THE SENSE OF THE BEAUTIFUL.

AN ADDRESS,

DELIVERED BY

W. GILMORE SIMMS,

BEFORE THE

CHARLESTON COUNTY AGRICULTURAL

AND

HORTICULTURAL ASSOCIATION,

(Now the Agricultural Society of South Carolina,)

May 3, 1870.

PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY.

CHARLESTON, S. C.

WALKER, EVANS & Cogswell, STATIONERS AND PRINTERS,

Nos. 3 Broad and 109 East Bay Streets.

1870.
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The uses and the beauties of all things in Nature exist chiefly in our susceptibilities. It is in the degree in which we can find the use and appreciate the beauty, that the one is valued as of profit, the other as of pleasure. There shall be two persons walking together through the avenues of a glorious garden. To the eyes of one of these all the lovely and fragrant creations which surround his footsteps, shall be instantly apparent, pregnant each with the charms of scent, form and color; and he will absorb, even as he walks, the flower, in all its sweetness, into his very self. The other will see nothing but himself, and will turn with ill-concealed impatience from the rapturous emotions which his companion will express. He would discourse only of himself; his petty schemes of policy; his petty policies of gain; and no divine intimations of beauty will enter his narrow brain and mercenary soul. He has only sought the garden walks for security—that no third party shall penetrate his secrets.

This little word in itself, which we call "man," is possessed from his very birth by two powers which seem to contend for his possession. The one is immortal, an angel; the other wholly mortal, an animal. The antagonism between them never ceases till the mortal shall put on immortality. The animal is one to make fierce battle. He possesses very terrible powers; eager appetites, fiery passions, lowly instincts. Like all other animals his paramount craving is for food, drink, sleep; ample pastures, comfortable beds. These are his most evident necessities. Cherished by habit, they will rage at seasons, the animal asserting itself in every aspect of savage
terror. He will take on him, in turn, every characteristic of
the wild beast; he will be wolf or fox, tiger, serpent, or cur.
These, in their blind rages, will rend themselves or one another.
They will shed and lap human blood; lie in cover to sting the
wayfarer, or bark spitefully at his heels, where they lack cour-
age to bite. These are very terrible attributes. How shall
the angel subdue this animal? What are his attributes of
power designed for the subjugation of these terrible passions?

These are many; very powerful also, and quite adequate to
their duty, if the guardian angel does not slumber on his post.
They occupy what we call the soul. They abide in head and
heart, and in the daily growth, in the individual, of the sensi-
bilities and susceptibilities; showing themselves in the develop-
ment of a beautiful feminity, which involves fidelity, gentleness,
tenderness and love, the grand necessities as they are the grand
virtues of humanity. With these, at once of intellect and sen-
timent, the angel watches the growth of the instincts and passions
in the child animal. He curbs the appetites in season; checks
every tendency to excess; to presumption; to usurpation;
keeps the boy, by loving restraints, from all evil associations.
He confers upon him at the earliest moment, two of the gifts
most precious to the young, innocent amusements and good
society. In brief, “trains” the child in the way he should go.
Train, you will remember is the word. The Bible does not say
teach. There is the greatest difference between the two. We
have quite too much teaching in the world — vulgarly misnamed
education — and too little training, and this is one of the greatest
sources of the sorrows and miseries of humanity!

And how very simple and how very grateful, once under-
stood, is this task to train. You take the child as you take the
vine or flower. You twine about the delicate tendrils of his
mind and heart, about his sensibilities and susceptibilities of
taste and fancy, a little thread of blended love and authority,
just as you would the vine which you thus train to dart up
from earth, to share in those bursts of sunlight which are gushing
through your lattice. You take him with you through walks
that are calm, sweet, lovely to the eye, and gently stimulating
to the innocent curiosity which is growing in his spirit. You teach him to rank and name the flowers as you go. You have a little history for each, and you take care to tell him that not one of these innocent beauties but has been made to symbolize a virtue and a blessing during six thousand years of time. You are heedful to show what is peculiar in vine, and tree, and shrub and flower. You describe their properties, whether found in mere common, medical or domestic use, or in their wondrous beauty of form and color, and delicious sweetness of scent.

