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ARTICLE I.

VISCHER'S AESTHETICS.[1]

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The best theory of the beautiful found in any ancient writer is that of Plotinus. It is substantially as follows: The divine reason is in itself perfect; but when it comes to act upon matter, which is by nature intractable, its work is imperfect. It were a contradiction to affirm that perfection could be realized in matter. The very nature of matter interposes insuperable obstacles. In the divine reason, therefore, there is a perfection not to be found in any of its material works, just as there is in the mind of an artist an idea which can be only imperfectly realized in any outward form. The human mind is kindred with the divine, and naturally conceives those ideas which flow from the latter. Not only does it see forms in nature which are more or less expressive of such ideas, but it has the power of conceiving of a *beau ideal*, that is, of ideas which are far above visible

[1] Aesthetik oder Wissenschaft des Schönen zum Gebrauche für Vorlesungen von Dr. F. T. Vischer, Professor der Aesthetik und deutschen Literatur an der Universität zu Tübingen, in sex Theilen, 1846—1858. (See the Number for April 1859, p. 450.)

forms, and can be only intimated by them. Beauty itself consists, not in outward forms, though these are necessary as a medium, but in the ideas which these forms imperfectly convey. Whenever the mind discovers in matter the expression of anything kindred to itself, such as spiritual ideas, it experiences great delight. This is what we mean when we say that a perception of beauty is attended with an agreeable emotion. Now there is a continual effluence of such ideas proceeding from external objects and passing into the human soul. When art comes to the assistance of nature, and removes its imperfections, and brings out the idea in its primal purity, it satisfies a natural longing of the soul, and becomes a source of exalted pleasure.

In nature, the idea and the form are not in a state of equipoise; they do not perfectly correspond to each other. The idea surpasses the form, and carries the susceptible mind away with it beyond and above the form. But nature repeats her efforts, and, by multiplying similar forms, makes up in individual varieties what is wanting in any one specimen. The artist, in contemplating beautiful objects, must, by an act of his own, elevate each one to the perfection of its class. The whole realm of any one kind of beauty, which is restricted in any single form, must be made to cluster about this single form, and constitute a halo around it. It is thus that the imagination is both true to nature and still creative. Spiritual ideas are beautiful in themselves; physical objects are beautiful only as they participate in their corresponding ideas. What, then, is the essence of physical beauty? In what does it consist? Not in symmetry of parts, for that would require that all beautiful objects be complex. Besides, may there not be symmetry without beauty? May not base and wicked plans and designs be symmetrical? No; the idea of beauty lies deeper. Whenever an external object evidently partakes of the formative idea, it has what we call physical beauty. Matter, as such, has no definite form or arrangement. It is merely capable of form, which always comes from mind or thought. Uninfluenced by mind, it has in it nothing that is

beautiful. Particles of matter are arranged according to some idea. Unity, as an element of beauty, is not in the matter itself as such, but in the arrangement of its particles, which is the result of intelligence, and is in conformity with a plan. Thus beauty is not inherent in matter, but is superinduced. Herein consists the unity and beauty of the world. It is not matter that pleases, but form. That which enters the mind is not matter, but form, which may exist apart from matter, and belongs rather to space than to matter. Matter cannot be reduced without essential alteration; form can be, and the beauty of the image remains the same. If matter itself were beautiful, the formative idea could not be so; for beauty cannot have two such independent sources.

Here, then, in fact, is a three-fold correspondence; the idea in the divine mind, the same awakened in the human mind, and the object on which the idea is impressed. This last finds a correspondence in the mind, and another in the archetype. It is this mirroring both the divine and the human, when we are moved by beauty, that gives to aesthetic pleasure its pure and exalted character.[1]

We will not pause to point out the truth and error that are mingled in this statement, but will content ourselves with a few casual observations.

The first thing that strikes us, is the Platonic mould in which the thought is cast. That philosophy in its ancient form has passed away forever. The ideal philosophy, however, under forms less objectionable, not excluding realism, but existing side by side with it, has not only adherents still, but is the prevalent philosophy of the present times. Without entering into a discussion of the merits of the system, which would require much more space than could be allotted to it here, it is enough for our purpose to inquire whether there are any primitive types of things, whether in the mind of the Deity any plan exists antecedent to the actual forms of outward objects. If every organized form of matter reveals some thought of the Deity; if the Great

[1] See E. Müller's Geschichte der Theorie der Kunst bei den Alten, Vol. II. pp. 289—302.

Artist works after models existing in his own mind, then, however difficult it may be for us to reach those thoughts with our philosophy, and reduce them to a system, the thoughts, the plans, the types themselves, exist, and glimpses of them may be caught by the aesthetic faculty, and they may hold some connection with what we call the creations of genius. There may be a great truth involved in the conceptions of Plotinus, notwithstanding the questionable manner in which he endeavors to set it forth.

The chief merit of his theory is, that it opens the way for reducing all the principles of beauty to unity, for finding a common basis on which they all rest. If, as Lord Jeffrey maintains, there is no essential unity in the principles of beauty; if under this term we comprehend an aggregate of the most heterogeneous things, having only this in common, that they all please, then either there can be no such thing as an aesthetic science, or that science must embrace all the pleasures associated with the contemplation of objects. A bond or mortgage is beautiful to a miser, an ale-house to an inebriate, an ugly Ethiopian nurse to a helpless child, an old shoe to a man who has corns on his toes. In short, all the pleasures associated with ideas of the utility of objects are by such a principle converted into pleasures of taste.

But while Plotinus laid down a broad principle to which all ideas of beauty may be referred, his Platonism led him into the error of extending the domain of beauty altogether too far. Is the production of beauty the chief object of the visible creation? May not utility be the leading object, and beauty be incidental? And may it not furthermore be true, that beauty is more frequently interfered with than utility? A scar upon the human face may not be a sign of physical weakness. A wound may be so healed that the body shall be restored to its full strength, and to its perfection so far as utility is concerned, and yet its beauty not be restored. What is wanting in the theory of Plotinus is an exact boundary line between ideas of beauty and ideas of utility. If under certain conditions there is a coincidence between them, then those conditions should be pointed out, and the

relations of the two principles to each other clearly defined.

