

applied to some end. While some satisfy needs of the body, the fine arts answer a like upward hunger of the human mind. The study of each one of the fine arts may be divided between two forms or directions of study. Every art requires appreciation of the end, as well as the knowledge to use the means. Technical skill should be preceded by faithfulness in observation: an intelligent intimacy of perception. The perceptive side of art, which appeals to the understanding, is certainly not less important than the imitative side, which depends upon the senses.

Art, thus studied, is a worship of Nature. If it does not begin with it; it must lead to it. Worship reverently believes in its object, and seeks to know it as it is. The attempt to represent and reproduce it, without this previous search for an inner suggestion underlying the forms of nature, is an idolatrous, not a true, worship. It prostrates itself before superficial resemblances. It sets up its own, perhaps misshapen, images in ultimate forgetfulness of the true Divinity. The curves of every mountainous sea tell of the mighty struggle between gravity and force. The stratification of a cliff, the outline of mountain ranges, are subject to the symmetry of law, and possess characters which should be studied and made to retell their story to the intelligence. The forms of trees obey primal instincts of growth that suggest a mysterious correspondence with our human pleasure in grace and balance of proportion. The sturdy branches spring from the common trunk, according to the secret of an appointed order, pursued into the infinite tracery of twig and leaf. Struggling and yielding, they attain to a division of the free air among them. The mind is enticed into a mystic region, where Equality and Fraternity reveal themselves, reigning immemorably in Nature's laws of form, before they gave birth to our legal conceptions and our moral sympathies.

If we apply this test intelligently, we shall not go far wrong in judging between the merits of the schools; whether we use the word school in the technical sense of the character of an historical series of artists, or whether we use it in the commoner special sense of particular contemporary teachers, or systems of instruction. The test is, does the school give more attention to mere technique, to tricks of the hand and material, than to the study of the original? Does it take its satisfaction in the reproduction of accidental and superficial appearances, or does it cultivate in the student that divine dissatisfaction with the best of human efforts, which arises in presence of the ever-opening vision of nature: the depth of thought, the great and pure design that study reveals in her apparent simplicity. Conducted in this spirit, mechanic arts may acquire the dignity of a pursuit of truth: and a fine art, for want of the same spirit, is debased into handicraft. Surely the student, who from the construction of the human eye, and an appreciation of the laws of optics, proceeded to the invention of the telescope, was no mere workman. In the spirit of his method he was to be reckoned among the masters of the fine arts. And the studio or art school which devotes its chief attention, first and last, to the copying of copies, whether it works with pencil or with stump, or even with air-brushes, under however carefully arranged north lights, is, in my humble opinion, a false and misleading, I may also venture to say, a debasing system of instruction. The end of these things, intellectually and artistically, is death.

No subject was more frequently or studiously painted by the great masters, generation after generation, than the great series of the natural elements and phenomena. To Fire, Air, Earth and Water; Springtime, Summer, Autumn and Winter, innumerable compositions were devoted, in an untir-