Losing no opportunity of bringing to his knowledge whatever shall awaken proper tastes, proper affections, and becoming fancies, you are even more careful to bring him into no contact which is not healthful to his undeveloped nature. You will not take him into the promiscuous crowd, in which Evil, almost of necessity, makes herself a dangerously conspicuous attraction. So shall he take light, color, form, sweetness and sentiment into his soul; for it is with man as with the chameleon, which takes the color of the leaf on which it runs. The hearts, minds, thoughts, fancies and desires of men are even thus impressed by the associations of their youthful days. Thus are the habits established, and as habit is perhaps the most imperious of all despots, so it becomes the guardian angel to see that the habits of the child shall all be good. And oh! women of Carolina, mothers and daughters in our Israel, from which so much of the glory has departed, do you not see, in the performance of this precious duty of training your young, the noblest as it is the fittest employment of the noble woman. You are the only trainers and teachers for the infantile mind, and when you know that the whole moral of the future life is shaped and moulded by the first twelve years, you will feel the solemn responsibility which rests upon you.

How beautiful the spectacle of the young mother training her offspring, in her porch, under mantling vines, under God's grand school house of azure arch, surrounded by his great colonnades of trees, and freshened by the pure breezes bringing perfumes from those gardens which have yielded you all these
Floral Beauties that begirt us now. Or would you prefer the hustle at the polls with Clym Chowder, for the great privilege of casting your vote for George Washington Bangs, who is opposed, for the Senate, by Napoleon Bonaparte Brick. While thus engaged abroad in loathsome associations, the beast is making fearful havoc with all your little angels at home.

You little know, mothers and daughters of Carolina, what large succor you can bring to the angel in his conflict with the animal. It is possible that your society here conceives it and hence the new institution, and this grand display to-night. It is not merely the market garden, the money consideration, with you. You aim at something more. You have felt the volume of meaning in the line—

"A thing of beauty is a joy forever."

Aye, and a study forever for the eyes that can see. Alas! for the myriads who have never seen, who never can see the beautiful. They have not been taught and trained in that profounder truth—"The Sense of Beauty is a Soul forever!" For it is only when you can receive and cherish this sense of the beautiful in your bosom that you can subdue the animal. It is then that he crouches at the feet of the angel, and submits to the chain, woven wholly of flowers, which is wound about his neck!

Yes, in this sense of the beautiful lie all the best securities of the race. It is this sense which develops all the soul's activity. It endows the soul with the eyes to see, the heart to feel, and all the subordinate senses to enjoy the marvellous beauty in this beautiful world which comes to us freshly, with every dawning, directly from the hands of God.

It is through this divine sense only that we are first taught to behold the latent beauties in the things we see, and to discover and to love the beautiful in the things we do not see. It is not the mere capacity to recognize the gorgeous glory in the sun, or the external charm in moon and star and system; the grandeur in the blue vaults above us, or the wooing softness in the verdure of the green lawns which spread below. True, we may exult in the grand tracts of forest, prairie, rock and cataract; rejoice in their attractions, and find a certain degree of pleasure in wan-
dering among their shades or solitudes. But, to feel them, we must first effect that couching of the eyes of the soul, which shall develop the beautiful within ourselves;—the grand, the beautiful, the sweet, the pure, set to grow within our bosoms, in Imagination, fancy, sentiment, warm sympathies with all that humanity should love, without which love there is no humanity.

Under the guidance of this sense of the beautiful, the soul itself becomes the explorer, and finds a new world of beauty springing about her with every progress which she makes. She sees the statue in the stone, and summons art to cut it out; sees the temple in the rock, and calls Michael Angelo to hang its mighty dome in air! What to-day was the shapeless mass, to-morrow develops into the shrine, the grotto, or the temple; what was a worm yesterday, becomes, to her great surprise to-day, a winged and beautiful creature, rich in all colors of the rainbow, a very flower of the air, in whose apotheosis the soul discerns its own—its own immortality and capacity for flight.

