, only serve to demonstrate the folly of their authors. The freshest work of the greatest master is made up of elements accessible to all. Life and novelty must be conferred upon them by the idea they subserve.

CHAPTER VII.

OF GENIUS AND TALENT.

If men differ in the tone, the turn, or bearing of their intellectual faculties, not less do they differ in the degrees of their strength and activity. While some have hardly force of mind enough to make their individuality distinguishable, others impress the features of their own character, not only upon all they do, but to some degree upon all with whom they are connected, or even upon the whole age in which they live; and some few have left such a mark upon the world as time seems unable to erase. The peculiar aptitude, or bearing, of the individual mind, has long ago been marked in common language. When we say of a person, that he has a genius for mathematics, or languages, or that he has a talent for mechanics, or a tact for certain manipulations, we distinctly recognize the existence of a peculiar turn of the mind. When used merely for the purpose of stating this fact, these three words are almost synonimous. Genius and talent are more common than tact, and of the two, perhaps genius is the more frequently employed. But

there are also distinctive senses in which they are more correctly used, as marking different degrees of strength, clearness, subtilty of the individual character, as well as different intellectual powers.

In its distinctive and appropriate sense, the term genius is applied to mind only when under the direction of its individual tendencies, and when those are so strong or clear as to concentrate all its powers upon the production of new, or at least independent results; and that whether manifested in the regions of art or science. Bacon, Descartes, and Newton, were no less men of genius, than Michael Angelo, Raphael, Shakspeare, and Scott, although the work they performed and the means they employed were different. The patient thought, the refined calculations, which unfolded the laws of the material universe, are slow in reaching their end, but are no less truly the productions of new and beautiful results, than that more rapid intuition which penetrates the mysteries of the human spirit, to embody them in creations which rise before the observer like living things. Genius, however, must agreeably coöperate with imagination, and from the most fascinating deductions of argument, though directed by itself, turns with an affectionate joy to those pursuits in which its flight is unconstrained. Those ideas which come unsought, whose light rises upon the mind not like the slow progress of dawn, but as the midday sun when he bursts through an interposing barrier of clouds, it delights to revel in. Yet it rests not in idle

revery. No power of the human mind is so abundant in labor. The unchanging lover of the beautiful, it dwells with peculiar affection upon the charms of resemblance and design, in accordance with which its creations are most rapidly achieved, while its own existence is an irresistible impulse to productive activity. If taste is the faculty of criticism, genius is that of original invention. The word is Latin, and in that language signified the guardian spirit of the individual man, the divinity which came into existence at his birth, watched over and directed all the changes of his life, and at his death was again merged in the all-pervading Deity from whom it sprang. There is a beautiful relation existing between this meaning and that which we have derived from it. Absolute creation is the work of God alone; but that faculty in man, which, in the use of preëxisting material, seems to approach creative power, we designate by a divine name. Genius can effect new ends only by recombining old material; but being itself original, its own freshness is breathed into its offspring, giving them the hue of new creations, diffusing over them the light of its own peculiar dowry from the hand of God.

By talent in its distinctive meaning, we understand the power of acquiring and adroitly disposing of the materials of human knowledge, and products of invention in their already existing forms, without the infusion of any new enlivening spirit. It looks no farther than the attainment of certain practical ends, which

experience has proved attainable, and the dextrous use of such means as experience has proved to be efficient.

Talent values effort in the light of practical utility; genius always for its own sake, labors from the love of labor. Talent may be acquired. For (in the distinctive meaning of the word), it does not entirely coincide with native character. It may be imitative, the acquired ability to repeat what has already been done, while the individuality may be too feebly developed to mark very distinctly even its manner of operation. Genius always belongs to individual character, and may be cultivated, but *can not be acquired.* Talent qualifies eminently for the duties of business life: genius for the most exalted efforts of intellect. Genius, however, commonly operates unconsciously, and when best developed always manifests itself during the cultivation and exercise of talent. It was by improving his talent for the stage that Shakspeare unfolded his poetic genius, which otherwise would have concealed, perhaps, its vast capacities from himself; and the cultivation of a talent for singing, or playing, is the invariable means whereby musical genius is made acquainted with its own power. Whoever despises his talent will never make much of his genius; but if he has any, will squander it on things of little profit. In daily work talent is the more serviceable. For he can be yoked into the harness at command. Genius comes only at his own free will, and then it is commonly to

take the reins into his own hand and guide the car which talent draws.

By *tact* we mean an inferior or limited degree of talent—a skill or adroitness in adapting words or deeds to circumstances, involving, of course, a quick perception of the propriety of circumstances. It is also applied to a certain degree of mechanical skill. In literature, it designates that very convenient faculty of perceiving the demands of the book market, and of successfully meeting them by compilations and adaptations of common property. It implies quickness of observation and facility of execution, but neither profundity nor strength. Nearly of kin to instinct, its ends are always temporary and definite. Because its range is narrow, and its force limited. Yet when connected with higher mental endowments it greatly enhances their value, and many a fine genius has been sadly crippled by the want of it. How much wider would have been the influence of Coleridge and of Shelley had their transcendant genius been united to a little tact! In Goëthe all these powers were so happily combined that it is not very easy to determine what amount of his success was due to each. Certainly neither his remarkable genius, nor his laborious talent would have won for him the place he occupies without the coöperation of consummate tact.

We sometimes hear of a universal genius, a phenomenon which is never seen. The term is commonly applied to a man of great talent in acquisition; or of

tact to employ his knowledge in various ways. A man of true genius is never fluctuating in his pursuits. He will exert great power upon whatever he attempts; but will certainly fix upon one prominent occupation, from the impulsive power of strong individuality, and the clearness with which he determines the comparative value of things. At the same time, if any one intends the word to apply, not to pursuits, but to powers, there is a sense in which the highest genius may be called universal—that is, comprehensive of all the powers of the mind to whom it belongs. For it is nothing more than an intense energy of spiritual life. But as each individual has his own peculiar character of spirit, that fact will only the more certainly determine the singleness of his aim. Hence in the ordinary acceptation of the term, there can be no such thing as a man of universal genius.

CHAPTER VIII.

IMAGINATION AND FANCY.

These remarks concerning the powers of criticism and production proceed of course upon the supposition that the mind has powers. A train of thoughts without a mind to think, is altogether inconceivable. A favorite theory may induce a man to adopt the doctrine, but no theory can enable him to form a distinct conception of such a reality. And that other notion that the mind is merely a passive basis, capable of being resolved, now into one state, and then into another, by certain agents, called laws, involves an inexplicable difficulty of gratuitous assumption. Every man's consciousness, if he will only appeal to it, will assure him that nothing extraneous calls his thoughts before him; but that he himself thinks: and the being that thinks and feels, must certainly have power to think and feel—an inference so obvious as to have obtained a place in the common language of men. Many words are employed for no other purpose than to name intellectual powers. Taste, genius, and talent, are never conceived of as thoughts or states of the mind; but

always as powers. Neither is originality spoken of as thought; but as a characteristic tone of thinking. Thus imagination and fancy, though sometimes applied to the results of thinking, are more commonly and properly confined to mental powers.

I would not deem it necessary to speak of these latter, any more than of several other subordinate faculties which I omit, were not a distinctive understanding of them requisite to a true conception of the most commanding exercise of genius. Without genius, talent, or at least some degree of tact, no excellence of any kind can be produced. There are sovereign powers, or to speak more correctly, degrees of the inventive power, without which all the rest would be silent and unproductive; and genius, while wielding a dominion over every faculty of the soul, finds its highest delight in the work of impersonation.

The meaning of imagination, as the name of a mental faculty, is pretty well established in good and popular usage; but is greatly disputed by metaphysicians. Brown absorbs it in his gigantic theory of suggestion. In his view, there is no power of any kind. Although that doctrine of his philosophy is explicitly rejected by the common voice, it is at the same time implicitly adopted by all who admit without modification his intellectual theory. In what is commonly called imagination, he regards the mind as entirely passive, or at most, incapable of exercising anything but selection, and that only partially, not as extending farther than

to those images which this arbitrary suggestion chooses to bring before it; making, thereby, suggestion superior to the thinking being of whom it is only a property, and denying the ability to call up any idea whatever. Now, is it true that you have no power to call up an idea which has escaped you for the present? In a particular case it may be so; but is it universally so? The idea must come according to the laws of suggestion. True; but have you no control over those suggestions, or must you just take that train of ideas which suggestion itself determines to give you, and hold on to the best? Is that all the mind can do? Did you never determine to recollect anything, and take means to do it? Have you never determined to meditate upon a certain subject, and taken means to do it? Have you never determined to work out a certain result, whose existence you suspect, and taken means to accomplish it? If you have, then think what were the means taken. You did not sit down passively, and wait to have ideas paraded before you by some uncontrollable agency; but you set yourself to work, with a very distinct and vigorous effort, to observe such relations and such things as you believed would lead to the desired result, and if upon trial you found that such relations, and such things, did not enable you to reach it, you have abandoned that train of ideas, and instituted another for the attainment of the same purpose. And when you succeed, or relinquish the attempt, you are just as conscious of relieving your mind from effort. The

mind, therefore, has some power over the current of its own suggestions, to guide them toward one result rather than another.

Moreover, any argument founded upon the passivity of the mind in suggestion, must be futile: because suggestion is itself a mental power. It is not a separately existing agent, acting upon a passive mind; but merely the method whereby the thinking being calls up the items of conception. Indeed, to suppose any other activity in the mind than its own, is absurd. The thinking being lays hold of the relations of things, to facilitate its knowledge and recollection of them. It has a power to that effect, whereby it directs those suggestions, is at all times directing them, and frequently chooses to change their direction. Suggestion depends upon the power to perceive the relations of things. It is vain to talk of a perception of these relations as governing and holding in subjection the mind by whose activity alone it can exist.

Imagination is a power by which the mind, in determinate combination, conceives of its own preëxisting ideas and feelings. It is not the singular gift of a favored few, but is exercised, in some degree, by every man every day of his life. Men do not differ by possessing or lacking it, but in the infinitely varied degrees of its energy, and of its coöperation with other ingredients of character. All principles of suggestion are employed in its service; but among the uneducated and feeble, the relations of contiguity are generally

followed, as being of most common occurrence and easiest comprehension. Educated minds, and those of naturally larger grasp, prefer the relations of resemblance, as presenting a basis of broader generalizations, and in themselves more intimate and animating. Individuals differ, also, in degree of force in concentrating attention upon a given class of ideas, and in the rapidity with which they bring kindred ideas together, as well as in clearness of conception and liveliness of the feelings attendant thereupon. The higher degrees of this faculty always bring up conceptions so vividly as to suggest warm emotion in the mind to whom they belong; and, when communicated in suitable language, are calculated to awaken similar feelings in all who can appreciate the original ideas.

Conceptions, obtained through the senses, can be communicated directly by the simple statement, or enumeration of them. Not so, feelings. The humblest of them refuse to obey a muster-roll. There is no possibility of enlisting them by direct call, or by any other method than that of presenting their antecedent ideas. Nor is it every presentation of the antecedent, which is sufficiently vivid to effect that end. Formal language addresses itself to intellection. Music is perhaps the only art that aims to lay direct hold of emotion. Certainly, in all the rest, emotion is only suggested by the conceptions they convey. Written words have no voice for it, except only as it is yoked with conception. The same is true of those arts that

deal in forms, colors, outlines. Conception is all that they can really express. Emotion they move only as conception suggests it. A speaker can do more, it is true; for the expression of his face, the attitude of his body, and the light of his eye, constitute a class of signs naturally appropriated to the indication of feeling; but these are very limited and defective in themselves, and in the general field of art we may still say that conception is that which is immediately recognized and addressed. Feelings, in all their kinds and degrees, are invisible. We can not present them to the eye. They manifest their existence by outward signs, but refuse to be embodied; and if one would call them up, he can do so only by employing the signs whereby they indicate their existence. Consequently, the most refined discrimination is needed to detect, in the ordinary utterance of conception, that wherein the mystic signs of feeling lie, and a masterly delicacy of touch, in order to reproduce them with true effect. In this, the highest achievement of art, very few are entirely successful. That concrete object whereby one person moves the deepest emotion, will, as presented by another, be merely recognized as correct, while in the hands of a third it might actually look absurd. One will move feeling by his statements, almost without intending it; another can not do so with his utmost effort. The signs whereby feelings make their existence known to the external observer, and by which their proper antecedents are inevitably and effectively restored,

are intangible to all but the hand of genius. Humbler powers may suggest ideas with sufficient liveliness to be entertaining, but fail of imbuing them with life and reality.

