

landscape with real men and women would appeal to us more forcibly than the most masterly combination of paint or canvas. Is it not because the artist, dwelling on the aspect that appeals to him most strongly, emphasizes those parts that express his feeling, subordinates whatever may interfere with it, and presents the whole to us translated into simple and more comprehensible language than many-voiced nature deigns to use.

"Art is the spirit of free self-delight, creating for itself various forms and modes of expression."—"The noble play of the intellect, heart, imagination, governed by laws of beauty and fitness." Not always mirthful play, for "our saddest thoughts make our sweetest songs;"—and in the inscription: "All hope abandon ye who enter here," beauty has touched a note of despair: and here one difference between art and nature is manifest; we know that we are being deceived and the deception is pleasing, while the reality would cause us keenest suffering.

To wander with Dante, in imagination, through those terrible regions at the other side of that mystic gate gives us intense pleasure. We love to have our emotions excited, especially those that, in ordinary life, are rarely used. To feel, to live, the words are almost synonymous. And then, we always have behind us the knowledge, that if the fears grow too oppressive, we can jerk our wandering fancy back to common-place safety again.

The child's discordant shriek of terror in Schubert's "*Erl King*," excites a sympathetic shiver in the audience. Were the scene actually before us, this terror would be too strong and amount to pain.

An artist may suffer keenly while, out of crude materials, he creates the artistic whole to be put before us; but if he has done his work well, our pain is softened by the ever present beauty, till it serves but as shadow for our joy.

Clear-eyed Emerson, who sees right into the heart of things, tells us, that, "though we travel the world over to find the beautiful, we must carry it with us, or we find it not";—but a sensibility that is weak may be strengthened, and one that is confused may be cleared and purified.

None of us can see everything for ourselves; one arrests for us the swirling clouds in their flight, and shows us the melting tenderness of their delicate outline;

another directs our eyes downward to the beauty that points every blade of grass and slumbers in every pebble. The bare brown trees tossing their graceful arms against the winter sky, cry out to some one understanding heart, to sympathize with them in their desolation, and show the heedless passer-by, that even in their hour of woe, they have not forgotten their duty of being beautiful.

To each one of us there may be given a special insight into some little corner of mighty Nature's heart; and as all material prosperity is brought about by exchange, intellectual riches are augmented in the same manner.

The portraying of the grandeur and mystery of death; the foaming of a cataract; the anguish of "the struggling heart which sinks with sorrow," may be beyond our powers, for most of us possess but very small coin in the way of original ideas, but we must remember that often the smaller the change the more useful it is, in the trivial affairs of life—and after all, what is *trivial*? The meanest flower that blooms gives me a "joy too deep for tears," throws a flood of glory over every field-daisy that will not fade while English tongue is spoken.

Two peasants saying the "*Angelus*," in a potatoe field! How many of us would pass them by, with an interested glance perhaps, but forget them at the first turn of the road. Seen by the light of Millet's genius the "*Angelus*" now vibrates through Europe and America—Not to encourage us in idealizing the future was the imagination given us, but to enable us to spiritualize the present.

When in dreary winter, wearied with our dull round of cares, Mendelssohn takes us into the forest and bids us dance with his light-footed peasants on the yielding green, while above us, the trees murmur glad melodies in the summer air, and the streamlet babbles a joyous accompaniment—when Beethoven gathers the witching "*Moonlight*," in his magic finger, and in its very essence we bathe our tired souls,—when Carlyle (in some of his exalted words) teaches breaking hearts the majesty of suffering, helping to strengthen those who must ever chant minor chords in the great symphony of life, do we not then feel that art is the great Master who brings us into sympathy with Nature and with "Nature's God"? H. N.