

superstitions it upheld, they saw that it depraved and perverted men by dramas, drinking-songs, novels, pictures, and dances, of a kind that awakened man's lower nature. Yet art always reasserted her sway, and to-day we are told by many that art has nothing to do with morality—that "art should be followed for art's sake."

I went one day, with a lady artist, to the Bodkin Art Gallery in Moscow. In one of the rooms, on a table, lay a book of coloured pictures, issued in Paris and supplied, I believe, to private subscribers only. The pictures were admirably executed, but represented scenes in the private cabinets of a restaurant. Sexual indulgence was the chief subject of each picture. Women extravagantly dressed and partly undressed, women exposing their legs and breasts to men in evening dress; men and women taking liberties with each other, or dancing the "can-can," etc., etc. My companion the artist, a maiden lady of irreproachable conduct and reputation, began deliberately to look at these pictures. I could not let my attention dwell on them without ill effects. Such things had a certain attraction for me, and tended to make me restless and nervous. I ventured to suggest that the subject-matter of the pictures was objectionable. But my companion (who prided herself on being an artist) remarked with conscious superiority, that from an artist's point of view the *subject* was of no consequence. The pictures being very well executed were artistic, and therefore worthy of attention and study. Morality had nothing to do with art.

Here again is a problem. One remembers Plato's advice not to let our thoughts run upon women, for if we do we shall think clearly about nothing else, and one knows that to neglect this advice is to lose tranquillity of mind; but then one does not wish to be considered narrow, ascetic, or inartistic, nor to lose artistic pleasures which those around us esteem so highly.