

paganism might have been thought likely to survive the changeful centuries and retain immortal vigor, it was the splendid paganism of Athens in the days of her highest glory. In Attica we reach the most sacred shrine of the "fair humanities" of the ancient world. "It was at Athens," says an eloquent writer, "that the human form, sedulously trained, attained its most exquisite and winning beauty; there that human freedom put forth its most splendid power; there that human intellect displayed its utmost subtlety and grace; there that Art reached to its consummate perfection; there that Poetry uttered alike its sweetest and its sublimest strains; there that Philosophy attuned to the most perfect music of human expression, its loftiest and deepest thoughts. Had it been possible for the world by its own wisdom to know God; had it been in the power of man to turn into bread the stones of the wilderness; had permanent happiness lain within the grasp of the senses, or been among the rewards of Culture; had it been granted to man's unaided power to win salvation by the gifts and qualities of his own nature, and to make for himself a new Paradise in lieu of the lost Eden, before whose gate still waves the fiery sword of the Cherubim;—then such ends would have been achieved by Athens in the days of her glory." But the effort was a futile one. "Where now is the vanity of Greece?" cries the golden-mouthed Chrysostom; "where is the renown of Athens, where the babbling of the philosophers? The man of Galilee, the man of Bethsaida, the peasant, has survived them all." Vainly did the æsthetic Greeks seek to identify the beautiful with the good; vainly did they strive to teach that the supreme duty of man was to live conformably to nature as a citizen of this world; vainly did they open the palæstra and the gymnasium for physical training, and crowd their cities with everything that could minister to the taste or captivate the imagination of the beholder; vainly did they erect in every temple and along every highway the shrines of such innumerable divinities that in Athens it was easier to find a god than a man. The Parthenon has fallen; the church abides. Athens may have instructed, but she has likewise debauched the world; for a boorish Philistinism is to be preferred infinitely before a licentious civilization. Art is not and can never be religion. Worthy as a handmaid, she is tyrannous and fata as a mistress. It is possible to inform the manners and yet to degrade the soul, and from the ancient capital we behold the seemingly monstrous contradiction of physical grace and beauty mingled with moral foulness and decay. It is mere sentimentalism to sigh over the downfall of the ancient world. What was the best in it remains immortal;

"All that is beautiful shall live,
All that is base shall die."

In Greece, Art had become the open servant of idolatry, the secret pander of shame. The altars of her genius were fed with strange fires and her sacrifice was one of lust and abomination. Nor is she redeemed by the splendi-