It is convenient to distinguish, as far as our language can, the different degrees of this impersonating power. That more comprehensive sway, which, by means of conception, wields the feelings of men with a force like that of the senses, is now very generally called imagination; while the term fancy is limited to that which avails only to the presentation of brilliant but cold imagery. The former may effect the highest degree of the beautiful; the latter scarcely more than the pretty. This distinction could be illustrated from every department of art—for example, the group of the Knight and Serpent, by Otten, is a product of fancy: Kiss's Amazon, a beautiful work of imagination; Cole's Dream of Arcadia sparkles in the drapery of fancy, while his Voyage of Life is bathed in the light of imagination. But one or two literary specimens will more clearly define the difference. Observe the effect of the following verses:

"Let the postillion Nature mount, and let
The coachman Art be set,
And let the airy footmen, running all beside,
Make a long row of goodly pride,
Figures, conceits, raptures, and sentences,
In a well worded dress,
And innocent loves, and pleasant truths, and useful lies,
In all their gaudy liveries."

In comparison with the following:

> "What envious streaks
> Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east!
> Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
> Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain-tops."

In both passages there seems to be equal lack of dignity in the imagery. Taken separately, out of their connection, postillion, coachman, dress, liveries, etc., are certainly as good as lace and burned out candles, and a man standing on tiptoe; yet the former is a cold conceit, and the latter one of the most striking and suggestive pictures that could be drawn in the same number of words.

Yet I would not be understood as intending to laud one degree of impersonation at the expense of another. Extreme cases best answer the purpose of marking distinctions; but every example must not be assumed as equally cold and uninteresting. We could ill spare from the kingdom of art the brilliant creations of fancy, and there are many unnamed degrees between the cold conceit and the life breathing personification. The more comprehensive is generally found to embrace the other. The best examples of both can be drawn from the productions of the same mind. Thus, the following is an offspring of pure fancy, elegant as frost work.

> "O, then I see queen Mab hath been with you.
> She is the fairies' midwife; and she comes
> In shape no bigger than an agate stone
> On the forefinger of an alderman,
> Drawn with a team of little atomies

Athwart men's noses as they lie asleep.
Her wagon spokes made of long spinner's legs,
The cover of the wings of grasshoppers,
The traces of the smallest spider's web,
The collars of the moonshine's watery beams.
Her whip of cricket's bone, the lash of film,
Her wagoner a small gray coated gnat,
Her chariot is an empty hazelnut,
Made by the joiner squirrel, or old grub,
Time out of mind the fairies' coachmakers."

For the purpose of comparison with this, I select, from the same author, another passage, consisting of images not more intimately associated with human feeling in their own nature:

"Come on, sir, here's the place. Stand still. How fearful
And giddy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low!
The crows and choughs that wing the midway air
Show scarce as gross as beetles. Halfway down
Hangs one that gathers samphire. Dreadful trade.
Methinks he seems no bigger than his head.
The fishermen that walk upon the beach
Appear like mice, and yon tall anchoring bark
Diminished to her cock, her cock a buoy,
Almost too small for sight. The murmuring surge
That on the unnumbered idle pebbles chafes
Can not be heard so high."

Here the imagery is so woven together as to move the very feeling which an observer of the reality would experience, until the reader is ready to exclaim, with the character personated:

"I'll look no more,
Lest my brain turn, and the deficient sight
Topple down headlong."

It is by the hand of fancy that images taken from the external world are employed to the expression of ideas without any touch of emotion; imagination is the power of imbuing all with a healthy human interest.

The distinction is one of degree and combination, and may not be recognized by metaphysics, nor necessary to the understanding of the radical operations of intellect, but is indispensable to true appreciation of the most important element in art. For the faculty of conferring upon inanimate material the utterance of human feeling is the profoundest source of sympathy between the artist and those whom he addresses. It is the secret of poetical interest, which arises mainly from our sympathy with other beings of our race. Why do we read the works of Cowley and other poets of his class with so much languor? They have imagery in abundance. They overflow with it; yet fail to interest the reader, or even to detain his attention long. It is a labor to peruse them for a few minutes. And why do the dreams of John Bunyan, with no pretension to reality, take such hold upon the mind as to withdraw it entirely from external things, abstracting attention from the information of the senses to engross it all for themselves; while the works of many a learned historian, deep in the most important transactions of the real world, are a laborious study. Or why has their allegorical meaning an interest not to be found in more learned and thorough theological works?

Or why does the oratory of one man create a breathless silence throughout the assembly, which hangs with the most eager attention upon his words, while another might say almost the same things and scarcely obtain a hearing? What, in short, is the difference between accurate dullness and that composition, which, with no higher degree of artistic skill, and on the same subject, absorbs the whole man of the reader, and leads his feelings captive in its chains?

It is impossible to answer such questions satisfactorily without regard to the distinction now made. For all such effects are the productions of imagination in that respect in which it is different from fancy.

The grandest, the most beautiful objects in nature, as material in the hands of an artist, are but tame and commonplace, unless he can inspire them with the glow of human emotion. Man can be truly and deeply interested only in what pertains to man. We must bring the lofty down to ourselves, as well as lift the lowly up, if we would truly sympathize with either. Even the student of science, who believes that he loves the rocks or plants of his classification, will find, upon closer observation, that it is only because he has associated with them, and, by an act of imagination, imputed to them, qualities of his own mind, and the accomplishment of his own plans. It is this association with the feelings of humanity which gives all its highest interest to the physical world. Are the natural features of the scenes they describe the principal source

of interest in the writings of Thompson and of Wordsworth? Their favorite subjects, as far as concerns bodily shape, have always been open to every man with eyes and ears in his head—subjects attempted repeatedly by other pens not failing either in accuracy or command of language. Its connection with human life is all that lends this material earth its power to move the feelings of man. We may admire the beautiful and wonder at the grand; but removed from the feelings of our race, they make but a short lived impression. With what different interest would we look upon the plains of Attica, and the wilds of New Holland, upon the site of ancient Thebes and the waste which bears no trace of man? Even in the primeval forests of the West the pulse is quickened by the thought that the Indian savage has wandered there; but the interest amounts to rapture when some ancient mound or fragment of a wall brings up our fellow man before us. The discoveries in central America and Yucatan, of ruined temples and cities of a former time, have excited more interest in the world than all the strangest stories ever penned, of vast territories of savage grandeur unmarked by the foot of man. Amid the solitude of the far western prairies, where least of all are suggestions of human life to be expected, what are the images that rise before the mind of the poet?

"Are they here—
The dead of other days?—and did the dust
Of these fair solitudes once stir with life

And burn with passion? Let the mighty mounds
That overlook the rivers, or that rise
In the dim forest, crowded with old oaks
Answer. A race that long has passed away
Built them: a disciplined and populous race
Heaped with long toil the earth, while yet the Greek
Was hewing the Pentelicus to forms
Of symmetry and rearing on its rock
The glittering Parthenon."

"All day this desert murmured with their toils.
Till twilight blushed, and lovers walked and wooed
In a forgotten language, and old tunes,
From instruments of unremembered form,
Gave the soft winds a voice."

Thus, even when the devoted lover of nature addresses himself to the wilderness, his imagery is drawn from the life and heart of man. Rather than contemplate nature in uninhabited wildness the imagination will people it with congenial beings of its own. What lover of painting has not felt how uninteresting and desolate, how unmeaning is the finest landscape piece without the presence of a human figure? The errant knights in the scenes of Salvator Rosa are often without any obvious business there; but their very presence, while enhancing the picturesque effect, gives a life and human interest to the whole. Extensive knowledge of nature and the principles of science must furnish the artist's mind; and yet if he would have these seeds germinate into works of interest, he must water them from the well springs of his own heart. One ought not to rest satisfied with observing, or with merely

comprehending—he needs to digest the materials of his knowledge until they become assimilated to his own mind; and then, if acquainted with his own strength and weakness, and willing to work in the direction of his strength, he may not attain the highest degree of interest, but his productions can never be dull: for they will be infused with that spirit which man can never regard with apathy—the real feelings of a healthy mind.

SECTION II.—Poesy.

However critics may differ as to the definition of poetry, all competent to offer an opinion on the subject will agree that occasionally, in prose, as well as in verse, we meet with a passage to which we feel that the term poetry could be applied with great propriety by a figure of speech. In the other arts, also, we find, now and then, what we feel prompted from within to call the poetry of painting, of statuary, of music, or of whatever art it may be. The fact that books have been written under such figurative titles, and favorably received, proves that the popular mind conceives of something in poetry besides versification—of some spiritual excellence, most properly belonging to compositions in verse, but which is also found elsewhere. When Byron said that few poems of his day were half poetry, he evidently meant by poetry something distinguishable from rhythm and from rhyme. True,

such may be only a figurative use of the word; but the public accept that figurative use as corresponding to some actual conception which they entertain of poetry in its best degrees. And when they speak of the poetry of any other art, it is evident from the use of the same word that they believe themselves perceiving the same or similar qualities. To such conceptions, then, without regard to whence they spring, I think, with Coleridge, that it would be expedient to appropriate the word *poesy* — thereby avoiding the ambiguity which now exists in the use of the word poetry; though popular choice, which always prefers a figurative application of a common word, has not adopted the suggestion.

Upon reading Byron's lines on Modern Greece, in the Giaour, or Burke's recollections of the Queen of France, or beholding Landseer's picture called the Old Shepherd's Chief Mourner, or the Dying Gladiator, the feelings we experience are found to be so similar, in the main, that we instinctively seek to embrace them under the same names. Upon proceeding to inquire into the æsthetic feature presented by such examples in common—the one cause of their common effect, that which would be popularly called their poetry—we find it to consist invariably in a beautiful expression of some tender or highly refined emotion.

We often confess a high degree of beauty where we are not prompted to declare the existence of poetry; nothing except what deeply moves the heart, without

a sensible blemish in the manner, receives the honor of that name. There is more poesy in Cole's Voyage of Life than in a whole gallery of equally well executed pictures, which are mere landscapes. Art is a language which may be beautiful only in itself, or also convey beautiful ideas. Poesy may exist in the latter where there is but a moderate degree of the former; but not in the former without the latter. Though many other works equal the Dying Gladiator in beauty of externals, few can be compared with it in the poetry of sculpture. In the Voyage of Life, though the whole is full of poesy, the most affecting of the series is No. 3, which is at the same time the most rugged and scanty in details. Some of the rough outlines of Michael Angelo embody a grandeur of poesy which is not to be found in the most highly finished works of inferior minds.

I do not know that the term is ever applied to any variety of the risible, except the humorous, and to that only in cases involving the most delicate feeling. Some of the playful productions of Charles Lamb might well be called the poesy of humor.

In all subjects of Art, invariably the most poetic are those which most beautifully express the loves, the sorrows, the patience, the piety, the sympathetic tenderness—in short, the more interesting affections of the human heart.

CHAPTER IX.

STYLE

It occurs as appropriate to the foregoing topics to add a few words on the nature of style and *morale* in Art.

Radically, style is the impress of the individual mind; but, from the fact that men in society are greatly influenced by each other, and adopt, without designing it, some portion of each other's thoughts and feelings, an aggregate of manner comes to belong to any given age or country. Hence, style is not only the mark of the man, but also of his country, and of the stage of its progress in improvement or decline.

The basis of classification, here, must be the relation between the rational and emotional in the human mind. For according as one or the other predominates so will the style be warm or cold, redundant or severe. Subdivisions might be made, under the name of the kind of intellectual power, or the kind of feeling embodied; as, on the one hand, the materially correct and the suggestive; on the other, the voluptuous and the holy.

The style of an individual, being his peculiar way of expressing himself, will vary with the change of his feelings, the growth or decay of his powers, or his adoption of different principles. The style of Raphael's youth was very inferior to that of his maturity, and from Byron's "Hours of Idleness" none could have anticipated the energy of the "Corsair." Still, there is generally something, even in the humblest efforts of a man of genius, that shows, or at least intimates, its outgoings as soon as a tolerable command has been obtained of the language to be employed. On this point, all are unconscious expounders of themselves. Their express ideas and feelings they can observe, examine, criticise, and form a fair opinion of, but of their style they can never form the notion that others do.

Because it is the effluence of his own internal being, one's true style necessarily appears without any singularities in his own eyes. Mozart replied to an inquiry concerning his style, that he had not the most distant idea of the Mozartish in his compositions; and it is a notorious fact that poets are poor judges of the proper merits of their own style. If any one seems to be perfectly aware of the niceties of his manner, and of that wherein it differs from others, he furnishes thereby a strong presumption that the garment is not his own, but borrowed.

