

Books and Authors

Æsthetic Principles¹

"Beauty, like all other qualities presented to human experience, is relative, and the definition of it becomes unmeaning and useless in proportion to its abstractness. To define beauty, not in the most abstract but in the most concrete terms possible, to find, not a universal formula for it, but the formula which expresses most adequately this or that special manifestation of it, is the aim of the æsthetic student." Thus Pater begins his preface to "The Renaissance." And again he says: "What is this song, this picture, this engaging personality, presented in life or in a book, to *me*? What effect does it really produce on me? Does it give me pleasure? and, if so, what sort or degree of pleasure?" Still further on he writes: "Our education becomes complete in proportion as our susceptibility to these impressions increases in depth and variety." This is the distinctly hedonic-æsthetic view of most artists, and we quote it here as singularly parallel to the latest scientific exposition of the same long-disputed question of what is the beautiful. A year or more ago Mr. Henry Rutgers Marshall published a large psychological work, "Pain, Pleasure, and Æsthetics," in which he developed his theory of the beautiful as a consistent but not a crude hedonist. This theory he stated as follows: "The beautiful is that in nature or in the activities or the productions of man which produces effects in us that are (relatively) permanently pleasurable in revival. The ugly, on the contrary, is that which produces effects of (relatively) permanent painfulness in revival." Mainly compacted from the larger work, this smaller and more popular and practical volume entitled "Æsthetic Principles" is one to be eagerly hailed by thoughtful people and by artists, because, unveiled by the uncertainties of metaphysical language, it lays open before them, with the restful precision of science, laws by means of which they can test their æsthetic impressions or construct their creations. The view which Mr. Marshall defends, logically unfolds from his fundamental psychological theory that "pleasure and pain are qualities both of which may and one of which must be present in every act of consciousness," is boldly supported by the latest physiological experiments, and is so cunningly fitted in to individual experience that the student acquiesces in each step as he examines the nature of the *impression* made upon the observer, and the *art instinct* expressed by the artist.

It is in the problem of the ultimate standard, looking at the matter from the standpoint of the critic, that our most eager attention is aroused; for we hope that here, at last, we may find the long-sought statement of a test by which we may classify our æsthetic impressions. Common sense agrees to the reality and value of the "Individual Standard of the Moment," allowing as we may its variability according to our moods, surroundings, and associations. Common sense also agrees to the reality and value of the "Relatively Stable Individual Standard," the basis of the judgments which we make our reflection; and according to our growth in years, experience, and study. But though common sense also agrees to the reality and value of the "Æsthetic Field of the Highly Cultivated Man as we conceive him," does it accept this as final? We must confess that with this, as with the statement of the ensuing "Ideal Æsthetic Field," we are not satisfied. We have followed Mr. Marshall along his well-laid and well-hedged path only to feel thrown out into a vague and ill-defined space where is not the guide whom we have been expecting. By his own confession, "the notion of a Fixed Universal Beauty, which the artist strives to conceive and represent, has in itself great æsthetic value altogether apart from its philosophic value; . . . but if we lose something in adopting the standards of relativity" he thinks "we are on the whole gainers," because this "doctrine enables us to look forward to an ever new and ever higher conception of beauty, arising as man develops towards nobility and perfection." The Idealist might reply, "But I cannot be satisfied with such a compromise; I cannot contentedly be 'on the whole' a gainer, yet lose 'something of great æsthetic and philosophic value.'" If the science of æsthetics culminates in such relativity of standard, must not its terms be irresistibly conclusive? And is the statement about "The Æsthetic Field of the Highly Cultivated Man as we conceive him" scientifically conclusive? It is true that "this is the field which every philosophic critic must acknowledge, if he is to treat æsthetic matters with any breadth."

We have been led to this conclusion logically, and so far as it goes we have no objection to it. But it hardly seems to us to have the finality which Mr. Marshall gives to it. He declares that the "relative stability of this standard gives it objective

