

# THE HOMILETIC REVIEW.

VOL. XVII.—APRIL, 1889.—No. 4.

## REVIEW SECTION.

### I.—BEAUTY AS A MIDDLE TERM.

(THE TRUE, THE BEAUTIFUL, THE GOOD.)

BY PROF. R. B. WELCH, D.D., LL.D., AUBURN THEO. SEMINARY.

IN our day there are two practical as well as philosophical theories which tend to dissever the beautiful from the true and the good. The one may be styled atheistic negation; the other, pantheistic indifference. The one is based upon the assumption of universal materialism; the other is based upon the assumption of universal spiritism. The one denies the individual human soul and a personal God; the other denies a personal God and the individual human soul. The one would locate beauty in the feeling of the brain, whether of man or beast, and make it objective and sensuous to consummate (logically) in sensuous indulgence; the other would locate beauty in the æsthetic sense, and make it subjective and æsthetic to consummate in æsthetic indulgence. The one would begin and end in atheistic negation; the other would begin and end in pantheistic indifference. Both would practically and logically dissever the beautiful from the true and the good.

It were well to trace these fully and expose their evil tendencies and defects. But that is not our purpose in this article. It is rather to trace in rapid outline the third or medium view.

In the article on "Spiritual Truths Self-Verified" (HOMILETIC REVIEW, December, 1888), the writer states, incidentally, an important principle in regard to beauty: "Æsthetic truths on a level with a soul's æsthetic development are self-verified."

It may be difficult to define beauty. It may not be important to do so. Indeed, beauty may be simple as truth, and ultimate as the right, and undefinable as either; yet it is none the less real, and is recognized and known by a correlated, sympathetic faculty of the human soul. Beauty might, does exist, in earth and air and sea and sky, but without the correspondent faculty (or spiritual sense) in the human soul, it would not be recognized or known. Yet evermore this spiritual faculty verifies for itself. It does not depend upon the judgment of others. It is not to be argued into an admission. It sees for itself, or there is no recognition of the beautiful. It feels for itself, or