

discharge of their religious obligations, should be the language, and should express the feelings of men, whatever their rank and condition, and in whatever measure, and of whatever kind, their offerings may be. And as the streams flow to the ocean, from whose bosom their waters originally came, the seaward course of those which rise at the greatest elevation being most prone and rapid; so not only should there be the general tribute of sacrifice and dedication of human powers to God, but in men of eminence the tribute should be most marked and most freely rendered.

It was the sense that God in all things should be glorified that brought Fra Angelico to his knees whenever he took his pencil in hand, and that led also Michael Angelo, artist and poet, to sing:—

“Heaven-born, the soul a heavenward course must hold.”

And the spirit of the Great Masters influenced those beneath them, so that,

“In the elder times of Art,
Builders wrought, with greatest care,
Each minute and secret part,
For the Gods see everywhere.”

And the high aim taken by them brought forth all their powers, and insured for their works a conspicuous position, securing for them the admiration of successive generations. *The want of such an aim is both the reason and the characteristic of the decadence of Art in modern times.* That art has declined is patent to all. To use the words of Sir Joshua Reynolds, “Art has long been much on the decline and our only hope of its recovery will consist in our being thoroughly sensible of its depravation and decay.” That the high aim is wanted has long been acknowledged. Thus Winkelmann says, “The perfection of beauty rests only in God, and human beauty is elevated in proportion as it approaches the idea of God;” and Emerson, “It is dislocation and detachment from the life of God that makes things ugly.” The Temple of Philæ, the Parthenon, the Apollo Belvedere were the productions of the religious enthusiasm of their times. Men *believed* in their deities, and laboured to give expression to their faith. But the mythological subjects, with which it was the fashion, a century or two ago, to fresco walls and ceilings, being merely decorative, lacked the *divine afflatus*; and their sprawling deities were vulgar and sensuous.

When men first met together in recognition of the fact that they were members of one family—the offspring of God, it was in