ALEXANDER WALKER

BEAUTY: ILLUSTRATED CHIEFLY BY AN ANALYSIS AND CLASSIFICATIN OF BEAUTY IN WOMAN

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Walker A.

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Содержание

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DEDICATION

TO GEORGE BIRBECK, M.D., F.G.S., PRESIDENT OF THE LONDON MECHANICS' INSTITUTION, &c., &c., &c

A department of science, which in many respects must be regarded as new, cannot so properly be dedicated to any one as to the inventor of the best mode of diffusing scientific knowledge among the most meritorious and most oppressed classes of society.

When the enemies of freedom, in order effectually to blind the victims of their spoliation, imposed a tax upon knowledge, you rendered the acquirement of science easy by the establishment of mechanics' institutions—you gave the first and greatest impulse to that diffusion of knowledge which will render the repetition of such a conspiracy against humanity impossible.

You more than once also wrested a reluctant concession, in behalf of untaxed knowledge, from the men who had evidently succeeded, in some degree, to the spirit, as well as to the office, of the original conspirators, and who unwisely hesitated between the bad interest which is soon felt by all participators in expensive government, and their dread of the new and triumphant power of public opinion, before which they know and feel that they are but as the chaff before the whirlwind.

For these services, accept this respectful dedication, as the expression of a homage, in which I am sure that I am joined by thousands of Britons.

Nor, in writing this, on a subject of which your extensive knowledge enables you so well to judge, am I without a peculiar and personal motive.

I gratefully acknowledge that, in one of the most earnest and strenuous mental efforts I ever made, in my work on "The Nervous System," I owed to your cautions as to logical reasoning and careful induction, an anxiety at least, and a zeal in these respects, which, whatever success may have attended them, could not well be exceeded.

I have endeavored to act conformably with the same cautions in the present work. He must be weak-minded, indeed, who can seek for aught in philosophy but the discovery of truth; and he must be a coward who, believing he has discovered it, has any scruple to announce it.

ALEXANDER WALKER.

April 10, 1836.

AMERICAN ADVERTISEMENT

The present volume completes the series of Mr. Walker's anthropological works. To say that they have met with a favorable reception from the American public, would be but a very inadequate expression of the unprecedented success which has attended their publication. "Intermarriage," the first of the series, passed through six large editions within eighteen months, and "Woman," has met with a sale scarcely less extensive. The numerous calls for the present work, have compelled the publishers to issue it sooner than they had contemplated; and, it is believed, that it will be found not less worthy of attention than the preceding.

All must acknowledge the interesting nature of the subject treated in the present work, as well as its intimate connexion with those which have already passed under discussion. The analysis of beauty on philosophical principles, is attended with numerous difficulties, not the least of which arises from the want of any fixed and acknowledged standard. The term Beauty is, indeed, generally considered as a vague generality, varying according to national, and even individual taste and judgment.

Mr. Walker claims, in his advertisement, numerous points of originality, some of which, on examination, may perhaps prove to have been proposed previously by other writers. Enough, however, will remain to entitle him to the credit of great ingenuity and acuteness. As treated by him, the subject assumes an aspect very different from that exhibited in any other publication. To trace the connexion of beauty with, and its dependance on, anatomical structure and physiological laws—to show how it may be modified by causes within our control—to describe its different forms and modifications, and defects, as indicated by certain physical signs—to analyze its elements, with a view to its influence on individuals and society, in connexion with its perpetration in posterity—all these were novel topics of vast and exciting interest, and well adapted to the genius, taste, and research of our author.

In preparing the present edition, it has been thought expedient to make some verbal alterations, and omit a few paragraphs, to which a refined taste might perhaps object, and to bring together in the Appendix such collateral matter, as might serve to correct, extend, or illustrate the views presented in the text. With these explanations, the work is confidently commended to the popular as well as philosophical reader, as worthy of studious examination.

PRELIMINARY ESSAY,

BY THE AMERICAN EDITOR

Her beauty hangs upon the cheek of night
Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear:

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Death hath no power yet upon thy beauty—
Thou art not conquered; beauty's ensign yet
Is crimson on thy lips, and in thy cheeks.

—*Shakspeare.*

It maybe set down, we suppose, as a matter sufficiently settled to become a principle, that men are moved by nothing more generally and certainly than by the power of Beauty—particularly Beauty in Woman. That it has an influence upon *all* of one sex, like that which Master Shakspeare has given picture of in the lines we have set upon our front, we would not pretend to say: but that the wild bard was no freshman in his knowledge of humanity so far as heart and mind matters were concerned, we feel safe to assert—and feel confident that the passionate language of Romeo trespasses no bounds, and is but a faithful declaration of a power that rules with a milder or a mightier sway in the bosoms of all who answer to the distinctive name of Man.

This may seem a wide assertion. But it is no less true. The reason of the slow belief in this universality is, that men are not always subject to the influence, while the principle of it is always a tenant within them. There is a time—and with the time comes the development. The mind, as it unfolds, becomes acquainted with nothing so calculated to excite its wonder, as its own properties and capabilities—its new perceptions—its new affections. Till progress brings with it this knowledge of ourselves, we remain ignorant of half that is within us to affect us like a spell, and within whose reach we have been unconsciously passing onward and upward, by a Providential ordering, from our childhood at least, if not from our cradles.

Keeping this in view, let us consider for a moment something of the elements of Beauty, and their influence, as a principle, upon the principles of our nature.—And first it must be admitted that they are good—of a good origin—and tend to a good result. They are good elements, we believe, for we find them almost ever associated with what is pleasing, improving, and satisfactory to us. Indeed, in this connexion, we find them a source of consolation and delight, where all else has failed to minister or even suggest them. They are of a good origin—for, if they were not, no such effect would be wrought upon a system so sadly prone to evil and villanous principles, and so little open to pure, and elevating, and comforting ones, that they may be said to come about it, most emphatically, like "angel-visits." They are elements, again, that tend to a good result, in their operation, for their consequences are almost ever, to make men better satisfied with their condition—where they come in, as an influence upon it, at all—better satisfied with almost everything about them, so long as they are conscious they are creatures of proportions and proprieties, and affected intrinsically by them.

If what we here set down respecting the *elements* of Beauty be true, it is certainly of an interesting importance in view of the influence of that quality upon the principles of our nature. We call it *quality*. Perhaps this is not name enough for something so peculiar and powerful in its connexion with the *total* of our spirits. We will term it such, however, for want of a wider language —and leave men to *feel* out such definition as they may deem more good and grateful.

Implanted, then, so deeply as Beauty is in the human heart—so universal, that millions bow to it as something to fear while they worship—so certain, as a principle, that scarcely a human being can be said to walk without the sphere of its influence—it would be needless as well as unphilosophical to deny that the great object of its fixture—its enthronement upon its high place, should be one of no common character, or of a tendency and effect within us, which it would be wrong and inexcusable to overlook.

What then is the design of this singular and mysterious power, in connexion with this sad and unaccountable nature—so often the theme of eulogy and lament—of lofty, long, and desperate satire, among men? The best answer, we think, is rendered in the influence, where operation is open to every one who thinks, observes, reasons, acts, among his fellows.—To enter into particular definitions here, would be needless as well as wearisome. The general effect upon man, as a sentient and moral being, must be the point to which our simple remarks and reasons must be confined.

We have somewhere seen it observed—and have little doubt in the publicity and good sense of the thought—that there was perhaps no one thing which tended so materially to awaken lofty and good sentiments among the people—to qualify the rough outline of character—and soften and harmonize the untaught elements of their nature, as the frequent, unrestrained, and encouraged contemplation of the perfect statuary, which their master sculptors were continually erecting in their temples. This freedom was a perpetual lesson to a nation. The principle was developed, and the power of Beauty had a new, and forming, and mastering sway. A people were coming into the light of better feeling—better society—better government, under the gradual but no less certain operation of a living principle, brought into great and beautiful action, under the commanding hand of Genius, that seemed to pass at once from the sky, whose perfect things it presented to the sons of earth!—It is not singular, we think, that such a leading forth of Beauty to the contemplation of awakened man, should produce effects like those to which we have adverted. It strikes us that it would have been strange had this consequence not been generated, and noble sculpture thus have stood before a world as cold as the marble from which it was stricken. We believe that Beauty saw a renovating power in the wonder of the Venus—and it would be a sad thing to feel that it had ever ceased in its progress where woman or the chisel were doing such things to advance it. Nor has it ceased. History presents too many instances of the monarch power of Beauty in woman, to permit us to doubt upon this subject. It has passed upon the spirit of Man like a thing of necromance—winning him to its command, and bowing him to its will, until royalty itself has stood powerless in its presence, and the poor mass of mortals, stricken and panting like cornered deer before the inexorable hunter. It has been the salvation and ruin of nations, as well as families and individuals—for queens have obeyed its supremacy as well as maidens, and kings squared their mandates, and regulated their course, by the “line of beauty.” All this is matter of record. Sacred and profane story abounds with instances which admit of no denial, while they excite our wonder. But the wonder ceases, notwithstanding, when we turn from record to our own experience, and *see* the effect, on others and ourselves, of what we once *read* about in the curious annals of our species. We now see the finished sculpture that delighted and softened the people of an age, gazed on and admired by every being whom we are accustomed to regard as rational. No one pretends to question, much less to deny the beauty of the lovely statue, in which the perfection of woman is portrayed in the finished feature or the swelling form. Insensibility here would properly be regarded as a thing to be ashamed of—as little better than a moral paralysis, which might well exclude the questionable man from the circle of reasonable, enlightened, and rising people, as a sad fellow, and a poor pilgrim on the earth. You will rarely find the roughest nature with a cuticle that

will not confess some sensibility in a presence such as this—and I think we may set it down as a thing well ascertained, that the picture or chiselling of a beautiful woman will command the tribute of delight—the acknowledgment—and loud one too—of a whole and hearty worship from the tar, as well as the amateur. The galleries of our artists, in which the principle of Beauty is made to speak and command, sufficiently prove that there is no passing away of this power which has moved, ruled, and regulated, to a degree almost incredible, the world of Man, from the time he came to this school, and this trial of the passions and affections. Let the question be asked of any one, whose spirit is in healthful action, if his experience before the work of art, imbodying the Beauty we speak of, is not of a humanizing—and we will add civilizing, as well as elevating character, and we are willing to abide the issue of his answer, in full support of the position we have taken. Such is our belief on the universality of this influence or element. We have heard it denied, it is certain—but it was even by those who have never tested the power by an application of it to themselves, or a surrender to its mysteries, by an approach to the real presence—and who, like bachelors upon the fearful subject of matrimony, only betray a silliness just in proportion to their ignorance. These are the men who have not yet unfolded. They are in the chrysalis condition—and to be pitied accordingly. They may depend upon it, when they pass from the *slough*, they will be ready to confess they are, alas! too deep in that other "Slough of Despond," which is too well represented by a sad sensitiveness to the magic of Beauty, and as sad a consciousness that there is no approach for them, which can be crowned by a capture of the citadel, or the least enjoyment of the glorious delights it encloses. When we hear men deteriorating this power, or thanking the gods they never bent knee or uttered vow at its shrine, we are ever ready to believe they have either bowed all their days to far other and sadder principles, and made oath to idols of bad material and worse sculpture, or that they are as much beyond the reach of any good, and proper, and beautiful influence, as the clod of the valley to which they are hastening. They may take pride in denial of such influence—but what is there to boast of in insensibility of any kind, where the very betrayal of admiration is the best evidence of a good taste—a good feeling—a good faith—a good principle? It cannot have escaped common observation, we presume, that a love of Beauty—or, at least, any peculiar sensitiveness to that quality in the female sex, has been held—and by sensible men, too—as a weakness, or an index only of a weak mind, or a feminine spirit. This is certainly very foolish—and a lamentable mistake. But it is easily accounted for. It will be observed that the doctrine is never held save by men who see beauty in things which other persons would hold abhorrent. They are men who are in love with metaphysics, or glory in a mathematical existence. They like, beyond all, the *features* of a problem, and think only of the *good face* of a speculation. They see, as they profess, at least, no proportions, save in some cold system of an absurd philosophy, and are only fit for judgment in things either too abstract for the mass of men, or too decidedly "earthy" to be worthy the attention of beings made for a better sphere, and capable of seeing something in much that is around us, which intimates the order and beauty by which that sphere is distinguished. This is enough to put an end to this objection, in reference to the subtle element of which we are venturing our humble, but we believe, orthodox sentiments. For ourselves, we know of no more sad or senseless mental condition in which we could be placed—we mean in the social relation—than this one of such ungraceful stupidity, as this of which a boast is made by such weary fellows as we have adverted to. If Beauty is an *outside* principle, which they argue is of no utility, and quite unworthy of one who should look beyond the mere *coating* of this existence for his reward or his satisfaction, then we say that even an *outside* of loveliness and grace, is better than an *interior* of deformity, uselessness, indefiniteness, chaos—even though it pretend to be all spiritual, while it suggests little but nonsense, and is quite certain to end in nothing.

There is another thought in connexion with this element of Beauty in Woman, which certainly deserves consideration. We believe the philosophy which it intimates is founded in very good sense, and withal, in propriety. Insensibility to the power, we have observed, is no index of anything virtuous or elevated. It is rather, in all cases, a bad omen. Men look upon it—and that very rationally—as

indicative of something unhealthy in the moral system. It seems to tell of a hardness—bad propensities—a crustaceous nature. In short, man regards his fellow, who is dead to this influence, as rather to be suspected at all times, than to be trusted at any. But this is not his saddest trial—or what should be regarded as such, if he can sign himself a man, with any conscience whatever. His estimation by woman is unqualified and unquestioned. He is set down by her as a creature as unworthy of regard by the sisterhood, as he is devoid of warmth or wit in anything that has to do with the social relations, and, above all, with the mysteries of the passions and affections. He is marked by them with a timble brand. He is set apart as a poor thing, who knows nothing of what he was made for, and whose ideas of the graceful and lovely in life are about as defined and worthy as those of the brutes that perish. He is run upon and laughed at by the playful, and satirised and scathed by the witty. In the circle he is treated—not pitied—as a piece of circulating insensibility; in the street he is pointed at as one who might be well set up as a mark at its corners. And this is right. It is well he should be visited by rebuke from her who presents so continually around him the elements of that power he is foolish to resist, and unable, after all, to depreciate. Woman's opinion, here, is a part of the great system which the influence she defends is meant to support—and we truly hope that she will maintain it aloud as long as she can utter it. Of the power of Beauty, both the world of fact, and the world of fancy, are abounding in instances. The records of ancient story present us with their Helens and their Cleopatras, who wrought upon nations by the magic of their faces. Later times show us the wonder of the power in Mary of Scotland, and many a page might be adverted to, full of the adventures which marked the love passages of kings as well as clowns, originating in this mysterious influence, as developed in the graces and glories of woman.

