moralist, there is another which must appeal to him and is fatal to his view in any form—the objection, namely, that people are made good not by reading good poetry but by doing good deeds. On a purely ideal diet sentimentalism may thrive, but not morality. Tourguenieff's story of the Russian Countess, who weeps over a pitiful tale in her carriage while her coachman freezes to death on the box—that parable disposes of the moralistic heresy once for all. How can that be the end of an art which it accomplishes so imperfectly?

We must conclude that poetry is not a means to anything. It is one of the simple goods of life, and no more needs to be vindicated than the contemplation of a sunset or the intercourse of friends.

But we are not therefore shut up to the pedantry of 'Art for Art's sake'. Poetry is only one of the goods of life: it must not be pursued to the impoverishment of the whole. It may be that there is no real rivalry between the various elements of human perfection, that beauty and goodness are radically one. But practically, and for us, the moral and the aesthetic value of a poem can be distinguished as readily as the smell and the colour of a flower. Nor need we always tolerate the one for the sake of the other. The Stinking Gladdon is a handsome blossom; but we do not grow it in our drawing-rooms.

Between these rival claims—if they are rivals—the free adult may choose for himself. But we must choose for the children. The moralist must stand at the gate of our Paradise, and admit no poems 'but such as breathe content and virtue'. [1]

In poetry admitted on these terms he will find an ally, but no servant. Not by direct instruction, not by inculcating moral precepts, does poetry promote the cause of virtue, but by deepening and enriching the emotional soil in which the virtues flower. Like a health-giving breeze, in Plato's simile, the effluence of its beauty steals into ear and eye, and insensibly draws the soul into harmony with the beauty of reason.

[1] The phrase is E. Fitzgerald's.

4