

WHY TASTES DIFFER.

TASTES are not matters for controversy: *De gustibus non est disputandum!* In its ordinary sense the proverb is unquestionable. What we feel to be sweet is sweet to us, however much we may be blamed, despised or envied for feeling it to be so. If a man really prefers Etty to Rafael, or Rigoletto to Lohengrin, no amount of reasoning or objurgation can make him do more than feign the contrary. Our feelings make themselves known to us by their own self-evidence, and, as they are ultimate, and can therefore neither be proved nor disproved, so neither can they be directly and immediately altered. But though our tastes, as facts, are not matters for discussion, much remains to be said about the "how" and the "why" of them.

How ugly and ridiculous those fashions often seem to us which ten or twenty years ago we all admired! Yet we are the same men and can in most cases be sure that our altered feelings are due rather to changes which have taken place about us—changes in our environment—rather than in ourselves. These waves of feeling are also very transient. Bygone fashions of dress, more or less modified, often come again into vogue. The distension of the "hoop" was repeated in the "crinoline," nor would it be unsafe to predict that "Madonna bands" will ere long reappear and smooth down many a fair but now ruffled forehead. The same phenomena may be noted in every department of human activity which is governed by taste. The ceaseless architectural changes which followed the introduction of the pointed arch, exhibited the same spirit of dissatisfaction with the recent facts to which our changes in costume are due. Again and again we have also had architectural revivals and reversions. When pointed architecture had worn itself out in the ornate beauties of the "perpendicular" and "flamboyant" styles, men turned eagerly to the reproduction of Greek and Roman architecture. When this in turn grew stale, we had that patient and industrious restoration of the pointed or "Gothic" style which has sown broadcast over our land buildings of much, though very unequal, merit, followed by others which show us how a new appreciation of the "Renaissance" has now arisen.

Accompanying and aiding the "Gothic" revival was the "romantic" school of literature, which coexisted with a widespread feeling of contempt for that era of powder and pigtails, the eighteenth century. But "romanticism" is now out of favor. And if

the differences of sentiment which in modern times, amongst ourselves and our neighbors, seem difficult to account for, how much more must be the differences of taste which have existed, or exist, between men of widely different cultures, races and epochs! How comes it that the lip-distortion of the Botacudos, or the head-flattening of Peruvians, could possess charms for any human beings? How is it that the Fuegian, reeking with the hot blubber he has greedily devoured, should be sickened with disgust at a dish of cold meat? Greek art seems to have supplied us with eternal models of human beauty, but they are not models for the Mongol; and while some of us may admire a pair of pouting lips, the fullest lips which European beauties could exhibit, would seem as wanting in fullness to the ordinary Negro as would Venus Kallipyge to the Hottentot.

What is the rational lesson of such divergences? May it not be said that all loveliness is but in the fancy of him who admireth, and that all positive, absolute, objective beauty is but a dream? The doctrine of evolution may appear sufficient by itself to confirm this view triumphantly. To those who may say that human organization is probably an inheritance from non-human ancestors, it may appear to follow as a matter of course that human feelings, as they are supposed to be similar in kind to those of animals, can but minister in us, as they do in them, to individual or tribal preferences of instinct, appetite or desire. We claim, however, to have shown already¹ that, though each of us is, as consciousness tells us, truly one being, we have, in spite of our animal nature, another side of our being—whencesoever and however derived—which is more than animal, which is able to apprehend abstract ideas, which can apprehend true things as true, good things as good, and we believe also beautiful things as beautiful. Here some of our readers may be tempted to stop, dreading to encounter a mere restatement of some old view about that well-worn subject, "the beautiful." We venture, however, to think that there are certain considerations, which appeal to experience and common sense rather than to any lofty transcendentalism, which are capable of application to very homely matters as well as to others less familiar, and which, because viewed from a new standpoint, may not be devoid of interest as well as novelty. For writers who have hitherto treated this question have mostly belonged to one or two opposite schools. One set, strongly impressed by conviction of the lofty nature of man's intellect, have followed the high *a priori* road, paying little heed to the phenomena of our lower sensitive faculties. The other set, convinced that all our psychical phenomena are ulti-

¹ See "A Limit to Evolution," AMERICAN CATHOLIC QUARTERLY REVIEW, April, 1883.

mately referable to sensation, have tried to explain all our perceptions by the aid of our lower faculties only, ignoring what could not be thus accounted for. But our contention has ever been, that, while man has an intellectual side to his being—a priceless quality in which no brute shares—yet, as being truly an animal, he possesses animal feelings, instincts and passions, with all the consequences and limitations thence arising.