Consequently, no rule for style can be more fundamental than that each one express in the most

satisfactory manner to himself what he thinks best. Attainment of absolute excellence will depend upon the correctness of his taste; and that, again, upon maturity and justness of thought and feeling. The style of the boy will, thus, be boyish, of the youth, youthful, and of the man of bad taste, at any age, it will be bad. But no improvement could be made by laboring upon style without effecting a change upon the mind; no good could come of aping the fine style of another, while there is nothing corresponding to it within. The works of our predecessors are invaluable helps, by example, and warning, and precedent; but more directly for improvement of taste than of style. On the latter point, the radical guide, at all times, is the question, "Does that embody precisely what I mean, in a way that perfectly satisfies me?" If the answer is negative, the man has not yet matured his style; and nothing but the effort to secure an affirmative can guide him to that end. He may, indeed, never attain it; few do succeed in bringing their style to perfection: but there is only the one way whereby it can be done. And even an approximation to it in that way will be more effective than the results of any other, however promising at the outset. It may be well for a painter to think how he should feel on presenting his works to some great master, and to keep the fear of such a critic before him; but that is in reality nothing more than awing himself into an earnest effort to embody his highest ideas of excellence

as he himself thinks best. To go to work servilely to copy the master's manner would certainly not be a rational mode of obtaining his approbation. One's style is never matured until he is himself satisfied with it; and when that end is reached, the style may be, in itself considered, either good or bad; but it is the best for its author. The style of a cold-hearted man may be cold and formal, and, so far, bad, yet the best for him. To ape anything absolutely better would be false and ridiculous. A more kindly spirit, however, would deal very unfairly with itself to rest content with such a manner. The style of a passionate man may be reckless and disjointed; but he is not capable of a better. To improve it he must begin with his own heart. Let that be properly subdued to the rein, and the externals of expression will follow.

There can be no one standard of excellence in style. What is good for one class of intellect would be highly improper for another. The excellence of Beethoven is very different from that of Bellini; yet both are true excellence. What is good in the style of Burke is not the same that we call good in that of Addison, save in the fact that they are both true to their respective authors. Goldsmith's structure of sentence, though of inimitable beauty, would have formed a very inadequate vehicle for the stupendous thoughts of Chalmers. The style of Canova may be humbler than that of Phidias; the fault is not in the style, but in the man.

To have copied the great ancient, without his grasp and sweep of thought, would have given a truly bad style. To study the works of our predecessors until their intrinsic merits sink into the soul, and make themselves at home there, is truly to profit by them. For then we grow rich by their wealth, while they become transformed into our image, are renovated by our spiritual life, and come forth again laden with a new message to mankind.

Many circumstances, as sameness of geographical situation and local scenery, of religion, of education, habits, hereditary constitution and political relations, conspire to give a similarity of style to those of the same age and country. The aggregate of a nation presents a singleness of character not less distinct than any one of its component members. The most cursory observer can not fail to distinguish from each other at first sight the works of Egypt, of Assyria, of Greece, of India, of China, or of Mexico. A truly national style is never fabricated by a combination for that purpose, but naturally proceeds from the operation of common causes, without the cognizance, in the first instance, of those from whom it springs.

For the same reason, different periods of national history have each their respective styles. If sometimes one dominant appears to be the leader, it will always be found that he is as much indebted to the age, in style of thinking, as the age is to him for style of

expression. If Phidias embodied the highest perfection of ideal art, the cultivated taste of that remarkable age had largely contributed to form his conceptions of the beautiful. Cicero received from the period in which he lived, many elements of that beautiful diction wherewith he graced it; and if Shakspeare matured the style of English dramatic composition, he was sustained by an age more devoted to the drama than any other in England, either before or since. While, however, such men have features in common with their time, I do not mean to say that their greatness is to be so explained. For, in all the higher achievements of their genius, they rise above the common standard—nay, the common appreciation of any time. Together with features which stamp them of a particular age and country, they have others peculiar to themselves: so that, while we detect Spenser and Shakspeare, and Massinger and Jonson, to be of the reign of Elizabeth, we can not hesitate a moment in distinguishing the style of any one of them as specially his own. He can never be a fair judge of style who has not fully studied the age and nation to which it belongs, and who can not think himself back into a sympathy therewith; not in order to assume its likeness, but that he may truly apprehend its causes, and the amount of truth and error it contains.

SECTION II.—MORAL.

Form, color, drawing, musical sounds, are, like language, worthless without something to convey—some moral truth instinctive to the life of man. In a good work, the moral will not appear in one part alone, nor stand in any need of explanation. The statue will breathe it in every limb, it will dictate every note of the music, and no chorus will be needed to preach it into the drama—and in the romance it will not stare in like a sheeted ghost at the close, but live and move throughout, the embodied spirit of the whole.

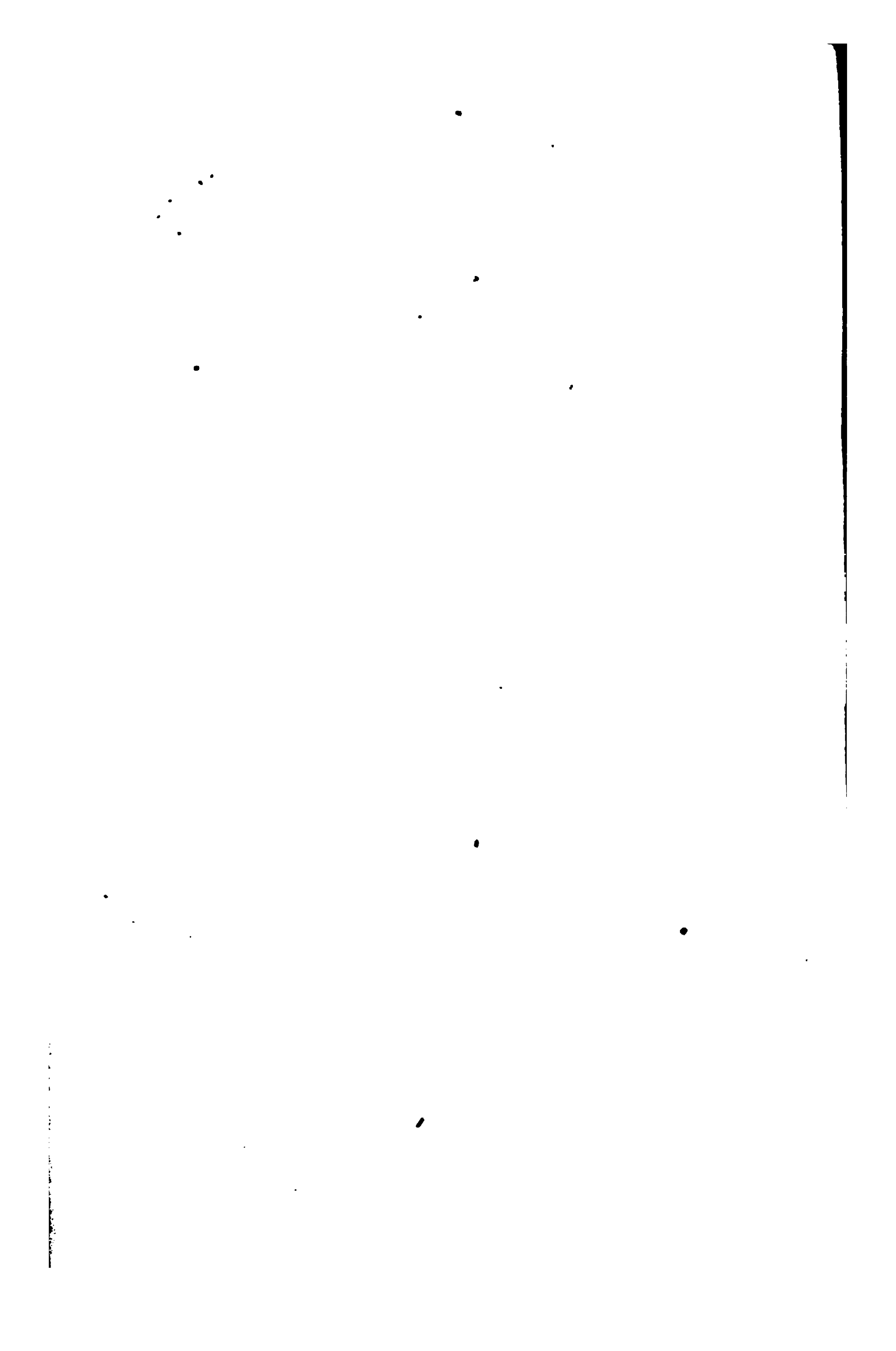
The world, though sinful, has decency enough to honor the appearance of virtue. Though they may take secret pleasure in an immoral work, they will not have the effrontery to praise it as such. God has put salt enough into the dead body to keep it from such utter corruption. The indecent disclosures of Pompeii are withheld from public view, and the prurient productions of prostituted genius are sold by stealth. He is an exceptionally degraded specimen of humanity, who is not ashamed of his vices. The great majority of the corrupt, though they may be shameless among their own class, attempt to cover their corruptions in more respectable company. It is not safe, therefore, for one's own reputation, to contemplate no higher motive, to pander to the tastes of the depraved. Who would covet the praise of the most skillful execution, in a work calculated to bring a blush to the cheek of virtue.

Low pruriency may give a certain kind of undercurrent popularity; but the universal voice of those who confer all permanent and valuable renown, will consign an immoral work to contempt and oblivion. Whoever courts the favor of the vicious, hangs a millstone about the neck of his own fame. A fault in morals is a fault in art.

But genius wofully executes its divine commission if it descend to feel the check of popular morality. To breathe upon the heart of man, secularized by worldly business, the atmosphere of holy beauty; to recommend the charms of truth and goodness; to win, thereby, the affections of men from vice and error, and fan those lofty aspirations, which are kindred to devotion, is the noble moral of art.

Fine taste is a cognate of natural piety; and art, in her proper place, and proudest triumphs, a servant of religion.

—Gerard on Taste. Alison on Taste. Hartley on Man, Part I., Chap. IV., § 1. Coleridge. Henry Nelson Coleridge, Introduction to Greek Poets.



PART III.

LIMITS OF THE FIELD OF ART.

THOUGH it is not to be presumed that every means of reaching the emotion of beauty has already been put in requisition, a classification of the arts according to the elements of human nature which they primarily call into activity, will show that genius has left few conceivable avenues unoccupied. Such a classification will also be the most complete and satisfactory.

I. To begin with our primary notions of the external world, we find a large group of arts, which seek the approbation of taste by means of gratifying the senses. Of these the various senses retain their own respective classes. Sight and hearing, however, are the chief purveyors for the mind: the other three are more concerned in attending to the safety and comfort of the body, and their capacities are narrower and lower. Refinement of mind exalts the worth and dignity of character; refinement in bodily gratifications works only voluptuousness and ultimate degradation of the moral nature.

II. A second group address themselves to the understanding, enlisting the work of the senses only in as far as sensible signs are necessary to communicate the thoughts of one mind to another. Under this head come all the varieties of oratory and elegant literature.

Subordinate to these orders, the individual arts arrange themselves under the particular elements of human nature from which they have sprung, each embodying some phase of the beautiful, peculiar to itself.

CHAPTER I.

The arts belonging to the first class may be conveniently disposed under the five heads of Plastics, Graphics, Architectonics, Landscape Gardening, and Music: each constituting a separate language, and possessing its peculiar capabilities of expression, and holding its own proper field of ideas.

PLASTIC ART.

Plastic, in accordance with its Greek original, is applied to the art of shaping or modeling, which is consequently concerned with forms, especially organic, and its highest efforts are expended upon the human form, as the most beautiful and interesting to the human eye, as well as the most eloquent in varied meaning. The primary branch, from which the generic name is derived, pertains to modeling in soft

masses, as clay, wax, or gypsum. Clay was, perhaps, the earliest material employed. There are some very ancient figures of this kind, of Greek and Egyptian workmanship. The Roman ancestral images were commonly made of wax, and gypsum in stucco work is still found in ancient buildings.

Works cut in hard material, as wood, ivory and stone, constitute a second branch, to which the term sculpture is more properly applied; to which may be added, work on gems. The term statuary is properly limited to figures of living beings.

The productions of the art are sometimes slightly raised from a plane surface, and said to be in *low relief:* sometimes so much raised that they seem only attached to the ground, then called *high relief;* and sometimes they are entirely isolated.

Intaglio, or work in which the figure is lower than the surrounding surface, though less obviously embraced by the etymology of the word *plastic*, is included in the spirit of this department of art.

Relief and intaglio are much used on Egyptian monuments, in architectural ornaments, and on gems. Many great and beautiful works exist in relief, such as the sculptures in the frieze of the Parthenon, and the gate of the Baptistry of St. John at Florence. But the higher achievements of plastic art are to be found in the region of statuary.