The power of Beauty operates widely, and everywhere. It takes the good man captive as well as the miscellaneous one, who has no definite rule to guide him on his wanderings. It bows the masters and teachers of men at its shrine, as well as the scholars and children of life. It draws the merchant from his desk—the philosopher from his chair. It gives new utterance to the poet, while it wins the statesman to confess that there is some virtue in the outside of the world, after all, and some attraction apart from the chaos of cabinets and broad seals.

There is a beautiful exemplification of this power given by Florian, in his story of a Theban sculptor. He is a wandering orphan in the streets of his native city, and his first entrance into the workshop of the celebrated Praxitiles well proves the truth of what we have set down in the foregoing pages.—"He is suddenly transported on beholding so many masterpieces of art! He gazes upon them—he is lost in admiration! and turning to Praxitiles with an air of grace and juvenile freedom, "Father," cried he, "give *me* the chisel, and teach me to become as great as thou art." Praxitiles stared at the boy, astonished at the fire of enthusiasm which kindled in his eyes, and embracing him with affection, "Yes!" said he, "remain with me; I will now be *your* master, but my hope shall be that you may soon be *mine*."

The pupil soon becomes worthy of his teacher. He becomes the heir of his fortune, and removes to Miletus. There, the daughter of the governor visits his statuary, and from the time of that visit, his destiny is sealed. Love usurps the place of every other passion, and the chisel is cast aside in silence, under that supremacy. The Venus of marble that adorned his study, was no longer a Venus before that living one which filled his eye and his bosom. He felt that he must tell his love, or die. He declares it, in a hurried letter—a slave betrays him—and the indignant father accuses him before the council. He is banished from the city—and embarks in a Cretan vessel.

At this time pirates surprise the city, and pillage the temple of Venus. The statue of that goddess is torn from its pedestal. It was the Palladium of the island, and on its possession hung the happiness of the Milesians. The oracle of Delphos was consulted, and it was answered that Miletus would not be safe till a new statue of Venus, beautiful as the Goddess herself, should replace that ravished by the pirates. The inhabitants were in despair. They accused the governor of unjustly banishing the only man who might now save the city. He is seized, and hurried in chains to a dungeon. Now came the

trial of the daughter, whose beauty had brought on this fearful crisis. She equips her vessel, and with treasures about her, determines to go in person to Athens—Corinth—Thebes—to find some artist who should emancipate her father. Tempted to land on a delicious island, she there comes suddenly upon her lover, whom she had been taught to believe had been long laid under the waters that lashed the heights of Naxos.

The story is soon told. In the humble cabin of his solitude he had prepared a statue which he said would meet the demand of the sybil. But he claimed to have it placed veiled upon the pedestal in the temple of Miletus, before she should even look upon the marble. She consents—and they embark for that island. The artist is received with shoutings and joy. The statue is borne to its trial on the altar of Venus. It stands erect. He fears nothing—and it is unveiled. The features are not mistaken—and the people utter cries of joy as they behold the image of his mistress! The enamored sculptor had made her, in his loneliness, the model of his Venus!—He is called on to claim his reward. "Release him you have imprisoned," he cried—"release her father—and I ask no more."—It is done—and the father gives up the daughter to his preserver, at the foot of her statue.

Can the power of Beauty be better illustrated than in this simple tale? We are not shown simply its effect upon an uneducated, artless individual—upon a mind in its singleness, and just awakened to its own capabilities of suffering and joy—but we see it operating in a wide and unquestioned influence, upon the spirit of a whole people. It was not demanded by fate that there should be merely a replacing of the piece of marble upon the pedestal from which it had been torn—it was required that the statue should be as royal in its *Beauty* as that was whose place it should supply. Beauty was the spirit-word of the destiny of Miletus. It was Beauty which had been guardian of the city—and it was Beauty which must now restore it, by her return to her temple.

But we will not dwell upon this story, though it so beautifully exemplifies the position we maintain. There are many instances of frequent occurrence in the world, which tell as strong a tale, of the influence of Grace and Beauty, as is here presented in the Grecian record. We may not witness them—but the power is working ever like fate in the mingled material of our life; and it only requires a sober faith, together with a moderate observation, to convince all men that they are the creatures of Beauty, as much as they are of destiny and dust.

But there is another consideration connected with this subject—an important one, too—and for that reason we have reserved it to the last.

We are settled in our conviction that there is something in Personal Beauty, of a representative and correspondent character. It represents a spiritual beauty—corresponds with a moral symmetry. Though we call it an *outward* property, still it must be a picture of the *internal*. It would seem impossible that there can be a speaking expression of grace and loveliness, upon a face that is but a telegraph of an inward deformity and ugliness. Perhaps all this may seem somewhat ideal in its philosophy—and, perhaps, almost transcendental. But we hold it to be true. It certainly appears to us reasonable that the minor should reflect the reality, as well in this heaven-made humanity, as amid the earthy art of our drawing-rooms. That the spirit should speak out in the language of the countenance, is to us as excellent sense as that it should tell its story in protuberances and indentations. Who can deny this—and where will the argument fail? We pause for a reply.

Let us be understood, however. We have no idea of going beyond reason in a theory, which, though it may appear more than plausible to us, may seem far this side of plausible to others. Yet we think we are borne out by example. We do not maintain, it will be remembered, that beauty of person must necessarily be the representative of *moral beauty*, according to the best and highest definition of that term. That definition, we presume, would include the virtuous and the heavenly. That these traits are unfailing accompaniments of noble features—the beautiful countenance—the finished form—it would be hazardous and foolish to assert. What we intend to say is this—that we believe external beauty is the representation of an internal and spiritual quality of the same nature. That Beauty may be spiritual, though it may not be moral—the Beauty of Virtue. It may be the

beauty of superior and surpassing powers—the Beauty of Genius. It may be the beauty of a mind, uncommon in its attractions, and in its proportions beyond fault or question. It may be the beauty of intellectual symmetry—and this may find its speaking resemblance in the chiseled face and figure, as certainly as the moral loveliness of the heaven-inspired—the emphatically *good* man. Of what more perfect mental proportions could the human countenance have been indicative, than the countenance of Napoleon? The symmetry of Genius spake there, if it *was* true—as it certainly was—that moral beauty had no telegraph in that splendid sculpture of the man.

But we have said as much as we can afford to—though the more particular subject of our remarks—or what in good faith should have been, if it has not—Beauty in Woman, would seem to be one on which it would not be deemed unknightly to give way to a pretty expression. We must, however, leave all considerations of gallantry on this score, to others who can amplify better than we can, when we have got to the end of our chapter.

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There is perhaps no subject more universally or more deeply interesting than that which is the chief subject of the present work. Yet no book, even pretending to science or accuracy, has hitherto appeared upon it. The forms and proportions of animals—as of the horse and the dog—have been examined in a hundred volumes: not one has been devoted to woman, on whose physical and moral qualities the happiness of individuals, and the perpetual improvement of the human race, are dependant.

The cause of this has been, probably, the neglect on the part of individuals, to combine anatomical and physiological knowledge with the critical observation of the external forms of woman; and, perhaps, some repugnance to anthropological knowledge on the part of the public. The last obstacle, if ever it existed, is now gone by, as many circumstances show; and it will be the business of the author, in this work, to endeavor to obviate the former.

The present work, beside giving new views of the theory of beauty, and of its application to the arts, presents an analysis and classification of beauty in woman. A subsequent work will apply the principles here established to intermarriages and crossings among mankind, and will explain their results in relation to the happiness of individuals, and to the beauty and the freedom from insanity of their offspring. A final work will examine the relations of woman in society, will expose the extravagant hypothesis of writers on this subject who have been ignorant of anthropology, and will describe the reforms which the common interests of mankind demand in this respect.

It is now to be seen, whether a branch of science which is strictly founded on anatomy and physiology—one which entangles the reader in no mystical and delusive hypothesis, and presents to him only indisputable facts—one which is applicable to the subject most universally and deeply interesting to mankind, the critical judgment of female beauty, as founded on necessary functions —and one which unravels the greater difficulties which that subject presents—may not excite and permanently command a great degree of public interest.

A preliminary view of the importance of this subject is given in the first chapter; the urgency of its discussion, in relation to the interests of decency and morality, is established in the second; and some useful cautions as to youth are offered in the third.

In regard to the importance of the subject, I may, even here, avail myself of the highest authorities.

Thomas More, speaking of the people of his commonwealth, says: “They do greatly wonder at the folly of all other nations, which, in *buying a colt* (whereas, a little money is in hazard), be so chary and circumspect, that, though he be almost all bare, yet they will not buy him, unless the saddle and all the harness be taken off—lest, under those coverings, be hid some gall or sore. And yet, in *choosing a wife*, which shall be either pleasure or displeasure to them all their life after, they be so reckless, that, all the residue of the woman’s body being covered with clothes, they esteem her scarcely by one hand-breadth (for they can see no more but her face), and so to join her to them, not without great jeopardy of evil agreeing together—if anything in her body afterward should chance to offend and mislike them.”[1]

Francis Bacon is of similar opinion.

Happily, the advancement of anthropological science in modern times, may, as is here shown, be so applied as to render quite unnecessary the *objectionable methods* proposed by both these philosophers, in order to carry their doctrines into practice.

Shall I be blamed, because I avail myself of the progress of knowledge to render all that these great men desired on this subject of easy attainment and inoffensive to woman? Shall I be blamed,

[1] Utopia, Book II., chap. viii.

because I first facilitate that which the still farther advancement of knowledge will inevitably render an everyday occurrence, and the guide of the most important act of human life?—I care not.

In the details as to female beauty, it will be seen how incorrectly Winckelmann says: "In female figures, the forms of beauty are not so different, nor the gradations so various, as in those of males; and therefore in general they present no other difference than that which is dependant upon age.... Hence, in treating of female beauty, few observations occur as necessary to be made, and the study of the artist is more limited and more easy.... It is to be observed, that, in speaking of the resemblance of nude female figures, I speak solely of the body, without concluding from it that they also resemble each other in the distinctive characters of the head, which are particularly marked in each, whether goddess or heroine."—The differences, even in the bodies of females, are here shown to be both numerous and capable of distinct classification.

It is right to observe, that this work has nothing to do with an early production of the writer, a consciousness of the small value of which prevented his attaching his name to it, which he now knows to be utterly worthless, and which has since been vamped up with things which are more worthless still.

The most valuable features of the present work are entirely new and original. Others are such as the writer thought not unworthy of preservation from earlier essays. He has also, throughout this work, adopted from other writers, with no other alteration than accuracy required, every view, opinion, or remark, which he thought applicable to a department of science, of which all the great features are new.

Such being the case, he thinks it just, at once to himself and others, to indicate here the only points on which he can himself lay any claim to originality. These are as follows:—

The more complete establishment of the truth that, in relation to man and woman in particular, beauty is the external sign of goodness in organization and function, and thence its importance.—Chapter I., and the work generally.

The showing that the discussion of this subject, though involving the examination of the naked figure, is urgent in relation to decency (the theory of which is discussed), morality, and happy intermarriage.—Chapter II.

The showing that the ancient religion was the cause of the perfection of the fine arts in Greece, by its personification of simple attributes or virtues, as objects of adoration.—Chapter II.

The exposition of the nature, the kinds, and the characteristics of beauty; and of some errors of Burke, Knight, &c., on this subject.—Chapter IV.

The showing that there are elements of beauty invariable in their nature and effect, and that these are modified and complicated in advancing from simple to complex beings, and the arts relating to them.—Chapter VI.

The pointing out these elements of beauty, and their mode of operation in inanimate beings; and the errors of Knight and Allison on this subject.—Sect. I., Chapter VI.

The pointing out these elements, and others which are superadded, in living beings; and the errors of Allison on this subject.—Sect. II., Chapter VI.

The pointing out these elements, and others which are farther superadded, in thinking beings; and the errors of Burke and Knight on this subject.—Sect. III., Chapter VI.

The exposition of these elements, as differing, or variously modified, in the useful, ornamental, and intellectual arts, respectively; and some remarks on ornament in architecture, and in female dress. —Sect. IV., Chapter VI.

The explanation of the nature of the picturesque, after the failure of Knight and Price in this respect.—Sect. I., Appendix to preceding chapters.

The vindication of the doctrine of Hobbes, as to the cause of laughter; and exposition of the errors of Campbell and Beattie on this subject.—Sect. II., Appendix.

The explanation of the cause of the pleasure received from representations exciting pity; and of the errors of Burke, &c., on that subject.—Sect. III., Appendix.

The arrangement of anatomy and physiology, and the application of the principles of these sciences to the distinguishing and judging of beauty.—Chapter VII.

The explanation of the difference in the beauty of the two sexes even in the same country.—Chapter IX.

Various arguments establishing the standard of beauty in woman; and exposure of the sophistry of Knight, on this subject.—Chapter X.

The showing, by the preceding arrangements, that the ancient temperaments are partial or complex views of anthropological phenomena.—Chapter XI., et seq.

The description of the first species of beauty, or that of the locomotive system, and of its varieties, as founded on examination of structure.—Chapter XII.

The description of the second species of beauty, or that of the nutritive system, and of its varieties, as founded on examination of structure.—Chapter XIII.

The description of the third species of beauty, or that of the thinking system, and of its varieties, as founded on examination of structure.—Chapter XIV.

The explanation of the cause of the deformity produced by the obliquely placed eyes of the Chinese, &c.—Chapter XV.

The explanation of the mode in which the action of the muscles of the face becomes physiognomically expressive.—Ibid.

The explanation of the physiognomical character of the different kinds of the hair.—Ibid.

The explanation of the cause of the different effects of the same face, even in a state of repose.—Ibid.

The indication of the faulty feature, and its gradual increase, even in beautiful faces.—Ibid.

The exposition of the different organization of Greek and Roman heads.—Ibid.

The explanation of the combinations and transitions of beauty.—Chapter XVI.

The explanation of the numerical, geometrical, and harmonic methods of proportion, employed by the ancient Greeks.—Chapter XVII.

Some remarks on character, expression, and detail in art.—Ibid.