Much of the difficulty and confusion which has attended the study of man's apprehensions of beauty has, we believe, been due to non-appreciation of our duplicity in unity—unity of person, duplicity of nature—and of the complex and various commingling of effects which thence result.

Now, as we men participate in the nature and vital powers of the lower animals, so animals participate in the nature and vital powers of plants. Almost all the actions of animals are unconsciously directed either towards their own conservation or towards the propagation of their kind, and these also are the unconscious ends of the vital activities of plants. The beautiful forms which foliage leaves exhibit, and the symmetry of the branches which sustain them, may generally be traced to their need of obtaining, under the various conditions to which different species are subjected, as much sunlight and air as they can, that they may be able the better to breathe and grow. The various tints of flowers, their simple or complex shapes, their perfume and their nectar, serve to attract such different insect visitors as are needful to enable them to set their seed. No one pretends that these phenomena of plant-life are accompanied by any distinct feelings. Animals, however, evidently possess sensations, and also appetites and instinctive preferences, which they seek to gratify. The plumage of the humming-bird and the song of the nightingale are said to be due to the competition of countless generations of suitors rivalling each other in brilliance of tint or melody of tone. However this may be, and fully granting that such qualities do exercise a sexual charm, no one pretends that beasts and birds are conscious of such beauties, as beauties, however potent may be the powers of attraction such characters exercise over them. The feelings, instincts and appetites of animals generally lead to acts which are "good" for them as individuals, or "good" for their race, and some of the characters just referred to would generally be allowed to be "beautiful." But animals perform such acts no more on account of any perception they have of their "goodness" than of their "beauty," but simply through a blind impulse which would be an end in itself if irrational creatures had any conscious end or aim at all.

As Darwin has shown us, the instincts of animals are not absolutely invariable, and they are, within narrow limits, modifiable

by circumstances. Such modifications may be seen in the nest-building of captive birds, and in the actions of woodpeckers which have migrated to regions where there is no wood to peck.¹

Acquired instincts and preferences may also be sometimes inherited. This is manifest from the different actions of the different breeds of domestic dogs. They are various, and have been variously acquired; but they are, nevertheless, inherited.

Now, man, considered merely as regards the animal side of his being, must be, as we all know he is, impelled fundamentally by the same actions as are the brutes. However "good" for the species or the race such actions may be, and whatever the "beauty" they may elicit or be accompanied by, they are commonly performed without advertence to such qualities.

We cannot doubt that our lower feelings and preferences may, like those of other animals, slightly vary, and that such slighter variations may be inherited. However much we may wish to "let the ape and tiger die," we must ever continue to share in the conditions necessary for animal life. We must feel the remote effects of the instinctive impulses of the brute ancestors of our corporeal frame, and experience various tendencies and solicitations founded upon those which are common to the animals which most nearly resemble us in structure. So much must be conceded respecting the influences which most conflict with the notion that there can be any absolute, objective beauty or goodness in man or in the irrational world over which he presides.

Let us now turn to the consideration of the higher aspect of our being. Every one must concede that somehow or other we have now got the idea of "beauty," whether or not it refers to something more than individual taste. However obtained, we have come to possess that abstract idea, and abstract ideas are admitted to be parts of man's intellectual possessions—peculiar to him as compared with other animals which admittedly do not possess them. A brief consideration of the other two cognate ideas, "goodness" and "truth" (which have been before referred to as belonging to our intellectual nature), may serve to throw some light on the problem whether beauty can be known to us as existing objectively—that is, independently of the mere tastes which individuals or communities may possess.