Works in stone or metal have generally been first

modeled in clay, or some other soft material. The artist builds around a frame, made for the purpose, a quantity of moist clay, which he gradually models to the conception in his mind. This model is afterwards copied in the marble or the bronze in which it is to stand. The copying is a mechanical operation, and, to some extent, may be performed by an ordinary workman. It is on the model that genius displays her power. When the copy is to be made in marble, care is exercised to find a block free from every blemish, of the finest, closest texture, and purest white. In Greece the quarries of Pentelicus and Paros furnished the varieties most highly valued. In the time of Vespasian, those of Carrara, in Italy, were discovered, and continue, to this day, to supply material for the most beautiful works. The marble block is wrought to a rough likeness of the statue, with the hammer and chisel, then smoothed with rasps and files, and finished by polishing with pumice stone.

Of metals, bronze is generally preferred, being well calculated to resist the effects of atmosphere and accidental violence. A mold of plaster and brick dust is made upon the model, lined with clay, of the thickness which the bronze is designed to be, then filled with a core, composed also of plaster and brick dust, which is fixed in its place by little bars of bronze passing through the mold. The intervening clay is carefully removed, and the melted metal, poured

in through an aperture for the purpose, fills the space previously occupied by the clay. The work is afterwards polished mechanically.

Some statues are cast in gold, some in silver, and many in iron. In recent times iron castings have been carried to great perfection, especially at Berlin. The commonest material for copying statuary, and, next to marble, the most beautiful, is gypsum, though its frailty is a great objection to the use of it in exposed situations. Ivory was sometimes employed by the Greeks, even in large statues—being put as a covering upon some plainer material, as in the Minerva of the Acropolis, at Athens, and the Olympian Jupiter, both works by Phidias. The mass of the statue was of stone, and the ivory, after being polished, was neatly fastened, so as to look like one entire piece, on every part designed to be naked. The drapery was of gold, fitted on in a similar manner. These statues were also painted, and the eyes composed of precious stones. In view of this latter point, it is due to the great statuary to say that he had another end in view besides that which is truly artistic. His chief object, indeed, was to embody the Greek conception of Deity—that life of spiritual activity and sublime bodily repose. The attitude of the figure, the calm features, and motionless material, furnished the one element, and the other Phidias attempted to produce by copying the lines of thought and colors of life with the light of the eye. His success is attested by such men as Plato

and Aristotle. The means, however, whereby he effected the supernatural and awful in the mind of the Greek, to whom the idea of external immobility and internal activity was familiar, would only shock those to whom it is foreign. We, who never conceive of the colors, and form, and light of life, without connecting therewith the motion also of life—the gentle heaving of respiration, at least—can not behold the former combined, without expecting also the latter; and where they are not to be found, the former can express nothing to us but sudden death, or suspended animation. A simple, uncolored material, whereby the counterfeit of life is not attempted, is, in the hands of genius, capable of higher effects. The plain bronze or marble can never be mistaken for the substance of living creatures, while, omitting all inferior accessories, they embody the noblest and most beautiful forms that animal life assumes.

Of all forms, the human is the best vehicle of the sculptor's thought — because in itself the fullest of meaning to the human understanding. All its varieties, and attitudes, and features, and lines, are associated with corresponding ideas and emotions in the beholder's mind. It is itself a language most powerfully expressive and universally understood. But in order to make an adequate use of it, a thorough acquaintance with its anatomy, its balance and capacities of motion, is indispensable. This is the grammar of the sculptor's language, without which he must

forever fail in obtaining a true and effective utterance. Though apparently dealing with the superficies alone, he can not make one independent and intelligible work without a knowledge of the internal mechanism. For such is the harmony of the whole frame that any given position of one member requires a certain corresponding position of all the rest, and almost every change of attitude and action changes the shape of some of the limbs. For example, when the figure is perfectly upright, and equally supported on both feet, with the hands hanging down on each side, the line of gravity falls through the center of the body, between the ankles, to the ground. Every remove from that position alters, more or less, the direction of the line of gravity, or rather the relation of every part of the body to it. If only a step be taken forward, with a natural motion, the upper part of the body is inclined forward, and the shape as well as the attitude of the muscles employed is changed. In preparing to run, the line of gravity is thrown beyond the advanced foot; in striking, when the action begins, the body is thrown backward, the line of gravity falls out of the figure, on that side, and is immediately transferred with the falling blow to the other side—every muscle pertaining to locomotion having changed its action in that instant. To raise the arm may seem to be the act of that limb alone; but if naturally executed involves the motion of the whole body. Thus, every change of attitude demands a new modeling of the

whole figure. The artist ignorant of fundamental principles, who has correctly made a statue in rest, must study the whole over again to produce one in the act of taking one step.

The peculiar work of sculpture is the ideal perfection of organic form, and its highest end, formal beauty in repose. Painting alone approaches to competition with it in this, its proper field. But colors, depending as they do upon so many modifications of light and of feeling, for their existence, necessarily suggest the idea of change, while the statue, in simplicity of actual form, which although it also changes in the course of time, is more associated in our minds with permanency, can attain its noblest results without those glowing signs of transitory emotion.

Though portrait statues and busts are historically valuable, it is not by them that the art is to be estimated. The most beautiful living form comes short, in some respect, of what the cultivated mind can conceive of perfection; but the statue, truly embodying the same style of beauty, carries to perfection all that we admire, while it omits everything that can offend. Statuary is even more fastidious than poetry, in rejecting all that fails of beauty. A long poem may contain many a blemish and yet be of admitted excellence, its merits being so great and striking as to retain their place in the mind when the faults are forgotten, or pardoned, for the sake of the associated excellence; a statue is taken in by the eye at once, and any want of

harmony immediately detected. The distinct perception of a single particular, as wrong, impairs the pleasure to be derived from all the rest; for we can not think of the work without remembering the blemish. If the design was beautiful, we grieve that it should have been marred; and if the fault is in the design, no excellence of execution can atone for it. In what the mind is only called upon to conceive, its own conceptions may help out the work of the artist, but that which is presented to the faithful eyes, must have in itself all the merit for which it is to have credit. To give its proper satisfaction, a piece of sculpture must actually present what seems to the observing mind the perfection of that particular style of form to which it belongs. With anything else than form and the ideas thereby conveyed, it has nothing to do, and the imagination demands nothing more of it.

Art is not, in any department, a promiscuous following of nature, but differs from nature by aiming at a separation of elements, which, in nature, are blended together. Nature, like her creator, is infinite. Art is finite—constructed on the principle of the human mind —*one thing at a time.* In nature we have perspective, and light, and shade, and color, and form, and motion, and sound, combined; but, in the midst of that wilderness of complicated beauty, the imagination labors to conceive of one of these elements suffered to develop itself to perfection. It separates perspective, and establishes the art of drawing; it separates sound, and

evolves the art of music; it separates form, and carrying out the peculiar features thereof to ideal beauty, constructs the art of statuary. Consequently, it is at variance with the primary object of the art, to introduce any other element. The legitimate design is not to present a figure that shall look just like some actual figure in nature, or that possesses as many as possible of the sensible qualities of the natural, but to embody the ideal perfection of form alone. Letting everything else go, for the time, the mind wishes to contemplate this one matter—how purely beautiful form can be—and wishes that it may not be embarrassed in, nor diverted from, that occupation, by the combination therewith of other notions. For the same reason that in a speech the whole must turn on one idea—that a tragedy should have but one plot—a statue should present the perfection of but one great element of beauty.

All arts are not equally limited in the number of their elements, but all are equally limited to unity of conception. Painting is equally limited to the effects of light and distance, and music to the beautiful in sound. When any of them attempt a close imitation of nature they become childish; because, in the aggregate, they can never equal nature, can never be anything better than toys, in comparison with her living productions. The works of nature are perfect, and can not be improved upon as such. It is only by taking one of her elements and making it human—by conferring

upon it a degree of separate excellence which she never gives, but which imagination conceives and desires to realize, that art can offer any worthy gratification to an enlightened mind. Each art, thus confined by the bounds of its own field, has yet a range for effort, greater than the genius of man can ever fill. Sculpture is the most definite and limited, perhaps, of all, and yet no human mind can embrace all the varieties of pleasing form, and of ideas, thereby expressible, which really occur, and the perfection of which, individually, it belongs to the art to present. Perhaps every healthy man and woman is possessed of some feature in face or figure, which, if suited with the entire accordance of all the rest, would present a new variety of beautiful expression. No one figure can be assumed as including in itself all the elements of human beauty; a fact clearly defined before the mind of antiquity. The statues of Grecian gods are as readily distinguished from each other as living men. The sublime repose in conscious sovereignty, of Jupiter, the strength of Hercules, the majestic grace of Apollo, are all beautiful, but markedly diverse. And besides the human figure, the possible beautiful in animal bodies is of great variety. The deer-like elasticity of the horses of Phidias, and the fiery strength of those of Lysippus, are far from having exhausted the possible beauty of that noble animal.

Of all materials employed in sculpture, the best for effecting the great end of the art is marble. Its pure

white is, in effect, the utter negation of color, or, at least, excludes that notion from the mind, together with all its associated notions of passion, and changeability, and mortality, confining it to the single conception of form.

The beauty of drapery is inferior, of course, to that of a figure, which breathes meaning from every limb; but there are objections to entire nudity, arising from the habits of modern society, which, I think, the artist should not disregard. Even the indulgence granted by the freer customs of ancient Greece was not without question of its delicacy and propriety. The people of Cos rejected the most beautiful work of Praxiteles on that very ground, preferring to pay the same price for a draped statue of less celebrity. It is undeniable, that to a northern mind, brought up to virtuous purity, there is something inexpressibly painful in the idea of such personal exposure, and that which would be avoided like death, in oneself, can not be conceived of in another with pleasure. Indeed, no truly modest eye, brought up to our habits, can look upon a nude statue for the first time, without a shock painfully unpleasant. The most truly delicate will, indeed, say least about it, and exhibit least appearance of embarrassment, but it will be deeply felt; and that feeling is not one to be despised in an æsthetic any more than in a moral point of view. The eye may become accustomed to the nude, and learn to enjoy the beauty without a thought of impropriety; still, I think that

artists would gain much in adapting their works to the beautiful delicacy of Christian habits and feelings. The noblest and loveliest element in art is its moral; and if statuary in heathen times was the minister of heathen religion, surely it is not beneath her, in Christian times, to conform to the customs established by true religion. The highest effects will always be produced in conformity to piety. If, however, the artist wishes to display his skill in anatomy, or to exhibit more fully than drapery will admit, the elegance of human form, let him not offend modesty by attitude or accessories. The Venus de Medici is a work of consummate genius, but the attitude is both indelicate and unworthy of the subject. The conception of Alcamenes, in representing the goddess as unconscious of exposure and of wrong therein, is incomparably better in every light. If figures must be exhibited in the undress of nature, let them be like Adam and Eve, before the fall—ignorant that they are naked. At the same time, all complication and minutiæ of drapery interferes with the true ends of the art. The common masculine dress of modern times, though not so absurd as that of some preceding ages, is still very unsuitable for statuary. In portrait statues and busts, it ought to be retained, because necessary to historical truth. To dress Washington in the toga, or present the French Emperor to his people in the garb of Alexander the Great, is a ridiculous falsehood. Posterity wishes to know how such men

actually looked, and, if a portrait would answer fully the end of its existence, it should present its subject just as he appeared to the intelligent among whom he lived; but to robe a hero of the eighteenth century of the Christian era in the dress of three or four centuries before Christ, is doubly false, saying that he looked as he did not look, and that he lived at a time when he did not live.

A marked distinction is always to be made between portraits and ideal pieces. In the one, truth to history is demanded; in the other, everything else ought to be sacrificed to true expression of the ideal. The latter alone are, in the fullest sense, works of art; and to them is my general remark under this head applied. In that case, the drapery need not be a mark of either Greek, Roman, or Oriental, but a simple truth of human life—a single robe, true only to the artist's idea of beauty, and the general fact that mankind delight in clothes.

In judging of a piece of statuary, the first importance is to be attached to the idea which it is designed to express; then to the means whereby that expression is effected; to the material, the proportions, the balance, the anatomy, and the execution; although, in reading the work, that order is reversed, and we actually reach the chief end of it last.