Some observations on the Greek forehead, actual as well as ideal.—Chapter XVIII.

The explanation of the reason of the Greek ideal rule, as to the proportion between the forehead and the other parts of the face.—Ibid.

The explanation of the reason of the Greek ideal rule, as to the profile of the forehead and nose, or as to the direction of the mesial line which they form, and the exposition of Winckelmann's blunder respecting it.—Ibid.

The explanation of the reason why the Greeks suppressed all great degrees of impassioned expression.—Ibid.

The mere indication of the Greek idealizations as applied to the nutritive and locomotive systems, and the explanation of the latter in the Apollo.—Ibid.

The replies to the objections of Burke and Alison, as to ideal beauty.—Ibid.

The enunciation of the ideal in attitude.—Ibid.

Various views as to the Venus de Medici, the conformation of the nose, and the connexion of odor with love, in animals and plants.—Chapter XIX.

Some remarks on the Venus de Medici.—Ibid.

The pointing out and explanation of various defects in beauty.—Chapter XX.

The pointing out and explanation of various external indications of figure, beauty, mind, habits, and age.—Chapter XXI.

The writer may possibly be mistaken as to the originality of one or two of these points; but, leaving the critical reader to deduct as many of these as it is in his power to do, enough of novelty

would remain for the writer's ambition, in this respect, if he had done no more than exposed the errors of Burke, Knight, Alison, &c., and established the true doctrine of beauty, in the first chapters —given an analysis and classification of beauty in woman, in the chapters which follow—and applied this to the fine arts, and solved the difficulty of Leonardo da Vinci, &c., in the last chapters.

CHAPTER I.
IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT

It is observed by Home, in his "Elements of Criticism," that a perception of beauty in external objects is requisite to attach us to them; that it greatly promotes industry, by promoting a desire to possess things that are beautiful; and that it farther joins with utility, in prompting us to embellish our houses and enrich our fields. "These, however," he says, "are but slight effects, compared with the connexions which are formed among individuals in society by means of this singular mechanism: the qualifications of the head and heart are undoubtedly the most solid and most permanent foundations of such connexions; but as external beauty lies more in view, and is more obvious to the bulk of mankind, than the qualities now mentioned, the sense of beauty possesses the more universal influence in forming these connexions; at any rate, it concurs in an eminent degree, with mental qualifications, to produce social intercourse, mutual good-will, and, consequently, mutual aid and support, which are the life of society."

Dr. Pritchard similarly observes, that "the perception of beauty is the chief principle in every country which directs men in their marriages."

Advancing a step farther, Sir Anthony Carlisle thinks a taste for beauty worthy of being cultivated. "Man," he observes, "dwells with felicity even on ideal female attributes, and in imagination discovers beauties and perfections which solace his wearied hours, far beyond any other resource within the scope of human life. It cannot, then, be unwise to cultivate and refine this natural tendency, and to enhance, if possible, these charms of life. We increase and heighten all our pleasures by awakening and cultivating reflections which do not exist in a state of ignorance. Thus, the botanist perceives elegances in plants and flowers unknown and unfelt by the vulgar, and the landscape-painter revels in natural or imaginary scenery, with feelings which are unknown to the multitude. It would be absurd to pretend that the more exquisite and more deeply attractive beauty of woman is not worthy of more profound, as well as more universal cultivation."

Such are the observations of philosophical anthropologists, who, nevertheless, in these remarks, consider mere physical beauty independent of its connexion with corresponding functions or moral qualities.

If, however, the external beauty of woman, calculated as it is to flatter the most experienced eye, limited its effect to a local impression, to an optical enjoyment, the sentiment of beauty would be far from having all its extent and value. Happily, ideas of goodness, of suitableness, of sympathy, of progressive perfection, and of mutual happiness, are, by an intimate and inevitable association, connected with the first impression made by the sight of beauty.

The foundation of this feeling is well expressed by Dr. Pritchard, in his observation that "the idea of beauty of person is synonymous with that of health and perfect organization."

Hence, it has been observed, the great ideal models of beauty please us, not merely because their forms are disposed and combined so as to affect agreeably the organ of sight, but because their exterior appears to correspond to admirable qualities, and to announce an elevation in the condition of humanity. Such do the Greek monuments appear to physiologists and philosophical artists, whose minds pass rapidly from the beauty of forms to that locomotive, vital, or mental excellence which it compels them to suppose.

Goodness and beauty in woman will accordingly be found to bear a strict relation to each other; and the latter will be seen always to be the external sign of the former.

There are, however (slightly to anticipate what must afterward be explained), different kinds, both of beauty and of goodness, which are confounded by vulgar observers; or rather there are beauty

and goodness belonging to different systems of which the body is composed, and which ought never to be confounded with each other.

Where, consequently, one of these kinds of beauty and of goodness is wanting, even in a remarkable degree, others may be found; and, as the vulgar do not distinguish, it is this which leads to the gross error that these qualities have no strict relations to their signs.

Want of beauty, then, in any one of the systems of which the body is composed, indicates want of goodness only in that system; but it is not less a truth, and scarcely of less importance, on that account.—I will now illustrate this by brief examples.

There may, in any individual, exist deformity of limbs; and this will assuredly indicate want of goodness in the locomotive system, of that or general motion. There may exist coarseness of skin, or paleness of complexion; and either of these will as certainly indicate want of goodness in the vital system, or that of nutrition. There may exist a malformation of the brain, externally evident; and this no less certainly will indicate want of goodness in the mental system, or that of thought.

It follows that even the different kinds and combinations of beauty, which are the objects of taste to different persons, are founded upon the same general principle of organic superiority. Nay, even the preferences which, in beauty, appear to depend most on fancy, depend in reality on that cause; and the impression which every degree and modification of beauty makes on mankind, has as a fundamental rule only their sentiment, more or less delicate and just, of physical advantage in relation to each individual. Such is the foundation of all our sentiments of admiration and of love.

The existence or non-existence of these advantages, and the power of determining this, or the judgment of beauty, are therefore of transcendent importance to individuals and to families. Such judgment can be attained by analysis and classification alone. Nothing, therefore, can more nearly affect all human interests than that analysis and classification of beauty which are here proposed.

To place beyond a doubt, and to illustrate more minutely, the extraordinary importance of this subject, as regards advantages real to the species, I may anticipate some of the more minute applications of my doctrine.

If, in the locomotive system of the female, much of the delicacy of form, and the ease and grace of her movements, depend upon the more perfect development of the muscles of the pelvis, and its easily adapting itself to great and remarkable changes, how important must be the ability to determine, even by walk or gesture, the existence of this condition!

If, in the vital system, the elasticity and freshness of the skin are the characteristics of health, and their absence warns us that the condition of woman is unfavorable to the plan of nature relatively to the maintenance of the species—or, if the capacity of the pelvis, and the consequent breadth of the haunches, are necessary to all those functions which are most essentially feminine, impregnation, gestation, and parturition, without danger either to parent or to child—of what extreme importance must be the ability to determine this with certainty and ease!

If, in the mental system, the capacity and delicacy of the organs of sense, and the softness and mobility of the nervous system, are necessary to the vivid and varying sensibility of woman—if it is in consequence of this, that woman is enabled to act on man by the continual observation of all that can captivate his imagination or secure his affection, and by the irresistible seduction of her manners—if it is these qualities which enable her to accommodate herself to his taste, to yield, without constraint, even to the caprice of the moment, and to seize the time when observations, made as it were accidentally, may produce the effect which she desires—if it is by these means that she fulfils her first duty, namely, to please him to whom she has united her days, and to attach him to her and to home by rendering both delightful—if all this is the case, of what inexpressible importance must be the ability to determine, in each individual, the possession of the power and the will to produce such effects!

If (descending to still more minute inquiries) external indications as to figure are required as to parts concealed by drapery—if such indications would obviate deception even with regard to those

parts of the figure which are more exposed to observation by the closer adaptation of dress—if, even when the face is seen, the deception as to the degree of beauty, is such that a correct estimate of it is perhaps never formed—if indications as to mind may be derived from many external circumstances —if external indications as to the personal habits of women are both numerous and interesting—if such indications even of age and health are sometimes essential—if all this be the case, let the reader say what other object of human inquiry exceeds this in importance.

Let us not then deceive ourselves respecting the source of those impressions which one sex experiences from the sight of the other. It is evidently nothing else than the more or less delicate and just perception of a certain conformity of means with a want which has been created by nature, and which must be satisfied.

"It is very obvious," says Dr. Pritchard, "that this peculiarity in the constitution of man must have considerable effects on the physical character of the race, and that it must act as a constant principle of improvement, supplying the place in our own kind of the beneficial control [in the crossing of races] which we exercise over the brute creation." And he adds: "This is probably the final cause for which the instinctive perception of human beauty was implanted by Providence in our nature."

We need not wonder, then, that the Greeks should have preferred beauty to all other advantages, should have placed it immediately after virtue in the order of their affections, or should have made it an object of worship.

Even the practical application of this principle to the improvement of the human race is not a matter of conjecture. We have seen both families and nations ameliorated by the means which it affords. Of this, the Turks are a striking example. Nothing, therefore, can better deserve the researches of the physiologist, or the exertions of the philanthropist, than the fact that there are laws, of which we have yet only a glimpse, according to which we may influence the amelioration of the human race in a manner the most extensive and profound, by acting according to a uniform and uninterrupted system.

Well might Cabanis exclaim: "After having occupied ourselves so curiously with the means of rendering more beautiful and better the races of animals or of plants which are useful or agreeable—after having remodelled a hundred times that of horses and dogs—after having transplanted, grafted, cultivated, in all manners, fruits and flowers—how shameful is it to have totally neglected the race of man! As if it affected us less nearly! as if it were more essential to have large and strong oxen than vigorous and healthy men, highly odorous peaches or finely striped tulips, than wise and good citizens!"

I actually know a man who is so deeply interested in the doctrine of crossing, that every hour of his life is devoted to the improvement of a race of bantam fowls and curious pigeons, and who yet married a mad woman, whom he confines in a garret, and by whom he has some insane progeny.

Let it not be imagined that the discovery of the precise laws of crossing or intermarriage, and the best direction of physical living forces, in relation both to the vital faculties and to those of the mind, upon which knowledge and skill may operate for the improvement of our race, is a matter of difficulty.

It will be shown in this work, that there exist not only an influence of beauty and defects on offspring, but peculiar laws regulating the resemblance of progeny to parents—laws which regard the mode in which the organization of parents affects that of children, or regulates the organs which each parent respectively bestows.

It will accordingly be shown, that, as, on the size, form, and proportion, of the various organs, depend their functions, the importance of such laws is indescribable—whether we regard intermarriages, and that immunity from mental or bodily disease which, when well directed, they may ensure, or the determination of the parentage of a child—or the education of children, in conformity with their faculties—or the employment of men in society.

I conclude this brief view in the words of the writer just quoted: “It is assuredly time for us to attempt to do for ourselves that which we have done so successfully for several of our companions in existence, to review and correct this work of nature—a noble enterprise, which truly merits all our cares, and which nature itself appears to have especially recommended to us by the sympathies and the powers which it has given us.”

CHAPTER II.
URGENCY OF THE DISCUSSION OF THIS SUBJECT IN RELATION TO THE INTERESTS OF DECENCY AND MORALITY

It has now been seen that beauty results from the perfection, chiefly of external forms, and the correspondence of that perfection with superiority of internal functions; on the more or less perfect perception of which, love, intermarriage, and the condition of our race, are dependant.

This mode of considering the elements, the nature, and the consequences of beauty, is equally applicable to the two sexes; but, in woman, the form of the species presents peculiar modifications.

In this work, it is the form of woman which is chosen for examination, because it will be found, by the contrast which is perpetually necessary, to involve a knowledge of the form of man, because it is best calculated to ensure attention from men, and because it is men who, exercising the power of selection, have alone the ability thus to ensure individual happiness, and to ameliorate the species; which are the objects of this work.

Let it not be imagined that the views now taken are less favorable to woman than to man. Whatever ensures the happiness of one ensures that of the other; and as the variety of forms and functions in man requires as many varieties in woman, it is not to exclusion or rejection with regard to woman that this work tends, but to a reasoned guidance in man's choice, to the greater suitableness of all intermarriages, and to the greater happiness of woman as well as man, both in herself and in her progeny.

But notwithstanding the importance of any work which is in any degree calculated to promote such an object, some will tell us that the analysis of female beauty, on which it can alone be founded, is indelicate.—I shall, on the contrary, show that decency demands this analysis; that the interests of nature, of truth, of the arts, and of morality, demand it.

Our present notions of sexual decency belong more to art than to nature, and may be divided into artificial and artful decencies.

Artificial decencies are illustrated in the habits of various nations. They have their origin in cold countries, where clothing is necessary, and where a deviation from the degree or mode of clothing constitutes indecency. They could not exist in hot climates, where clothing is scarcely possible.

In hot climates, natural decency can alone exist; and there is not, I believe, one traveller in such countries whose works do not prove that natural decency there exists as much as in cold countries. In exemplification of this, I make a single quotation: it would be easy to make thousands. Burchell, speaking of the Bushmen Hottentots, says: "The natural bashful reserve of youth and innocence is to be seen as much among these savages, as in more polished nations; and the young girls, though wanting but little of being perfectly naked, evinced as just a sense of modesty as the most rigid and careful education could have given them."

In mild climates, the half-clothed or slightly-clothed people appear to be somewhat at a loss what to do. Fond of decorations, like all savage or half-civilized people, they seem to be divided between the tatooing and painting of hot climates, and the clothing of cold ones; and when they adopt the latter, they do not rightly know what to conceal.

The works of all travellers afford the same illustrations of this fact. I quote one. Kotzebue describes the custom among the Tartar women of Kasan, of flying or of concealing their countenance from the sight of a stranger. The necessity of conforming to this custom threw into great embarrassment a young woman who was obliged to pass several times before the German traveller. She at first concealed her face with her hands; but, soon embarrassed by that attitude, she removed

the veil which covered her bosom, and threw it over her face. “That,” adds Kotzebue, “was, as we say, uncovering Paul to cover Jacques: the bosom remained naked. To cover that, she next showed what should have been concealed; and if anything escaped from her hands, she stooped, and then,” says Kotzebue, “I saw both one and the other.”