That "truth" at least exists as a real quality of statements and beliefs, must be admitted by all who have not some eccentric theory to maintain. John Stuart Mill distinctly affirms that the recognition of the truth of any judgment we make, "is not only an essential part, but the essential part of it as a judgment." "Leave

¹ Such a woodpecker is found on the plains of La Plata.

that out," he tells us, "and it remains a mere play of thought in which no judgment is passed." But it is impossible for any consistent follower of science to doubt that truth is not a mere quality recognized as belonging to a judgment by him who emits it, but has a real relation to external things. Were this not the case, it is plain that science could make no progress. We do not base scientific inductions and deductions on our knowledge of beliefs, but of facts; and, without a foundation of facts, beliefs are worthless. "Truth" is the agreement of "thought" with "things—of the world of beliefs" with the world of "external existences." "Truth," therefore, cannot be merely that which "each man troweth," but must be "that which a man troweth when he troweth in conformity with real external coexistences and sequences, and with the causes and conditions of the world about him." Thus, "truth" is and must be both subjective and objective. It is subjective when regarded as the quality of his own thought by him who thinks it. It is objective when regarded as the quality of the thought of any one else.

But can truth be attributed to things themselves apart from and independently of all and every human mind? All persons who feel convinced of the reasonableness of Theism, must affirm that it can be so attributed. For if we may conceive of what, for lack of a better name, we may call intelligent purpose as underlying nature, then each object in so far as it corresponds with such purpose may with justice be spoken of as "true." It is another, though widely different, conformity between thought and things—namely, their conformity with the thought which is Divine. The independence and objectivity of "truth" should be especially manifested at a period in which, to our eternal honor, the unconditional pursuit of truth is more eagerly engaged in than it ever was before, and when a profound reverence for truth is ardently professed by the leading men of each department of science, and is certainly on their lips no idle boast. There is one characteristic of truth which it will be worth our while to note: It essentially expresses the idea of a relation between two distinct things. Nothing is or can be true in itself, but only in relation to something else with which it conforms. Truth is thus one kind of conformity. The essence of all truth is "likeness." But what is "conformity" or "likeness"? We can only reply that such words express an ultimate idea which can neither be defined nor explained. The terms "likeness" and "unlikeness" express so simple a perception that reasoning or exposition would be thrown away on any one who could not understand them. It is plain that everything cannot be explained. However we may reason, we must at last come to what, as simple and ultimate, carries its own meaning and evidence with it. On such ideas all reasoning

reposes, and the idea of "likeness," which is the essence of "truth," is one of such.

Let us next consider the "goodness" of things we call "good." The words are often used to denote a relation of correspondence between some object or action and its proper or intended end. When we call either a knife, a gun, a horse or a coat "good," we mean that it is well adapted to serve the purposes for which it was intended. We may use it similarly with respect to a race-horse, a baker, a judge, or a bishop. Nevertheless, a little consideration serves to show that this use of the term does not bring us to the foundation of the idea of "goodness." For "conformity to an end" will not make an action thoroughly "good" unless the end aimed at is itself good and agreeable to duty—unless by conforming to it we "follow the right order." But, we may ask, "why should we conform to duty?" Why should we follow the right order? To this there is no answer possible but that "it is right to do so." It may perhaps be replied, "the right order should be followed because it is our interest to follow it." But any one who should so reply must either mean that "it is always right to follow our interest because it is our *interest*," which would be to abandon the idea of duty altogether; or else mean that "we should follow our interest not because it is our interest, but because it is *right*," and so affirm the very ethical principle which he set out with the intention of denying. If we know with certainty that any definite line of action is "right," the proposition which declares it to be right must either be self-evident or must be deduced from other propositions as to what is right, one of which at least must be self-evident. Otherwise, it would be impossible for us to infer that anything is right, since all processes of proof must stop somewhere. As Mr. Arthur Balfour has pointed out,¹ it is then simply indisputable that the basis of every ethical maxim must itself be ethical. It thus becomes clear that the idea of "goodness" is, like that of likeness (the essence of "truth"), something ultimate, absolute, and incapable of analysis. Objects which duly serve the end for which they are intended are fitly spoken of as being "good," for they are good in a certain way and in a subordinate degree, and may thus be so termed by analogy with true and real goodness.

Is it possible for us to form any conception of objective goodness altogether apart from human actions or human thoughts—except so far as they may recognize it? Some religious persons will probably say that the "goodness" of anything depends upon the will of God—that that is right which He commands because

¹ See "A Defence of Philosophic Doubt," p. 337. Macmillan. 1879.