This Sense of the Beautiful once actively developed in the man, and he loses nothing in nature which his senses should absorb within themselves as so much aliment. He perceives, with each day's consciousness, new and increasing powers of perception in himself. The sounds issuing from the great forests, or the mountain gorges, are no longer mere gusts and murmurs of a senseless force in Nature, but, they resolve themselves into a song of the winds, telling the story of their capricious wanderings over land and sea. The solitude is no longer companionless. There are those who walk beside him, who speak with numerous voices to his newly developed faculties. He finds the Beautiful in all her retreats; his ear opens with a new capacity for music, which enables him to hear the Spring-time chant from earth, in the murmur of the infinite tribes that toil below for extrication from the seed and the bondage of the soil. All the senses grow in turn, and triumph in the fresh delight of that wondrous fountain, newly welling in the soul, now first made capable to feel all the glory that harbors in the grass, all the splendor that blushes and bourgeons in the flower. We become sensible of the majesty, the dignity and the frankness,
as well as the magnificent beauty in the rose, and it glows before us with the charm of an exquisite and perfect woman. We linger with delight to survey the fearless, yet pleading innocence which looks to us from the virgin lily. The delicate appeal which is made to us in the equal beauty and odor of the pink, moves us to place it in our bosoms; and, briefly, we discover, with our own developed sense of the beautiful, that, in the cultivation of the flower of the valley, we have cultivated a very rose of Sharon, blossoming for immortality in each loving heart and soul. It is not a mere shrub or flower which we nurture with so much care; it is a sentiment, a song, a virtue. It is our own best nature which we thus train to beauty, through every agency of sense, sentiment and sensibility, to the full development of that greatest of all human virtues—a perfect manhood. It is not merely eye and ear and nose which are the satisfied feeders among these flowers. But here thought broods with new discoveries, which bring new hopes; fancies spring with fresh desires, that take all their aspects from innocence; love glows with generous and sweet emotions, and the man becomes complete in the exercise of all his fulness of quality, in beauty, majesty and strength. Studying well the arts of the cultivator, he has read from those books of Nature which practice no frauds upon the intellect, assail no moral in his soul; teach no errors; beguile to no crimes or vices; and sensibilities, thus tutored, minister lovingly to all his moods, whether in joy or sorrow, whether it be care or triumph, pain or pleasure, that is looking, meanwhile, over his shoulder.

"And this, our life, exempt from public haunt,
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything."

The thousand exquisite media which have been employed in developing the sense of the beautiful, enable the seeker to advance pace by pace, with all sensibilities quickened to all electrical affinities, until he ascends to the sublimest source of the beautiful, made sensible in some degree of the great original, with whom perfection and the beautiful are one, the incomprehensible but ever paternal God. The sense of the beautiful, my friends, is one of the first essentials of religion.
Now, whatever the thousand inequalities among men, there is a latent germ of this sense lodged for growth in the soul of every human creature. It is, as we have sought to show, the great business of education, so to train this germ, as to bring out its full development and perfect uses. It is a great life-long labor that this germ should be made to sprout and grow, 'till it flowers in a beautiful maturity. However small the gift in the individual, it will flourish under the parental culture. However large, if left untrained, it will perish, wither in the ungenial soil, and die out like so much unexercised muscle. Man, if he develops into manhood at all, is always an individual. He is himself and can be no other—as individual as pine, oak, cypress, cedar, or any other individual and well defined tree, shrub or flower. The modes of training must vary with the characteristics of the individual, and we must needs study these characteristics, in order to their proper and profitable cultivation. We are told by wretched traders in politics, and the stupidest of all philosophies, that all men are born equal. Even if this were true, it is not possible, as the world's experience has shown, to keep them so. The doctrine is simply a miserable ad captandum, designed to flatter vulgar vanity in defiance of common sense; and but for the vanities of men, the assurance would be received on all sides with a howl of scorn. The notion is in ludicrous antagonism with all human experience. So far from men being equal, it is the absolute necessity of society that men should be unequal, unlike, different in tone, temper, attribute and faculty, so that each shall act an individual part, playing into the hands of one another, in various occupations, for the common good. There will then be no malignant rivalry—no ruinous competition, while there will be employment for all in the thousand avocations of life. Were it not for the vanities, cowardice, and indolence of men, seeking ease and affluence from the toils of others, and were each to find out the use for which he was designed, and pursue it, the reign of Astraea would prevail again on earth, and the golden age be no longer a fiction of the poets. Every vocation essential to man and society, no matter how humble, is honorable, and I would as soon make my fortunes out of turnips
and cabbages, tulips and roses, as from the fields of rice and cotton. And there is no reason why farmer, blacksmith, mechanic, laborer, should not all be trained as gentlemen, though they be trained to toil; the quality of the gentleman depending upon the honorable purposes, the good conduct, the considerate sensibilities, and, in no degree upon the occupation which is pursued. The development of this Sense of the Beautiful in their souls, will suffice to make them so.

