

## An Old-Fashioned Essence

senses after all that supply the nourishment of our dreams and suggest the trend of our ideals. It is useless to delude ourselves with the belief that the spiritual life needs nothing more than virtue for its sustenance, and may be lived in a state of fatuous beatitude quite removed from actualities. Such a dreary and fantastic conception of existence could only have been devised by the dark rabid theology of the middle ages, that midnight of man's reason. Strange as it seems, there are still here and there fanatical minds which can decry the excellence of beauty, keeping alive the mistaken old cant which declares it to be an evil and a snare. This is no more than an ascetic and fanatical pose, without any real ground of conviction; for we must all enjoy the æsthetic stimulus of beauty and feel the religion of its innocent good, unless we are perverted or mad.

But the instinct of humanity is never to be defrauded for long. The sternest Puritan must have felt in his heart that his hatred of