Before considering particularly the constituent elements of beauty according to the author's analysis, to which we now pass, and going through a long process in order to reach a final result, it will be convenient, at the very beginning, so far to anticipate the result as to give a bird's eye view of his system. This will enable the reader, as he proceeds from topic to topic, to interpret each part in the light of the whole. It will furthermore afford the means of comparison between his system and that of Plotinus, showing what they have in common, and wherein they differ. Beauty is not produced by the imitation of nature in its accidental, imperfect and partial forms, nor by the imagination, breaking away from nature, and creating what is unreal. Beauty is nothing more nor less than nature in its true, ideal forms, — nature according to its pure, original design, unobstructed and unmarred. Every such form carries with it a divine thought. All approximations to it are so many efforts of nature, more or less successful, to give an outward reality to the divine conception. An object is beautiful, not so much from what it is, as from what it *appears* to be. In order to appear, it must have a definite form; it cannot be merely ideal, it must be real also. But an object that represents no idea, that has no individuality as the product of thought, that is totally devoid of an organizing principle, cannot be beautiful. A beautiful object cannot be abnormal, cannot depart from the general law which regulates the form of its species. Whatever breaks over the limit of its species is deformity. But strict conformity to the species alone would produce uniformity. Hence must be added the element of individuality as the source of variety. These two apparently contradictory, but really reconcilable elements, each in a high degree of perfection, must be united in order to produce beauty. This is the law of unity and variety, so often repeated and so little understood. The instances of beauty in any high degree are rare; first, because the intentions of nature in respect to perfection of form are, by a multitude of

untoward accidents to which both matter and mind are subject, more frequently thwarted than otherwise; and secondly, because the blooming period of living things is ordinarily very brief. Ideas of utility are, by a wise and beneficent Providence, generally realized; those of beauty, which are secondary and incidental, relating not to things themselves, but to their outward appearance only, are less frequently realized. It may be said that the intention of beauty, which requires both favorable circumstances and favorable moments, are everywhere apparent in nature, while, in point of fact, the end contemplated is rarely reached. Hence the necessity of art, whose object it is to do away with the opposition between the ideal aims of nature and its actual productions, by freeing individual forms from all accidental injuries and imperfections, and raising them to the purity and perfection of their original types. Thus artists are aesthetic interpreters of nature, which bring individual things and their primitive types into harmony with each other, and represent them in solid materials, or colors, or tones, or words and actions; and these varied means of representation constitute the ground of the division of art into its several branches.

It is sometimes said that this modern theory, introduced in some of its peculiar elements by Kant, and more fully elaborated by Schiller, his disciple; enlarged by Schelling, and by Solger, his disciple, put in a still better form; and theoretically completed by Hegel, but corrected, arranged, and systematically carried out in all its details by Vischer, his disciple, is objectionable, not only because it is ideal, but because its idealism is Platonic in its character. This is a misapprehension, which a careful study of his work could correct. Plato himself had no clear and well-defined system of aesthetics. With him, the beautiful, being identical with the good, belonged to ethics as much as to art, and perhaps even more. Plato's eminence does not rest on his philosophy of art. In his theory of ideas, however, there was a groundwork for the philosophy of the beautiful, which, as we have seen, was used for this purpose by Plotinus.

Aristotle, having but a slight sympathy with idealism, founded his useful and practical treatises on some of the arts upon purely empyrical principles, or upon the facts of experience and observation. A distinct and avowed realism was substituted for Plato's idealism. Most of the English and Scotch writers on the principles of beauty have followed his example. Not one of these has been able to construct a philosophical system of aesthetics. System there is not, and indeed cannot be. A conglomerate of disconnected principles and observations, with no definite limits, no necessary point of termination, is all that there can be. Vischer does not belong to either of these schools. He combines them both. He makes the first his organizing and guiding principle, and under it arranges, in their respective places, all the facts furnished by the second. Idealism and realism are put together like two hemispheres, thus forming a whole. The vagaries of a fanciful idealism are guarded against by making outward forms, or objective beauty, in all cases the starting point. He always begins with facts. The imagination can be trusted only when its point of departure is some beautiful object which addresses itself to the senses. From the imperfect and faulty forms necessarily furnished by pure realism, the mind frees itself by the inherent power which it possesses of looking beyond the gross realities before it to the ideas which they were intended to embody, but of which they have failed to give a complete and faultless expression.

With this faint outline before us, to serve as a general guide in the series of views to be taken, we proceed to the representation of the several parts of the author's theory of the beautiful.

He first takes a metaphysical view of beauty, that is, of beauty in itself, according to its necessary laws, and apart from the objects in which it resides. Beauty is the union of the real and the ideal, or is the idea expressed in form. The idea may be said to have had an absolute existence from eternity, and to have duplicated itself in two ways, in the world of matter, and in the world of mind. The mind, hav-

ing within itself undeveloped principles of beauty, discovers in objects that which corresponds to these principles, and thus ascends towards that ideal beauty which is revealed both in matter and mind, and which, when discovered, gives pleasure to the mind by the recognition of what is kindred to it. These three elements must be combined, inasmuch as they exist, not separately, but as counterparts of each other. No theory of beauty is complete which omits any one of these three elementary parts. The objective and the subjective in beauty are inseparable. Just as sound and the ear exist only for each other, and neither would produce any effect without the other, so beauty in objects exists only for the mind, and the mind, in turn, brings as much to the objects as it receives from them. The absolute idea, the source of both, and the aim and the standard of art, is necessarily presupposed, and is seen only dimly, and known but approximately even by the most gifted minds. It is the divine, which can be neither denied nor perfectly known. When, therefore, we speak of any one of these three aspects of the subject, we must keep in mind the other two, or we shall fall into error or confusion. There can, consequently, be no dispute whether beauty be objective or subjective; it must be both, otherwise it could not be either.

In this metaphysical view of the subject, the author treats first of the Idea, secondly of the Form, and thirdly of the union of both.