In colder or more uncertain climates, the greatest degree of covering constitutes the greatest degree of artificial decency: fashion and decency are confounded. Among old-fashioned people, of whom a good example may be found in old countrywomen of the middle class in England, it is indecent to be seen with the head unclothed; such a woman is terrified at the chance of being seen in that condition; and if intruded on at such a time, she shrieks with terror and flies to conceal herself. In the equally polished dandy of the metropolis, it is indecent to be seen without gloves. Which of these respectable creatures is the most enlightened, I do not take upon me to say; but I believe that the majority of suffrages would be in favor of the old woman.

So entirely are these decencies artificial, that any number of them may easily be created, not merely with regard to man or woman, but even with regard to domesticated animals. If it should please some persons partially to clothe horses, cows, or dogs, it would ere long be felt that their appearing in the streets without trowsers or aprons was grossly indecent. We might thus create a real feeling of indecency, the perception of a new impurity, which would take the place of the former absence of all impure thought, and once established, the evil would be as real as our whims have made it in other respects.

Moral feeling is deeply injured by this substitution of impure thoughts, however fancifully founded, for pure ones, or rather for the entire absence of thought about worthless things. Artificial crimes are thus made, which are not the less real because artificial; for if aught of this kind is believed to be right, there is weakness or wrong in its violation. But violated it must be, if it were but accidentally.

To corrupt minds, this very violation of artificial decency in the case of woman affords the zest for the sake of which many of these decencies seem to have been instituted; and thus are created the artful decencies.

The purpose and the zest of artful decency are well illustrated by coquetry. Coquetry adopts a general concealment, which it well knows can alone give a sensual and seductive power to momentary exposure. Coquetry eschews permanent exposure as the bane of sensuality and seduction; and where these are great, as among the women of Spain, the concealment of dress is increased, even in warm climates. Nothing can throw greater light than this does on the nature of these decencies.

That coquetry has well calculated her procedure, does not admit of a doubt. She appeals to imagination, which she knows will spread charms over even ugly forms; she seeks the concealment under which sensuality and lust are engendered; and, in marriage, she at last lifts the veil which gratifies, only to disgust, and repays a sensual hallucination by years of misery.

Ought religion to claim the right of saying grace to such unveiling of concealment and the nuptial rites that follow it? Ought religion to profit by the impurities of sexual association? Marriage is a civil ceremony in other countries, even in Scotland. Such profane and profitable sanctions have nothing to do with primitive Christianity: they are abhorrent to its letter as well as to its spirit. But worldly and profitable religion is connected in business with government, under the firm of Church and State, and drives a thriving trade, in which the junior partner is contented with the profit arising from the common acts of life, while the senior one draws much of his living from other rites.[2]

What is said here, is no argument for living nudity: that, our climate and our customs forbid; and, in so doing, we can only regret that they are unfavorable to natural purity; while perfect familiarity with the figure ensures that feeling in the highest degree.

[2] I do not wish to be forced into any discussion of this last point. But, if necessary, I shall not decline it.

A distinguished artist informs me that greater modesty is nowhere to be seen than at the Life academy; and it was an observation of the great Flaxman, that "the students, in entering the academy, seemed to hang up their passions with their hats." I can, from personal experience, give the same testimony in behalf of medical students at the dissecting-rooms. The familiarity of both these classes with natural beauty leads them only to seek to inform their minds and to purify their taste.[3]

Sinibaldi observes, that "nothing is more injurious to morals and to health, than the incitements of the women who in such numbers walk our streets," and that "the laws as to offences against morals ought certainly to affect them the moment their language or actions can be deemed offensive." But it is not to those who are critically conversant with the highest beauty of the human figure, that defective forms, ill-painted skins, rude manners, and contagious diseases, are at all seductive.

Nothing, then, can be more favorable to virtue than the decoration of every house with the beautiful copies of the glorious works of ancient Greece; and it is only humiliating to think that what has been so extensively done in this respect in the best houses, is less owing to our own taste than to the poor wanderers from Lucca or Barga. Experiment on this subject is peculiarly easy in London: let any one spend an hour in the shop of the very able Mr. Sarti, of Dean street, where he will meet the most liberal attention, and let him ask himself, in coming out, whether his moral feeling, as well as his taste, is not improved.

Those who cannot make this experiment, will perhaps be satisfied with the assurance of Hogarth, who says: "The rest of the body, not having advantages in common with the face, would soon satiate the eye, were it to be as constantly exposed, nor would it have more effect than a marble statue." Surely this is decisive enough in its way! Now let them mark what follows. "But," he continues, "when it is artfully clothed and decorated, the mind at every turn resumes its imaginary pursuits concerning it. Thus, if I may be allowed a simile, the angler chooses not to see the fish he angles for, until it is fairly caught." He meant of course—"the *fish* chooses not to see the *angler*, until it is fairly caught!"

Be it known then to all, even the most aristocratic as to sexual association—I say the most aristocratic, and not the most religious, because religion is in some countries made the pander to aristocracy—be it known that the critical judgment and pure taste for beauty are the sole protection against low and degrading connexions.

Home observes that "the sense of beauty does not tend to advance the interests of society, but when in a due mean with respect to strength. Love in particular arising from a sense of beauty, loses, when excessive, its sociable character: the appetite for gratification, prevailing over affection for the beloved object, is ungovernable, and tends violently to its end, regardless of the misery that must follow. Love in this state is no longer a sweet agreeable passion: it becomes painful, like hunger or thirst, and produces no happiness but in the instant of fruition. This discovery suggests a most important lesson, that moderation in our desires and appetites, which fits us for doing our duty, contributes at the same time the most to happiness: even social passions, when moderate, are more pleasant than when they swell beyond proper bounds." Payne Knight says: "When, at the age of puberty, animal desire obtrudes itself on a mind already qualified to feel and enjoy the charms of intellectual merit, the imagination immediately begins to form pictures of perfection, by exaggerating and combining in one hypothetic object every excellence that can possibly belong to the whole sex; and the first individual that meets the eye, with any exterior signs of any of these ideal excellences, is immediately decorated with them all, by the creative magic of a vigorous and fertile fancy. Hence, she instantaneously becomes the object of the most fervent affection, which is as instantaneously cooled by possession: for, as it was not the object herself, but a false idea of her raised in heated imagination, that called forth all the lover's raptures, all immediately vanish at the detection of his delusion; and

[3] We fear that Mr. Walker's analogical reasoning here is not very conclusive. To reason from a living to a dead subject may be very logical but it is not altogether satisfactory.

a degree of disgust proportioned to the disappointment, of which it is the inevitable consequence, instantly succeeds. Thus it happens that what are called love-matches are seldom or ever happy."

Now, nothing can more effectually prevent even the existence of the mania described by these two philosophers than a critical judgment and a pure taste for beauty, which again therefore are the sole protection against low and degrading connexions.

A just sense of this truth will give high encouragement to sculpture and painting—arts which may everywhere be looked upon as the best tests, as well as the best records, of civilization. Such encouragement they need in truth; for the monstrous monopoly of landed property and the accumulation of wealth in few hands—the great aim of our political economy—renders art poor, indeed.

I am aware that the vulgar among artists think otherwise; from the few rich they obtain employment; and, like the dog with his master, they look not beyond the hand that doles out their pittance. But the rich are few; and their palaces are already filled. A diffusion of wealth alone can give encouragement to art; nor can this ever be while British industry is crushed under the weight of enormous taxation.

Having removed some objections to art, I would add a few words to artists on the cause of the fine arts in Greece, from a paper I, two years ago, contributed to a monthly periodical.[4]

That the mythology of Greece had an influence over its arts, is generally granted; but I am not aware, that it has either been shown to be exclusively their cause, or that its mode of operation has ever been explained.

Religion, I may observe, is as natural to man as his weakness and helplessness. There is not one of its systems, not even the vilest, which has not afforded him consolation. Of its higher and better systems, some are equally admirable for the grandeur and the beauty of the truths on which they are founded, the simplicity and the elegance of their ostensible forms, the power and applicability of their symbols, and their sympathy with, and control over, the affections and the imagination.

These high characteristics peculiarly distinguished the religion of ancient Greece.

By bigots, we are indeed told, that, though Homer is our model in epic, Anacreon in lyric, and Æschylus in dramatic poetry—though the music of Greece doubtless corresponded to its poetry in beauty, pathos, and grandeur—though the mere wreck of her sculpture is never overlooked in modern war and negotiation—though the mere sight of her ruined Parthenon is more than a reward for the fatigue or the peril of a journey to the Eternal city—though these products of art are the test of the highest civilization which the world has witnessed—though to these chiefly Rome owed the little civilization of which she was capable, and we ourselves the circumstance that, at this hour, we are not, like our ancestors, covered only with blue paint or the skins of brutes—though all this is true as to the arts of Greece, we are told that, by the strangest exception, the religion of Greece was a base superstition.

That religion, however, was the creator of these arts. They not only could not have existed without it, but they probably could never have been called into existence by any other religion.

The personification of *simple* Beauty, Valor, Wisdom, or Omnipotence, in Venus, Mars, Minerva, or Jupiter, respectively, was essential to the *purity* and the *power* of expression of these attributes in the worship of the deities to whom they respectively belonged. The union of absolute beauty and valor in one being, is not more impossible than their union in one expression of homage and admiration. Delicacy, elegance, and grace, were as characteristic of the statue, the worship, and the temple, of the goddess of beauty, as attributes nearly opposite to these were of the statue, the worship, and the temple, of the god of war. Thus, were the fine arts in Greece created by the personification of *simple* attributes or virtues as objects of adoration; and thus is excellence in these fine arts incapable of being elicited by any system of religion in which more than one attribute is ascribed to the god.

[4] "The Magazine of The Fine Arts," No. VI, for October 1833.

They must be ignorant, indeed, of the wonderful people of whom I now speak, who allege, that the Greeks worshipped the mere statue of the god and not the personified virtue. Even the history of their religion proves the reverse. It was the tomb which became the altar, and retained nearly its form. It was the expression of love, of regret, and of veneration for departed virtue, which became divine adoration; and, as individual acts and even individual names were ultimately lost in one transcendent attribute, so were individual forms and features, in its purified and ideal representation. Here, then, instead of finding the worship of men or of their representations, we discover a gradual advance from beings to attributes—from mortal man to eternal virtue—and a corresponding and suitable advance from simple veneration to divine adoration.

When, in great emergencies of the state, the sages and the soldiers of Athens, in solemn procession repaired to the temple of Minerva, turned their faces toward the statue of the goddess, and prostrated themselves in spirit before her—let the beautiful history of Grecian science tell, whether in the statue they worshipped the mere marble structure, or, in its forms and attributes, beheld and adored a personification of eternal truth and wisdom, and so prepared the mind for deeds which have rendered Greece for ever illustrious. Or, when returning from a Marathon, or a Salamis, the warriors of Athens, followed by trains of maidens, and matrons, and old men, returned thanks to the god of victories—let the immortal record of the long series of glorious achievements which succeeded these, tell, whether gratitude to their heroes was not there identified with homage to the spirit or the divinity that inspired them.

True it is, that, whenever physical or moral principles are personified, the ignorant may be led to mistake the sign for that which is signified; but one of the most admirable characteristics of the Grecian religion is, that, with little effort, every external form may be traced to the spirit which it represents, and every fable may be resolved into a beautiful illustration of physical or moral truth. So that when mystic influences, with increasing knowledge, ceased to sway the imagination, all-powerful truths directed the reason.

The natural and poetical religion of Greece, therefore, differed from false and vulgar religions in this, that it was calculated to hold equal empire over the minds of the ignorant and the wise; and the initiations of Eleusis were apparently the solemn acts by which the youths and maidens of Greece passed from ignorance and blind obedience to knowledge and enlightened zeal. Thus, in that happy region, neither were the priests knaves, nor the people their dupes.[5]

And what has been the result of this fundamental excellence?—that no interpolated fooleries have been able to destroy it;—that the religion of Greece exists, and must ever exist, the religion of nature, genius, and taste;—and that neither poetry nor the arts can have being without it. Schiller has well expressed this truth in the following lines:—

> “The intelligible forms of ancient poets,
> The fair humanities of old religion,
> The power, the beauty, and the majesty,
> That had their haunts in dale, or piny mountains,
> Or forest, by slow stream, or pebbly spring,
> Or chasms, and watery depths—all these have vanished;
> They live no longer in the faith of reason;
> But still the heart doth need a language; still
> Doth the old instinct bring back the old names;
> * * And even, at this day,
> ’Tis Jupiter who brings whate’er is great,
> And Venus who brings everything that’s fair.”

[5] I am not here called upon to vindicate the errors and absurdities which poets and others introduced into mythology.

CHAPTER III.
CAUTIONS AS TO YOUTH

In relation to *early* sexual association, it cannot be doubted, that, when the instinct of reproduction begins to be developed, the reserve which parents, relatives, and instructers, adopt on this subject, is often the means of producing injurious effects; because, a system of concealment on this subject, as observed in the preceding chapter, is quite impracticable. Discoveries made by young persons in obscene books, the unguarded language or shameless conduct of grown-up persons, even the wild flights of an imagination which is then easily excited, will have the most fatal consequences.

Parents or instructers ought, therefore, at that critical period, to give rational explanations as to the nature and the object of the propensity, the mechanism of reproduction in various vegetable and animal beings, and the fatal consequences to which this propensity may lead. Such procedure, if well conducted, cannot but have the most beneficial results; because, in order that a sane person should avoid any danger, it is only necessary that he should see it distinctly.

The advantage, it has been observed, which the parent, relative, or instructer, derives, from himself in forming the adolescent in the new faculty which is developed in him, is to prevent his choosing, among corrupt servants or ignorant youths of his own age, the confidants of his passion. The parent or instructer, moreover, is then justly entitled to, and has gratefully given to him, the entire confidence of the adolescent; and he is thereby enabled exactly to appreciate the degree of power of the propensity which he desires to divert or to guide.

Such being the case, it is the business of the parent to present a true picture of the effects of too early association of this kind, on the stature, the various development of the figure, the muscular power, the quality of the voice, the health, the moral sense, and especially on the acuteness, the power, the dignity, and the courage, of the mind.

In doing this, it would be as stupid as injurious to employ the slightest degree of false representation, of unjust reprimand, or too much of what is called moralizing, which is often only the contemptible cant of a being who cannot reason, especially when it takes the place of a simple and powerful statement of facts. All of these would only render the young man a dissembler, and would compel him to choose another confidant.

Among other considerations, varying according to the circumstances of the case, those stated below may with advantage be presented.