He commands it. But in our perceptions of duty and moral obligation we recognize that it addresses conscience with an essentially absolute and unconditional imperativeness. No good man could consent to perform an ungrateful action, seen by him to be such, even in obedience to the behest of an omnipotent being. We must approve and admire Mill's declaration, that he would rather incur eternal torment than call a bad god "good," however much we may distrust our own power of enduring even a temporal martyrdom. But if "goodness" cannot be dependent even on the will of God, if the commands of conscience are absolute and supreme, if it is impossible even to conceive an evasion of its universal and unconditional authority, then the ethical principle must be rooted, as it were, within the inmost heart, in the very foundation, so to speak, of the great whole of existence which it pervades. The principles of the moral law must be at least as extensive and enduring as are those starry heavens which shared with it the profound reverence of Kant.

The absolute, necessary and universal character of the moral law is expressed by that dictum of theologians which declares that it pertains not to God's "will," but to His "essence." The phrase may seem obscure, or even unmeaning, to some persons to whom it may be new, but we must confess that we have met with no other expression which so well conveys to us the profoundest possible conception of the fundamental and supreme character of the ethical principle. The goodness of actions is evidently twofold: They may be "good" in themselves as actions, and "good" as being done with a good intention by those who perform them. Thus "goodness," like "truth," must be both subjective and objective. It is subjective when regarded as a quality of the mind of any one entertaining a good intention. It is objective regarded as that quality of an object or action whereby it conforms, in its degree, to the eternal law of right which manifests itself to our intellect as inherent in the universe since it is inherent in us.

"Goodness," like "truth," essentially implies a relation. As nothing can be true save by its conformity, or likeness, to something else, so nothing within our powers of observation or imagination can be "good" save by its harmony with an eternal law by concordance with which it "follows the right order."

Thus everything which exists, in so far as it exists and so follows the law of its being, must be more or less "good." If by defect it deviates from a higher good, it thereby becomes a more or less good thing of an inferior order—as a marble statue broken into fragments ceases to be good as a statue, and becomes so many pieces of marble good in their degree and apt for various inferior ends.

Armed with these reflections about "truth" and "goodness," let us next consider the objectivity of "beauty." As before said, we actually possess the ideas of "beauty" and the "beautiful," whatever may be the mode in which we have come by them. Unlike the lower animals, we are not only attracted by what is charming, but we can recognize both the fact of being charmed and the qualities which charm us. Putting aside for the moment objects which attract some persons and repel others, or which are admired here and there according to the fashion of the day, let us consider some objects to which almost all normally constituted members of civilized communities would agree in ascribing some beauty and charm. Taking visible beauty as a starting point, the objects which manifest it to us are sea, land and sky as viewed by night and day, the animal and vegetable products of the earth, man and his works. The aspects of these objects change for us according to circumstances, amongst which must be reckoned the emotions or ideas which may happen to dominate in us at the time. Nevertheless, we think it must be admitted that whatever of these things strikes us as pre-eminently beautiful is regarded by us as approaching perfection of its kind. Such an object must certainly not convey to us a notion of discord, deficiency or redundancy amongst its parts or attributes.

Beauty as apprehended by the ear is eminently a harmony, and is the more beautiful according as that harmony approaches perfection. The beauty of even simple notes of sweetness is, we now know, due to "*timbre*"—which is a special and, as it were, minute kind of harmony. The same thing may be said of the charm of certain human voices, though we may also have an additional charm from the perfection with which they exhibit some shade of character, or give expression to some dominant emotion. The senses of taste and smell may give us very pleasant impressions, which so far may be said to possess a certain kind of beauty; but it is only when objects convey to us the notion of a more or less harmonious and perfect blending of savors and of odors, or of these combined, that they ordinarily arouse in us a perception of the kind. The sense of touch, combined with feelings of muscular effort and tension, may inform us of various beauties which are ordinarily apprehended by the eye; and this is emphatically the case with the blind. Feelings such as those of a most excellently polished surface, or of a perfection of delicate softness—like that of the fur of the chinchilla—may give rise to qualitative perceptions which we express by the terms "beautifully smooth" or "beautifully soft."