The absolute idea, or the infinite, must, so to speak, be resolved into finite forms before it can be apprehended by finite minds. It can be seen only as it is revealed in parts, just as the Deity cannot be contemplated in his absolute nature, but must be resolved into attributes to be contemplated separately. Even the individual parts of beauty, the limited and relative forms which it assumes, are never revealed fully to us in any one object. They are to be found only in the infinite number of objects belonging to the same class. No one man represents the beauty of the species. This beauty, imperfect in every single instance, is infinitely repeated and varied. Its real perfection exists in two ways,

first in the unending series of actual forms, and secondly in the mind which can grasp this idea by an idealizing energy of its own.

The beautiful, objectively, is the appearance or manifestation of the beautiful in an individual outward form. Subjectively, it is the union of these two, the pure idea and its imperfect manifestation in the mind; or, more properly, the latter modified by an apprehension of the former.

The general idea of any kind of beauty is incapable of being made known directly as such. The medium of its manifestation is necessarily a definite individual form. But every such form carries with it, as a kind of luminous atmosphere, the idea of the beauty of the whole class to which it belongs. Mediately, therefore, the generic idea is present to the mind of an artist with the particular form. In other words, by a natural mental process a subjective element is added to the objective. The mind seizes upon the original ground-plan of a particular form, sees that it has been interfered with by some obstacle that has been interposed. Some peculiarities are perceived not to have come from the original germ, but from hindrances that have prevented its complete development. These peculiarities are set aside, and the primitive plan is eliminated. The individualities arising from defects, the results of accident, are removed. A more generic type is brought out by this idealizing process, without which observation is more mechanical than artistic, and the mind more a machine than a soul alive with conceptions of the beautiful. Thus objective beauty is more defective than subjective, because more exclusively specific, or limited to some actual outward form. The true beauty is that which is both objective and subjective; which originates in the form, but receives its completion from a supplementary act of the mind, removing all accidental injuries by which the form has been marred, and restoring the parts so affected to their original design.

The idea, as applied to beauty and as used in art, is, therefore, very far from being an abstract idea, with which philosophy is chiefly concerned. The latter has no reality

corresponding to it. It is produced by combining together in the mind qualities which do not exist together in nature. In the beautiful the idea is the perfection of the concrete form. It is the image of what would have been realized had no accidental causes intervened to prevent it. It commences with the first act of nature, and carries out its intentions. The world of ideas, and consequently of beauty, begins with the living and most real things in nature, and rises by a spiritual agency to the highest freedom and perfection, whereas abstract ideas produce the birth of philosophy only by the death of nature.

The idea, with reference to organized forms, is generic, and the higher and more comprehensive the class, the fuller, other things being equal, is it of the elements of beauty. The idea may be regarded as that spiritual force, which restrains all the individual forms it creates within certain limits, and preserves the order of the vegetable and animal world. The highest idea is that which attains to personality. The animal is higher than the plant, and man is higher still. The highest beauty is personal, and all other beauty is more or less perfect as it approaches personality, or is preparatory to it and involved in it. Every individual idea embraces several parts which either coexist or follow each other in succession. The idea of vegetable life includes inorganic matter; that of animal life, the vegetable; and that of man includes them all. The gradations of beauty correspond herewith. In personal or spiritual beings, the beautiful and the good may be the same in substance, but, as will be shown hereafter, they are different in form.

A similar distinction exists between the true and the beautiful. Truth addresses itself to the understanding, and can be expressed only in logical forms. These forms are always abstractions, and never concrete things. The same thing may, under different aspects, be both true and beautiful, just as fruit may be both beautiful and sweet; but these two qualities are perceived through different media.

Form, as the individual appearance representing the idea,

must contain the whole generic idea of the class to which it belongs. While the species is fixed in its general characteristics, the individual is infinitely variable, being dependent on innumerable fortuitous circumstances. The species is the direct product of the divine idea, which would be uniform were it not for the operation of other causes. The accidents to which the material is liable produce the individual varieties of form. Beauty results from this play between the uniformity of the idea and the ever-changing individuality of the form. Therefore no exact canon of beauty can ever be laid down. No measurement or proportions can be given, from which minor deviations may not be a grace instead of deformity.

The statement of Plato and Aristotle, that beauty consists in unity in the midst of variety, where order and symmetry are preserved, embraces too much. All this is indeed true of the beautiful, but is not limited to it. The statement is in another sense too limited. While this enters into beauty, it does not constitute the whole of beauty. The same remark applies to the sensualistic school of English philosophers, who specify the proportions, the lines, and the kinds of surface which they regard as the essential characteristics of beauty. Such forms are not always beautiful, and there are, moreover, other forms, which are nevertheless beautiful. All these errors spring from contemplating the subject from an external point of view. It is only the unity of the *idea* that is essential to beauty. There may be a mathematical, moral, philosophical, mechanical, or natural unity, which, though accompanied with variety, may or may not be beautiful. Aristotle rightly limits the rule in respect to tragedy, and the remark applies equally to all works of art, that the object must have a given extent; that, if it be too small, it cannot be conspicuous enough to make the most favorable impression; and that, if it be too large, it cannot be clearly taken in at one view. Plato sometimes abandoned his own principle, that beauty was to be sought in the unity *within* an object, or an outward form as growing out of an inward principle, and spoke of it as consisting of certain external

characteristics, admitting of harmony indeed, but being also beautiful in themselves as single parts, prior to their composition according to the laws of harmony and proportion. This beauty he attributed directly to the idea underlying it, as though the idea could lend beauty to the form in any other way than by pervading it and giving it shape.

