

"Scientific art will so habituate the senses to inexhaustible splendour of hue, and to accuracy of intricate form, that manual achievements must come to show a glaring rudeness. The polarizing mirror will spoil us for the noble child's play of Titian's yellows and Turner's scarlets; the crystal, with its pellucid severities of form, will train us to see hesitating crooks in all lines drawn or sculptured with the fingers."

It is further suggested that through the advance of science we are becoming so thoroughly *en rapport* with what have hitherto been the secrets of nature, that Manual Art, not being able to find symbols "for the subtler presentiments of cellular and crystalline organization," must cease altogether, not being "able to content the fully aroused organic appetites!"

Such appetites were indeed difficult to satisfy with the grand spiritual conceptions and teachings of High Art. It would be as rational to attempt to satisfy the appetite of a hungry boor with the symphonies of Mozart or Beethoven, as the soul of a positive philosopher with the feeling of ideal beauty.

But does it thence follow that all art that is not under mechanical direction and influence is of an inferior quality? Is the genius of the heaven-born artist to become powerless and fruitless unless it becomes the slave of science—a thing to be summoned by what this essayist has himself fitly enough described as a "mechanical spell"? Under such conditions art would indeed become effete, and, losing its divine strength, become a servant to the Philistines, condemned

"To grind in brazen fetters under task."

This is a philosophy of very narrow comprehension,—“a reason very little reasonable, since it does not include all parts of human nature.” And herein lies the source of the reviewer's misapprehension of the true function of Art. His range of view is narrow and incomplete, though an admirable

one as far as it goes. He has dwelt with great ability on the advantages which Art may reap from her alliance with Science; and these we do not at all question. But we earnestly maintain if this alliance, which must and will grow closer day by day, is to be a happy one, Science must not attempt to play the *role* of dictator, but attend to its own business, and wait duteously upon the "imperial faculty" of the creative imagination of

"those whose kingly power
And aptitude for utterance divine
Have made them artists." *

The truth is that Art has a nobler mission than to address the senses alone. She comes to us with "messages of splendour" from the grand unapproachable Central Source of light and beauty, † telling us of a larger and fuller life beyond and around this present one, and giving us glimpses, too swift and short, of its supersensual glories,—whisperings of things not seen, like those of the shell concerning which Wordsworth beautifully sings, whose "sonorous cadences" express

"Mysterious union with its native sea,"
telling of

"ever-during power
And central peace, subsisting at the heart
Of endless agitation." ‡

As the Prophetess of Nature, the Revealer and Expositor of her mysteries, Art takes up the same parable, and by her interpretations makes more widely and fully manifest the "invisible things" of the Creator. If the language of the artist-preacher is symbolical, it is not on that account either uncertain, or untruthful. The objection that the intellect is offended by "an imperfect and partially symbolical representation is simply absurd. The intellect can no more be offended by anything that enables it to grasp more firmly objects of mental conception (*intelligenda*)

* Dr. Holland's "Kathrina."

† Φῶς, οὐκ ὡν ἀπόρσιτον." 1 Tim. vi.—16.

‡ The Excursion, Book 4.