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A DISCUSSION ON BEAUTY:

BEING IN THE MAIN A CRITICISM OF THE ALISON-JEFFREY THEORY.

PART I.

THE readers of the MARITIME MONTHLY may perhaps remember that the very first subject to which it invited their attention was "Use and Beauty." The writer did not venture on a discussion of the nature of the Beautiful; but among other hints incidentally given, he suggested towards the close of his remarks especially, that Use and Beauty were pretty closely related, and that a good deal might be said upon the Use of Beauty. I think there might, and I have sometimes felt disposed to take advantage of the hint, and to say my say upon that subject. It is one which would be strictly congruous with the season of the year, and on which it might be neither unpleasant nor unprofitable to reflect for a while.

But if it would not exhaust the patience of those whom it may concern to follow me through a somewhat subtle, and intricate philosophical discussion, I would like to preface my reflections on the Use of Beauty, by some remarks on Beauty itself. It may look more logical to some to begin with the existence and the nature of the thing, before we talk of its use. For be it known unto you, my readers, that many sensible men have talked as if there was, strictly speaking, no such thing as beauty at all,—as if it were all a mock appearance and mirage,—a thing that may seem to be, but is not, a mere reflection of the feelings, and the shadow of a dream like Fichte's thought of his own existence.