But, left untrained, undeveloped—the angel left unsuccoured to do battle alone—the boy without home culture—the father an idler at the tavern—the mother a slattern—having no uplooking eyes—no ideas beyond the bacon and collards which constitute her abdominal moral—the sole one which she possesses—what can be hoped for in the case of that poor boy for whom the angel and the beast contend. At home a scullion; abroad, even accompanying his father, an incipient ruffian. See the pair as they attend at the village, at the courthouse, sale, muster and election days. The father sprawls at full length on the village counter, half besotted and half asleep. The boy follows the paternal example. The father will rise only to new potions of fiery whiskey. The boy more stealthily follows in his footsteps 'till he becomes old enough and bold enough to take the old man by the throat. Already he carries in his pocket a huge plug of tobacco, which he does not seek to chew in secret. He is striding rapidly forward to that shamelessness which makes vice a brawler and impudence a criminal. Father and son lose the day whenever they go forth to the village, even on pretexts of duty. The voter, having given his vote, does not return to his home and farmstead. His disease is empty-mindedness. He has no one faculty of soul developed; no appetite for anything which is not specially demanded by the beast; no love for trees or flowers—no feeling for the sweets in Nature or Art. No love for music, books or pictures—never reads a book—will not look at a picture, though the divine Raphael appealed to him from a canvas all streaming with the beautiful. Yet the miserable creature sickness of his own society, incapable of higher associations, and only finds repose in that stupor,
which is rather inanity than sleep. What of that father? What of the poor boy, who follows in his footsteps? You see that the angel is beaten from the ground. The beast cannot but triumph. And you see in these portraits a true history of all that pestilent curse, which has left glorious fields of God to barrenness, souls of noblest susceptibilities to blight, and the whole moral atmosphere, for thousands of miles, tainted with leprosy, and sin and shame.

What of the wretched woman, the slattern whom we left over her pot of bacon and greens? And what of her two slatternly daughters, exactly after her pattern? Show me how the woman keeps her house, and I will tell you what she is. Here all is wretched. The floors filthy, unwashed, unswept. All is miserable. No signs of the woman hand, the woman nurture, the woman heart or womanly sensibilities. Yet see this wretched mother and her daughters at the village church next Sunday. Behold them in their motley of gaudy calicoes and faded ribbons—the miserable gewgaws of shining copper in their ears, around their necks, and on arms and fingers. That miserable sneaking, but most inveterate passion, Vanity, will prompt them thus to decorate their persons, as for a market, while their habitations are as foul and barren as their souls. What the husband and father will consume in whiskey and tobacco, they waste on these monkey trappings. Each after some fashion, thus proclaims the ascendancy of the beast. Are such people human? Is there a soul among them? Alas! My friends, the germ of soul is of very little account, among men or women, unless trained and developed into the Sense of the Beautiful, which is ever a sense bringing us nearer to God. He teaches this to all our senses;—since, nowhere, in all His creation, has he failed to blend the types of beauty with every work of his hands.

