

## THE POWER OF APPRECIATION.

MORE often than not the power of appreciation is spoken of with a half contempt, as if hardly worth having. Appreciation is regarded as the humble antithesis of that creative power which makes things, and does things, and moves the world. It is a passive, unoriginal, shy, quiet quality which neither shines nor shouts before men, and hence is relegated, with a sneer perhaps, to the domain of the drones and the non-productive members of the race.

But, in spite of this disestimation, appreciation is a rare and precious possession, of great value to the owner thereof, and of great good to the world at large. And it is misprized in part because of this very unobtrusiveness, this delicacy of nature germane to it. In the realm of the fine arts or literature, appreciation has the fairly divine function of picking out the true and the beautiful, of giving its gentle but emphatic verdict, to the enheartening of the artist, and the notifying of the Philistines that they must leave the flesh-pots of Egypt for the feast of the soul. Where would be the creators of the artistic, the lovely, and the sublime, were it not for the small band of those who really and truly appreciate? It may be almost said that these latter are the complement of genius, so necessary to its discovery and furtherance are they.

In the realm of nature it is the self-same thing. Appreciation notes the smallest manifestation of earth and sky in the way of grace, harmony and fairness; draws delight therefrom, and transmits that delight to others by pointing out the source of pleasure and inspiration. It is the part of appreciation to take cognizance of the common flower at our doorway; not

the magic blue flower on the other side of the world, nor even the more splendid bloom in our neighbour's field, but just the daisy or the clover blossom close at hand and familiar. This is a truly divine mission, and the recognition of the beautiful in what is staled by being often seen or handled, is a power which alone declares appreciation no mean brother to inspiration and the creative faculty. How seldom do we find those with the gift of getting out of the near-at-hand and the homely what is inherent in them! We all know that without this gift of appreciation travel is useless and a vain show. "They change their skies, not their dispositions, who can cross the seas," quoth Horace. If one utterly fails to see the grandeur or the charm in the mountains that hem his home horizon, or to feel the witchery of the sea that booms or glistens beyond his door, it is pretty sure that Mount Blanc herself will not do much for that person, nor all the seas and waters of earth greatly seize on his emotions. It is the unpretentious extractor of honey from the thistle who revels in and rightly apprises the gardens of the King.

And in the realm of character it is not otherwise. Your friend who carries about with him the touch-stone of appreciation finds daily and even hourly proof of the worth and nobility of his fellow-creatures where a less sensitive soul never suspects the truth. And how we all do long for genuine appreciation! Not for the careless plaudits of people who judge from the outside, but for the deeper, discriminating approval of one who knows us as having searched the heart and the reins. This is one of the reasons why we turn yearningly and instinctively to God Himself.