But apart from sensuous perceptions, the intellect very keenly apprehends beauty of character and action—moral beauty. As to such beauty it will not be disputed, but that those acts and char-

acters in which it is most apparent are deemed by us to most nearly approximate to our notions of perfection. The same may be said of the intellectual beauty of a discourse, a poem or a problem. Whichever of such things may strike us as being the most beautiful, is that which most nearly agrees with our idea and ideal of perfection according to its kind. We have used the terms "idea" and "ideal" advisedly, for objects we admire seldom entirely satisfy us. We can conceive of an ideal beauty beyond them. Our perceptions of beauty, though aroused by the impressions of external objects, are not contained within them, but, like the rest of our higher apprehensions, are the result of our intellectual faculty which attains through sensitivity that which is altogether beyond sensitivity—like the ideas of being, possibility, necessity and cause.

From the foregoing brief review of the objects which excite our admiration, it results that our intellectual apprehension of beauty may to a certain extent be explained as a perception of ideal perfection realized, or of an approximation thereto. But this explanation may be deemed by some persons as not altogether satisfactory and final, because just as it may be asked: "What is the goodness of following the right order?" so also it may be asked: "What is the beauty of perfection?" But to this question there is, we believe, no reply but that perfection is beautiful, and if this be so then it must be admitted that the idea of "beauty," like each of the ideas of "the good" and "the true," is an ultimate idea which is capable of apprehension, but not of analysis.

Beauty also, like goodness and truth, must be both subjective and objective. It is subjective, regarded as a quality perceived by our own mind; and objective, regarded as an intrinsic quality whereby anything approximates to perfection according to its kind and degree of being.

But there is one great difference whereby "beauty" differs from both "truth" and "goodness." The latter qualities are, as we have seen, predicates of objects only on account of relations they bear to something else, but "beauty" is essentially intrinsic and relates, at least primarily, to a thing considered in and by itself, and the relations it implies are internal relations.

When anything is said to be beautiful on account of its fitness to serve some end, the word is, as we have seen, but used analogically, since what is thereby really denoted is not beauty, but utility or analogical goodness of a certain kind.

The beauty of a race-horse differs from that of a perfect horse of the strongest and most massive build, as that of a spaniel differs from a dog of the St. Bernard breed. The qualities which accompany such different kinds of beauty may be, and often are, related to utility. It is not, however, their utility, but the perfection with

which they respectively correspond with an ideal of a certain kind, which makes them beautiful. Nevertheless, an object may have a certain relative beauty in that it augments, or is augmented by, the beauty of some other object. Thus a picturesque castle may derive additional beauty from its situation on some mountain side or summit. Or a mountain may derive an added beauty from the castle which clings to its steep sides or is artistically perched upon its crest.

Can we form any conception of objective beauty altogether apart from human feelings? If the beauty of any being is the same thing as its perfection, then, evidently, those who are convinced that, upholding and pervading the universe (even if that universe be eternal), there is and must be an Eternal Cause—or Power the author of all objects which exist, their powers and therefore their perfections—must affirm the existence of such supreme perfection or beauty. The Author of all perfection cannot be deemed to be Himself imperfect. Of such a Being perfection, and therefore beauty, must not only be eminently the attribute, but that Being must be the prototype of all beauty. “Beauty,” like “goodness,” must be of His essence, and the “truth” of all things, as we have seen, also depends on His essence and power. Thus power, beauty, truth and goodness are most closely inter-related. For that which is most good must be perfect of its kind, and therefore true; that which is perfect must be good and must also be true, as responding to the end of its being; and that which is true must be perfect in the way just mentioned, and therefore also good. Yet beauty, goodness and truth are not identical. They are, at the least, three aspects of one ineffable whole, and form, so to speak, a sort of trinity in unity, whereof “power” may be regarded as fundamental, while “the good” and “the true,” as each essentially implying an extrinsic relation, may be said, as it were, to proceed from “beauty” being the attribute of the whole with its ineffable internal relations:

All the various perfections, all the beauties material, intellectual and moral of the whole creation, and whatever man most admires or aspires after, as well as what he is least capable of appreciating the beauty of, must, like all that is good and all that is true in the universe, be reflected and derived from the Prototype of all perfection and of all goodness. The beauty of objects must also vary in degree, according as the perfection to which they severally approximate resembles, by a more or less immeasurably distant analogy, the perfection of their First Cause. Since, again, everything which exists more or less approaches a perfection of some kind or order of existence, everything which exists must have a beauty of its kind and in its degree, just as it must be more or less good. But if

everything is thus more or less beautiful, wherein does ugliness consist ?