force as a real existing Ideal," and that this "æsthetic field is as distinctly objective as any absolutist could desire." In the conception of these standards we are obliged to "take account of the agreements in the experience of those whose judgment we believe to be most worthy of confidence," and "endeavor to co-ordinate our own experience with these agreements," and so they "become objective in a sense that allies them closely to the realities of the external world." This means that we are left to the task of choosing the highest type of the cultivated man in each age, comparing and selecting the qualities which can be assimilated in one æsthetic field; and this we must set up as the Ideal "as we conceive it"! This appears truly to be consistently subjective—perfectly consistent with Mr. Marshall's argument—an excellent thing to do, but not finally satisfactory. "Relation! Relative, not Absolute!" is the cry of the age, and of the advanced intelligence of the age. But we call upon science to keep on with her work of reconciling the varied demands of the races of mankind, the intelligent demand of the idealist, as well as of his opponent. And, indeed, Mr. Marshall, in the second part of his study, gives us practical help in defining this troublesome "æsthetic field of the highly cultivated man" by his organically connected and clearly tabulated negative and positive æsthetic principles. Agreeably to his theory, we have the negative principle of the exclusion of pain and the elimination of the ugly, by the avoidance of repressive pains or the pains of excessive functioning; psychological statements by which are explained the more familiar philosophical language of the relation of the ugly to the beautiful; the imitation of nature, truth, harmony, usefulness, fitness, conformity to type. The positive principles are of less practical use to the artist, but are not less interesting to the observer and critic; for among them are the satisfaction of expectation, contrast, vividness of impression, resemblance, width of pleasure-field, concentration, balance, variety, and rhythm. In this little book every man may find something of use to him, for every man has his pains and pleasures, that is, his likes and dislikes, that is, according to Mr. Marshall, his impressions of ugliness or beauty. To know why he has them, how he can avoid or induce them, by what standard he can judge whether he is correct in them, must be desired by every one. And this is just what Mr. Marshall has intended to show him how to do. It is done with a notably excellent style, a special knowledge cleverly brought to the level of the ordinary reader, and the high aim of helping his fellows to live fuller lives.



Moral Evolution¹

Professor George Harris has rendered a valuable contribution to the science of ethics by his volume on "Moral Evolution." There is nothing new in the endeavor to apply the doctrine of evolution in the department of ethics. Evolution is the clue which science has accepted in its endeavor to interpret the strange contradictions of the universe. Ethical thinkers have for a considerable time endeavored, in the employment of this clue, to work out a scientific statement of ethical law and ethical progress. What is new in Professor Harris's book is the further step—and it seems to us a real step in advance—which he makes in this endeavor. To many it seems somewhat difficult to reconcile ethics at all, in any high and noble view of the case, with evolution as interpreted by Herbert Spencer, though Herbert Spencer has himself made the attempt so to do. Mr. Kidd, and still more Mr. Huxley, practically bring ethics in at a certain stage of human development to antagonize the preceding processes. According to both these writers evolution is a selfish struggle for existence and domination by means of which progress is carried on up to a certain point; then comes in the ethical principle demanding service and the sacrifice of self. "Goodness or virtue," says Mr. Huxley, "involves a course of conduct which in all respects is opposed to that which leads to success in the cosmic struggle for existence. In place of ruthless self-assertion it demands sacrifice; in place of thrusting aside or treading down all competitors it requires that the individual shall not merely respect but shall help his fellows; its influence is directed not so much to the survival of the fittest as to the fitting of as many as possible to survive." It is difficult to reconcile this statement of Mr. Huxley's with consistent evolutionism; but then consistency is not Mr. Huxley's strong point. Drummond carried the process on further and deeper. He showed that altruism is from the very beginning an element in evolution; that the monad cannot produce growth without dividing, and in some sense sacrificing, itself; that the flower perishes for the sake of the fruit, and the egg for the sake of the bird; that maternity runs through the universe, and the struggle for

¹ *Æsthetic Principles*. By Henry Rutgers Marshall. Macmillan & Co., New York. \$1.25.

¹ *Moral Evolution*. By George Harris, Professor in Andover Theological Seminary. Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston. \$2.

others is the secret of maternity; in a word, that service and self-sacrifice are from the beginning essential to development.