The English sensualists, abandoning the principle of internal unity, began on the outside, and made beauty to consist wholly in individual external characteristics, forgetting that these features are beautiful only in their concrete assemblage in objects, and that they are powerless alone; that symmetry may pertain to beauty, and yet of itself not constitute beauty. Around symmetrical forms must play the free and flowing lines of individuality, which are to be referred to an entirely different principle. These philosophers merely observe how certain objects affect the senses, without considering how the mind thus moved casts its own reflection back upon the object. Thus they do not go back of the external qualities of the object, which affect the senses to the inner idea, which is the cause that produces them. Such observations are, however, not without their use. Inadequate as they are to ground a theory upon, they belong to the subject, and have their place among other details. Hutcheson did not carry the sensualistic tendency to this extent, but in explaining the Platonic theory of unity in variety, he lost the spiritual point of view, fell from "unity" to "uniformity," and landed in a geometrical symmetry. Of course the crystaline forms were the most perfect, and to these the human form approached by having its members in equal pairs, and its different parts in mathematical proportions. He overlooks the fact that this only gives a skeleton around which the free and waving lines of beauty may be drawn. It is not the uniformity, but the mingling of it with accidental variety that constitutes beauty.

Hogarth, in his singular but not ungenial book, showed that the principle laid down by Hutcheson was nothing more than an indispensable condition of beauty. But he goes confusedly to work when he speaks of correctness, va-

riety, uniformity (as in mathematical parallels), simplicity, "or clearness," without any philosophic method or order.

As to his celebrated theory of "the waving line," there is a certain foreshadowing of a principle in it which deserves attention. This, when fully brought out and explained, is the line of individuality, or the line of variation, distinguishing the individual from the general type of its species. His theory is defective, in not showing how the waving line, which is but one ingredient in the composition of a figure, stands related to that other system explained by Hutcheson, and admitted as a part of a true theory by himself.

In Burke we find an anticipation of much that was afterwards said by Kant. He successfully controverted the point that beauty had its foundation in proportion. This only fixes the general type or essential form of the species, which is not in itself beautiful. There are certain limits beyond which the individual may not deviate; but within these limits deviations are among the sources of beauty. Individuals of the same proportions may differ widely in beauty, and those of equal beauty may differ widely in proportions. A figure of exact proportions may be ugly, and one whose proportions are not exact may be attractive. The male and female form differ in their proportions, and yet both may be beautiful. The cause of beauty is not in quantitative proportions, but in *quality*. The opposite of beauty is not disproportion, but ugliness. The former is opposed to completeness and correctness of form. Proportion is only a negative condition of beauty. Without it there cannot be beauty; with it there may or there may not be beauty. Had Burke pursued this line of investigation to its last results, he would have made important contributions to the science. But he fell into the worst sort of sensualism, into a physiological view of the effect which objects make upon the nervous system, confounding the agreeable with the beautiful. Lord Kaimes so confounds ideas of utility with those of beauty, as to destroy the value of his speculations for philosophical purposes. All these systems are faulty, partly because they include much that does not belong to

beauty, and partly because they omit much that does belong to it.

Beauty does, indeed, as Plato taught, appear in color, but not as a single color, which is simply agreeable, nor as a combination of colors merely, but this as existing, or appearing to exist on the surface of a body. Form, too, is beautiful not merely as such, but when it presupposes a body expressive of an idea, or has itself life, action, and expression.

Any other attempt to find out the fundamental principle of beauty than that of studying the specific manner in which the uniform type of the species is blended with the variable and accidental individual form, will prove fruitless Here let it be observed, that both the generic idea and the individual form pass through a series of gradations from the lower and more defective to the higher and more perfect, for each of which there must be a different standard of beauty. The utmost confusion has resulted from overlooking this obvious truth. Burke well observes that each kind of beauty has its own peculiar relations. He failed however to point out how every grade presents a rich variety of definite forms, as well as to recognize the gradation itself.

It might hence appear that the whole matter might be rendered simple and plain, by establishing for each kind a separate, independent standard. But just in proportion as regularity increases in the ascending series from the lower to the higher orders of existence, the free play of the accidental causes which produce marked individuality, increases. In man we have greater uniformity in the proportions of the figure, and in the distribution of the members of the body, than in the lower animals. Hence artists have often laid down particular canons for the proportions of the human body. No animal varies so much in outward form as a plant or tree. But with a general outward uniformity in man, there is an internal individuality and variety of temperament and of character, which give peculiarity of expression in an almost infinite degree.

But we pass to speak of the union of the idea and the

form. Between the archetype and the outward form representing it, there are accidental influences that disturb the order of nature, and prevent the former from being realized in the latter. We see a marked example of this when a frost appears in May, and injures the blossoms and flowers. In most cases the injury, though not less real, is less perceptible. These collisions of the laws of nature, belonging to entirely different spheres, such as the laws of physics, and the laws of vegetable and animal life, are of constant occurrence. The recognition of this disturbing force of accident is necessary even in other sciences, but especially in the science of the beautiful.

The error of Baumgarten in the treatment of this general subject is, that with him the idea, instead of being a living formative principle in nature, ever reproducing the species within the limits of its primitive type, was degraded to the rank of a lifeless, unreal abstraction, a thing that does not exist at all in nature, but has its being only in the mind of the philosopher. This abstract idea, as entertained by Baumgarten, included the end for which an object was made. On such a theory, as Kant justly remarked, nothing could appear beautiful until the purpose for which it was made was understood, a consideration that lies quite out of the sphere of the beautiful. It was furthermore affirmed by Kant, that the end for which a thing was made, was not to be sought out of itself, in something else to which it is subordinated as a means, but within itself. Had he proceeded one step further, and connected the end for which each object was made with its visible appearance as pleasing to the eye, he would have seen that there is in nature a true foundation for objective beauty. As it was, he failed to make that discovery. His strength, therefore, does not lie in this direction, but in the clear analysis of the subjective element of beauty. This element, which was true only in connection with the objective as its necessary counterpart, being separated from that, led directly to the idealism of Fichte, according to which beauty has no existence except in the mind. Schiller's excellent treatises are founded upon

the philosophy of Kant. But his artistic mind seized upon that theory in its nearest approximation to the truth. Consequently, in his discussions as well as in all his poetry, he blended the real with the ideal, form with substance, freedom with necessity, and the finite with the infinite.