Though sculpture is capable of expressing feelings, as well as ideas, its excellence appears most in calm, unimpassioned thought. Feelings, both æsthetic and moral, are perfectly within its range—a god-like

Apollo, a debauched Silenus, the cool wisdom of Minerva, the brutal wrath of a boxer, a chaste Diana, a voluptuous Venus, the dignified tranquillity of Juno, and the troubled thoughts that crowd upon the mind of a gladiator, dying in the midst of the arena, far from every kindly heart he loves, are all within the mastery of the chisel, as far as they modify the human form or face; and yet the work which it prefers, in which it must forever remain unrivaled, is the delineation of the traces of intellect. Violent feelings express themselves to the eye in color and motion, as well as in form, and are better reached by painting, and entirely grasped only by the histrionic art; but the calm inscription which thought writes upon the features, no art can copy out so plainly, so permanently, as sculpture. Low conceptions, not from incapacity, but from prudence and consistency, it does well to avoid. The work at which modesty would blush, and the brow of virtue frown, can be little credit to its author, no matter what the skill expended in making it.

—History of Sculpture, Painting and Architecture: by J. S. Mesnes, L. L. D. Flaxman's Lectures on Sculpture. Of Statuary and Sculpture among the Ancients, with some account of specimens preserved in England: by James Dallaway.

SECTION II.—GRAPHIC ART.

Under the head *graphic* we classify the arts of drawing, painting, and engraving—founded upon the relations of light and distance.

Drawing is concerned only with the light and shade on objects, and their proper perspective: in other words, with only the lines defined by light upon their edges, and their relative apparent distance.

Painting includes drawing, but fills in the outlines with the colors of nature, and adds to linear perspective the effects of atmospheric interposition.

Engraving is the art of inscribing upon some hard material the lines afterward to be transferred to paper; and its object is to give, by means of light and shade, the general effect of colors in painting—to be to painting what printing is to penmanship.

Drawings are made with different materials; and the style and capacities of the art vary accordingly. The hard, dry, but firm, stroke of the pen, the softer, but less definite outlines of the crayon, and the delicate shading in India ink, have each their place in the field of art; though the second is the commonest, and the last the most beautiful. By the use of crayons of different colors, an effect, similar to painting, may be produced. Works of this kind are also of different classes, besides the finished drawing. *Sketches* are the great ideas of a work, hastily thrown off to serve a temporary purpose, often possessed of great energy and spirit, from their very imperfection and absence of detail. *Studies* are copies of actual objects, wholly or in part, for use in some future picture. *Cartoons* are large drawings, of the same size as the paintings to be copied from them.

Paintings may be classified under the heads of still-life pieces, pictures of animals, portraits, landscapes, and historical pictures; the latter subdivided into the epic, dramatic, and historical proper.

The humblest branch of the art, which consists in rendering with life-like truth objects of inanimate nature, as flowers and fruits, has yet a beauty above that of mere imitation, when the ideal perfection of the subject, and not merely the tame likeness of a given individual, is presented. Some selection ought also to be made of subjects suited to improve and refine the feelings. The dull geniuses who used to go into a Dutch market to paint turnips, carrots, cabbages, and stalls of dead fish, in the most offensive fidelity to minute details, may have gratified the taste of some market women, and succeeded in amusing children; and if so, their spirits undoubtedly rejoice in the success of their most sanguine expectations.

Animal painting is incomparably higher, especially if to perfection of form is added truth of expression and character. An affectionate observer of animals soon comes to detect among them distinction of individual character, as true, though not so great, as among men. A horse, or a dog, by Landseer, is not a mere general likeness of his kind, but perfectly individualized, though ideal—evidently possessing his own thoughts, feelings and propensities. You see, not only how he looks, but what he thinks.

Portrait painting is highly valuable, in an historical

point of view, and in the eye of friendship, but from its very nature is withheld from all designs upon ideal excellence.

Landscape painting is either descriptive or symbolical. When the design of the painter is to represent the actual features of some natural scene, he does, by drawing and colors, what one in describing the same scene would do by words; but when he uses these natural objects as the means of communicating some great moral truth, he rises to the dignity of a most interesting and impressive teacher. Then, if at any time, he may expect the visits of genius, and the light of poesy.

The work of the historical painter is to represent great junctures in history. The final circumstances in an accumulating series, which has filled up some great measure of human policy, belongs to the highest subjects of his art.

Styles of painting are very different, according to the material employed: as that of water colors, in which colors prepared with gum, or size, are applied with water—characterized by clearness and transparency of tint: of oil painting, in which colors ground in oil are used, giving at once the richest and most enduring effects: of fresco, in which the colors are laid upon a wall newly plaistered: of encaustic, in which the colors are mixed with wax and varnish, or water, and applied with heat: of enamel, in which, by means of fire, vitrified colors are impressed on gold, copper, silver, etc:

of the elydoric, which combines oil painting and the use of water colors: or of mosaic, which consists in combining small pieces of glass, wood, pebbles, enamel, etc., of different colors, so as to produce the effect of painting. Miniature painting has been almost extinguished by the inventions of Talbot and Daguerre. Of all these different styles, the most important, by far, are oil painting on canvas, and fresco work.

The field of painting is wider than that of sculpture, but less definite and precise in its objects; the latter being confined to form, while the other extends to all modifications of light and distance, including, therefore, the treatment of form also: but while painting can only give apparent form, sculpture presents the actual. The lights and shades of the painter are only imitation; those of the sculptor are real. So far, the actuality of sculpture gives it greatly the advantage. In the relations of distance however, that very characteristic is its bondage, where painting, dealing with the apparent, is unboundedly free. In sculpture, perspective is a feeble affair. Even in the celebrated work of Ghiberti on the gates of the Baptistry of St. John, it is far from successful. On the other hand, it is the magic wand of painting, without which the greatest productions of the art could never have been called into existence.

This fine effect is produced by two classes of causes: one, and the radical one, that of imitating the lines in which the rays of light reach the eye from different

objects, and the other that of representing the hazy coloring which the atmosphere throws over them, and which is deeper according to their remoteness: hence, designated by the names, *linear*, and *aerial perspective*.

The first and highest merit of painting is to single out, and appropriate to the delight and improvement of the human mind, the beautiful lessons involved among the complicated lights and shades, colors, prospects, and combinations, of nature, and human life. Ideas of time, of motion, and particular abstractions, which cannot be represented by any conventional symbol, are not properly subjects of the realm of painting, and every image that gives offence to good feeling, or just propriety, must be excluded by correct taste. What might be narrated circumstantially, might be highly improper to set before the eyes. To paint the progress of a wound, as Homer describes it, would be sickening; and the scene by the walls of Corinth, in Byron's poem, the Siege of Corinth, would only disgust in a painting. Within those limits, however, the art possesses an inexhaustible domain.

—Principles of Practical Perspective, etc.: by Richard Brown. A course of Lectures on Drawing, Painting, and Engraving, considered as branches of elegant Education: by W. M. Craig. The Elements of Linear Perspective, demonstrated by Geometrical Principles, etc.: by Edward Noble. Linear Perspective, or a new method of representing justly all manner of objects, as they appear to the eye in all situations: by Brook Taylor, L. L. D. Lectures on the Principles and Practice of Perspective: by John G. Wood. Camper on the Connection between Anatomy and the Arts of Drawing, Statuary, etc.: translated from the Dutch by T. Cogan. Fuseli's Lectures on Painting.

Landseer's Lectures on Engraving. Lauri's History of Painting in Italy: translated by Thomas Roscoe. The Flemish, Dutch, and German Schools of Painting: by Rev. J. S. James. Oram on Coloring and Landscape Painting. Ottley's Inquiry into the origin and Early History of Engraving on Copper and in Wood. Reynolds' Discourses on Painting. Sènefelder's complete Course of Lithography, translated from the German. Leonardo Da Vinci's Treatise on Painting. Du Fresnoy—Art of Painting: translated into English by Wm. Mason; annotations by Sir J. Reynolds. Reflexions Critiques sur la Poesie et la Peinture, par M. l' Abbé du Bos. History of Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, and Engraving; and of those who have excelled in them: by P. Monier.

SECTION III.—Architectonics.

Architecture is the art of building well; and, according to the particular objects to which it is addressed, is designated by the names, Civil, Military, and Naval.

Though there is, doubtless, considerable range for the exercise of taste in both fortification and ship-building, it has been incomparably less called for than in structures pertaining to civil life. The productions of civil architecture may be classed under four heads: as sacred, or those designed for the service and honor of God; monumental, embracing tombs and other memorial structures; municipal, including all edifices erected for public business or entertainment; and domestic, or the style suitable for private dwellings.

The elementary parts of a house are those which are necessary to its support, inclosure and covering; or,

more particularly, the foundation, column, wall, lintel or arch, roof or vault, or dome. Other parts are frequently added to increase its capacity and convenience, as upper floors, stairs, balconies and porticoes. Though every building does not contain all these elements, yet to design in their selection and character, as well as in the minor particulars depending upon them, is the work of the architect confined. The great diversity of which they are capable, and their variety of combinations, open a wide field for the exercise of genius. For example, the column appears sometimes, as in the most ancient works of India, rude and massive, half pillar, half pier; in Egypt, more artistic, but of a certain sepulchral heaviness and solemnity; in Greece, of faultless symmetry; while in the Gothic, it consists in a bundle of slender shafts running up into a wilderness of arches: and the wall, from the light domestic structures of China, to the rock-built temples of Egypt and the baronial castles of the middle ages, from the plain wood or rubble work, to the beautiful surfaces and firm outlines of the marble, presents a vast diversity of character. A similar remark might be made of every element above the foundation.

In reference to these varieties, buildings are classified in a two-fold manner: first, according to their ground plan, and secondly, according the character of their elevation. Thus we speak of them as quadrangular, circular, cruciform, etc., and those of the Grecian style

are designated by the arrangement and number of the columns—a temple in antis being one with only two columns in front, flanked by projecting antæ; a prostyle temple, one with a row of columns only in front; an amphiprostyle structure, one with columns occupying the full breadth at both ends; a peripteral, one with columns all round, etc.; while they are also distinguished by the terms tetrastyle, hexastyle, octostyle, etc., according to the number of columns presented in front.

Under the second head we hear of the different Greek and ancient Italian orders, in which the members chiefly contemplated are: the base or stylobate, the pillar, the entablature, the cornice, and the pediment. These are subdivided into smaller portions, as the base of the pillar, the shaft, the capital, the abacus; the entablature is subdivided into architrave, frieze, and cornice; and the pediment into tympanum and cornice. Again, these are subdivided into smaller members, called, generally, moldings—many of them also distinctive, and appropriate only to particular orders.

The natural limits of architecture are imposed by the law of gravitation, and all the fundamental varieties of style are based upon the different principles whereby it is overcome. Consequently, as far as style is concerned, the nature of its covering must settle the chief question in regard to a building. According as it is to be a roof, resting vertically upon

the walls, a vault, having its abutment upon them, a pensile covering, for which they furnish only tension, or is to be supported by the method of trussing, so must the whole style of the architecture be. The different features necessarily arising from strict adherence to one or other of the former two, or from the attempt to combine them, divide all the works of by-gone time into three great classes. Of the first, the highest perfection appears in the structures of ancient Greece; of the second, in the pure Gothic; and the last is exemplified in the later Roman, and in many works of recent time.

Where the first method is employed, which is certainly the simplest and most natural, the crowning excellence to be aimed at is that the incumbent pressure, while distinctly acknowledged, shall in no case be, or seem to be, in the slightest degree, less or more than the inferior are perfectly able to sustain—producing thus the ultimate expression of graceful repose. The highest aim of the second is determined by its indispensable curve-lines and invisible pressure, giving the upper members less the appearance of being supported than of springing up from those beneath, as branches from the trunk of a tree. Where the truth of such construction is fully given, the effect must be that of upward aspiration.

The style which is constituted from a combination of these two has not yet taken any unexceptionable form, but from the chaotic state of recent architecture, in

connection with the zeal and talent therein enlisted, it would seem that we are now in a transition process toward an age when that style must prevail, and may, perhaps, mature into something greater and more comprehensive of beauty than the world has yet seen. To return entirely to either the Greek or the Gothic, is now impossible; the changed and changing condition of the world demands another style. New materials are also coming into use. The introduction of iron into building will, by and by, suggest a new method of covering—a new principle of proportion—and, consequently, a new style of architecture; when patient thought and persevering labor shall have had time to elaborate its capabilities for beauty.

These fundamental ideas a multitude of subordinate principles are made to subserve, as, for example, in the Greek orders, the prevalence and scrupulous perfection of horizontal lines, together with the prominence given to members of support; and, in the Gothic, the art of converging all the pressure upon distant points, the assurance given in the obvious strength of the buttresses, that these points are well secured, removing the very idea of pressure from all the rest of the structure.

In like manner, the decorations of a building must spring out of its constructive character, and be real additions to intrinsic beauty—not unmeaning attachments, not impudent tricks to cover up ugliness, or mask a poor design. Any attempt to make materials

seem to be what they are not, or seem to perform an office which they really can not, is childish and ridiculous. Wood will always look best as wood, brick as brick, stone as stone, a lintel as a lintel, and an arch as an arch, if it is though proper that they should appear at all; and the decorations which beautify a Gothic cathedral would be entirely out of place upon a Grecian temple.