Professor Harris approaches this subject more from the ethical point of view, assumes evolution without defending or even to any great extent interpreting it, and boldly affirms that the struggle for self is a moral struggle—as moral as the struggle for others. This affirmation of the virtue inherently resident in regard for one's self is the distinguishing contribution of his volume to the literature of this subject. Not, indeed, that this is original with him; not that no ethical teacher before him has ever affirmed that love for one's self is part of the moral law. To go no further back, this is found distinctly stated in the ethics of Dr. Mark Hopkins, and both he and Professor Harris discovered it embedded in Christ's summary of the Jewish law. But Professor Harris works out with marked ability the principle that struggle for others and struggle for self are not inconsistent nor incongruous; that, indeed, one is impossible without the other. "Two persons are concerned in every altruistic act—the giver and the receiver. To the completeness and the value of such an act receptiveness is essential. There is as much virtue in right receiving as in right conferring." "It is false pride to refuse needed help. Ingratitude is base. Indeed, right reception is the more difficult, and therefore in many cases the better, part of virtue." "The altruism which reduces self to zero is an act without an actor; it is something out of nothing; it is a verb without a noun." "Unless one does make the most of himself, he is incompetent for good to others. The pleasure I have in helping another does not reduce the virtue of the act, but enhances it." He contends, we think successfully, that the very term self-sacrifice is, if not misleading, very liable to mislead. Every true act of self-sacrifice is a true act of self-service. In sacrificing ourselves for another, what we really do is to sacrifice our lower for our higher selves. "Self-sacrifice is not self-abasement, self-obliteration, self-debasement. One may, for the sake of another, sacrifice outward things—goods, time, pleasures, comforts, reputation. He may sacrifice possessions and enjoyments which in themselves are legitimate, and so may practice self-denial. But he may not sacrifice character, the goods of the soul, truth, honor, purity, nobleness." This is but another way of saying, "He that loseth his life for my sake shall save it." It is but an interpretation of the declaration that because Christ emptied himself God highly exalted him. Self-emptying is always the condition of true self-exaltation.

Our brief quotations have been, we hope, sufficient to show the terse, compact, and often scintillating style of the writer. Our brief epitome has not been sufficient to embody its substantial contribution to ethical thought, only to indicate the central and germinant element in that contribution.

Some Recent Novels

Whatever Mrs. Burnett writes is sure of a wide reading. *A Lady of Quality* marks an entirely new departure in her methods. She has given us here the life-story of an eighteenth-century woman placed under strange conditions, who learns what love and unselfishness mean only after a bitter experience of sin and its punishment. Clorinda is the motherless daughter of a drinking, hunting English father of the Squire Western type, a brutal, foul-mouthed fellow who hates his daughters because he has no son, refuses even to see them, and allows Clorinda to be brought up by grooms and ignorant servants until she becomes as a child passionate, willful, and as foul-mouthed as himself. Discovering this by chance, he takes a fancy to her, makes her a kind of child boon-companion, dresses her in boy's clothes, brings her to the hunting-field, and, in short, does all he can to ruin her character. At the age of fifteen she abandons boy's attire and becomes a superb beauty and coquette. Proud of her power over men, she yet falls a victim to the arts of a villain, conceals her sin, marries a noble-hearted elderly man, to whom she is gentle and faithful, and after his death meets with an ideal man of her age and learns what true love is. Meanwhile the villain of her early life (who then refused to marry her) continues to pursue her with threats of exposure. In a moment of rage at the vilest insults she strikes him with a heavy whip and kills him. She conceals his body in the cellar of her house, marries the man of her choice, and lives a life of repentance, charity, and humbleness. This brief outline is enough to show that the story in itself has strong dramatic possibilities. In its treatment we do not think that Mrs. Burnett is at her best. In reproducing the eighteenth-century atmosphere she is not at home. The unqualified somberness of the story is not in keeping with the bent of her genius. The characters have not an air of naturalness. The whole tone of the story is too intense not to become strained. The diction is often stilted, and one feels that there is too much repetition of the superlative in describing the wondrous beauty and power of Clorinda. No one can deny the originality of the plot and the strength of the situations; but from the literary point of view there is exaggeration. (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.)

There is much about *The One Who Looked On*, by Miss F. F. Montresor, that reminds one of the qualities that made "Ships that Passed" so popular. The story is slight, but told with simple sincerity and

what we may call a cheerful pathos. The narrator is a true-hearted, natural girl whose unrequited love does not prevent her from being a helpful, bright companion to all around her, and to sympathize with the sorrowful love-story of her innocent and unknowing rival. There is wholesome humor in the book, too; and the author's imaginative touch is delicate and sure. (D. Appleton & Co., New York.)

Iralie's Bushranger is a cleverly told little story by Mr. E. W. Hornung, who is probably tired of being called the Kipling of Australia. It is a tale of the old days—not so very old either—when bushrangers' deeds gave plenty of material for writers of adventure. The plot is a clever one and neatly handled; and both the bushranger and the gentleman whose identity he assumes, and who in turn is believed to be the robber, are brought out clearly. For readers of stories of incident this book will provide a satisfactory hour's reading.