Evidently it can have no positive existence, and can be but a defect and negation—as “coldness” is but a deficiency of “warmth.” Therefore, nothing can be simply ugly in itself, but only in relation to something else, and it may be very ugly in relation to something else. For as one thing may, as we have seen, gain beauty by augmenting the beauty of another object, so a thing which is even perfect of its kind, and therefore beautiful in its degree, may be relatively ugly through the injury it inflicts or the destruction it occasions to the beauty of something of a nobler and higher kind which it, by its existence, deforms from perfection or tends to destroy. Thus, a perfectly developed cancerous growth has and must have a beauty of its own very inferior order—a beauty which the biologist and pathologist can appreciate. It is none the less relatively hideous as marring the beauty of a human body, and it may be even deforming the moral beauty of a mind.

We are blinded to the real objective beauty of many objects by the fact that they are essentially hurtful to us. To take an extreme case, no man led out to die, however serene in mind, could be expected to appreciate the perfection of the instrument prepared for his execution, however perfect of its kind that instrument might be. But his want of appreciation would not make its objective perfection any the less.

We are often also blinded to the beauty of natural objects, or of their modes of action, by reason of our inveterate tendency to anthropomorphism ; that is, to regard things exclusively from a human point of view. We often feel disgust or horror at objects and actions, or even regard them with a sort of fierce reprobation, because of an unconscious association of them with analogous imaginary human actions.

But the feelings which arise in us, the sentiments inspired by the aspect of such things, are essentially human, and human only. In themselves objects so abhorred have a beauty of their own, such as we elsewhere readily recognize, though such qualities are disguised from us in them by our human prejudices. It is surely quite conceivable that a pure spirit, uninfluenced by human sensibility, would recognize such beauty, and might, so to speak, smile at the childishness of the notion that there could be anything unlovely in what to us men causes feelings of repulsion. Anthropomorphism necessarily attends all our conceptions. We cannot help regarding things with human eyes and prejudices. But our reason should make us aware of this, and teach us to make due allowance for it in our estimate of all things, however high or however low.

Let us now try and see what light the foregoing considerations

may throw upon the questions of the existence and origin of differences of taste and changes in the appreciation of the beautiful. To like, and feel attracted towards, objects is one thing, but to perceive their beauty is another and a very different thing. The perception of beauty and perfection is an act of the higher and purely intellectual side of our nature. Feelings of attraction and repulsion, likes and dislikes (apart from acts of judgment), belong to the lower or sensitive side of our nature—the side we share with the brutes about us.

The faculty of apprehending beauty is a power which may be greatly increased by culture. Brutes have, as before said, no perception of it, however much they may be attracted by it, and the faculty is rudimentary or dormant in the lowest savages and very young children. For the beauty of a *nocturne* by Chopin, or a landscape by Turner, the average boor has, as we say, "no ears or eyes." The picturesqueness and majesty of such cathedrals as those of Lincoln or Bourges may indeed strike the imagination of the ignorant; but only those versed in architecture can appreciate their true beauty and their approximation to one kind of architectural perfection. It is the same with the contemplation of natural objects. Though some uncultivated minds are strongly impressed by their charms, education is generally needed for their due appreciation. We have an example of such need in that admiration for the beauty of a serpent which a full knowledge of its organization may give rise to, dissipating the natural but irrational distaste or horror which may before have been felt for it. Among the many processes of evolution which take place around us, few are more noteworthy than that evolution of perceptions of beauty which, generally unnoticed, is continually taking place. Progress in culture also calls forth more and more agreement as to perceptions of the kind both as regards the region of art and the domain of nature. Admiration for the beauty of rugged mountain masses is a modern development of taste. But in addition to the æsthetic beauties now discovered to exist in scenes which before were deemed savage and horrible, the advance of science has given to the geologist the power of perceiving harmonies previously undreamed of. Thus the study of nature gradually makes known to us new fields of beauty which ignorance had before hidden from our gaze. The evolution of the cosmos progressively reveals to us ever new ideals, and doubtless forms and modes of beauty which no man now suspects the existence of, yet lie hidden and will only be made known to those who shall come after us.