Yes, my friends, you will travel a thousand miles through whole districts of our country as I have done, and never once behold the most solitary proof of the woman's hand or her sensibilities. Naked fields, naked farm-houses, wretched culture, without head or heart suggesting the slightest thought or care for improvement. There shall be no shrub, no flower, set
to grow; no vine trained to rise about the porches. But, according to my experience, at the Sunday gathering you see her bedecked in all the poor vanities with which she keeps hope in exercise with vague anticipations of some rustic Darby. Nor, my friends, was this barrenness of prospect confined to the poor cotter's homestead. The more stately abode of the man of wealth was almost equally lacking in the signs of culture. It was a rare thing to see rose, or geranium, or japonica, embellishing lattice or veranda. But you meet the ladies at the dinner-table usually in silks and satins, and plentifully decked with jewels, which, for aught I know, might be as precious as the pebbles of California.

Yet, with the Sense of the Beautiful, developed in moderate degree, and the poorest cotter, wife and daughters would command better food—and the taste for good food is a moral sense—and would greet the eyes of the traveller, with a pictured homestead of refreshing sweetness. It is only to begin with work. Work keeps down the animal. Work is healthful; prompts observation; observation compels thought; thought makes discovery, and discovery, once begun, provokes desire, curiosity, inquiry and search; thus opening up, step by step, all the avenues, even to the highest civilization. Work, reflection, self-study, all implied in the desire to know, these, with the proper economy of time, provide the best education known to man. But this very economy of time, the most precious of all mortal gifts of God to humanity, is that duty to which our people have always shown themselves most indifferent.

Let us turn from these melancholy specimens to nobler types. It is grateful to know that all is not barren of culture, whether of home or self, among us. We possess many model cottages and farmsteads, though they occupy few acres. Ten acres of land in our country, with one good mule, one honest plough-boy, and judicious cultivation, are quite enough for the ample support of a thrifty family of ten persons. But here, the pater familias must be a man! His help-meet, a woman.

These are noble titles. Man and woman—none nobler in the world; nothing more noble, in all God's creation, than a
perfect man and woman, working together, lovingly, harmoniously. He in his walks of courage, energy, industry and intelligence. She in hers, of grace, domestic duty, motherly watch over dutiful children, and that cheery and elastic spirit which ever welcomes with smiles, conciliation and tenderness. They may be poor together in worldly goods; but rich in all the essentials which make life a permanent pleasure while it lasts. Look at their homestead. See how the cottage gleams through the green woods, white and glossy. It is whitewash, not paint, and put on by the good man himself. The garden blooms beside it. There are flowers, there are fruits; and the little fields thicken with luxuriance. His horn is sounded with the dawn, when he drives afield his mule or oxen. He will waste no hours abroad or in idleness, and the honest sweat of his industry will be as so much dew in nurturing his humble fortunes. Healthy with toil, and cheerful with hope, the cottage receives him at night, unexhausted and ready for romp or lesson with the happy children. While he drives afield at dawn, you see the cottage windows open. There is a tall damsel hanging out her bird-cages. She has mocking-bird and canary. She sings, and they sing together, the song of the happy roof-tree. You see her as she comes forth into the little veranda. There she waters her geraniums, her shrubs and flowers. What a collection that young girl has made. What a property in beauty and use, simply from having forgotten herself. She hath had no vanities to afflict and make her worthless. Tier upon tier of common shelves of pine, not a foot of which is vacant, support her numerous boxes of shrub and flower. The little piazza gleams with them; the air is saturated with their sweetness. These are all acquisitions of love and maiden taste, under that Sense of the Beautiful, which glows within her, but which she herself could never define. Anon, that girl of sixteen has the breakfast table ready; when she goes forth—for what?—to milk Brindle. Jackey, her brother, brings up the cow! The chickens next are seen to, the poultry let forth, and while Chanticleer is straining his throat proclaiming the sunrise, she finds her way to the garden. There are
strawberries and radishes to be gathered for breakfast, and she must look around the garden to see that the rabbits have not broken somewhere through the pale, to the great danger of her young green peas.