At a certain period in the life both of plants and animals, varying according to their kind and the climate they live in, they are fit for and disposed to the reproduction of their species. The sexes in both are then attracted to each other. In plants, the powder termed pollen, in animals a peculiar liquid which, deriving its name by analogy from the seeds of plants, is termed seminal, is secreted by the male plant or animal, and, by organs differently formed in each kind, is cast upon ova or eggs either contained within, or deposited by, the female. The details of this process are among the most beautiful and interesting of the living economy. In mankind, the attainment of this period is termed puberty.

It is with this critical period, and his conduct during it, that all that the youth deems most valuable, all that can decide his fortunes and his happiness in the world, his stature, figure, strength, voice, health, and mental powers, are most intimately connected.

In regard to stature, the body appears to complete its increase in height chiefly at the age of puberty, and during the first years which succeed that age. To be assured of the powerful influence of his own conduct, at this period, upon his stature, the youth has only to compare the tall men and women of the country as in Yorkshire, Lancashire, Westmoreland, Cumberland, and the Scottish borders, where they have not been overworked, with the stunted and dwarfed creatures of the metropolis, where a stranger, when he first enters it, is apt to think he sees so many ugly boys and

girls, whereas, they are full-grown London men and women. Half the population of the metropolis is affected in this way; and it is the obvious consequence of the acceleration of puberty by confinement, stimulating food, indecent plays, and sexual association.

In regard to the perfect development and beauty of the figure, the youth is probably aware that the most beautiful races of horses and dogs rapidly deteriorate, if men do not carefully maintain them by continence as well as by crossing. The too early employment, the depraved abuses, the injury, or the removal, of the sexual organs, are all of them causes still more certain of deformity. The latter of these causes acts, of course, most obviously; and it is evidenced in the almost universal malformation of eunuchs, geldings, &c.

That, in regard to bodily strength, sexual continence adds energy to the muscular fibre, is clearly seen by observing the most ardent quadrupeds previous to the time of the union of their sexes. But, this being past, precisely in the same proportion does the act of reproduction debilitate and break down the strongest animal. Many male animals even fall almost exhausted by a single act of union with the opposite sex.

Every classical student has read the beautiful allegory of Hercules, who, having spun at the knees of Omphale (ομφαλὸς the navel, here put for the most essential part of the female generative organ), thereby lost his strength: this beautifully expresses the abasement of power amid the indulgences of love. Euripides also depicts the terrible Achilles as timid before women, and respectful with Clytemnestra and Iphigenia. Hence, when a foolish lord reproached the poet Dryden with having given too much timidity toward women to a personage in one of his tragedies, and added that he knew better how to employ his time with the ladies, the poet answered: “You now acknowledge that you are no hero, which I intended that personage to be.”

As to voice, which depends on the muscles of respiration, and more immediately on those of the mouth and throat, as general strength does on the muscles of the whole body, both merely affording expressions of the mind, the influence of the sexual union upon it is prodigious. How entirely it is altered by the removal of the testes in eunuchs is known to every one: in corresponding proportion, is it altered by every act of the generative organs, but especially by sexual indulgence during puberty. The horrible voice of early libertines and prostitutes presents an alarming example of this. To those who value voice in conversation, in the delightful and humanizing exercise of music, or in the grander efforts of public speaking, nothing more need be said.

As to health, the less we are prodigal of life, the longer we preserve it. Every one capable of observing may see that the stag loses his horns and his hair after procreation; that birds fall into moulting and sadness; and that male insects even perish after this effort, as if they yielded their individual life to their progeny. Indeed, everything perishes so much the more readily, as it has thus transmitted life to its descendants, or has cast it away in vain pleasures.

In mankind, as in other animals, to procreate is in effect to die to one’s self, and to leave one’s life to posterity; especially, if this takes place in early life. It is then that man becomes bald and bent; and that the charms of woman fade. Even in advanced age, epicures are so well aware of this, that they are known to abstain from amorous excess, as the acknowledged cause of premature death.

In relation to mind—as the generative power is the source of several characteristics of genius, the exhaustion of that power at an early age must take away these characteristics. Genius as surely languishes and is extinguished amid early sexual indulgence, as do the faculties of voice and locomotion, which are merely its signs and expressions.

It is thus with all our faculties, locomotive, vital, mental, at an early age. They are strengthened by all that they do not dissipate; and that which their organs too abundantly dispense is not only taken immediately from their own power, and mediately from that of the other organs, but it ensures the permanent debility of the whole.

It is true that the strong passions which are modified or characterized by the sexual impulse, excite the imagination and impel the mind to sublime exertions; but the sole means of either obtaining

or preserving such impulsion is, to shun the indulgence of pleasure in early life, and its waste at later periods.

It has accordingly been observed, that the passion of love appears to be most excessive in animals which least excel in mental faculties. Thus the beasts which are the most lascivious, the ass, the boar, &c., are also the most stupid; and idiots and cretins display a sensuality which brutifies them still more. Hence, the Homeric fable that Circe transformed men into beasts.

It would also appear that the most stupid animals, swine, rabbits, &c., in general produce the greatest number of young; while men of genius have engendered the fewest. It is remarked that none of the greatest men of antiquity were much given to sexual pleasure.

It is, then, of the greatest importance to young men who are ambitious of excellence, to mark well this truth, that the most powerful and distinguished in mental faculties, other things being equal, will be he who wastes them least in early life by sexual indulgence—who most economizes the vital stimulant, in order to excite the mental powers on great occasions. By such means may a man surely surpass others, if he have received from his parents proportional mental energy.

Beside the means already indicated, there is one proposed by an able writer, as serving to divert the instinct of propagation when too early and excessive, and consequently dangerous: that is, the sentiment of love. To employ this means, he observes, “it is necessary to search early, after knowing the character of the adolescent whom it is wished to direct, for a young woman whose beauty and good qualities may inspire him with attachment. This means will serve, more than can easily be imagined, to preserve the adolescent both from the grosser attractions of libertinism and the disease it entails, and from *the more dangerous snares of coquetry*. It is,” he adds, “a virtuous young woman and a solid attachment that are here spoken of.”—At some future period I shall probably show how wise this recommendation is, as well as the necessity and the advantages of early marriages, under favorable circumstances.

Having now shown the evils of early sexual association, I may briefly notice those of later libertinism.

If, even in more advanced life, and when the constitution is stronger, the instinct of propagation be not restrained within just limits, it degenerates into inordinate lewdness or real mania: “Repperit obscænas veneres vitiosa libido.” By such depravation, nobleness of character is utterly destroyed.

This scarcely evitable consequence of great fortune and of the facility of indulgence, it has been justly observed, will ever be the ruin of the rich, and a mode of enervating the most vigorous branches of the most powerful house.

The libertine, then, owing to exhaustion, by sexual indulgence, is characterized by physical and moral impotence, or has a brain as incapable of thinking, as his muscles are of acting.

As libertines are enfeebled by indulgence, it follows that they are proportionally distinguished by fear and cowardice. Nothing, indeed, destroys courage more than sexual abuses.

But, from cowardice, spring cunning, duplicity, lying, and perfidy. These common results of cowardice are uniformly found in eunuchs, slaves, courtiers, and sycophants; while boldness, frankness, and generosity, belong to virtuous, free, and magnanimous men.

Again, cowardice, artifice, falsehood, and perfidy, are the usual elements of cruelty. Men feel more wounded in self-love, as they are conscious of being more contemptible; and they avenge themselves with more malignity upon their enemy, as they find themselves more weak and worthless, and as they consequently dread him more.

These are the causes of that malignant revenge which princes have often shown, as, in ancient times, Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, Domitian, Heliogabalus, &c. In later times, Catharine de Medici solicited the massacre of the Protestants; Paul, Constantine, and Nicholas, of Russia, were happy only when they wallowed in blood; Charles X., equally effeminate and bigoted, perpetrated the massacre

of the Parisians; Don Miguel covered Portugal with his assassinations; and nearly all the sovereigns and sycophants in Europe upheld or palliated his atrocities.[6]

The strong and brave man, on the contrary, scarcely feels hurt, and scorns revenge.

It is not cruelty only with which we may reproach these effeminate individuals: it is every vice which springs from baseness of character.

Libertinism, moreover, is not hurtful only to the health and welfare of these individuals: it is so also to those of their posterity.

Finally, the results of libertinism have constantly marked, not merely the ruin of families, but the degeneration of races, and the decay of empires. The delights of Capua caused the ruin of Hannibal; and the Roman, once so proud before kings, finally transformed himself into the wretched slave of monsters degraded far below the rank of humanity.

So little, however, do men look to remote consequences that perhaps the most frightful punishments of libertinism are the diseases which it inflicts. Man may, then, be said to meet only death on the path of life.

The dangers of promiscuous love are, indeed, far beyond what young men will easily believe. I do not exaggerate when I state, that, out of every three women, and those the least common of the promiscuous, two at least are certainly in a state of disease capable of the most destructive infection. A surgeon in the habit of receiving foul patients at a public hospital tells me, I might safely say that nine out of every ten are in this state.[7]

While writing this, Sir Anthony Carlisle observes to me, that, "the special disease which appears to be a punishment for sexual profligacy, is not only malignant, painful, and hideous, in every stage of it, but the only remedy known for its cure, mercury, is a poison which generally leaves its own evils for the venom which it destroys. This frightful disease has no natural termination but in a disgusting disgraceful death, after disfiguring the countenance, by causing blindness, loss of the nose, the palate and teeth, and by the spoliation of the sinning organs. The miserables, who thus perish in public hospitals, are so offensive to the more respectable patients, that they are confined to appointed rooms, termed foul wards, where they linger and die in the bloom of life, either of the penalty inflicted by their profligacy, of the poison administered to them, or of incurable consequent diseases, such as consumption, palsy, or madness."

Hence, it has been observed, that, if we have to deal with a young man incapable of guidance by the nobler motives, of feeling contempt for vice, and horror for debauchery, there yet remain means to be employed. Let him be conducted to the hospital, where he will find collected the poor victims of debauchery—the unhappy women whom, even the day before, he may have seen in the streets, with faces dressed in smiles, amid the torments, the corrosion, and the contagion of disease. This may leave an impression sufficiently deep. But let him also know that these unhappy creatures are a thousand times more pitiable than the libertine who destroys them, and who forfeits the only good we cannot refuse to other wretches, compassion for the misery he endures.[8]

[6] George IV., though the "first gentleman" in England, was guilty of cheating at a horserace.—Ed.

[7] The above remark is true of the same class of females in this country.—Ed.

[8] Appendix B.

CHAPTER IV.
NATURE OF BEAUTY

In this chapter, my aim is to show that there is more than one kind of beauty, and that much confusion has arisen among writers, from not clearly distinguishing the characteristics of these kinds.

An essential condition, then, of all excitement and action in animal bodies, is a greater or less degree of novelty in the objects impressing them—even if this novelty should arise only from a previous cessation of excitement.

Now, objects of greater or less novelty are the causes of excitement, pleasurable or painful, by means of their various relations.

The lowest degree of bodily pleasure (though, owing to its constancy, immense in its total amount) is that which arises, during health, from those relations of bodies and that excitement which cause the mere local exercise of the organs—a source of pleasure which is seldom the object of our voluntary attention, but which seems to me to be the chief cause of attachment to life amid its more definite and conspicuous evils.

All higher mental emotions consist of pleasure or pain superadded to more or less definite ideas. Pleasurable emotions arise from the agreeable relations of things; painful emotions, from the disagreeable ones.

The term by which we express the influence which objects, by means of their relations, possess of exciting emotions of pleasure in the mind, is beauty.

Beauty, when founded on the relations of objects, or of the parts of objects, to each other, forms a first class, and may be termed *intrinsic beauty*.

When beauty is farther considered in relation to ourselves, it forms a second class, and may be termed *extrinsic* beauty.

We are next led (hitherto this has apparently been done without analyzing or defining the operation) to a division of the latter into two genera; namely, the *minor beauty*, of which prettiness, delicacy, &c., are modifications, and that which is called *grandeur* or *sublimity*.

The characters of the minor beauty or prettiness, with relation to ourselves, are smallness, subordination, and subjection. Hence female beauty, in relation to the male.

The characters of grandeur or sublimity, with relation to ourselves, are greatness, superordination, and power. Hence male beauty, in relation to the female.

By the preceding brief train of analysis and definition, is, I believe, answered the question —"whether the emotion of grandeur make a branch of the emotion of beauty, or be entirely distinct from it."

Having, by this concise statement of my own views on these subjects, made the reader acquainted with some of the materials of future consideration here employed, I may now examine the opinions of some philosophers, in order to see how far they accord with these first principles, and what answer can be given to them where they differ.

That *beauty*, *generally considered*, has nothing to do with particular size, is very well shown by Payne Knight, who, though he argues incorrectly about it in many other respects, here truly says: "All degrees of magnitude contribute to beauty in proportion as they show objects to be perfect in their kind. The dimensions of a beautiful horse are very different from those of a beautiful lapdog; and those of a beautiful oak from those of a beautiful myrtle; because, nature has formed these different kinds of animals and vegetables upon different scales.

"The notion of objects being rendered beautiful by being gradually diminished, or tapered, is equally unfounded; for the same object, which is small by degrees, and beautifully less, when seen in one direction, is large by degrees, and beautifully bigger, when seen in another. The stems of trees

are tapered upward; and the columns of Grecian architecture, having been taken from them, and therefore retaining a degree of analogy with them, were tapered upward too: but the legs of animals are tapered downward, and the inverted obelisks, upon which busts were placed, having a similar analogy to them, were tapered downward also; while pilasters, which had no analogy with either, but were mere square posts terminating a wall, never tapered at all."

Speaking of beauty generally, and without seeing the distinctions I have made above, Burke, on the contrary, states the first quality of beauty to be comparative smallness, and says: "In ordinary conversation, it is usual to add the endearing name of little to everything we love;" and "in most languages, the objects of love are spoken of under diminutive epithets."

This is evidently true only of the objects of *minor* or *subordinate beauty*, which Burke confusedly thought the only kind of it, though he elsewhere grants, that beauty may be connected with sublimity! It shows, however, that relative littleness is essential to that first kind of beauty.