Architecture admits another limit in the truth of application. The structure of a temple is necessarily different from that of a court house, and both from that of a private dwelling. It strikes one with a feeling of absurdity, as well as of falsehood, upon passing through the portico of a temple, to find that instead of some idol shrine you have entered the house of a private citizen.

The essential demands of the art may be summed up as follows: that the building completely and undisguisedly answer the purpose of its erection; that it not only be, but also present the appearance of being perfectly stable and secure; that, in effecting these ends, it present a pleasing object to the eye; that whatever decorations are added be in keeping with the intrinsic beauty of the structure, and attached only to members on which the mind can conceive of rest, and have leisure to contemplate ornament, and that, if in the country, the whole structure should harmonize with surrounding nature.

Unlike painting and sculpture, architecture is not

imitative of anything in nature. Distant analogies may occasionally be perceived in some of its features to those of the grotto and arbor, but it would be utterly ridiculous to say that imitation of either has had anything to do with the progress of the art. It is entirely the creature of human invention for the supply of human necessities. Sculpture has its models in the forms of natural bodies, painting in the colors and outlines of the actual world, and landscape gardening in the real scenery which it modifies; but architecture has no model save in conceptions of the human mind. A building is an object alien to the landscape on which it appears — intrinsically, indeed, a deformity — and draws any beauty it may possess entirely from association with human life and from judicious design. There is no other art in which the mind is left so completely to its own resources, and in which beauty has to be studied so purely for its own sake, and as additional to the fullest attainment of utility. Accordingly there is no other in which, when any particular kind of beauty has been secured, the baldest imitation, and even repetition of it, is regarded with more indulgence. From this cause have the various styles and orders arisen — artists successively working out gradually, through many generations, the ideas originated within the nations to which they belong. Thus, the Egyptian, the Hindoo, the Chinese, and the Greek styles, are all the offspring of the habits of living and of thought

prevalent in their respective countries. The orders of the Greek style were also the productions of different nations, who while recognizing a kindred origin, and possessing much in common, retained each their own peculiar taste in minor things. Individual genius has seldom dared beyond a variation of some established order.

The whole available means of the art may be reduced to lines, angles, surfaces, natural light and shade, together with the color of materials, proportionate magnitude and capacity; but so manifold are the effects in grandeur and beauty thereby produced, and such the field its surfaces present for appropriate decoration, such the demand which it makes upon beauty in all things, internal and external, connected with it, that architecture may well be called the prince of arts, to whom the rest are most highly honored in being ministers. Painting and sculpture never seem so truly in their proper place as when in some way pertaining to a beautiful building, and helping out the expression of its idea—no where else are the grandest effects of music so powerful, and in no other connection can the natural landscape be so readily harmonized into unity.

M. Vitruvius—de Architectura. There are several good English translations of this work. One published by Wm. Wilkins, with an introduction containing a View of Architecture among the Greeks, in London, 1812. Another by John Gwilt.

Palladio. A translation of Palladio was published in London, 1742, with notes from the papers of Inigo Jones.

Lectures on Architecture; comprising the History of the Art from the earliest time to the present day: By J. Elmes. London, 1822.

Principles of Design in Architecture, traced in Observations on Buildings, Primeval, Gothic, Arabian, Chinese, and Modern English Domestic: By Wm. Mitford, Esq.

Architecture of the Hindoos: by Ram Raz. Gwilt's Encyclopædia of Architecture. Le Genie de l'Architecture, ou l'Analogie de cet Art avec nos Sensations: Par M. Le Camus de Mezieres. Winkelman's Hist. of Ancient Art. A work on the general subject of these three sections. Ruskin's Seven Lamps of Architecture.

SECTION IV.—Landscape Gardening.

The object of Landscape Gardening is to unfold that beauty which is appropriate to the particular character of a natural scene, by collecting and combining beautiful forms and colors, in trees, surfaces of ground, buildings, and walks, as well as by the removal of everything discordant or uncouth. Every natural scene has its own peculiar æsthetic qualities. Any attempt to contradict these would effect nothing of real power—they must be taken as the key note of the landscape harmony. Though the diversity of these features is endless as the ever varying aspects of nature, they may be all referred to two generic heads, distinguished by the terms *graceful* and *picturesque beauty*—the former characterized by glowing outlines and kindred elements, the latter by elements irregular and strongly contrasted. The sublime can seldomer be within the

range, or the command, of landscape art, yet is by no means excluded. For, though not to be created, it may be embraced by the disposition of trees in such a manner as to open effectively a view of a vast extent of sea, or plain, or far distant mountains.

If we choose a landscape naturally marked by graceful beauty, we highten that expression by judicious culture, by undulating elevations and depressions, smooth shaven lawns, open groups of shapely trees, winding walks of easy curve, assemblages of flowering shrubs, sheets of water, bordered with smooth green banks and white pebbled shore, limpid streams, to enliven the whole with their joyful manner, while here and there an urn, or a work of statuary, contributes to the general effect by intrinsic grace and associated refinement. The buildings erected in such a scene will be of a consistent style—regular, pure, and classical—and everything will be kept in the most scrupulous order and neatness.

If, on the other hand, a naturally wild spot is subjected to the artist, he will not attempt to tame it down to symmetrical evenness, but will use means to add to its native charm—removing everything discordant therewith, deepening the shade in some places, exposing a rock clothed with ivy, or a mouldering ruin in another, and leading the walks by many an abrupt, winding, and arduous steep, through a spirited diversity of striking views, and constructing the buildings in a correspondingly picturesque style.

Few fail to enjoy the general features of the graceful, but only the more highly cultivated, or those of active imagination, are prepared to appreciate the picturesque. It is the most refined, or rather disguised form, under which the beautiful addresses us.

Though the diversity of spirit in natural landscapes is so great that perhaps no two were ever precisely alike, and their appropriate treatment, consequently, must be in some degree different, yet to one or the other of these styles must every truly beautiful landscape incline; and many a little spot, incapable of the higher effects of either, may be improved by simply singling out, from all accidental and conflicting elements, the one prominent and pervading feature of its nature, and by disposing wood and lawn in reference thereto. On the other hand, the most extensive resources, where things are heterogeneously assembled, and all fail to unite harmoniously in the production of one pleasing emotion, can not lay claim to the honors of art at all. They are unmeaning as the gibberish of a lunatic. Unity of general effect in a given scene is indispensable to beauty.

But here, as elsewhere, unity is to be distinguished from sameness. Variety in the details, is as truly requisite as unity in the final effect. Many elements conspiring in one expression, is art. It is a poor and bald idea, which is satisfied with uniformity. Many elements are needed to set a beautiful thought in its

full length and breadth before the mind, and to illustrate it in all its relations to its neighbors in the realm of thought. As in language, a plain word contributes one part to convey our thought, a figure of speech contributes another, an argument a third, an example a fourth, and a comparison a fifth, like different strokes on the canvas; so, in landscape gardening, one kind of tree utters one part, another kind of tree utters another part, a lawn another, a curve in a walk another, a murmuring brook another, a statue another, and so on, all together constituting one beautiful sentence to the heart of taste. The tedium of uniformity arises from lack of meaning. There is not enough expressed to detain an active mind for more than a very brief period, after which the whole becomes dull and irksome. Variety is needed to convey the broad conception of great genius, as well as to prolong the enjoyments of the most ordinary mind. In order to effect one general expression, the various details have to be harmonized with each other; but that harmony of details is no more inconsistent with diversity or even contrast, than soft and loud, high and low, in notes of music, are inconsistent with their union in one melody.

The laws of landscape painting apply in some degree to landscape gardening; but to all the elements of the former, the latter adds reality, and motion, and time, and life, and sound. Many ideas beyond the reach of painting fall fully within the range of gardening. On

the other hand, gardening is confined by the natural features of the landscape. The artist can not create a mountain where nature has not put one, nor remove a mountain to extend his plain; he can not introduce a view of the sea, if the sea is not within sight, nor take a navigable river, with its white flitting sails, through a highland scene, where nature has not already led it; and even small changes, such as conducting a rivulet by a new channel, or smoothing a hillock, or elevating a mound, is a work of expense and delay. While the competition of gardening with painting is confined to landscape painting, and even there is limited by the natural features of the scenery, and the qualities or ideas it is capable of expressing are of less variety, it effects more completely and with vastly greater copiousness of detail, what it pretends to. A beautiful landscape is unspeakably superior to a landscape painting of the same subject—even more than realities are superior to shadows.

The truths of this branch of art have been chiefly the discovery of recent times. Even in the days of Louis XIV. the most ridiculous and childish notions prevailed in regard to it. Instead of consulting the meaning of nature, and seeking to elucidate and simplify her expression, the gardener deemed himself called upon to torture her into the utterance of every whimsical conceit of his own brain. The trees could never be permitted to grow as trees, but must be compelled into the shapes of birds, and beasts, and

statues, and tables, and letters of the alphabet, while such as declined servility to the pruning-knife had, at least, to take their place in rank and file, in square and column, like soldiers on drill. That despotism which then had secured her fetters upon mankind, feebly attempted also the dominion of nature, and the sterility which she invariably works in society and human thought, was reproduced in the bondage of taste.

In the present day the art has attained a high degree of excellence, having disentangled itself from unmeaning laxity on the one hand, and from tasteless pedantry on the other. The artificial of the seventeenth century can never reappear until luxury has again extinguished all true appreciation of nature and propriety.

—Loudon's Suburban Gardener. Thomas Whately's Observations on Modern Gardening. A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening, adapted to North America, with remarks on Rural Architecture: by A. J. Downing. Another work by the same author, on Cottage Residences, and their Garden Grounds.

SECTION V.—MUSIC.

From all the sounds that reach it in its mortal dwelling, the human spirit chooses out those most nearly corresponding to its own constitution, and disposing them symmetrically upon the descending current of time, constitutes for itself an art embracing all the

treasures of that region of sense. The principle whereupon it proceeds in selecting, is of the utmost mathematical precision. No sounds that are mixed, or otherwise call for irregular and difficult action of the organs of hearing, are admitted as pleasing. The quickness with which the sense operates is very great, whether regularly or irregularly—the multitudinous and mingled sounds of a busy street, the clatter of a mill, or the noise of a grindstone, although unpleasant, are apprehended by it with astonishing rapidity; but when in condition to admit any given sound, it more readily and agreeably receives others of the same kind; and their nearness of kindred is the measure of their agreeableness.

No mere single concussion of the air produces a musical tone; it only gives a rap, or report. To obtain a pleasing sound there must be rapid waves of air formed with perfect regularity into one effect, of precisely the same duration, but swelling and diminishing gradually in magnitude and intensity. Unmusical sound consists of slower, or isolated impulses of air, or of those which do not follow each other in precisely the same length of time.

A wheel, with teeth disposed at regular intervals along its edge, being made to revolve evenly, and strike a piece of quill with every tooth, when moving slowly, will give a distinct succession of strokes (each being equal to half the vibration of a chord), which are not musical, because, though in regular times, not

rapid enough to be apprehended as one sound. Let the motion of the wheel be accelerated until thirty-two strokes are made in a second: they will then cease to be heard separately, and the one resultant sound will differ from the separate raps of which it is composed, in being more agreeable to the ear—by being, in fact, a musical tone. In proportion to the increased rapidity of revolution, it will rise in shrillness until the strokes amount to about thirty-two thousand in a second; after which it ceases to be admitted by the human ear, at least as music.

The same effect may be produced by vibrating an extended cord or wire. If the vibrations are slow, they can be seen and counted. When amounting to sixteen in a second, they give forth a low musical tone, which, as they increase in rapidity, becomes sharper, until they reach sixteen thousand three hundred and eighty-four in a second, where the region of music ends. The number of vibrations above and below these, are not all inaudible, for sounds can be heard from eight vibrations in a second, and some ears can detect a kind of hissing sound made by twenty-four thousand in a second; but these are of no account in music.

The rapidity of vibrations may be accelerated by either increasing the tension of the cord, or diminishing its thickness and weight, as well as by shortening it. In the former case, the number of vibrations increases directly as the square root of the force of tension—that is, the octave can be produced on a cord strained by

four times the force under which it yielded the fundamental note.

The same effect is produced if waves of air are made with the same regularity and celerity by any other means. Such is the nature of a single musical tone.