And so, passing from one little office to another, singing as she goes some cheerful ditty, that one young girl, with only one little brother for her ally, will pass through all the morning duties of garden, house, pantry, poultry and dairy with ease, without any real effort, having learned to rise early, being economical of time, having a mind trained to method, happy that she is doing and capable to do. There may be an hour's hoeing daily to be done in the garden, quite enough for a single acre, and she and Jackey will do it ere the sun grows hot. The dinner table that day will give you the earliest varieties of the season. The head of the family will have done his work ere the day closes, and has no doubt that Sally has done hers. How cheery is the supper table that night. All is neat and clean; all is abundant. The invalid mother smiles languidly, but happily upon the scene, and thanks God that she is in such loving keeping. Then there will be music—why not? The farmer takes down his violin, and Sally has her accordion. Nay, she has her guitar also, and with no master, has taught herself the use of both. The scene varies according to the humors of the household. Perhaps Sally will read to her mother. Perhaps the father takes down his Shakespeare (why not?) and gives a scene, well read, from "As you Like it," possibly rising to sublimer aims, will, from "Comus," give to the dawning spirituelle in the girl's mind, her loveliest conception of the Sense of the Beautiful. This portrait is no fancy sketch. Our model farmer is the son of a Scotchman, and from Burns he has passed to the grand domains of Shakespeare and Milton. "The Cotter's Saturday Night" is always read, as a sort of closing service of the week. No matter how small the cottage, how limited the resources, how humble the aims in life, the absolute necessities of life being once made sure, the good farmer, here and everywhere, may realize this exquisite ideal of a Golden Age. You shall even, in our own abased country, in
these brute and baboon and barbarous days, find a few such good farmers, and model homesteads. Nay, more,—you shall also be able to find a Sally, who will rise with the dawn, sing like the skylark, rear flowers of loveliness around your walks, decorate your dwelling—yet never think to decorate herself; never once repining that she has no copper ornaments or California pebbles upon her person, to make terrible sensation on street or alameda. With her simple white dress, easily fitting, no bends from Greece, no bandages, no elaborate flouncings, no gaudy ribands streaming wide in air; and, instead of jewels, one white rose just stuck within her hair, there will be some sensible Darby who shall seek Sally Ashley out in her cottage, while the fashionable damsel vainly looks for him along the highways.

Yes, the humble cottage may be an empire within itself; when once its tenants are possessed of this Sense of the Beautiful; it may teem with poesy, glow with song, sparkle with sentiment, and all will begin to exist in the simple study of Nature through her flowers. With its thousand antennæ this sense of the beautiful will develop all latent powers of the soul, the fancies that enliven, and the thoughts which elevate. They will tutor the affections to warmth and activity, rouse proper sentiments and sensibilities, purify the taste, teach consideration and gentleness of manner, all of which are virtues needed to render human nature desirable. Thus love becomes a first necessity and sweetens all the tasks of duty, while home becomes a very temple of the heart. How lovely such a home, where the Sense of the Beautiful takes all the sting from the necessity of toil. Trained in such a home your children grow up in a daily consciousness of what is innocent and lovely, a knowledge of which the world rarely has the power to strip them when they emerge into the great arena of life. Alas! my friends, for the miserable millions in whom this Sense of the Beautiful never develops. The man is a living care and sorrow to himself—and passes into the beast,—the fox, the wolf, the serpent or the cur. What of the woman, similarly untrained? We dare not paint the picture. Enough, there are no loving influences to cheer their
firesides. And, still worse, their miseries are entailed upon the future to the third and fourth generation. Their boys, unless saved by special interposition of Providence, or by the power of an innate gift which is too strong for corruption, grow into sturdy ruffians; their girls into simpering idiots of vanity—sworn slaves of one or other of those terrible passions which we have personified as beasts.