With greater knowledge of facts than Burke possessed, and with as feeble reasoning powers, but with less taste, and with a perverse whimsicality which was all his own, Payne Knight similarly, making no distinction in beauty, considered smallness as an accidental association, failed to see that it characterized a kind of beauty, and argued, that "if we join the diminutive to a term which precludes all such affection, or does not even, in some degree, express it, it immediately converts it into a term of contempt and reproach: thus, a bantling, a fondling, a darling, &c., are terms of endearment; but a witling, a changeling, a lordling, &c., are invariably terms of scorn: so in French, '*mon petit enfant*,' is an expression of endearment; but '*mon petit monsieur*,' is an expression of the most pointed reproach and contempt."

Now, this chatter of grammatical termination and French phrase, though meant to look vastly clever, is merely a blunder. There is no analogy in the cases compared: a "darling" or little dear unites *dear*, an expression of love, with *little*, implying that dependance which enhances love; while "witling" or little wit unites *wit*, an expression of talent, with *little*, meaning the small quantity or absence of the talent alluded to; and it is because the latter term means, not physical littleness, which well associates with love, but moral littleness and mental degradation, that it becomes a term of contempt.

Even from the little already said, it seems evident that much of the confusion on this subject has arisen from not distinguishing the two genera of beauty, and not seeing that "the emotion of grandeur" is merely "a branch of the emotion of beauty."

The other genus of beauty, *grand* or *sublime beauty*, is well described by the names given to it, grandeur or sublimity. Some have considered sublimity as expressing grandeur in the highest degree: it would perhaps be as well to express the cause of the emotion by grandeur, and the emotion itself by sublimity.

Nothing is sublime that is not vast or powerful, or that does not make him who feels it sensible of its physical or moral superiority.

The simplest cause of sublimity is presented by all objects of vast magnitude or extent—a seemingly boundless plain, the sky, the ocean, &c.; and the particular direction of the magnitude or extent always correspondingly modifies the emotion—height giving more especially the idea of power, breadth of resistance, depth of danger, &c. Of the objects mentioned above, the ocean is the most sublime, because, to vastness in length and breadth, it adds depth, and a force perpetually active.

Now, that these objects, though sublime, are beautiful, is very evident; and it is therefore also evident how much Burke erred in asserting comparative smallness to be the first character of beauty generally considered. This and similar errors, as already said, have greatly obscured this subject, and have led Burke and others so to modify and qualify their doctrines, as to take from them all precision and certainty.

Hence, in one place, Burke says: "As, in the animal world, and in a good measure in the vegetable world likewise, the qualities that constitute *beauty* may *possibly* be united to things of *greater*

dimensions [that is, littleness may be united with bigness!]; when they are so united they constitute *a species something different both from the sublime and beautiful*, which I have before called, Fine."

So also he says: "Ugliness I imagine likewise to be consistent enough with an idea of the sublime. But I would by no means insinuate that ugliness of itself is a sublime idea, unless united with such qualities as excite a strong terror."

Here, he confounds sublimity with terror, as do Blair and other writers, when they say that "exact proportion of parts, though it enters often into the beautiful, is much disregarded in the sublime." It is a fact, that exactly in proportion as ugliness is substituted for beauty in vast objects, is sublimity taken away, until at last it is utterly lost in the terrible.

Even Blair shows that sublimity may exist without terror or pain. "The proper sensation of sublimity appears," he observes, "to be distinguishable from the sensation of either of these, and, on several occasions, to be entirely separated from them. In many grand objects, there is no coincidence with terror at all; as in the magnificent prospect of wide-extended plains, and of the starry firmament; or in the moral dispositions and sentiments, which we view with high admiration; and in many painful and terrible objects also, it is clear, there is no sort of grandeur. The amputation of a limb, or the bite of a snake, is exceedingly terrible, but is destitute of all claim whatever to sublimity."

Payne Knight shows that terror is even opposed to sublimity: "All the great and terrible convulsions of nature; such as storms, tempests, hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanoes, &c., excite sublime ideas, and impress sublime sentiments by the prodigious exertions of energy and power which they seem to display: for though these objects are, in their nature, terrible, and generally known to be so, it is not this attribute of terror that contributes, in the smallest degree to render them sublime.... Timid women fly to a cellar, or a darkened room, to avoid the sublime effects of a thunder-storm; because to them they are not sublime, but terrible. To those only are they sublime, '*qui formidine nulla imbuti spectant*,' who behold them without any fear at all; and to whom, therefore, they are in no degree terrible."

This farther confirms the distinction which I made of beauty into minor or subordinate, and grand or sublime beauty, although Knight adopted other principles, if principles they may be called, and neglected such distinction.

There is but one other error on this subject which I need to notice. Burke says: "To make anything very terrible, obscurity seems in general to be necessary. When we know the full extent of any danger, when we can accustom our eyes to it, a great deal of the apprehension vanishes. Every one will be sensible of this, who considers how greatly night adds to our dread, in all cases of danger.... Those despotic governments which are founded on the passions of men, and principally upon the passion of fear, keep their chief as much as may be from the public eye. The policy has been the same in many cases of religion. Almost all the heathen temples were dark."

From what has already been said, it is evident that all this contributes to terror, not to sublimity; and that the same error is made by Blair when he says, "As obscurity, so disorder, too, is very compatible with grandeur, nay, frequently heightens it."

To expose the weakness and to destroy the authority of some writers on this subject, can only set the mind free for the investigation of truth. I may, therefore, conclude this chapter by quoting the shrewd remarks of Knight on some of the principles of Burke. I shall afterward be forced critically to examine the notions of Knight in their turn.

Burke states that the highest degree of sublime sensation is astonishment; and the subordinate degrees, awe, reverence, and respect; all which he considers as modes of terror. And Knight observes that this graduated scale of the sublime, from respect to astonishment, cannot, perhaps be better illustrated than by applying it to his own character.

"He was certainly," says Knight, "a very respectable man, and reverenced by all who knew him intimately. At one period of his life, too, when he became the disinterested patron of remote and injured nations, who had none to help them, his character was truly sublime; but, unless upon those

whom he so ably and eloquently arraigned, I do not believe that it impressed any awe.... If, during this period, he had suddenly appeared among the managers in Westminster Hall without his wig and coat, or had walked up St. James's street without his breeches, it would have occasioned great and universal astonishment; and if he had, at the same time, carried a loaded blunderbuss in his hands, the astonishment would have been mixed with no small portion of terror: but I do not believe that the united effects of these two powerful passions would have produced any sentiment or sensation approaching to sublime, even in the breasts of those who had the strongest sense of self-preservation and the quickest sensibility of danger."

Thus, I believe, it now appears that novelty[9] is the exciting cause of pleasurable emotion, and of the consequent perception of beauty in the relations of things, and that the two genera of beauty —the minor or subordinate beauty, and grandeur or sublimity—have distinct characteristics, the confounding of which by writers has led to the obscurity of this part of the subject.

[9] Appendix C.

CHAPTER V.
STANDARD OF TASTE IN BEAUTY

The expression, “standard of taste,” is used to signify the basis or foundation of our judgments respecting beauty and deformity, and their consequent certainty.

Setting aside such objection as might be raised to a standard of taste on the doctrine of Berkeley (which I refuted in 1809, and which I need not enter into here), this matter was long ago settled by David Hume; and I have nothing new to say upon the subject (there is probably enough of novelty in other chapters, whatever its worth may be), except that Burke appears to have borrowed all he knew about it from that incomparably more profound philosopher.

As I ought not, however, to omit here a view of the subject, I cannot do better than transcribe the words of Hume and Burke respectively. While this will put the reader in possession of all that I think necessary upon this subject, it will farther tend to show in what Burke’s ability as a philosopher consisted.

I must first, however, observe that the word “taste,” as expressing our judgment of beauty, is a metaphor whimsically borrowed from the lowest of our senses, and is applied to our exercise of that faculty, as regards both natural objects, and the fine arts which imitate these.

It is not wonderful that the variety and inconstancy of tastes respecting the attributes and the characters of beauty, should have led many philosophers to deny that there exist any certain combinations of forms and of effects to which the term beauty ought to be invariably attached.

In his “Philosophical Dictionary,” Voltaire, after quoting some nonsense from the crazy dreamer who did so much injury to Greek philosophy, says: “I am willing to believe that nothing can be more beautiful than this discourse of Plato; but it does not give us very clear ideas of the nature of the beautiful. Ask of a toad what is beauty, pure beauty, the το καλον; he will answer you that it is his female, with two large round eyes projecting from her little head, a large and flat throat, a yellow belly, and a brown back. Ask the devil, and he will tell you that the beautiful is a pair of horns, four claws, and a tail. Consult, lastly, the philosophers, and they will answer you by rigmarole: they want something conformable to the archetype of the beautiful in essence, to the το καλον.” This is wit, not reason: let us look for that to a deeper thinker—as proposed above.

David Hume says: “It appears that, amid all the variety and caprice of taste, there are certain general principles of approbation or blame, whose influence a careful eye may trace in all operations of the mind. Some particular forms or qualities from the original structure of the internal fabric, are calculated to please, and others to displease.... If they fail of their effect in any particular instance, it is from some apparent *defect* or imperfection in the organ.

“In each creature there is a sound and a defective state; and the former alone can be supposed to afford us a true standard of taste and sentiment. If, in the sound state of the organ, there be an entire or a considerable uniformity of sentiment among men, we may thence derive an idea of the perfect beauty; in like manner as the appearance of objects in daylight, to the eye of a man in health, is denominated their true and real color.”

To the same purpose writes Burke, after some preliminary observations:—

“All the natural powers in man, which I know, that are conversant about external objects, are the senses, the imagination, and the judgment.

“First, with regard to the senses. We do and we must suppose, that, as the conformations of their organs are nearly or altogether the same in all men, so the manner of perceiving external objects is in all men the same, or with little difference.

"As there will be little doubt that bodies present similar images to the whole species, it must necessarily be allowed, that the pleasures and the pains which every object excites in one man, it must raise in all mankind, while it operates naturally, simply, and by its proper powers only.

"Custom, and some other causes, have made many deviations from the natural pleasures or pains which belong to these several tastes; but then the power of distinguishing between the natural and the acquired relish remains to the very last.

"There is in all men a sufficient remembrance of the original natural causes of pleasure, to enable them to bring all things offered to their senses to that standard, and to regulate their feelings and opinions by it.

"Suppose one who had so vitiated his palate as to take more pleasure in the taste of opium than in that of butter or honey, to be presented with a bolus of squills; there is hardly any doubt but that he would prefer the butter or honey to this nauseous morsel, or to any other bitter drug to which he had not been accustomed; which proves that his palate was naturally like that of other men in all things, that it is still like the palate of other men in many things, and only vitiated in some particular points."

In the same manner, Payne Knight observes that "things, naturally the most nauseous, become most grateful; and things, naturally most grateful, most insipid.

"This extreme effect, however, only takes place where the palate has become morbid and vitiated by continued, and even forced gratification; and even when the metaphors taken from this sense, and employed to express intellectual qualities, show that it is always felt and considered as a corruption, even by those who are most corrupted: for though there are many who prefer port wine to malmsey, and tobacco to sugar, yet no one ever spoke of a sour or bitter temper as pleasant, or of a sweet one as unpleasant." By this concession, Knight answers several of his own objections.

"When it is said," farther observes Burke, very properly, "taste cannot be disputed, it can only mean, that no one can strictly answer what pleasure or pain some particular man may find from the taste of some particular thing. This indeed cannot be disputed; but we may dispute, and with sufficient clearness too, concerning the things which are naturally pleasing or disagreeable to the sense. But when we talk of any peculiar or acquired relish, then we must know the habits, the prejudices, or the distempers of this particular man, and we must draw our conclusions from those."

Hume proceeds to a second point, by observing that "one obvious cause, why many feel not the proper sentiment of beauty, is the want of that *delicacy* of imagination which is requisite to convey a sensibility of those finer emotions.

"Where the organs are so fine, as to allow nothing to escape them, and at the same time so exact, as to perceive every ingredient in the composition; this we call delicacy of taste, whether we employ these terms in the literal or metaphorical sense."

Burke enlarges on this, after preliminary observing that "the power of the imagination is incapable of producing anything absolutely new; it can only vary the disposition of those ideas which it has received from the senses. Now, the imagination is the most extensive province of pleasure and pain, as it is the region of our fears and our hopes, and of all our passions that are connected with them.

"Since the imagination is only the representation of the senses, it can only be pleased or displeased with the images, from the same principle on which the sense is pleased or displeased with the realities; and consequently there must be just as close an agreement in the imaginations as in the senses of men.

"There are some men formed with feelings so blunt, with tempers so cold and phlegmatic, that they can hardly be said to be awake during the whole course of their lives. Upon such persons, the most striking objects make but a faint and obscure impression. There are others so continually in the agitation of gross and merely sensual pleasures, or so occupied in the low drudgery of avarice, or so heated in the chase of honors and distinction, that their minds, which had been used continually to the storms of these violent and tempestuous passions, can hardly be put in motion by the delicate and refined play of the imagination. These men, though from a different cause, become as stupid and

insensible as the former; but whenever either of these happen to be struck with any natural elegance or greatness, or with these qualities in any work of art, they are moved upon the same principle."

On a third point, Hume says: "But though there be naturally a wide difference in point of delicacy between one person and another, nothing tends farther to increase and improve this talent, than *practice* in a particular art, and the frequent survey or contemplation of a particular species of beauty.

"So advantageous is practice to the discernment of beauty, that, before we can give judgment on any work of importance, it will even be requisite that that very individual performance be more than once perused by us, and be surveyed in different lights with attention and deliberation."

This is well illustrated by Burke, who observes: "It is known that the taste (whatever it is) is improved exactly as we improve our knowledge, by a steady attention to our object, and by frequent exercise.

"To illustrate this—(that there is a difference, not in the causes, nor in the manner of men's being affected, but in the degree, owing to natural sensibility, or greater attention to the object)—to illustrate this by the procedure of the senses in which the same difference is found, let us suppose a very smooth marble-table to be set before two men; they both perceive it to be smooth, and they are both pleased with it because of this quality. So far they agree.

"But suppose another, and after that another table, the latter still smoother than the former, to be set before them. It is now very probable that these men, who are so agreed upon what is smooth, and in the pleasure thence, will disagree when they come to settle which table has the advantage in point of polish.... Nor is it easy, when such a difference arises, to settle the point, if the excess or diminution be not glaring.

"In these nice cases, supposing the acuteness of the sense equal, the greater attention and habit in such things will have the advantage. In the question about the tables, the marble-polisher will unquestionably determine the most accurately.

"In the imagination, beside the pain or pleasure arising from the properties of the natural object, a pleasure is perceived from the resemblance which the imitation has to the original.