Schelling was the first clearly to open the way to a new and more comprehensive philosophy of the beautiful, by insisting on the union of the ideal and the real. This principle was carried out by Solger in his system of aesthetics. Going back to the doctrine of Kant, that an object has its end within itself, he maintained that a living thing, being formed according to its design or end, does not fall *without the circle* of the species to which it belongs. The individual is but the realization of the idea in a material form, and this constitutes its beauty. Had he not satisfied himself with the general statement that an individual form is beautiful because it is the expression of an idea, but added that the expression must be *pure and faultless*, he would have hit exactly upon the true principle of beauty. Indeed, he seems, at times, by accident as it were, to say almost as much as this. "Beauty," he says, "is the indwelling of the idea in individual forms in all its normal varieties." This variety is nothing but the general type, differently developed. The idea, or primitive form, is the standard of all its varieties. "Beauty is that pure union of essence and form which finds its perfect expression in an individual; or it is the perfect interpenetration of the idea and the visible form." Thus he was the first to develop a complete system of aesthetics from a single principle, comprehending all the parts separately treated by others. The view to which he was verging, without quite reaching it, is that in which the defect in Plato's system of ideas is supplied by connecting with it Aristotle's true principle of the reality of ideas as founded on the *reality of things*. The defect of both systems is remedied by the element of subjective beauty, established upon a firm basis by Kant and succeeding philosophers. These, then, are the three points which may now be considered as settled: 1. The ideas or types of things

precede the existence of material forms, which is the Platonic element. 2. Those ideas or types are accessible to us only through the medium of material forms, which is the doctrine of Aristotle. 3. There is in the human mind an innate or natural idea of *perfection* in respect to form, by which it is enabled, under given circumstances, to remove, in its own conceptions, all the actual defects that are found in natural objects. This is the part of Kant's theory of subjective beauty which is now, with good reason, generally adopted as true.

What needed still further elucidation was the way in which the primitive type impresses itself upon the individual, or, as Plato would say, the idea upon the form. The individual truly represents the species, and in fact is the product of it, or of that energy which works in and through it. The producing cause, as a fixed order of creation, is permanent, but the conditions of its activity are occasional. Whenever all the necessary conditions exist, the cause is always operative. In the lower orders of being, individual peculiarities are, for our purpose, less important. In the higher orders, especially in those in which mind is manifested, individual peculiarities increase just in proportion as the representation of the species approaches completeness in the individual. The more nearly the whole species is revealed in the individual, the more marked is the individuality. Shakspeare is highly individual, because his mind is so generic in its character. The human character of Christ differs from all other human characters in that everything truly human in others finds something answering to it in him. He who unites in himself the greatest number of individualities existing separately in others, is himself the most individual and unique. While in some one respect he resembles a greater number of men than others do, he differs from them all more than they differ from each other. His individuality consists in the rare assemblage of qualities, blended in him in a peculiar manner, which places him far above others.

In vegetable life the individual is more dependent on

numbers for artistic effect, as with the verdure of the fields, the flowers of a garden, or the trees of a forest; or on being properly associated with other objects. A tree, in order to be represented by an artist, must be associated with something else, whereas the picture of a man may stand alone. Animals will bear to be represented alone, but have their full effect only when represented in connection with man.

We have said that the imagination must remove from beautiful objects all imperfection. We may add that it is equally necessary that it view things, not in their real, but in their artistic connections. Those things must be grouped together which give harmony and unity to the effect. As it is with the appearance only that we are here concerned, the grouping is not actual and physical, but exists merely for the eye. In a landscape, things that exist together in nature, and are even connected in respect to utility, often need to be separated in art. A quarry that furnishes stone, or a slough that furnishes manure, is useful to the husbandman, but is not available to the artist. Again, things are not to be viewed with reference to their physical qualities chiefly. The clearest skin has impurities, which, if seen, would be disagreeable to the eye. A beautiful tree has insects living upon it, which do not disturb us because they are unnoticed. Here a proper distance preserves that appearance of beauty which a microscopic view would destroy. The internal structure is to be excluded both from the sight and the imagination. When we see a fine head, we do not wish to think of what the dissector's knife would reveal, but that part merely which the sculptor would represent. That which is within must in some way show itself on the surface before it deserves the artist's consideration. Thus the eye and the countenance may be expressive of a healthy physical condition, or of intelligence and emotion. Hence a twofold purification of form is necessary, first from all accidental blemishes, and secondly from such conceptions of internal organization as occur to the mind of a naturalist. Göthe and Schiller were the first to set this forth in all its importance. The latter says: "It is the object of art to an-

nihilate matter through form." Hegel as enigmatically and as truly says: "The ideal sets its foot into the real, into nature, but immediately withdraws it again."

If pure form, or the complete harmony existing between the outward object and the idea which it represents, constitutes the essence of beauty, then the difference between the beautiful and the good is plainly distinguishable. The good aims to give reality to that which does not now exist; and when a good act is accomplished, we consider its character merely, and not its *appearance*, as in beauty. The more splendor and show there are in a moral act, the more suspicious we are that it is not genuine. Solger truly says: "In the activity of the will, wherein the goodness of an act lies, the result, so far as it manifests itself in *appearance*, is of no consequence. Only as it is *in reality* conformed to the divine idea, has it any worth." Wirth, therefore, in his system of speculative ethics, properly places morality far above art. The former realizes its object only by strenuous and repeated efforts of the will, whereas the latter appears as a work of magic. The former achieves its work by overcoming all the obstacles to virtue in the whole world of experience, while the latter creates its ideal at once, receiving its impulse from a single specimen of beauty. Morality has a much more earnest character, a deeper penetration, and a wider range. Its work is never finished; and for the very reason that it is still in the act, it is capable of representation. The highest beauty of a moral character is seen while the struggle against evil is going on, and is consequently unfinished. But it is the weakness of the *bel esprit* to loosen beauty entirely from its connection with morality. The wit finds beauty in his own brilliant sallies, which scorn the restraints of morality. But beauty of character *presupposes* morality, and is one of its accidental aspects. Now to dispense wholly with that which is necessarily presupposed as a condition, is an absurdity in philosophy. This mistake is not made by men of the greatest genius. They, unconsciously perhaps, have in the background morality, towering high like a distant mountain-range, in com-

parison with which the mere rules of art are trivial and insignificant.