You cannot too soon familiarize your young with the ideas and images of beauty. A few even ordinary pictures on your walls, on which their eyes open every morning, will become their teachers. The Greeks understood this secret. They placed grand and beautiful ideals, perfect models, whether in painting or statuary, in the pathways of their children, well knowing that, by a natural law, in degree as we admire or love an object, we grow to resemble it; even as the cattle of Laban took their streaks and stripes from the peeled wands of Jacob, in the waters where they went to drink. Familiarize your young with flowers, trees, shrubs, the beauties of the landscape, the rosy tints of dawn, and the warm blushes of the evening sky. I take for granted, ladies, that to your culture, in a measure, and largely to your taste, we owe the beautiful display of floral loveliness with which you have inaugurated this Society. I assume that there is hardly one among you, but rears her own roses and lilies, her geraniums, and other favorites of the garden and conservatory. Think how meanly all ornaments show, the mere work of art, with such as your hands can rear in the walks of Nature. "Consider the lilies of the field; how they grow. They toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these!"

And yet, unless this Sense of the Beautiful be awakened in your souls, the lilies of the field shall show to your eyes no such charm as they possessed in the eyes of that Divine Master to whom we owe this exquisite floral illustration. Happy was Eve as a floriculturist—happy in her innocent flowers—till beguiled from their saving sweetness by the subtle persuasions of the beast. Bitter the repentance and terrible the doom that
followed. She must have loved her flowers. Milton thought so. Very touching is the farewell speech of her anguish, at parting with them forever:

"Must I thus leave thee, Paradise? Thus leave
Thou, native soil—these happy walks and shades.
Oh! Flowers,
That never will in other climes grow,
My earliest visitation—and my last,
At even! which I bred up with tender hands,
From the first opening buds, and gave ye names;
Who now shall rear ye to the sun, or rank
Your tribes, and water from the ambrosial fount."

Alas for us! Alas for her! The world's first woman sacrificing beauty to the beast.

To conclude. Beauty, my friends, implies the most exquisite symmetry and the most perfect organization. It thus represents the highest law—the perfection of moral in the being who creates, and thus establishes an absolute law for the nature of him who beholds. That we should learn this lesson and duly esteem this law, it was made to appeal, through every possible variety of form, color and aspect, to our tastes and senses. Beauty thus becomes the visible representative of a principle and a virtue, involving models which govern our inventions, even as they refine our tastes; which elevate our genius even as they conciliate our affection. There is not a bud that blows, not a bird that flies, not an insect that chirrups beside our walls, not a cloud that drifts along the skies, but fully displays its uses to the soul whose eyes have been fully opened to the sense of the beautiful—in the fancies they inspire, the tastes they awaken, and the morals which they teach.

With a single illustration—one of the humblest which occurs to me—I shall leave you to your individual studies of the beautiful. Look now—there is a flower at your feet, such as the Spring flings everywhere along our common highways—one of those insignificant forms—not finger high from earth—with four little leaves of violet—possibly five—and a tiny bright eye in the centre. It is in your pathway. You would tread upon it, but for the sense of beauty in your soul. You pause. Something arrests your footstep—some little nimble fancy, which whispers your thought, and checks your movement. Mean-
while, other fancies glide into activity, and what a crowd of
human associations suddenly possess the mind! You are under
the dominion of a spell of reverie. You dream—and your
thought wanders back over long tracts of time. You recall
sacred memories which have all been awakened by the eye of
that simple little flower, looking upward and pleading to your
own. You recall your own innocent childhood, when you had
no fear of being trodden upon—when your only craving was to
be loved—your only care how to consume the sunshine and be
happy along the highways. With this memory, human forms
and faces gather beside you. There are all your young play-
mates. They seem to occupy the places of all the little violets
about you; and, as your reveries grow, you suddenly behold,
rising in the midst of them, one pale, sweet, sad looking dam-
sel—your LILY once—so real, so near that you feel that you
take her to your bosom by simply stretching forth your arms.
You know her, perhaps, as the one dear sister, who helped
rear with you the garden flowers; shared in your boyish
sports, and soothed all your childish sorrows. You have seen these
little violets strewing her grave with beauty, and the vivid
fancy is due to this simple association; and when the vision dis-
appears, you turn heedfully aside from the innocent daisy you
were about to bruise—you walk away with slow and careful
footsteps, so that you shall not graze a single leaflet. The
flower and the fancy together, have done their work! The
loving and the loftier moods are active within you. Your soul
becomes lifted—your heart softened, and you feel—God grant
that you do feel—that you are a better man that day!