"All men are nearly equal in this point, as far as their knowledge of the things represented or compared extends.

"The principle of this knowledge is very much accidental, as it depends upon experience and observation, and not on the strength or weakness of any natural faculty; and it is from this difference in knowledge that what we commonly, though with no great exactness, call a difference in taste, proceeds.

"A man to whom sculpture is new sees a barber's block, or some ordinary piece of statuary; he is immediately struck and pleased, because he sees something like a human figure; and entirely taken up with this likeness, he does not at all attend to its defects. No person, I believe, at the first time of seeing a piece of imitation, ever did. Some time after, we suppose that this novice lights upon a more artificial work of the same nature; he begins to look with contempt on what he admired at first; not that he admired it even then for its unlikeness to a man, but for that general though inaccurate resemblance which it bore to the human figure. What he admired at different times in these so different figures, is strictly the same; and though his knowledge is improved, his taste is not altered. Hitherto his mistake was from a want of knowledge in art, and this arose from his inexperience; but he may be still deficient, from a want of knowledge in nature. For it is possible that the man in question may stop here, and that the masterpiece of a great hand may please him no more than the middling performance of a vulgar artist; and this not for want of better or higher relish, but because all men do not observe with sufficient accuracy on the human figure, to enable them to judge properly of an imitation of it."

On other points, Hume makes the following observations:—

"Without being frequently obliged to form *comparisons* between the several species and degrees of excellence, and estimating their proportion to each other … a man is indeed totally unqualified to pronounce an opinion with regard to any object presented to him. By comparison alone, we fix the epithets of praise or blame, and learn how to assign the due degree of each.

"But to enable a critic more fully to execute this undertaking, he must preserve his mind free from all *prejudice* and allow nothing to enter into his consideration, but the very object which is submitted to his examination.

"It is well known, that, in all questions submitted to the understanding, prejudice is destructive of sound judgment, and perverts all operations of the intellectual faculties: it is no less contrary to good taste; nor has it less influence to corrupt our sentiments of beauty. It belongs to *good sense* to check its influence in both cases; and in this respect, as well as in many others, reason, if not an essential part of taste, is at least requisite to the operations of this latter faculty. In all the nobler productions of genius, there is a mutual relation and correspondence of parts; nor can either the beauties or blemishes be perceived by him whose thought is not capacious enough to comprehend all those parts, and compare them with each other, in order to perceive the consistence and uniformity of the whole. Every work of art has also a certain end or purpose for which it is calculated; and is to be deemed more or less perfect, as it is more or less fitted to attain this end."

To a repetition of this, Burke adds some useful remarks:—

"As many of the works of imagination are not confined to representation of sensible objects, nor to efforts upon the passions, but extend themselves to the manners, the characters, the actions, and designs of men, their relations, their virtues and vices, they come within the province of the judgment, which is improved by attention and by the habit of reasoning.

"The cause of a wrong taste is a defect of judgment. And this may arise from a natural weakness of understanding (in whatever the strength of that faculty may consist), or which is much more commonly the case, it may arise from a want of proper and well-directed exercise, which alone can make it strong and ready. Beside that ignorance, inattention, prejudice, rashness, levity, obstinacy, in short, all those passions, and all those vices which pervert the judgment in other matters, prejudice it no less in this its more refined and elegant province. These causes produce different opinions upon everything which is an object of the understanding, without inducing us to suppose, that there are no settled principles of reason.

"A rectitude of judgment in the arts, which may be called a good taste, does in a great measure depend upon sensibility; because, if the mind has no bent to the pleasures of the imagination, it will never apply itself sufficiently to works of that species to acquire a competent knowledge in them. But though a degree of sensibility is requisite to form a good judgment, yet a good judgment does not necessarily arise from a quick sensibility of pleasure; it frequently happens that a very poor judge, merely by force of a greater complexional sensibility, is more affected by a poor piece, than the best judge by the most perfect; for as everything new, extraordinary, grand, or passionate, is well calculated to affect such a person, and that the faults do not affect him, his pleasure is more pure and unmixed.

"In the morning of our days, when the senses are unworn and tender, when the whole man is awake in every part, and the gloss of novelty fresh upon all the objects that surround us, how lively at that time are our sensations, but how false and inaccurate the judgments we form of things!

"Every trivial cause of pleasure is apt to affect the man of too sanguine a complexion: his appetite is to keen to suffer his taste to be delicate.... One of this character can never be a refined judge; never what the comic poet calls '*elegans formarum spectator*.'

"The rude hearer is affected by the principles which operate in these arts even in their rudest condition; and he is not skilful enough to perceive the defects. But as arts advance toward their perfection, the science of criticism advances with equal pace, and the pleasure of judges is frequently interrupted by the faults which are discovered in the most finished compositions."

The chief idea above expressed, is again repeated by Sir J. Reynolds, who says: “The principles of these (the imagination and the passions) are as invariable as the former (the senses), and are to be known and reasoned upon in the same manner, by an appeal to *common sense* deciding upon the common feelings of mankind.”

These views are thus summed by Hume: “The organs of internal sensation are seldom so perfect as to allow the general principles their full play, and produce a feeling correspondent to those principles. They either labor under some defect, or are vitiated by some disorder; and by that means, excite a sentiment, which may be pronounced erroneous. When the critic has no delicacy, he judges without any distinction, and is only affected by the grosser and more palpable qualities of the object: the finer touches pass unnoticed and disregarded. Where he is not aided by practice, his verdict is attended with confusion and hesitation. Where no comparison has been employed, the most frivolous beauties, such as rather merit the name of defects, are the object of his admiration. Where he lies under the influence of prejudice, all his natural sentiments are perverted. Where good sense is wanting, he is not qualified to discern the beauties of design and reasoning, which are the highest and most excellent. Under some or other of these imperfections, the generality of men labor; and hence, a true judge in the finer arts is observed, even during the most polished ages, to be so rare a character: strong sense, united to delicate sentiment, improved by practice, perfected by comparison, and cleared of all prejudice, can alone entitle critics to this valuable character; and the joint verdict of such, wherever they are to be found, is the true standard of taste and beauty.”

Taking the principal ideas above, Burke also concludes: “On the whole it appears to me, that what is called taste, in its most general acceptation, is not a simple idea, but is partly made up of a perception of the primary pleasures of sense, of the secondary pleasures of the imagination, and of the conclusions of the reasoning faculty, concerning the various relations of these, and concerning the human passions, manners, and actions.”

“It is sufficient for our present purpose,” Hume farther observes, “if we have proved that the taste of all individuals is not upon an equal footing, and that some men in general, however difficult to be particularly pitched upon, will be acknowledged by universal sentiment to have a preference above others.

“Though men of delicate taste be rare, they are easily to be distinguished in society by the soundness of their understanding, and the superiority of their faculties above the rest of mankind. The ascendant which they acquire, gives a prevalence to that lively approbation, with which they receive any productions of genius, and renders it generally predominant. Many men, when left to themselves, have but a faint and dubious perception of beauty, who yet are capable of relishing any fine stroke which is pointed out to them. Every convert to the admiration of the real poet or orator, is the cause of some new conversion. And though prejudices may prevail for a time, they never unite in celebrating any rival to the true genius, but yield at last to the force of nature and just sentiment.”

Hume finally obviates some apparent difficulties:—

“But notwithstanding all our endeavors to fix a standard of taste, and reconcile the discordant apprehensions of men, there still remain two sources of variation, which are not sufficient indeed to confound all the boundaries of beauty and deformity, but will often serve to produce a difference in the degrees of our approbation or blame. The one is the different humors of particular men; the other, the particular manner and opinions of our age and country.

“A young man, whose passions are warm, will be more sensibly touched with amorous and tender images, than a man more advanced in years, who takes pleasure in wise, philosophical reflections concerning the conduct of life and moderation of the passions. At twenty, Ovid may be the favorite author; Horace at forty; and perhaps Tacitus at fifty. Vainly would we, in such cases, endeavor to enter into the sentiments of others, and divest ourselves of those propensities which are natural to us. We choose our favorite author as we do our friend, from a conformity of humor and disposition.

“Such preferences are innocent and unavoidable, and can never reasonably be the object of dispute, because there is no standard by which they can be decided.

“For a like reason, we are more pleased, in the course of our reading, with pictures and characters that resemble objects which are found in our own age or country, than with those which describe a different set of customs.

“A man of learning and reflection can make allowance for these peculiarities of manners; but a common audience can never divest themselves so far of their usual ideas and sentiments, as to relish pictures which nowise resemble them.”

Thus I believe the reader has before him a view, sufficiently clear, of that popular topic, the standard of taste, as well as of the agreement which subsists among the best writers on the subject. In the next chapter, we proceed to a more fundamental and difficult inquiry.

CHAPTER VI.
THE ELEMENTS OF BEAUTY. [10]

On the subject of the preceding chapter, even the reasonings of Hume appear to me to be of too vague and indefinite a kind. It requires the more minute scrutiny into which I shall now enter, in order to place it upon a deeper and more scientific foundation. If I can here show that, in the material qualities of the objects of nature and art, there exist elements of beauty equally invariable in themselves and in the kind of effect they produce upon the mind, it is evident there can be no farther dispute about a standard of beauty.

Many attempts have been made to determine the material elements of beauty, by Hogarth, Home, and others. All have more or less failed, from not observing that these elements are modified, varied, and complicated, as we advance from the most simple to the most complex class of natural beings, or of the arts which relate to these respectively. Many partial views of perfect truth and great interest have been taken, and by every one of these it will be my duty here to profit: but, from the failure just pointed out, no philosophical and systematic doctrine of beauty, ascending from its origin in elements through its higher combinations, has ever been attained by any of the numerous, deep, acute, and elegant thinkers who have devoted their time to this subject, as the foundation of taste and of the fine or intellectual arts.

Profiting, as I ought to do, by the partial views of these philosophers, I pretend here only to take one larger view—to analyze, to generalize, to systematize, the materials which they present to me.

In the hope of accomplishing this, I shall now endeavor successively to trace the elements of beauty which belong respectively to inanimate, living, and thinking beings, and to the useful, ornamental, and intellectual arts which have a reference to these, the neglect of all which I have described as the fundamental cause of previous failure.

Again, I repeat, it is to this analysis and generalization alone, and to the systemization founded upon it, that I make any pretence. The materials have long been presented by all the great writers on the subject: they have only left them in confusion, and without conclusion. I shall now proceed to employ them.

[10] To the reader unaccustomed to inquiries of this kind, it may save trouble to peruse first the brief Summary of the contents of this important chapter, beginning in page 120.

SECTION I.
ELEMENTS OF BEAUTY IN INANIMATE BEINGS

Though Burke did not accurately trace the elements of beauty in any one class of the objects of nature or art, he yet states a preliminary truth on this subject so well, that I here quote it: “It would be absurd,” he observes, “to say that all things affect us by association only; since some things must have been originally and naturally agreeable or disagreeable, from which the others derive their associated powers; and it would be, I fancy, to little purpose to look for the cause of our passions in association, until we fail of it in the natural properties of things.”

Home, advancing farther, says: “If a tree be beautiful by means of its color, its figure, its size, its motion, it is in reality possessed of so many different beauties, which ought to be examined separately, in order to have a clear notion of the whole.

“When any body is viewed as a whole, the beauty of its figure arises from regularity[11] and simplicity; and viewing the parts with relation to each other, from uniformity[12], proportion, and order.”

I will here only observe that these are the qualities, as will speedily appear, which Burke should have set down as the fundamental and first characteristics of beauty, instead of relative littleness, which belongs not to beauty generally, but only to the minor or subordinate beauty.

Even Home, having arrived thus far, says: “To inquire why an object, by means of the particulars mentioned, appears beautiful, would, I am afraid, be a vain attempt.”

But he truly adds: “One thing is clear, that regularity, uniformity, order, and simplicity, contribute each of them to readiness of apprehension, and enable us to form more distinct images of objects than can be done, with the utmost attention, where these particulars are not found.” And he subjoins: “This final cause is, I acknowledge, too slight, to account satisfactorily for a taste that makes a figure so illustrious in the nature of man; and that this branch of our constitution has a purpose still more important, we have great reason to believe.”

Now had Home seen that the characteristics of general beauty always are, with regard to the object, accordant and agreeable relations, the importance of the qualities he has just enumerated would have been evident; for, without them, these characteristics of the object could not exist: simplicity, regularity, uniformity, order, &c., are the very elements of accordant and agreeable relations. This is in reality the still more important purpose in which Home believed, and to which the readiness of apprehension he now alludes to eminently contributes.

As to simplicity, he observes, that “a multitude of objects crowding into the mind at once, disturb the attention, and pass without making any impression, or any lasting impression; and in a group, no single object makes the figure it would do apart, when it occupies the whole attention. For the same reason, even a single object, when it divides the attention by the multiplicity of its parts, equals not, in strength of impression, a more simple object comprehended in a single view: parts extremely complex must be considered in portions successively; and a number of impressions in succession, which cannot unite because not simultaneous, never touch the mind like one entire impression made as it were at one stroke.

“A square is less beautiful than a circle, because it is less simple: a circle has parts as well as a square; but its parts not being distinct like those of a square, it makes one entire impression; whereas, the attention is divided among the sides and angles of a square.... A square, though not more regular

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[11] Regularity expresses the similarity of parts considered as constituting a whole; and uniformity, the similarity of parts considered separately.

[12] Regularity expresses the similarity of parts considered as constituting a whole; and uniformity, the similarity of parts considered separately.

than a hexagon or octagon, is more beautiful than either, because a square is more simple, and the attention less divided.

"Simplicity thus contributes to beauty."

By regularity is meant that circumstance in a figure by which we perceive it to be formed according to a certain rule. Thus, a circle, a square, a parallelogram, or triangle, pleases by its regularity.

"A square," says Home—(who here furnishes the best materials to a more general view, because he most frequently assigns physical causes, and whom, with some abbreviation, I therefore continue to quote)—"a square is more beautiful than a parallelogram, because the former exceeds the latter in regularity and in uniformity of parts. This is true with respect to intrinsic beauty only; for in many instances, utility comes in to cast the balance on the side of the parallelogram: this figure for the doors and windows of a dwelling-house, is preferred because of utility; and here we find the beauty of utility prevailing over that of regularity and uniformity."

Thus regularity and uniformity contribute to intrinsic beauty.

