

receives no attention whatever. If we did not live face to face with such loveliness in earth and sea and sky it would perhaps be a different story. The rosy morn appearing, say once in a twelvemonth, to "paint with dew the verdant lawn" might either induce us to breakfast in the dark, or to postpone coming to table till the painting performance was over.

But there is more to be said than this. Even if beauty were rare, perhaps the majority of us would fail to see it, for the sufficient reason that their eyes have never been trained. Training is to a great extent necessary. "Those who have not studied the fine arts," remarks a painter who has given much attention to the subject, "are little aware how blind people are naturally to the beauties of creation; how much they stand in need of instruction and of information how to look at nature so as to become acquainted with and to distinguish its beauties in form, colour and effect." The celebrated Benjamin West, the Quaker artist, held that "we are all born blind, like puppies; their eyes being opened by nature, ours by art."

Some of us are perhaps so fortunate as to mix in the society of artists who, spending their lives in the study of beauty, are well qualified to direct others what to see, and how to look at things in a proper manner. A great deal may be gained in this way and very pleasantly too. For those not so happily circumstanced, there is the insight to be obtained through books, and there are many now to be had dealing with this important topic, and pointing out, as far as words can do, how to see things with an artist eye.

It may be taken as certain that the cultivation of the sense of beauty is within the reach of every one; every one, that is, who has the use of her eyes and does not belong to the not-inconsiderable class who find it impossible to think of any serious subject for more than two minutes at a time.

For those who are in earnest we set down the following maxim by the great German author, Goethe. After applying it to what we are talking about, it will be found handy to cheer us up in any other pursuit in which we may be engaged.

"With the exception of health and virtue," says Goethe, "there is nothing so valuable in life as information and knowledge; nor is there anything that can be obtained so readily and purchased so cheaply. The whole task consists in preserving a calm attitude of mind and the expenditure in time—a thing which we cannot save without expending it."

The beauty of nature is a desirable study, for it tends to make us gentle and refined. That is not the certain consequence but the tendency is that way. A coarse mind and vulgar manners are rare indeed where there is cultivated taste.

In its train too comes much enjoyment. "The improvement of taste," says one writer, "enables us to derive the most refined pleasure from the contemplation of objects, which make little or no impression on other people, to feel ecstasy from scenes which the aged peasant has beheld from his infancy without emotion, and with as much indifference as the sheep that he tends or the cattle he herds. Taste in a way creates new beauty and bestows on us new faculties."

The trained eye, however, important though it may be, is not everything. A great deal lies deep down in ourselves, and the recognition of beauty depends in a large measure upon our own character.

To see the loveliness of the world we must, for one thing, be happy-hearted. The poet who says "there's nought in this life sweet but only melancholy," was very much mistaken. In a melancholy fit you may as well be out of existence for all the pleasure or satisfaction you get in looking about. It is a

stupidity in any circumstances whatever to make a companion of woe, and a girl need never have any doubt on what side of human affairs she ought to take her stand. She should always choose the laughing side. This does not mean, be frivolous. It only means, be sensible.

Solomon hit the truth when he said that "the merry heart is a good medicine." It clears away the mists from our vision and enables us to look at things with those kind eyes which alone can discern their real worth and loveliness. Happy in ourselves, we see the whole world smiling around us, and to every landscape—even in gloomy weather—supply our own sunshine.

This, of course, means that we must banish sulkiness, ill-temper, jealousy, selfishness, suspicion, every evil passion, every unreasonable whim, every unworthy affection. They must be sent about their business or there can be no real beauty for us. We do not recommend the experiment, but if any girl of an inquiring turn wishes to see nature in gloom and with her worst looks on, just let her have a quarrel with some one and then go for a walk. Streams, fields, and hedgerows she will find coloured by the fire of her own anger, enjoyment being out of the question. And so it is with all the other follies we can commit. They prevent our seeing what is to be found everywhere about us of Heaven upon earth.

We are indeed not of much account unless we are good, or at least trying to be so. "If thy heart be right," says Thomas à Kempis, "then every creature will be to thee a mirror of life and a book of holy doctrine." You will have your eyes opened then to beauty, sublimity and grandeur, which have previously been hidden, and have your hearts filled with thankfulness to the Great Author of this wonderful world. The better you are, the nobler your affections, the more just your dealings, the more beauty you will see.