There is a certain dualism in morals. That which is, and that which ought to be, are in conflict. There was an original harmony, a state of primeval innocence; and the result of the successful struggle will be a restored harmony. Of these three states, primitive innocence, the moral struggle, and the final victory, morality is chiefly concerned with the second. Beauty has something to do with all the three, but is most concerned with the first and the last. This shows both the connection between the beautiful and the good, and the difference there is between them. The good furnishes the substance or matter on which beauty rests as its drapery. The good is the bony frame of the body; beauty is its soft flesh and covering.

There are other illustrations of the dependence of the beautiful on the good. If the matter of a poem be bad, morally corrupt, it will show itself in the plan and structure. So it is in Göthe's questionable works. The want of a sound moral basis is the grand fault of Wieland's frivolous spirit. Says Schiller: "I am persuaded that a work of art is accountable only to itself, or rather is subject to the laws of beauty alone, and that no other demand can be made upon it. But I believe as firmly that by following the laws of beauty, it will mediately satisfy all other demands, that beauty itself will harmonize perfectly with all truth. The artist may seek first for the beautiful, and be sure that all other good things will come of themselves."

We must next consider, a little more at length, the nature and origin of the subjective element of beauty. After discussing the general principle of beauty, we found it necessary to examine it in its manifestation in individual objects. But this implies a subject to whom the manifestation is made, a person with organs of sense in whose mind the idea of beauty is awakened by the object. Beauty waits for its complement in the mind of the beholder. Ruge, in his admirable analysis, has shown that there can be no beauty but in the union of object and subject, just as, in arithme-

tic, two factors are necessary to a product. The material objects which produce in the mind the idea of pure form exist, indeed, in themselves; but they are beautiful only to a mind in which the idea of beauty, or a capacity for it, already exists. Hence he aptly remarks: "Beauty is like a draft payable *at sight*. It appears in its completeness only at the moment it is honored." A thing is pronounced beautiful when it is seen. Apart from sight it is merely an outward, but as yet inoperative, cause of the idea of beauty. From those senses which act by contact, and produce mere sensation, as touch, taste, and smell, beauty is excluded. It pertains to the senses of sight and hearing, because both are productive, not only of sensations, but of ideas. When, like the other three senses, they give merely agreeable sensations without sentiment, the objects which affect them are agreeable, but they are not beautiful. The two artistic senses present their objects, not as gross matter, acting physically upon them, but as form standing out distinctly before the mind for contemplation. The beauty which is addressed to the mind through the ear, as in music and poetry, has form and proportion, although the parts do not appear simultaneously, but in succession. These nobler senses are internal as well as external, and therefore can present imaginary as well as real objects. Objects of sight, though absent, can exist in the imagination; and we can hear music and poetry mentally, without the intervention of sound.

In organized beings, the distinctness of the ideal form is nothing but the transparency of the object revealing the inworking and indwelling idea. This idea comes out of the object, as it were, to meet the mind; and the mind, in turn, seeks for it in the object. When the idea and form are so blended as to appear in harmony, the result is what we call grace of form. The beautiful does not produce its effect upon the sense as such. Beauty has to do with the mind, and the sense is merely the mediator between the object and the mind. The idea which is embodied in the object meets, through the sense, with a corresponding idea slumbering, or existing potentially in the mind, and by awakening this ef-

fects the union of external and internal, of objective and subjective beauty. Ruge observes, that the idea which is expressed in outward form is beauty. But an idea expressed is an idea received. Whether we say that beauty is the idea going from the object to the mind, or from the mind to the object, we say the truth; but the whole truth is, that it is both. No perfect beauty comes from without; every beautiful form needs the perfecting act of the mind. The aesthetic state of the mind is that in which there is a perfect reflection of the ideal form of the object.

In order to make this principle perfectly clear, it will be necessary to go still further into particulars. In the part which the imagination has to act in rendering beauty perfect, we begin with an objective cause of beauty, with a beautiful object; but the mind instinctively enhances the beauty of the object, and renders it perfect by idealizing it. Beauty is not only imperfect, and often almost as transient as a gleam of light upon a landscape, but it is relative to the state of the mind. The mind is not always in a poetic mood, or highly susceptible of ideas of beauty. It needs, at times, to be seized, as it were, by a beautiful object, that the imagination may be aroused and put into a genial state. The mind must observe such an object with the eye of genius in order to observe it truly. The object must be seen in its ideal as well as real form. Its imperfections must be removed by a corrective principle or impulse received from nature itself, and not originating in any fancy or conceit of ours. It must be viewed not merely as it is, which would make an artist a mere copyist, — but as it would have been, had it never in its whole history been subject in the least degree to any unfavorable influences. The process of idealization must begin with an impulse received from the object. When the mind so affected passes to the contemplation of another beautiful object, it comes to it in a favorable state. It sees all things through a poetic medium. But this subjective state, which idealizes all beautiful forms, was itself produced by objective beauty. Thus following out the impulse of nature, the mind is true to nature. No natural

object is perfectly beautiful; yet it truly exists as a beautiful object, and has the power of acting upon the mind in such a way as to produce in it an ideal or perfect image as its counterpart. While the mind is a mirror that gives back nature, it at the same time mingles with the images which it reflects the soft tints of the setting sun.

I look upon a person evidently formed by nature for beauty, but some unfortunate accident has checked or limited his physical development. I have the power to see in him what he would have been but for this misfortune. The image existing in my mind is not independent of the form which gave rise to it, nor is it an exact copy of that form. It is the joint result of the form and of the activity of my imagination. Thus my mind is both receptive and creative at the same time. What I create is different from what I see, and yet is dictated by it. Says Göthe, "whoever really seizes a beautiful object in nature, makes it his own by an artistic act of the imagination.

To avoid misapprehension, we must remark, by the way, that the imagination has another and higher office. The images of objects thus received and thus idealized, sink into the abyss of the mind and are lost; but they afterwards reappear in the form of new creations. Images are to the imagination what words are to the intellect; they are its language. As the impassioned orator instinctively combines letters, syllables, and words which he had before learned, so the artist uses the images with which his mind is stored, in giving form to his ideal creations.