All these forms of perception belong, as we have said, to the higher side of our being. We must next glance at the tastes and preferences of our animal nature and the conditions which modify

and change them. To begin with an unquestionable fact: We may all have our likings and dislikings for certain feelings, and be attracted or repelled by the odor, savor, contact, sound, or aspect of many things, without having a distinct perception of any real beauty in them. Such preferences or aversions, such feelings of attraction or repulsion, may be due in us, as in brutes, to the action of heredity (inherited tendencies), to the association of feelings experienced in early life, or to the action upon us of our environment and the contagiousness of custom. This association has very naturally induced in mankind, as in some other animals, that horror of serpents, just referred to, the bite of which still causes annually so many thousand deaths in India alone. It is also, to say the least, probable that this distaste may be inherited in us, as is so often the case with the congenital aversions of the lower animals. There are persons (some such have been known to us) whose reason has been quite unable to overcome aversions of the kind which they have felt from their earliest infancy. The action of our environment—the general feeling of the family, the tribe, or the nation—notoriously gives rise to likes and dislikes altogether distinct from intellectual apprehensions of beauty, whether moral or physical. Thus may be explained the preferences which exist for various bodily deformities amongst different peoples, such as Botacudos, Peruvians, Chinese, and even ourselves. Such aberrations are the effects of custom, and are felt as welcome and agreeable by different tribes, just as a tall hat and a correctly cut coat are agreeable in the eyes of English people of a certain social position, as harmonizing with what is expected and producing a sense of fitness, although no one would pretend that it is due to a perception of the realization of a high ideal of beauty by the hat or coat so approved of.

But no doubt some persons really think they see beauty in what to more cultured minds is distasteful, while others are blind to the perfections which are evident to those more qualified to judge. There seems thus to be an absence of certainty as to the beautiful, not merely through an occasional defect of power to appreciate it, but also through a tendency to appreciate the beauty of some objects far too highly. Thus there sometimes seems to be an active and positive tendency to error, as well as an occasional passive inability to perceive. How can these divergent erroneous tendencies be accounted for?

The solution of this difficulty appears to us to lie in a correct appreciation of the essential unity of the human personality—a unity of which consciousness and common sense combine to assure us, instant by instant. No sane man doubts that he is the same person who is, at the same time, both appreciating the charm of an eloquent discourse and also feeling a pain in some limb or a

current of air disagreeably affecting him. We must ever recollect that the being of each of us, though consisting of two natures, is a perfect unity. It follows from this that, in our every vital energy, both natures are present, and act and react on each other in a variety of ways—our animality limiting and soliciting our intellect, and our intellect overflowing, as it were, and more or less transforming the feelings of our animal nature.

Even the most abstract conceptions cannot be present to our minds, without being accompanied by some symbol actually perceived by the senses or revived by the memory of the imagination—even though that symbol be but a written or spoken word or a voiceless gesture. On the other hand, a dim, intellectual consciousness of our existence and of such ideas as being, truth and causation (however little such ideas may be reflected on and recognized), accompanies the mere exercise of our faculty of sensuous cognition, and even such merely animal acts as those of eating and drinking.

Thus, as even our purest and most exalted perceptions of beauty must be ministered to and accompanied by feelings and sense-perceptions which are indispensable to all the intellectual acts of our complex unity, so our mere feelings of liking and attraction are the feelings of an essentially intellectual being, and are, therefore, more or less consciously possessed by us. This accompaniment of intellectual consciousness causes them to possess a certain resemblance to intellectual perceptions of beauty, because it enables such mere feelings to be reflected upon and intellectually recognized.

These considerations, we think, suffice to account for all the varieties of tastes and feelings which exist amongst mankind, and to show that their existence in no way conflicts with that of a real, objective beauty in the cosmos as a whole and in every part of it. They account for the mixing up, with our intellectual perceptions of beauty, of sensuous likings which may be keenly or but slightly felt, but which mar the distinctness of each such intellectual perception, as a perception of abstract beauty. They also account for the mixing up of a tendency to find more beauty than they merit in things which give us sensuous impressions delightful to our feelings, and which attract our lower nature, however little we may allow them to be of any high order of beauty when our judgment is fully exercised in their regard.

Those persons who may be inclined to wonder unduly at the undoubted fact that so many men should be attracted by, and feel a preference for, objects and actions which are repulsive to the æsthete or to those zealous for moral perfection, should recollect that everything has a beauty of its kind and in its degree.

