

panied by an agreeable sensation. From this they conclude that the beautiful and the agreeable are convertible. Therefore, say they, whatever is agreeable is beautiful and is the proper object of art. If this reasoning be admitted, the most sensualistic and depraved rhymsters are placed on a level with the most moral and lofty minded poets that have ever charmed this dreary world with their kindly presence. If we follow out the principle in all its consequences we are forced to conclude that the head of the culinary department, and the manufacturer of scented waters, are artists of the first order since they produce what is agreeable. The flaw in the argument adduced lies in the fact that it is based on principles of sensistic philosophy. The sensist teaches that man is merely a sensitive being, is without a rational soul. For one blessed with the gift of reason, man is a rational animal and his senses are to be governed and directed by his reason.

Though the primary object of poetry is to please, it is by no means the only end to be obtained. Horace declares that the instructive, the practical, must form a part of all art. In the words of that great authority, he who mingles the useful with the pleasing, carries the highest applause in delighting his readers. Lessing, the foremost critic of Germany, asks: "What poetry is there whose duty is not to foster and strengthen our human instincts: our love of virtue, our hatred of vice." Every kind of poetry ought to improve its readers. A poetic character which lacks the elements of virtue lacks purpose. To act for a purpose is that which elevates man above the lower creatures. To write and imitate with a conscious purpose is that which distinguishes the man of genius from the scribbler and rhymster.

The godless artist, denying the source of all good, finds it impossible to clothe morality with a pleasing garb. Nor need we wonder at this since virtue without religion is simply a sham. He who is all-knowing has said: "Without Me you can do nothing." What incentives does atheism supply to urge men to practice virtue? What rewards does it offer to those who, like a Saint Francis De Sales, or a St. Vincent De Paul, devote their talents, their strength, their life their all, to the service of distressed humanity? The

godless poet with the insignificant means at his disposal, at best, only attempts to please. To move, to instruct, to better the world, is altogether beyond his power. He wishes us to be satisfied with his artful but purposless productions. It is true that the greatest poets occasionally produce work, the sole end of which is to please, but this they do only for the sake of exercising their faculties in the beginning, or to fill up vacant spots in their large picture, and place therein points of rest here and there. The atheist on the contrary is continually forced to exhaust his talents on mere trifles. As a consequence his effusions are generally bombastic, high-sounding, and meaningless. He will, for instance, extol love to the skies, and lavish it with choicest epithets, but if God, the human soul, hereafter, etc., are all a myth in what is man's love superior to the sexual attraction existing among brutes. Exaggeration and fustian may tickle our ears and elicit our admiration for the imaginative powers of him who produces it, but it cannot be called poetry.

Shakespeare makes Hamlet speak thus: "Do not overstep the modesty of nature: for anything overdone is from the purpose of art, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, 'as it were, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and presence."

History bears out the assertion that poetry, in fact all art, has thrived best when in alliance with religion. Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Virgil, were all firm believers in the existence of a Supernatural Power. And this belief was the source of much of their inspiration. What is it that makes Homer's heroes such grand noble types of manhood? Undoubtedly their colossal greatness lies in the fact that they were able to compete and compete successfully with the gods themselves. True, by acting thus, the mighty Grecian bard, lessened to a certain extent the dignity of the gods, but he nevertheless enhanced man's power and glory. Later on it was through inspiration from on High that Dante and Tasso were enabled to chisel out their immortal masterpieces. The age of Corneille and Racine, and even that of Shakespeare and Milton, was a