

this moral consistency. Goodness should and does consist with Truth. Beauty should, does consist with both—Truth and Goodness. The false should appear, as in reality it is, deformed and ugly, and should never be agreeable. The false is not in reality good, and should not be chosen. Even style, says a rhetorician, “becomes beautiful so far as—and only so far as—it is the adequate expression of worthy thoughts.” “Language,” says Herbert Spencer, “is the symbol for conveying thought,” and hence should first of all be truthful. True oratory recognizes the same law, relation to the true and the good. The eloquence of the bar should be loyal to justice. Civil eloquence should seek the public good. Sacred eloquence should exalt Christian virtue and proclaim the truth as it is in Jesus, and thus, by the grace of God, win sinners to the Saviour. The beautiful should not be severed from the true and the good, but rather be more closely and constantly allied to both. Thus beauty as the middle term should promote truth and goodness, until moral character consummates in “the beauty of holiness.”

II.—THE POETRY OF MODERN SKEPTICISM: MATTHEW ARNOLD. JAMES THOMPSON.

BY PROF. J. O. MURRAY, D.D., DEAN OF PRINCETON COLLEGE.

SOME years ago the attempt was made by an English barrister, Mr. N. J. Birch, to prove from Shakespeare's plays that he was an atheist. The work has been shelved among the “Curiosities of Literature.” The Christian element in Shakespeare is too pronounced for any question as to his faith in Christianity, and the book in question was alike a blunder and an injustice, if indeed it was not a ghastly joke. In fact, the skeptical spirit did not affect English poetry till the time of Pope. Dryden boxed the compass of theological belief, but he never gave up his faith in Christianity. Pope's “Essay on Man”—a jumble of Spinoza and Bolingbroke—is yet believing as far as it goes. It is theistic and optimistic both. Still Deism is all the faith it recognizes. No great poet followed in his track till Byron and Shelley appeared. Byron's “Cain” and “Shelley's” “Queen Mab” sounded a bold and blasphemous note of defiance to existing beliefs. They have had no successors in the special line of their infidelity. That infidelity of theirs to law and moral purity and decency was enough to disarm their unbelief in Christianity of much of its power. But the modern unbelief is at work, and marking the poetry of our time to greater or less extent. It would be passing strange if this were not so. The air is so full of the revolt against supernaturalism, that poetry, always one of the best reflectors of the spirit of an age, would be sure to catch it. Tennyson is no unbeliever. His poetry is not anti-Christian, nor yet agnostic. Still he sounded some notes, which have had an echo