As men always seek a good, though not by any means the highest good, so whatever attracts them, attracts them by a beauty of some kind, though by yielding to its attraction they may be diverted from seeking some far nobler and higher beauty.

It is impossible to deny that even the lowest "goods" are "good" in their degree, or that the lower forms of beauty are beautiful after their inferior kind. A murderer who cuts a throat commits, of course, a most wicked act, but all the positive elements of that, save his defective will, are "good." "Good" is the sharpness of the well-tempered knife, "good" is the vigor of the muscular arms which do the deed, and "good" are the arterial contractions which force outwards the lethal stream. So, also, there is a real, however inferior, absolute beauty in the objects which attract our most animal appetites, and in the actions to which even the lowest natures amongst us are thereby induced; though, like the cancerous growths before referred to, they may be, relatively, revolting and hideous, on account of the deflections from nobler beauties of feeling and of will which such attractions may induce and occasion. We should be as unwise as unjust did we deny to Circe and Aphrodite, to Dionysius and Adonis, their beauty and their charms; but our unwisdom and injustice would be much greater did we not recognize the nobler attractions of Athene and Artemis, Phœbus and Zeuspater. More unjust still should we be if we did not own the ethical inferiority of the whole Greek and Roman Pantheon, compared with those later ideals of the "Heavenly Sophia" and the "Divine Logos," which prepared men's minds for that supreme conception of human perfection and absolute goodness to which the ages have made us heir. However divergent may be men's theological beliefs, all must admit that the Founder of Christianity proclaimed, far more fully than did the noblest of the antecedent seers of Israel, the Fatherhood of a God—at once the type and exemplar of all goodness and of all beauty.

That man should be able to turn away from his very chosen ideal and follow what even in his own eyes is immeasurably less lovely, is the sad penalty of his unique privilege of freedom. That he should be able to diverge from what he himself clearly perceives to be "the right order," far more widely than brutes do which, nevertheless, have no perception of the kind, is the penalty of his possessing intellect combined in one personality with an unequivocally animal nature. As he is free to direct his activity along elevated ways which are necessarily inaccessible to the brute creation, so, also, it is his very possession of intellect which enables him to direct his imagination and his actions into more devious paths than the feelings of brutes would lead them to enter upon.

To sum up shortly what we have here endeavored to express:

We think it may be confidently affirmed, that such a being as man, replete with animal feelings and desires, and dim, unconscious memories of ancestral brute experiences, but with an intellect endowed with a perception of truth, goodness, and beauty, would hardly fail to show, in his tastes and perceptions, just those mingled and more or less discordant and varying mental phenomena which we find mankind do exhibit. We find, in fact, just those facts and conditions of thought and feeling which the theory of evolution would lead us to expect. We find what that theory would lead us to anticipate when it is applied, not only to explain the genesis of our animal nature, but also the perfecting and development of that intellectual nature of ours which, ages before the twilight of history, first made its unnoticed and mysterious appearance in the world. Underlying or accompanying the multifarious and conflicting changes of taste and feeling due to heredity, association and environment, we find that progressively clearing perceptions of true beauty have been gained, the manifestation of beauty in fields where it was before invisible having again and again taken place for us through the progressive development of our faculties by culture. But these perceptions ever tend to be obscured, and are almost always more or less disguised for us by the effects of our animal organization and prehuman antecedents.

This, then, is why tastes differ. They differ because we human, intellectual animals vary as to the peculiar influences we have received from parents, family and tribe, from the diverse associations of feelings to which we have been severally exposed, and from the action upon us of the tastes and feelings of our friends and fellow tribesmen. As to such matters of mere feeling, there will probably ever be a wide divergence of tastes.

On the other hand, we agree largely as to our intellectual perceptions of beauty, and we tend to agree more and more, because of our possession of an intellectual nature, which is fundamentally one and the same in all men, and has the power of perceiving, more or less imperfectly, objective "beauty" as well as "truth" and "goodness." Education will enable us, and above all religious education, to emerge, by more and more successful struggles, from the obscuring influences of animality towards as clear a vision of these highest qualities as may be possible for the future of our race in this world, and for ourselves individually in that life in a world to come which the Church sets before us, and about which even unbelievers, though they may with truth say they have necessarily no power to imagine it, yet must admit that reason by no means forbids their entertaining a fruitful hope.