We have thus far taken a metaphysical view of aesthetics, and given an analysis of beauty, resolving it into its objective and subjective elements. To prevent misunderstanding in respect to the application of this theory of the beautiful, it will be useful to take a rapid survey of the physical world, to see how its different parts stand connected with our subject. Here it will be found that the science of aesthetics and the natural sciences go hand in hand. The union of these sciences in the same person would be required to give a complete physiognomy of nature.

The forms of the various classes of organized objects lie widely scattered in space and time, or are in a state of confusion in the same space and time. But limitation and unity are essential to beauty. The universe is too large to be seen aesthetically. Even the imagination cannot compass it. Our senses impose a limitation. Only that which can be taken in at one view can be prononnced beautiful. Hence only a fragment of what is indefinitely spread out in space, can be seen at once, and this must be arranged in order around some one central point. The same is true of history, stretching out through many ages. Hence time must also be limited, so that all the events may be simultaneously comprehended by the mind; and in a work of art these must constitute a harmonious whole. There are happy points in space, and happy moments in history in which a beautiful fragment is thrown before the eye in a manner that is to us purely accidental. From a certain point of view a perfect landscape is seen. Change your position and the unity and proportion are lost. There are certain points in history, hinges of great events, where the fortunes of a people are concentrated. These furnish themes for the dramatist and poet. Accident, therefore, is the first artist, nature's great artist, and man, seizing upon it, and using its bold, rough sketches, becomes himself an artist.

The formative idea appears most perfectly in personal existence. It also appears in individual beings that fall short of personality. In matter not formed into individual organized beings, there can be only a dim foreshadowing of ideas, as it is preparatory or relative to them. Minerals, indeed, have the limitation necessary to beauty; but as they are lifeless and motionless, they, of themselves, hardly belong to the class of objects properly called beautiful. The whole world of inorganic matter seems too far removed from life and personality to be beautiful, except as it is subordinated to something else, and comes in as a means to a higher end. Add plants, trees, animals, and man, and then inorganic nature comes in as a condition of existence, as a necessary background. Still, when parts of lifeless nature are so combined as

to produce action and reaction, and to constitute a larger organism, as a scene of land, water, clouds, and light, with their waving motions and varying hues, they produce an artistic impression. Indeed, whatever strikingly *resembles* personality, individuality, organic unity of action and form, partakes so far of the beautiful. The secret powers of nature may be conceived of poetically as living beings, as they were by the Greeks who deified them, and thus be rendered beautiful in imagination. In all these and other similar instances, the subjective element of beauty is very prominent, that is, the beauty which the creative fancy brings to the object.

Light is to be regarded rather as a condition than as an object of beauty. By light and shade we discover the outlines of objects, and give a certain connection to those that are grouped together. By the management of light a figure is separated from a dark background and set forth in bold relief. Light, proceeding from the point of the observer, gives prominence to the nearer objects, and throws the more distant ones into greater obscurity; or coming towards the beholder, subdues the tone of the nearer objects by throwing the side towards him into the shade, and thereby separating them from the illuminated ground. By a unity of light, the separate figures of a group are made to appear as parts of a whole. By double lights this unity may be relaxed, and yet preserved, in a lower degree, by the predominance of one light over the other. Thus light has a modelling or plastic power, and, as such, is a means of beauty, an important instrument of art. Light, moreover, in a certain dependence upon other objects, is itself beautiful. The sun, moon, and stars are beautiful more on account of the poetical conceptions which they awaken, than as single physical objects. We associate certain magical and personal qualities with the sun and the moon. The stars, too, viewed not astronomically, which would give their actual distribution in space, but aesthetically, which is an optical illusion, present a broad canvas full of illuminations and transparencies. Light also gives coloring to the seasons, to different days and nights, to morning, noon, and evening. There is, fur-

thermore, the play of gleams of light, its reflection, and transparencies, giving it a magic and apparently vital power.

Colors are separate parts of light, and charm, not so much by themselves as by being attached to the surface of bodies, and appearing as a part of them. So color appears in flowers and fruits, and in the plumage of birds. The mind lends to physical colors a certain symbolical import, and they often please by association. Hence, the beauty of colors is partly objective and partly subjective. A single color, without the variety produced by outline and contrast, might be agreeable, but would hardly be beautiful. The principal charm of colors lies in their artistic combination.

In the motion of water, whether running, pouring, or undulating, the waving line resembles that which constitutes the grace of living forms. Lines in themselves, though they may be agreeable, can be called truly beautiful only as they mark the surface of bodies. Bodies bounded by certain lines are beautiful. In a sketch or outline, the imagination supplies the body of which the drawing is but a symbol.

The lines which mark the forms of water are, if beautiful, always easy and graceful deviations from mathematical forms. The smooth surface of the ocean, whose shore is not seen, is a desert; but it becomes beautiful when seen winding around its shore. The free and irregular undulation of water, its graceful and ever-changing motion, its breaking and combing waves; or its clear and pellucid nature in tranquil lakes, its enchanting border of shore and trees, and winding hills, its play of light, and its mirrored forms, give it a fancied vitality, and render it attractive as a kind of organism, as well as from its various relations to man.

To the forms of the earth, its mountains, crags, hills, valleys and plains, the same general principle applies. The mineral masses furnish the only individual forms, which approximate to organic nature, by the laws of crystalization. But its laws are mechanical, its lines and angles uniform and mathematical. They are totally deficient in the rounded and varying forms of organic life. The beauty of a mineral does not spring from its essential form, but from

its accidental qualities of flashing light, transparency, and color.