The agreeableness of a succession of notes is due to a similar exact and material combination. If the string of a violoncello be made to vibrate by drawing the bow lightly across it, near the bridge, there will often be heard, not only the note given by its whole length, but also at the same time, more feebly, those given by the half, the third, and the fourth part; and the string will be found, upon examination, to be vibrating, not as a whole, but in portions, as the half, the third, etc., with points of rest between them. A similar motion may be communicated to a string by touching it at any aliquot part of its length, and then drawing the bow across the part thus marked off. The shorter the cord, if the impulse is the same, the more rapid are the vibrations. Consequently, the different parts of the same cord give forth different tones, according to the length of the portions into which it divides itself; and these being proportionate, the notes are accordingly harmonious. The vibrated string yields the harmonies of its own proper note. The perfect accords of the first, third, fifth, and eighth, thus formed by nature, constitute the basis of the musical scale. The octave is assumed as the unit of measurement.

The ear, being accustomed to these intervals in the

sounds of nature, readily detects the relations of minuter divisions, and discovers the more pleasing degrees which occur between any two of them. The subdivisions of the octave, according to their greater or less minuteness, constitute the diatonic, or chromatic, or enharmonic scale: the diatonic being the system of eight tones and semitones, as they constantly occur in nature; the chromatic, the division of the same series into semitones; and the enharmonic, a very unusual further division of the semitone. The diatonic scale is also arranged in two ways, as the major and minor modes. They are both equally natural, and, although differing in several essential effects, are fundamentally to be distinguished only by the place of the semitones.

The relation of notes to each other in the scale is strictly mathematical. In the major mode, the number of vibrations necessary to produce the respective notes are to each other as 1, $\frac{9}{8}$, $\frac{5}{4}$, $\frac{4}{3}$, $\frac{3}{2}$, $\frac{5}{3}$, $\frac{15}{8}$, 2; and the length of the string producing them 1, $\frac{8}{9}$, $\frac{4}{5}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{2}{3}$, $\frac{3}{5}$, $\frac{8}{15}$, $\frac{1}{2}$. In other words, suppose the number of vibrations giving the fundamental note C, to be represented by 1, then $1\frac{1}{8}$ will be the number giving the second note, D, $1\frac{1}{4}$ the number giving E, etc., and the string, which in its whole length sounds C, in order to make D must be diminished by $\frac{1}{9}$, to make E, by $\frac{1}{5}$, and so on. Accordingly, if thirty-two strokes in a second produce the fundamental note, then thirty-two and one-eighth of thirty-two, that is, thirty-six strokes in a second, will produce D, thirty-two and one-quarter of thirty-two, that is

$32+8=40$, will produce E, and so, for the other notes, $32+10\frac{2}{3}=42\frac{2}{3}$ will give F, $32+16=48$ will give G, $32+21\frac{1}{3}=53\frac{1}{3}$ will give A, $32+28=60$ will give B, and $32+32=64$ the octave.

Again, if these notes are arranged in groups, occupying precisely similar times, and these groups or measures into strains, holding an exact arithmetical correspondence to each other, to the expression of some idea of melody, we have the foundation of musical science.

Artificial as this may seem, it is as truly natural as the law whereby we see, through an equal medium, only in straight lines. The principles of music have grown up from the unchanging laws of the material world, to which the human ear has been created to correspond. Its mathematical basis extends to every essential element of the art. The primary charm wielded by sounds over the human spirit is the precise division of time by waves of air, to which harmony gives additional richness and power, and varying degrees of intensity give expression; while the field of the art is greatly enlarged by the endless diversity of quality in voices and instruments, a particular which no research has, as yet, satisfactorily explained.

But the relations of human life, and association with its changing phases in joy and sorrow, convey to the same sounds an auxiliary power, often transcending that which they possess in their own right. And when the results of faithful science are made fully subservient

to the demands of human emotion, the highest effects of musical art are attained.

Why it is, that "there is in souls a sympathy with sounds," it may be impossible to determine; but the fact is most obvious that music, though more subtile and evanescent than any of its sister arts, is more promptly, more profoundly, and more generally felt. In all ages its power over the feelings has been proved by triumphs which need to be repeated to secure credence. The warm imagination of antiquity, and the cool arithmetic of modern times, have equally been taken captive by it. The mythological wonders of Orpheus and Amphion might almost be taken for figurative prophecies of the real wonders wrought by the violin of Paganini, and the voice of Jenny Lind.

In spite of that law whereby human feelings revolt from the abstract, music addresses them successfully without personification. When the painter has delineated his idea on the canvas, he has given it a body and expression once for all: so the polished marble retains and will express, as long as it endures, the thought with which the sculptor has imbued it; but music refuses to assume any material body. Its written signs are only a system of marks to guide one artist in reproducing what another has conceived—resembling those of literature, but differing in as far as the written word does not need to be uttered in order to convey the writer's thought, whereas musical notation is in itself no expression of the composer's

ideas at all. Writing can answer the end of its being without the aid of oral reading, but music has no existence except in sound. To read the notes silently, is only to learn what they will be when performed. Music reveals herself only in the symmetrical relations of evanescent sound—not of continuous sound which might be made permanent; but of sounds as they pass away and give place to others, and in the measured lapse of time during which they begin and end. This immateriality constitutes a distinctive feature of the art, and, if a disadvantage in one point of view, is a safeguard in another.

All who address the public are liable to be misunderstood; but the musical composer is subject to the additional inconvenience of being misrepresented. For he has to utter himself, for the most part, through the instrumentality of others, and if his performers are either ill prepared or ill natured, his idea may not only be ruined, but something entirely at variance therewith expressed. And when we consider the defects of voices, and the limited power of instruments, and the changing effects of atmosphere upon wood, and cord, and metal, and the thousand accidents operating upon the human mind and body, and thereby upon the style of the singer, we shall find abundant reason to believe that many ideas of the greatest masters seldom find any adequate expression.

On the other hand, advantages of incalculable value

flow from this peculiarity, tending to render music one of the most effective coadjutors of religion. Of these the most noticeable is its perfect freedom from all inherent taint of moral wrong. A musical tone is as perfectly free from stain as the falling flake of snow, and no combination of tones, unassociated with other things, can be made to convey a vicious idea. You may unite them to words expressive of vice, or with improper gestures, looks, or signs, and thereby pollute your own associations with the music; but these are external defilements entirely foreign to the concord of sweet sounds. In itself considered, music has no congeniality with any form of vice, although often employed to conceal the monster's deformity. All beauty is essentially holy and can be polluted only externally by contact with meaner things; but on account of its immateriality, music is less liable to permanent contamination than the other arts. If a beautiful air is sometimes degraded by being connected with a vulgar song, the evil exists in that contiguity; to all who never heard the song, the music is as pure as if it had been composed for the harp of an angel. If those who have been accustomed to hear or to sing it with its vicious associations still think of it as something morally wrong, the fault is entirely in their own minds. I do not say that for them it will ever be a proper vehicle of pure thought; nor do I mean to say that every tune is capable of expressing just the same kind of holy

feeling—one may give utterance to grief, another to joy or to lighthearted gladness, one to gentle sorrow, another to wild wailing, one to dignified praise or to solemn adoration, another to triumphant rapture; neither do I mean to say that every piece is suitable for public or social worship; but I do mean to say that all combinations of musical tones are intrinsically as pure as the song of a bird or the murmuring of a stream, and if ever degraded by contiguity with vice, the dissolution of that contiguity alone is sufficient to effect their entire rescue. Many of the airs now sung to the verses of Burns and Moore were formerly the compulsory companions of filthy ballads; but who can now detect in them any trace of such connection? If Highland Mary and the Last Rose of Summer have rescued their respective tunes from trifling and vulgar associations so thoroughly that not a vestige thereof remains, what hinders the same tunes from being still further set apart to their still more proper place in the service of piety? We need sacred song expressive of every class of emotions, and for the manifold conditions of human existence. It does not follow if music is holy, that every air must be suitable for public worship; we need some for the family circle, in which many feelings are to be uttered that never properly occur in the great congregation. There are also times of private devotion, when a sweet soft tune, altogether unfit for an assembly, might be the most delightful

medium of expression for the pious heart. And then, there are hours of social relaxation, when music, without departing from its holy sphere, can at once embody and enlarge the feelings of cheerfulness and harmless mirth.

Accordingly music is found to be one of the most valuable auxiliaries in the work of human civilization and refinement, preparing the heart for all else that is beautiful, opening up the avenues of pleasure in the other arts, inspiring a quicker sensibility to all the loveliness of nature, and consequently softening our feelings toward one another. Preceding, in its own rudest state, the earliest steps of civilization, in its work of improvement becoming itself more and more improved, meeting all the demands upon its productiveness and still creating more demand, its course has been eminently progressive. No other ancient art has gained so much in modern hands. Advancing and retrograding with the fluctuations of social melioration and decline, it has effected its highest achievements in these days of Christian culture. Notwithstanding the love of it, native to mankind in all ages and countries, and the high degree of excellence to which it was carried by the ancient Egyptians, Hebrew, and Greek, the great works of musical art are of modern production. The mighty masters of the lyre have flourished within the last three hundred years, and the greatest of them within the last

hundred and fifty. Music, in every age the minister of religion and promoter of social refinement, has received from the noblest religion and the highest refinement the most enlightened cultivation.

Dr. Burney's General Hist. of Music. Crotch's Lectures on Music. Gardiner's Music of Nature. Hawkin's General History of Music. Harmonics, or the Philosophy of Musical Sounds: By Robert Smith. Arnott's Elements of Physics—Acoustics. De la Borde, Essai sur la Musique Ancienne et Moderne.

CHAPTER II.

A SECOND group of arts has grown up from the effort to give expression to ideas of such a kind as no mere sensational means can adequately embody. An elaborate system of signs has been devised, which in itself having no claim to the honor of a fine art, has yet laid the basis of this extensive class, in moral if not æsthetic power—the very highest of all. They pertain to the domain of letters, consisting of the kindred branches of Argument, Narrative, Description, Oratory, the Drama, and the Stage.

The first mentioned embraces literary productions belonging to the heads of treatise or essay, which are constructed according to the laws of logic and rhetoric proper; the province of the latter being to find out and arrange arguments, and that of the former to test their validity. Every grace, wherewith an argument can be illustrated, adorned, and rendered agreeable and effective, belongs of native right to the essay, but its indispensable frame work is a structure of reasoning.

The limits of narrative and description are as wide as the whole field of human knowledge—the latter being an account of the nature and condition of any subject at any given period, and the former a record of the changes passing upon it in the course of time.

The object of the drama is to represent, in ideal

excellence and real personages, some event in either actual or imaginary life, by means of exhibiting the various actors in the principal stages of its progress.

All these branches may take the garb of either verse or prose, which are distinguished by the former possessing a rhythmical arrangement of syllables in lines of symmetrical length, and sometimes rhyme.

Though oratory has been sustained and improved by the art of writing, and belongs to the same generic head, it is certainly of older date—arising, obviously, from the natural wish to highten and prolong some of the more stirring efforts of conversation. Properly, it is the art of oral persuasion; but practically, it is spoken prose composition. A writer's whole language is confined to words; the orator adds thereto the powerful elements of tone, sympathetic emotion, and the whole expression of the human body.

What oratory is to prose, the histrionic art is to poetry. The actor is an artist, whose material is himself; body and mind alike are called into action, both to prepare and to execute. He appears as the bodily presence of a poet's thought. If it is remembered that only with the greatest effort do we comprehend the vast conceptions of a mind superior to our own, and that it is almost, if not altogether, impossible to rise to sympathy with feelings loftier or purer than we have experienced, the difficulty of the histrionic art will be immediately recognized—inasmuch as it calls not only for the appreciation of every variety of emotion, from the coarsest excitement of selfishness to the most

beautiful attendant on the purest conceptions of genius, but also for the reproduction of it in action. Consequently, there are advantages of personal appearance, as well as of intellectual capacity and emotional habits, without which success is not to be hoped for by the actor. So diverse are the faculties called for in tragic and comic characters, that few actors are found equally competent to both.

Were it possible to ascertain precisely and fully all the conception of the poet, it might be laid down as the utmost boundary of histrionic art to reproduce that conception glowing in its original magnitude and delicacy of coloring; but, as ordinary language is inadequate to communicate so completely the beautiful imaginings of a highly poetic mind, and barely gives brief and fragmentary indications of them, it becomes necessary for the actor to possess a quick and accurate apprehension of the import of such indications, and a keen sensibility to the most delicate shades of emotion, and even to be himself a poet, in order to supply by intonation, look and gesture, much that words have failed to convey. Consequently, the highest object of the art is not a mere reproduction of the ordinary acceptation of the poet's words, but to represent the ideal perfection of that particular degree and tone of thought and feeling therein indicated; not, indeed, by adding to the poet's words, though even that is not entirely forbidden—but by filling out their meaning, and perfecting it, through those varieties of intonation, countenance and gesture — those accelerations and

suspensions of utterance natural to the state of mind represented, and sometimes, also, by omitting or laying little stress upon what the poet has improperly introduced. One of the most difficult things in the art is to seize upon the proper degree of emotion. It is not the most violent exhibition of passion which is most affecting; but that perfect propriety which adapts itself precisely to the circumstances and supposed exciting cause—and this involves the consideration of different temperament, of race, nation, education, age and clime. Herein are the force, originality and genius of an actor manifested; and all the accessories of the art, as scenery, music, stage-machinery, etc., are to be valued only as they forward the same chief end. True acting is a living commentary upon the poet, as well as a full translation of his thoughts into action.

