

beauty of countenance, from one fearless courage, from another greatness of soul, and uniting all these gifts in the personality of one man, there springs forth from the brain of Homer an Achilles or a Hector.

Such at least was the conception of art as entertained by the ancients. Thus Plato in the *Timæus* says of the artist, that he whose eye is fixed upon the immutable being, and who using it as a model, reproduces its idea and its excellence, cannot fail to produce a whole whose beauty is complete, while he who fixes his eye upon what is transitory with this perishable model will make nothing beautiful. And again, Cicero, in his *Orator*, says that Phidias, that greatest of ancient artists, when he wrought the form of his Olympian Jupiter or of his Athene of the Acropolis, did not contemplate an earthly model, a resemblance of which he would express; but there resided in the depth of his soul a perfect type of beauty, upon which he fixed his look, which guided his hand and his art.

Such productions take their rank as works of art in accordance with the beauty of the original conception, and also in accordance with the perfection of its outward execution. Without the ability of giving adequate outward expression to his ideas no one can lay claim to the distinction of an artist. On this principle all agree. Concerning the necessity of the beauty of the ideal, and what constitutes this beauty, the agreement is by no means so unanimous. Some claim that the highest object of art is served by a faithful imitation of nature. Others again insist that art must rise above nature in the pursuit of ideal beauty. Between these two extremes art has ever oscillated in accordance with the fashion of the time and the peculiar mental and moral bias of the artist. The truth, however, lies between those extreme views. If art be not based on nature it will fail to touch our hearts, but it must enhance nature in order to satisfy our ideal aspirations. A lifeless ideal is equally reprehensible as the opposite extreme, the want of ideality. He who with servile accuracy merely copies the object before him is no more a true artist in the higher sense of the term than the idealistic dreamer who loses sight of this earth in the attempt to grasp the stars. "Genius consists in the ready and sure

perception of the right proportion in which the ideal and the natural, form and thought, ought to be united." Their harmonious union constitutes the perfection of art.

Even dramatic art whose avowed object is the imitation of real life, must acknowledge certain limits in the creation of its illusions. If these are carried too far they cease to interest us. Thus for instance if in the tragedy of *Virginius*, the artist should succeed to impress us with the idea that the father is actually going to stab his daughter to the heart, we should turn from the scene in horror. The teachers of modern realism, in proof of their doctrine, often adduce the example of Shakespeare who stands pre-eminent among the dramatists of modern if not of all times. It cannot be denied that Shakespeare leaned more toward realism. It is that direction also that we find the chief limitations of his art—the introduction of low and trivial objects and dialogues (especially in his earlier productions) and the presentation of revolting scenes of murder and bloodshed as in *Macbeth*, *Richard III* and *Othello*. Still there is no author whose example furnishes a stronger refutation of the pretensions of the spurious realism of our days because none other has painted vice so loathsome and virtue, purity, nobility of heart in colors so resplendent as the bard of Avon. Light and shade are everywhere ably blended but the latter never usurps the place of the former. Whereas modern sensualism would invert this order of things. It is the libertine the reprobate on whom all the charms of the poet's fancy are lavished, while virtue stands in the background decked in the dull garb of insipidity, to serve only as a foil to the former. Unable to follow Shakespeare to those lofty heights whose rarefied atmosphere they cannot breathe, those degraded realists think to surpass him by descending into valleys where pestilential vapors rising from the dank earth wither with their deadly blast all higher forms of life.

The error of this school arises from the principles of sensistic philosophy, which confound reason with sensation, the beautiful with the agreeable. From the fact that the perception of the beautiful is always accompanied by an agreeable sensation they conclude, with justice, that whatever is beautiful is agreeable; but