

But though the question of taste thus often approaches the ludicrous, it has as much to do with the serious side of the matter. It affects all our social and domestic arrangements, it influences the arts, it intermingles with the great question of education, with literature in general, and it has much to do with religion.

And here it may not be useless to observe, how wonderfully God has been pleased to place utility and happiness within reach of all his creatures. Genius is the property of a very few amongst mankind. Yet genius is incapable of shewing its greatness but by serving others; and the possessors of the highest genius have been the hardest workers; often the worst paid and the worst treated, during their lives. It is a great mistake to suppose that persons achieve great acts by single strokes of genius; by intuition. The value of an object may be perceived by the possessor of genius sooner than by other men. But he who sees what other men are unable to discern, knows also what fatigue and labour are required to reach the object, and he is often ridiculed and opposed in the research: he passes away before the result is accomplished, and other men reap the fruit of his labours. Talent on the other hand is the inheritance of a far larger number of men, and good taste may be said to be within the reach of all.

Taste may be shown in furnishing a palace, or in the purchase of a cotton gown; in the arrangement of jewels in a diadem, or in the rose and honey-suckle which twine around the labourer's cottage, or in the condition of the interior of the cottage and its inmates. Here, indeed, our great Creator is, as he always is, in every good quality, our example. He has bestowed grace and elegance on the movements of the stars, and on the wing of the fly or the moth; on the cedar of Lebanon, and on the thistle-down: on the giant oak, and on the little "forget-me-not." So that young men need not suppose that they have nothing to do with good taste, because they are not rich. Taste is seen in the smallest things as well as in the greatest. Perhaps it is not likely to be shown in great matters, if small things be neglected.

If then the chief subjects of taste be **UTILITY, BEAUTY, and PROPRIETY**, not considered simply, but in their mutual relations, good taste will depend greatly on association and on judgment in the selection of objects.

Let us consider how much taste depends on association. The savage who obtains a precarious living by hunting in his native forests, has no taste except the desire for finery and toys. His mind has never been enriched by association with the past, by collision with intellects superior to his own, by the collected traditional refinement of other ages, nor has he