It follows that, though men of low character may entertain the low and immoral among the audience, and pass for good actors, in ordinary parts, none but those of righteous principle and elevated soul can possibly perform the part of a pure and lofty personage to the approbation of a correctly appreciating audience. The low morals of actors inevitably drag down the stage to their own level. A debauchee may act the part of a saint, but it will be as a hypocrite, by merely mimicking a few externals, to the disgust of all spectators whom it can be an honor to please; nor less, when a man of vile heart attempts to represent a hero, does every discriminating eye see that the thing personated is only a hollow blackguard, and avert itself

in loathing. The audience, which otherwise would give respectability and support to the stage, withdraw from it, preferring to read the poet by their own firesides to having the sensibility offended by histrionic hypocrisy, misconception and vulgarity.

The necessary consequence of moral corruption in the actors, is shallow acting of all the characters of the drama which are most interesting to a virtuous audience—travesty of all the best personages of tragedy—the thinning of that class of spectators who give respectability to public entertainments, and the consequent recourse of the stage to low comedy and farce—sinking still lower and lower, to suit the taste of the vicious rabble.

The state of society which calls for and sustains a good theater, is that wherein a high degree of intellectual activity and prevalent poetic taste coëxist with scanty means of information, few books and few readers—ingredients that can seldom come together except in the earlier part of a language's literary history. The maturing refinement of Athens, ere books had accumulated to meet the demands of her fully awakening intellect, gave birth to the greatest tragedians of the ancient world, and the most virtuous drama. Dramatic *poetry* was never popular in Rome, save in the days of her youthful civilization; and the same is true of the French and English languages. The reign of Elizabeth and of James I. was the true age of the English drama. Later efforts to revive it, though sustained by much talent, have been only

partially successful. It has never recovered the dignity it then assumed, although the greatest actors, as far as art is concerned, have flourished since that time. It no longer represents the spirit of the age, nor satisfies any want of the better part of society. Books have increased, not only to meet all demand, but even to exceed any capacity to devour, at the same time that the degraded moral character of actors, in general, shuts them out from the only means of gratifying that kind of audience which would take pleasure in the higher efforts of their profession.

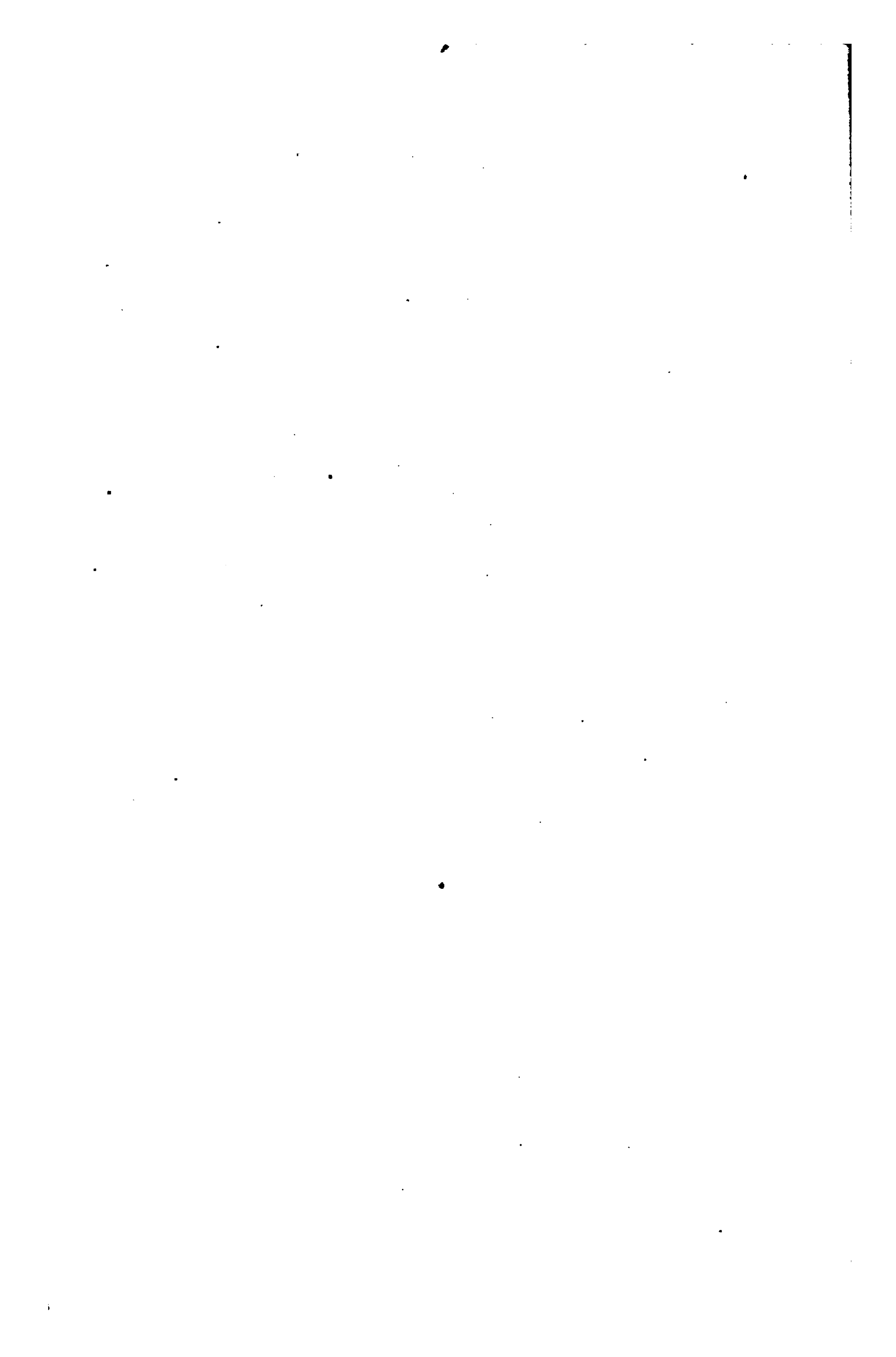
—Quintilian, Institutiones Oratoricæ. Campbell, Philosophy of Rhetoric. Whateley's Elements of Rhetoric. Dannon, Cours D'etudes Historique. Arnold's Lectures on History. Macauley, Miscellanies —article, History. F. Schlegel, Lectures on Philosophy of History. John Q. Adams, Lectures on Oratory. Horace, Art of Poetry. Boileau, Art Poetique. Pope, Art of Criticism. Pemberton, Observations on Epic Poetry. Moir's History of Poetry. Schlegel's Lectures on Dramatic Literature. Coleridge's Lectures on Shakspeare.

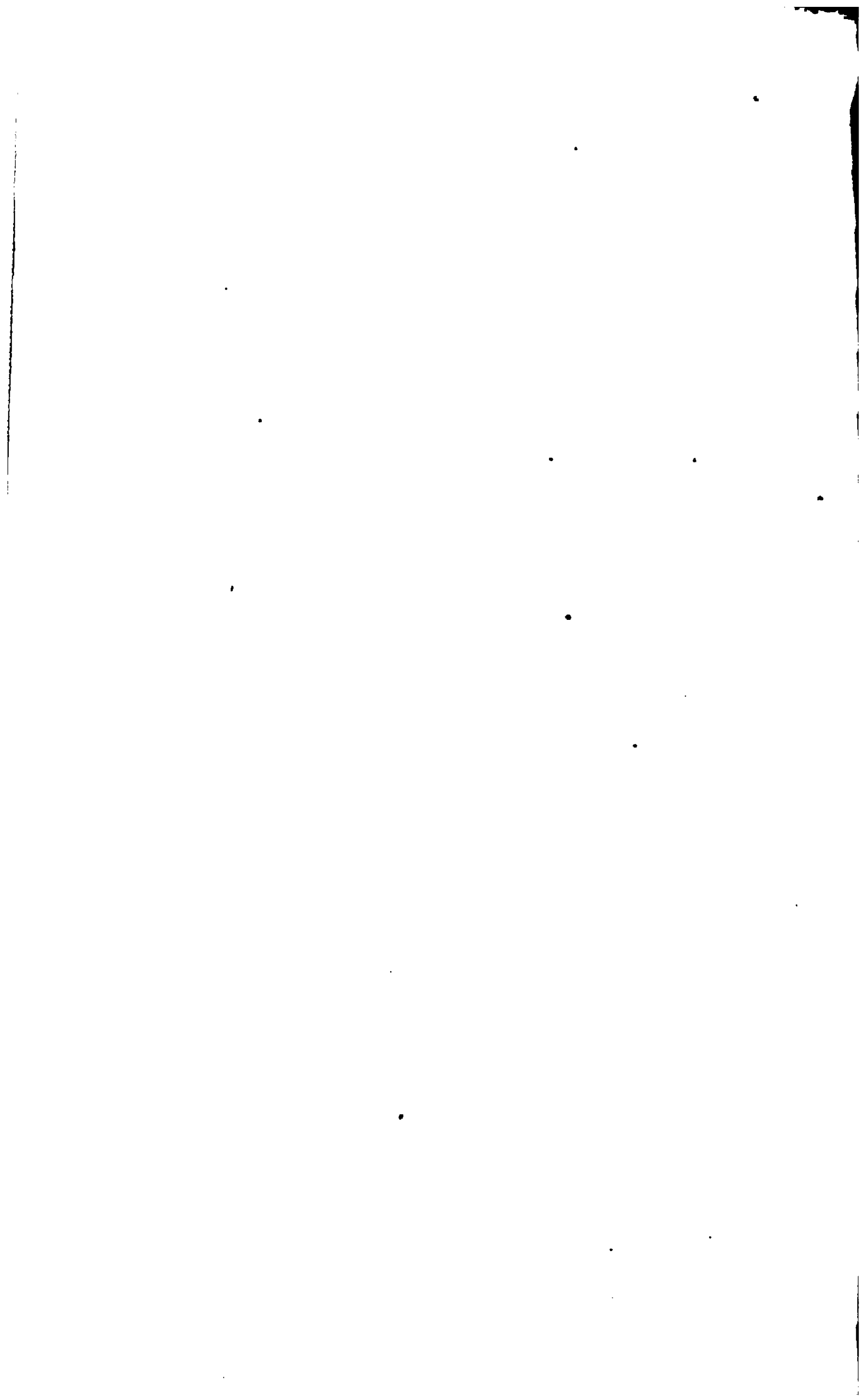
CONCLUSION.

From the above brief definitions of the principal branches of art, the limits of æsthetic science must be sufficiently clear. It is that department of mental philosophy which treats of human feelings, as far as they are conducive to beauty, and of intellections, in as far as they give rise to feelings of that kind, as well as of external objects, in as far as they are the signs, conditions, or occasions of such feelings.

The relations of modern art to society are unprecedented, and full of obscure but lofty promise. In

earlier times, high intellectual culture, and consequently, good taste, were confined to certain orders or professions: the masses were uneducated and incompetent. The works of Egypt were produced by a caste of priests, who perpetuated the necessary instruction among themselves: those of Greece, by a professional few, in the service of their mythology; and those of reviving Europe, under the patronage of the popish priesthood, and, in some cases, even by secret societies of artists. Printing, and the Reformation, with their universal diffusion of knowledge, have wrought a change in this matter—a change which is still in progress, not in all cases for the better, so far, it must be confessed; architecture, painting, and statuary, especially, are in the present day in a woeful state of chaos and indecision. Some, looking back to the lofty and well defined purpose and masterly execution of former times, are turning their hopes to a revival of exclusive fraternities, as the only means of correcting the present disorder. But all such attempts are vain. History never repeats herself. We are evidently in the transition state to something greater than has yet appeared, an age of art, where no exclusive caste or profession shall dictate style—but the enlightened taste of a whole people, under the nobler moral and religious light of a pure Christianity. The transition state must necessarily be chaotic, but the elements will arrange themselves correctly in the end, and the greater their number and diversity, the higher shall be that art which effects their harmony.





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