Plants are the lowest forms of *organic nature*, and are the first in which beauty has a positive seat without the magical influence of the imagination. Here is the first *real* individuality. It is an end for which other things exist. Earth, water, heat, air, and light are its ministers. But wanting a soul, and being bound fast to the earth with but limited action and motion, the individuality of the plant is much lower than that of an animal. Still in its growth, and health, and successive changes, and susceptibility of injuries, it rises far above the crystal. It approaches towards animal and even human life. It has its laws of form, and also its thousand graceful deviations. Its fixed laws are those of the perpendicular direction of the trunk, the horizontal direction of the branches with definite angles, the regular position of the leaves, the rotundity of the trunk and branches, and the round, oval, or conical form of the crown. But to how many accidental varieties is it subject? The constant change and even loss of certain of its parts, as flowers, seeds, and leaves; the variable mass of its foliage; the slight deviations from mathematical proportions, the individual forms and motions of the leaves, and the infinite diversity of contour, give to trees and plants the loose and flowing lines of grace. To all this is added the charm of an infinite variety and blending of colors, which is apparent in the bark and foliage, but reaches its perfection in the blossoms and fruit. Besides the individual beauty of trees, there is another kind of beauty in the grouping of them, in the mixture of different kinds, and the relief furnished by rounded hills, and valleys, and the contrast between the forest or grove and cultivated fields.

In the *animal* there is a living and animating spirit. It is an individual that lives and acts for itself, and uses the various means provided for its sustenance and support. It is itself a living centre of action, and moves in obedience to its own will. If plants give beauty to the naked earth by their rich and varied drapery, animals, by their presence, heighten that beauty. There is a bird to sit and sing in the branches

of the tree, a goat to climb the rocks and feed upon shrubs, wild animals to fill the forest, lowing herds to crop the grass or lie in the fields, fishes to glide through the smooth waters, and a winged creation, from the eagle to the insect, to fill the air. The wonderful structure of the animal is highly complex compared with that of the plant. Without the majestic elevation of the tree, it has organs of the body adapted to a great variety of motions. Not only is the form in itself rounded and well proportioned, but it is infinitely varied by movement and action. Back of the motions themselves, lie passions and various mental operations, which bring the animal much nearer than plants to man in sympathy.

In *man* is summed up all the complex perfection of form, the elements of which are scattered through all lower orders of animals. Nature seems, by a succession of efforts, to have ascended, step by step, from the lowest order of living beings till it crowned its work by reaching perfection in man. In him beauty exists in its highest perfection. We can never go beyond the human in form. Even spiritual beings must be clothed in human forms by the artist. In man the correspondence between the inward spirit and outward form, is more perfect than in any other being. In human consciousness the formative idea is most perfectly manifested, shining, as it does, through the human form. Such a perfect expression of the spiritual, beaming from the eye, from every feature, and from the whole mien and bearing of the person, produces a higher order of beauty than any that has been hitherto noticed. It is the soul, intellect, will, inclinations, passions, sentiment — that give beauty to the human face and human form.

The individual springs from the people, and is affected by race, nationality, climate, occupation, government, moral state and culture. Both body and mind are subject to these influences. No animal is capable of receiving so many peculiarities from the circumstances of its birth and training. Temperament, intellect, feeling, what is original and what is acquired, exert a moulding influence over those parts of the body which have the greatest power of expression. In the

whole structure of the body, as thick or lank, elastic or heavy, compact or loose, there is ordinarily to be observed something which fits it to be the companion of the mind. Without the possibility of any exact science in respect to the form of the head or face, as furnishing the means of prognostication, on account of the innumerable variations from accidental causes, there is, for aesthetic purposes, a world of meaning in the forms of this leading organ of the body. Still more definite is the language of the soul as expressed in the general mein and action of the body. This is observed partly in the ease and grace of conventional signs, and partly in the unconscious peculiarities of posture and movement, which are natural symbols of the workings of the spirit within. The same outgoing of the soul is observed in the quality, volume, tone, and pitch of the voice. How the passions, love, hate, pity, terror, shame and the like, paint themselves on the face, and send a corresponding influence through all the nerves of the body, is known to every one. By habit, the muscular expression of these various feelings may become fixed; and on this principle certain kinds of beauty may be traced to character. But we cannot further enlarge upon a topic so wide in its range.

Thus, instead of running hastily over the numerous subjects discussed in this voluminous work, we have given a tolerably full view of one selected from the whole number. The task was a difficult one, and may not have been accomplished with perfect success. We have, as far as possible, left out the Hegelian form and the Hegelian terminology of the original. In translating the language of philosophy into common language, there is, of course, some sacrifice both of system and of accuracy. Besides, it has been a matter of great difficulty to recast and put into one continuous train of thought, a series of abstract propositions and a large body of explanatory notes, broken up into innumerable fragmentary forms. This will sufficiently explain, as we hope, the occasional repetitions and want of strict connection in our statement of the author's theory. So far as this theory is founded upon the Hegelian philosophy, we regard it as unsound.

But its leading aesthetic principles may be engrafted upon almost any of the systems of the spiritual philosophy, which prevail in the present century. The effects which the author attributes to the power of an idea, or primal spiritual type of things, others may attribute to the Deity continually reproducing his works after one comprehensive, unchangeable plan. Then the plan of the creation existing in the divine mind, will take the place of ideas, and the power of God ever exerted in producing living things after their kind, will take the place of the energy of a formative idea, or of the power of the species in keeping all the individuals belonging to it within certain limits. We must confess, however, that, while we see much to admire in the theory, we are not quite satisfied with it. Whether the beauty of inorganic forms is sufficiently explained by saying that they bear some analogy to living organic forms, and that their beauty is inferior because the objects themselves are only analogous to the latter, may be questioned. In the lowest organizations we are to expect only the lowest order of beauty. The author admits that a poor specimen of a higher class of beings is inferior to a good one of a lower class. On the same principle, he must admit that inorganic beauty is sometimes superior to that of even highly organized forms.

He meets the most obvious objections to which his theory is exposed by saying that beauty is not the direct aim of organic life, and that the idea of utility is almost universally realized, while that of beauty is but rarely realized. Furthermore, utility attends every step of the life of living things, whereas beauty is limited to the brief moment of the flowering period. The facts are undeniable. Do they leave the theory in its full integrity? Or is the alleged limitation possibly a *contradictio in adjecto?* We cannot resist the conviction that this point needs further discussion. If some great writer should yet appear who should advance upon this author as much as he has advanced upon Plotinus, and in the same direction, the public mind would be satisfied that, if there is not yet a clear and well-established theory of the beautiful, there is a very hopeful movement in that way.