By acting as we ought to, we not only make the world beautiful for ourselves but for other people. It requires a stretch of imagination to picture even the loveliest scene pleasing anyone if you set down in the foreground a girl we once knew who, because of her temper, shown in her looks, went by the name of "Miss Turn-the-milk-sour." On the other hand look at Nellie, who by her happy-hearted ways, her kindness, her quiet enthusiasm, makes everybody think the scenery ten times finer than it really is. We once spent a day with her in a remote Highland inn where it rained from morning till night, and there was nothing to read but a tattered Gaelic hymn-book and an equally tattered Inverness newspaper seven months old. But, very much because of Nellie's presence, the view from that lonely inn remains a happy memory: the soaked moorland seemed to have a beauty all its own, and the canopy of mist over the hills, which might otherwise have been like a funeral pall, reminded us only of a crown of glory.

One of the most difficult points to convince people of is the power that lies in little things, especially in the direction of making others happy and contented and fitting them to get the best out of their lives and surroundings. It is like the least touch that is sometimes required to be given to the peg of a musical instrument to put a string in tune. A kind word, a smile, an almost nothing and the thing is done. And an equal trifle—like the peg turned the wrong way—will make all discordant again. A sneer, a frown, another almost nothing, and the world, which might have been made so bright, is changed for somebody into no better than a black hole.

All things are not equally attractive, and even when there is no question about their beauty it will be found that those which take

most firm hold upon us are those with which we have pleasant and interesting associations. With some people indeed association is everything. Without that magic halo nothing gives pleasure, all seems dull and lifeless.

This is a good reason for filling our minds with knowledge of every sort. A girl who is as ignorant as the young woman who thought the moon was an egg laid by the earth can hardly be expected to derive much refined and elevating pleasure from the contemplation of beauty either in the starry heavens or in her native green fields.

The more we know the better. To have our minds so stored with incidents that we are able to go about saying to ourselves, a great man lived here, a famous battle was fought there, that flower has a story, a legend belongs to yonder star, a poet has made that little bird immortal, multiplies our enjoyment a thousand-fold. We then read romance into everything, even into barns and pigstys when we find them constructed of stones from the ruins of an ancient baron's castle. Knowledge brings love, and moved by love we see innumerable charms invisible to other people. This is the true harvest of a quiet eye.

And with all we see we can and ought to associate thoughts of the Great Creator, recognising in everything the manifestation of the wisdom, power, and goodness of God and the riches of His bounty to men. "The works of the Lord are great; sought out of all them that have pleasure therein."

Taste devoted to the study and contemplation of the beautiful, remarks one writer, "swallows up and supersedes all other passions and pleasures. It outlives them all. Its atmosphere is joy and peace; rightly pursued it softens the heart and directs the mind to nature's God; to that Almighty and adorable Being whose voice uttered this still beautiful creation into existence."

The fact is, to see well we must live wisely. Some points of importance we have now spoken about and others girls may not unprofitably think out for themselves. They may for example consider whether when the recognition of beauty is in question it is not a fatal error to go through the world in a bustle. "When Romeo said, 'I stand on sudden haste,'" and was answered, "Wisely and slow; they stumble that run fast," the old friar gave counsel more needed nowadays than it ever was in Verona. The tendency of modern life is to be in such a hurry that people not only stumble but fail rightly to see anything. The observer of beauty must be deliberate. Is not that to be sleepy? No, it is to be more wide awake than scamper and bustle ever were or can be.

Another question that might be considered is how much a simple life assists in opening our eyes to the beauty by which we are surrounded. The artificial existence which many of us lead, with its trivialities and distractions is a great hindrance. The rich and fashionable, unless they are blessed with great discretion and common sense have in this case the worst of it.

The beauty of the world may be said to be the inheritance of the poor. It belongs to every one who has the taste to enjoy it. We need not be landed proprietors. "The rights of property," it has been well remarked, "do not extend to the beautiful, the sublime, nor the grand. These are emanations of the divine essence and are beyond the reach of man's laws, for God is everywhere present, and to be seen in His works by all who seek after Him." There are no pleasures so cheap as those to be got by looking at nature, and none so accessible either. We may live remote from forests, mountains, and streams, but there are always left to us the clouds lit up by the sun, and the stars shining in the midnight sky.