Anthony Hope's *Comedies of Courtship* includes "The Wheel of Love" and a few other society tales, not intended to be very probable or to be taken seriously, but serving as a medium for witty talk and to set off amusing situations in the limitlessly possible complications of love-making. Those who have read the "Dolly Dialogues" will know what to expect. There is no sign that Mr. Hawkins's powers of invention and quiet satire are failing him. (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.)

Strangers at Lisconnel is a second series of the charming "Irish Idylls" by Miss Jane Barlow. The new sketches are not inferior in the least to their predecessors. They give a lifelike reproduction of Irish peasant character, without a touch of burlesque or excess. In turn they bring out the pathetic, the humorous, and the quaint qualities of the Irish village, as deftly and strongly as does Ian Maclaren those of the dwellers in his Scotch glen. While the story-element is slight, it is always present. The reader feels that he has before him a chapter out of human nature, with the simple gayety or sorrow unspoiled by over-refinement, yet treated with true art. (Dodd, Mead & Co., New York.)

Mr. Walter Frith's *In Search of Quiet* is a little like "Cranford" modernized, but not as amusing or clever. It tells of a city man's visit for rest to an English village, and of the little comedies and tragedies he discovered under the apparently humdrum inactivity. The style is good, and a little more vigor in the telling would have made the story a capital one. (Harper & Brothers, New York.)

A valuable guide-book is the Rev. Dr. Henry S. Lunn's *How to Visit Switzerland*. (Horace Marshall & Son, London.) This book ought not to have been prefaced by such a cheap portrait of Dr. Lunn, and its maps ought to be of a more exhaustive order. However, the editor tells us that he has no intention of entering into rivalry with the excellent handbooks of Baedeker or Murray, and that one or the other of these works is indispensable to any one who wishes to make a thorough study of Switzerland. As many of our readers know, Dr. Lunn is the originator of the now famous Grindelwald Conference. During his residence at the University of Dublin he had been a member of a small club called the "Contemporary," which represented every shade of political opinion, and which met every Saturday evening to discuss the developments of the week. When Dr. Lunn founded the "Review of the Churches," it occurred to him that if men who differed so widely in their political aspirations could meet together in so friendly a manner from week to week, and, as a consequence of those assemblages, could understand each other so much better, it would be possible to combine in a party visiting some quiet spot on the Continent a number of men who differed on matters ecclesiastical as completely as Mr. Russell and Mr. Davitt (two members of the Club) differed on political issues. Accordingly, Dr. Lunn planned for a fortnight in January, 1892, a winter party to visit Grindelwald to enjoy the skating and tobogganing of that delightful resort. The party numbered twenty-eight, and included a High Church clergyman, two evangelical clergymen, three Methodist ministers, and several other representatives of Nonconformity besides Dr. Lunn. Every day, after dinner, problems which tend to separate Christians were discussed, and also questions touching those fundamental grounds of agreement which should unite Christians. The days were given up to winter sports. Encouraged by this success, Dr. Lunn wrote to Earl Nelson and to the Bishop of Ripon asking them if they would co-operate with him in summoning a Conference to meet at Grindelwald in the summer to discuss the question of Home Reunion, the primary object of the gathering being to give greater prominence to those aspects of truth upon which English Christians are at one. Both the Earl and the Bishop replied, promising their sympathetic support. The summer Conference of that year at Grindelwald surpassed the most sanguine expectations of its founders. Nearly one thousand persons availed themselves of the opportunity. The most remarkable addresses were delivered by Père Hyacinthe and by the Bishop of Worcester. One result of the Conference was the beginning of the Co-operative Educational Travel Movement. A tour to Rome was decided on. Professor Mahaffy and the Rev. H. R. Haweis delivered lectures, and, in all, six parties went to Rome in the spring of 1893. The total number of tourists was about 450. In the summer of 1893 occurred another Conference, but in consequence of the disastrous fire at Grindelwald the assemblage took place at Lucerne. The next experiment in foreign travel was the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. A steam yacht was chartered, and the party enjoyed unusual privileges, listening to lectures from Dean Farrar, Professor Mahaffy, the Bishop of Worcester, and from Mr. F. J. Bliss, the eminent archaeologist. In 1894 another Grindelwald Conference was held. The attendance had now risen to 2,500. The previous year an appeal had been made to the churches of Great Britain, suggesting that Whitsunday should be set apart as a day of special intercession for the outpouring of the Spirit of Unity. The Archbishop of Can-