

heard the "voice of the Beloved, and seen the vision of Patmos.

But this atmosphere is too rare to be breathed by all, these heights too difficult of access for all to reach them. Next then to the entire apprehension of spiritual things is the power of appreciating those immediately surrounding us, and which their Maker approved as "very good." Nor of these only, but of whatever man, in the exercise of his powers of imitation, has nobly achieved in the poetry of speech, or colour, or form.

Beside these the mere animal or vegetative life which we share with the plants and brutes—of growth and increase of strength, nay, of precision and activity in the use of the bodily powers—does it not seem mean and contemptible?

The skill of the savage describing marvellous circuits with his boomerang, and of the cricketer sending the ball with unerring precision on the wickets, are equally admirable as a display of bodily training—equally inconclusive of either's superiority. It is only by ministering to the two higher faculties that it becomes worthy of cultivation and encouragement.

It was limbs trained in the exercises of the Palaestra that gave models for the frieze of the Parthenon, and the strength of Samson was better and more wholesomely employed in carrying off the gates of Gaza, than lying dormant at the feet of Delilah.

So again, as bodily perfection is solely admirable when subserving some æsthetic or spiritual end—developing beauty of form, or affording an outlet for unruly passions—so do I conceive æstheticism to be chiefly noble when ruled and exercised in obedience to the spiritual part.

I can best illustrate this by collating a few passages from the same work of the great master of modern, noble æstheticism—Mr. Ruskin. I have before instanced the senses of *hearing*, *smell* and *sight* (which last Newman, in his "Dream of Gerontius," terms,

*The princely sense,
Which binds ideas in one, and makes them live.")*

I have instanced these, I say, as so many channels of perception, and their several *virtues*, as Aristotle would call them, the apprehension of sound, and odour, and colour. Of the last of these, Mr. Ruskin says: "The fact is, of all God's gifts to the sight of man colour is the holiest, the most divine, the most solemn."

"It will be discovered in the first place, that the more faithful and earnest the religion of the painter, the more pure and prevalent is the system of his colour." "It will be found in the second place that where colour becomes a primal intention with a painter otherwise mean and sensual it instantly elevates him, and becomes the one sacred and saving element in his work."

"The opposite poles of Art in this respect are Fra Angelico and Salvator Rosa: of whom the one was a

man who smiled seldom, wept often, prayed constantly, and never harbored an impure thought. His pictures are simply so many pieces of jewelry, the colours of the draperies being perfectly pure, as various as those of a painted window, chastened only by paleness and relieved upon a gold ground. Salvator was a dissipated jester and satirist, a man who spent his life in masking and revelry. But his pictures are full of horror, and their colour, for the most part, a gloomy grey."

Here, I think, is sufficient to prove what I wish. *Æsthetics* is the science of perception, the princeliest of perceptions is sight, the best of gifts to sight is colour, and a delight in colour is the characteristic of the most spiritual minds: so that, as I said before, æstheticism is then most noble when informed and guided by the spiritual part.

So far, then, I have endeavored to establish the true relation of the three parts of man—first the spiritual, which in its highest form is capable of being all engrossing, and of converting the whole being to its own uses, but this highest necessarily only for a few—secondly the æsthetic, which is most admirable when most highly spiritualized—thirdly, the purely bodily, which is only desirable to subserve the other two.

What a vast field then does true *Æstheticism* occupy! The exquisite education of all the senses to the appreciation of beauty—the refining of our sympathies till they answer like the strings of a Stradivarius to each skillful impulse, be it ever so slight, and become unerring in judgment and true in tone, and perfectly concordant with all good and right, and utterly impatient of all evil, and false.

And true *Æstheticism* is indeed sensuous—as Milton says all true poetry ought to be but *not* sensual. I have already quoted Mr. Ruskin on the spirituality of colour itself the most sensuous of perceptions hear him again on the same subject:—"Observe also the name of Shem (or *Splendour*) given to that son of Noah in whom the covenant to mankind was to be fulfilled, and see how that name was justified by every one of the Asiatic races descended from him. Not without meaning was the love of Israel to his chosen son expressed by his 'coat of many colours,' nor without deep sense of the sacredness of that *symbol of purity* did the lost daughter of David tear it from her breast—'with such robes were the King's daughters that were virgins appareled.'"

And is not this same master himself, making war on the lifeless formal architecture of the Renaissance,—and on the Renaissance itself,—with its heathen Popes, its cold cynicism, its heartless luxury, its foul morals, is not he a proof that true *Æstheticism* is a refining and purifying influence,—a warmth and fire indeed, but the warmth and fire of healthy life, the best preservative from death and corruption.

A very common idea regarding *Æstheticism* is that it is effeminate. Now, why a man is less a man, I can-