"A parallelogram, again, depends for its beauty on the proportion [or relation of quantity] of its sides. Its beauty is lost by a great inequality of these sides: it is also lost by their approximating toward equality; for proportion there degenerates into imperfect uniformity, and the figure appears an unsuccessful attempt toward a square."

Thus proportion contributes to beauty.

"An equilateral triangle yields not to a square in regularity nor in uniformity of parts, and it is more simple. Its inferiority in beauty is at least partly owing to inferiority of order in the position of its parts: the sides of an equilateral triangle incline to each other in the same angle, which is the most perfect order they are susceptible of; but this order is obscure, and far from being so perfect as the parallelism of the sides of a square."

Thus order contributes to the beauty of visible objects.

"A mountain, it may be objected, is an agreeable object, without so much as the appearance of regularity; and a chain of mountains is still more agreeable, without being arranged in any order. But though regularity, uniformity, and order, are causes of beauty, there are also other causes of it, as color; and when we pass from small to great objects, and consider grandeur instead of beauty, very little regularity is required."

It follows, from all that has been here said, and this has been shown by Burke, that any rugged, any sudden projection, any sharp angle, is in the highest degree contrary to the idea of beauty. Such projections and angles are destitute of all the qualities which have just been enumerated—simplicity, regularity, uniformity, proportion, order; and conformably to the principles I have laid down in a previous chapter, they can present only relations which are naturally disagreeable. This view is corroborated by the fact, that all very sharp, broken, or angular objects, were disagreeable to the boy couched by Cheselden, as they are to all eyes of very nice sensibility.

Now, as angular forms give, to the sense of touch, sharpness, roughness, or harshness, so do opposite forms give smoothness or fineness. Hence, Burke makes smoothness his second characteristic of beauty, and that far more truly than he makes littleness its first, for, as he observes, "smoothness is a quality so essential to beauty, that I do not now recollect anything beautiful that is not smooth."

Such being really the case, I am bound to expose Knight's sophistry on this point. "This elegant author," says he, "has expatiated upon the gratifications of feeling smooth and undulating surfaces in general: but, I believe, these gratifications have been confined to himself; and probably to his own imagination acting through the medium of his favorite system: for, except in the communication of the sexes, which affords no general illustration, and ought therefore to be kept entirely out of the question, I have never heard of any person being addicted to such luxuries; though a feeling-board

would certainly afford as cheap and innocent a gratification, as either a smelling-bottle, a picture, or a flute, provided it were capable of affording any gratification at all."

This is a good specimen of the kind of perverted reasoning, which peculiarly distinguishes Knight.

A man affecting the character of philosopher, ought calmly to have observed that, by young people before puberty, and, consequently, when there is not the slightest sexual bias, smooth objects are generally found to be agreeable, and rough or harsh ones to be the reverse. This would at once have set him right upon this point.

If, to such a man, it should for a moment have appeared worth while to ask why we do not make use of feeling-boards, as well as of smelling-bottles, he ought to have sought the solution of his difficulty in the nature of the senses; and then, with a trifle more of ability than Payne Knight hereby shows himself to have possessed, he would have seen that smoothness affords us as much pleasure as any smell, but that, as it would have been always troublesome, and often impossible, to apply our fingers to smooth surfaces, we generally receive the varied and incessant pleasure it affords, by means of sight; that it is borne by light to the eye, as smell is by the air; and that this is the reason why, except when contact is indispensable, we have no need of anything in the way of a feeling-board.

But Knight says: "Smoothness being properly a quality, perceivable only by the touch, and applied metaphorically to the objects of the other senses, we often apply it, very improperly, to those of vision; assigning smoothness as a cause of visible beauty, to things which, though smooth to the touch, cast the most sharp, harsh, and angular reflections of light upon the eyes; and these reflections are all that the eye feels, or naturally perceives.... Such are all objects of cut-glass or polished metal; as may be seen by the manner in which painters imitate them: for, as the imitations of painting extend only to the visible qualities of bodies, they show those visible qualities fairly and impartially.... Yet the imitative representation of such objects in painting is far less harsh and dazzling than the effects of them in reality: for there are no materials that a painter can employ, capable of expressing the sharpness and brilliancy of those angular reflections of the collected and condensed rays, which are emitted from the surfaces of polished metals."

It seems, to me, scarcely possible to find sophistry more worthless than this, or rather a more contemptible quibble; for that which, availing himself of our technicalities about light, he calls angularity, sharpness, &c., has no analogy with disagreeable angularity of form. To produce the brilliance and splendor which he calls angular, and describes as so *offensive*, we polish crystalline and metallic bodies in the highest degree!—we value precisely those which thus admit of greatest splendor!—and, on that very account, the diamond (rightly or wrongly, is not the question) is deemed the most valuable object on earth!

So much for those elements of beauty, in inanimate things, which fall under the cognizance of our fundamental sense, or that of touch.

As to sight and its objects, it is true that, as this organ varies in different persons, their taste is modified, with regard to colors. But the preference of light and delicate colors to dark and glaring ones, is almost universal among persons of sensibility.

Alison, indeed, ascribes the effects of all colors to association. "White," he says, "as it is the color of day, is expressive to us of the cheerfulness or gayety which the return of day brings: black, as the color of darkness [night], is expressive of gloom and melancholy." And he adds: "Whether some colors may not of themselves produce agreeable sensations, and others disagreeable sensations, I am not anxious to dispute." But this is the very point into which Alison ought to have inquired. Nature does nothing without foundation in the simplest principles; and this foundation is not only anterior to, but is the cause of all association.

That, independent of any association, blackness is naturally disagreeable, if not painful, is happily determined by the case of the boy restored to sight by Cheselden, who tells us that the first time the boy saw a black object, it gave him great uneasiness; and that, some time after, upon

accidentally seeing a negro-woman, he was struck with great horror at the sight. This appears to be perfectly conclusive.

Knight indeed says: "As to the uneasiness which the boy, couched by Cheselden, felt at the first sight of a black object, it arose either from the harshness of its outline, or from its appearing to act as a partial extinguisher applied to his eyes, which, as every object that he saw, seemed to touch them, would, of course, be its effect." It is highly probable that black operates in both these ways; and it has therefore natural effects, independent of all association.

As to sounds, Alison observes, that the cries of some animals are sublime, as the roar of the lion, the scream of the eagle, &c.; and he thinks they become so, because we associate them with the strength and ferocity of the animals which utter them. By opposite associations, he accounts for the beauty of the notes of birds. And he says, that there is a similar sublimity or beauty, in the tones of the human voice, and that "such sounds are associated, in our imaginations, with the qualities of mind of which they are in general expressive, and naturally produce in us the conception of these qualities."

This writer endeavors to establish his views on this subject, by observing, that "grandeur or sublimity of sound, can no otherwise arise from its loudness, than as that loudness excites an idea of power in the sonorous object, or in some other associated with it in the mind: for a child's drum, close to the ear, fills it with more real noise, than the discharge of a cannon a mile off; and the rattling of a carriage in the street, when faintly and indistinctly heard, has often been mistaken for thunder at a distance. Yet no one ever imagined the beating of a child's drum, or the rattling of a carriage over the stones, to be grand or sublime; which, nevertheless, they must be, if grandeur or sublimity belong at all to the sensation of loudness. But artillery and lightning are powerful engines of destruction; and with their power we sympathize, whenever the sound of them excites any sentiments of sublimity."

Now, all this is directly opposed to the doctrine it is meant to support. It distinctly implies that loudness is so natural and so frequent a result of the violent contact of bodies, that we sometimes mistakenly ascribe power to objects, of which we have not correctly distinguished the sounds, owing to imitation, distance, &c. The occasional mistake implies the general truth.

Alison, himself, notwithstanding his doctrine of association, is accordingly led to observe, that "there are some philosophers who consider these as the natural signs of passion or affection, and who believe that it is not from experience, but by means of an original faculty, that we interpret them: and this opinion is supported by great authorities."

He adds the following observations, which, notwithstanding the error they involve, are too much to the purpose to be omitted here, and which in reality illustrate a natural and true theory, better than they do his own:—

"It is natural, however, to suppose, that in this, as in every case, our experience should gradually lead to the formation of some general rules, with regard to this expression.

"The great divisions of sound are into loud and low, grave and acute, long and short, increasing and diminishing. The two first divisions are expressive in themselves: the two last, only in conjunction with others.

"Loud sound is connected with ideas of power and danger. Many objects in nature which have such qualities, are distinguished by such sounds; and this association is farther confirmed from the human voice, in which all violent and impetuous passions are expressed in loud tones.

"Low sound has a contrary expression, and is connected with ideas of weakness, gentleness, and delicacy. This association takes its rise, not only from the observation of inanimate nature, or of animals, where, in a great number of cases, such sounds distinguish objects with such qualities, but particularly from the human voice, where all gentle, or delicate, or sorrowful affections are expressed by such tones.

"Grave sound is connected with ideas of moderation, dignity, solemnity, &c., principally, I believe, from all moderate, or restrained, or chastened affections being distinguished by such tones in the human voice.

"Acute sound is expressive of pain, or fear, or surprise, &c., and generally operates by producing some degree of astonishment. This association, also, seems principally to arise from our experience of such connexions in the human voice.

"Long or lengthened sound seems to me to have no expression in itself, but only to signify the continuance of that quality which is signified by other qualities of sound. A loud or a low, a grave or an acute sound prolonged expresses to us no more than the continuance of the quality which is generally signified by such sounds.

"Short or abrupt sound has a contrary expression, and signifies the sudden cessation of the quality thus expressed.

"Increasing sound signifies, in the same manner, the increase of the quality expressed.

"Decreasing sound signifies the gradual diminution of such qualities.

"Motion furnishes another sort of beauty.

"Figure, color, and motion, readily blend in one object, and one general perception of beauty. In many beautiful objects they all unite, and render the beauty greater."

These characteristics are too universal not to support the doctrine of natural appropriation and power, of which association is merely a consequence.

It may be said, that all this chiefly regards mere geometrical forms, not objects in nature. But, on referring to inanimate objects, it will be found that they everywhere present these forms.

The round, the simplest form appears to characterize all elementary bodies and all that are free from compression, to be in fact the most elementary and the most readily assumed in nature. This form, accordingly, is presented by the drops of water and of every liquid, by every atom probably of oxygen, hydrogen, and azote, by the smallest as well as the largest bodies, even the innumerable celestial orbs.

All the other, the angular forms are presented by inanimate bodies under compression, or by mineral crystals.

Thus, then, do these simple geometrical forms characterize the simplest bodies in nature; and it appears that this first kind of beauty is peculiarly their own. It will, in the sequel, be as clearly seen, that each of the other classes of natural beings presents beauty of a different kind, which similarly characterizes it. Hence, no rational theory of beauty could be formed by writers, who indiscriminatingly jumbled together the characteristics of all the kinds of beauty, and expected to find them everywhere.

As, then, from all that has been said, it appears that all the elements of beauty which have thus been noticed, belong to inanimate beings, and as this is shown by the passages I have quoted from the best writers, it seems surprising, not merely that they should not have seen this to be the case, but, that it should not have led them to observe, that there exists also a second beauty, of living beings, and third, of thinking beings, as well as others of the useful, the ornamental, and the intellectual arts respectively, in each of which some new element was only added to the characters of the preceding species.

It seems still more surprising that Alison, who deviates so widely from all fundamental principles, should have actually stumbled upon an observation of a few of the characteristics of inanimate beings, and traced them as they pass upward through some living and thinking beings— whose new characteristics, however, he did not discriminate. He observes, that "the greater part of those bodies in nature, which possess hardness, strength, or durability, are distinguished by angular forms. The greater part of those bodies, on the contrary, which possess weakness, fragility, or delicacy, are distinguished by winding or curvilinear forms. In the mineral kingdom, all rocks, stones, and metals, the hardest and most durable bodies we know, assume universally angular forms. In the vegetable kingdom, all strong and durable plants are in general distinguished by similar forms. The feebler and more delicate race of vegetables, on the contrary, are mostly distinguished by winding

forms. In the animal kingdom, in the same manner, strong and powerful animals are generally characterized by angular forms; feeble and delicate animals, by forms of the contrary kind."[13]

[13] Appendix D

SECTION II.
ELEMENTS OF BEAUTY IN LIVING BEINGS

I have now to show that, in living beings, while the characters of the first and fundamental beauty, that of inanimate beings, are still partially continued, new characteristics are added to them.

Plants accordingly possess both rigid parts, like some of those described in the preceding section, and delicate parts, which, in ascending through the classes of natural beings from the simplest to the most complex, are the very first to present to us new and additional characters totally distinct from those of the preceding class.

I. To begin as nature does, then, we find the trunks and stems of plants, which are near the ground, resembling most in character the inanimate bodies from among which they spring. They assume the simplest and most universal form in nature, the round one; but as growth is their great function, they extend in height and become cylindrical.

Even the branches, the twigs, and the tendrils, continue this elementary character; but it is in them, or in the stem when, like them, it is tender, that such elementary characters give way to the purposes of life, namely, growth and reproduction, and that we discover the new and additional characters of beauty which this class presents to us.

II. To render this matter plain, I must observe that the formation of rings, which unite in tubes, appears to be almost universally the material condition of growth and reproduction. Every new portion of these tubes, moreover, and every superadded ring, is less than that which preceded it.

It is from this that results the first characteristic of this second kind of beauty, namely, fineness or delicacy. Hence, Burke made the possession of a delicate frame, without any remarkable appearance of strength, his fifth condition in beauty; and he here erred only from that want of discrimination which led him to confound together all the conditions of beauty, and prevented his seeing that they belonged to different genera.

Now, as fine and delicate bodies, which are growing, will shoot in that direction where space, air, and light, can best be had, and as this, amid other twigs and tendrils, will greatly vary, so will their productions rarely continue long in the same straight line, but will, on the contrary, bend. Hence, the curved or bending form is the second characteristic of this kind of beauty.

It is worthy of remark, that, as the trunks, stems, twigs, and tendrils, of plants assume the simplest and most universal form in nature, the round one, so their more delicate parts have again the tendency to bend into a similar form.

In the young and feeble branches of plants, it is observed by Alison, that the bending form is “beautiful, when we perceive that it is the consequence of the delicacy of their texture, and of their being overpowered by the weight of the flower.... In the smaller and feebler tribe of flowers, as in the violet, the daisy, or the lily of the valley, the bending of the stem constitutes a very beautiful form, because we immediately perceive that it is the consequence of the weakness and delicacy of the flower.”

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.