XI.—THE PSEUDO-SCIENCE OF ÆSTHETICS.

By ALEXANDER J. FINBERG.

1. *The Foundations of Æsthetics*.—Professor James Sully has many claims to be regarded as the leading exponent of the Science of Æsthetics. If we refer to his scholarly and widely-informed labours in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*,* in his standard and authoritative manual of Psychology, *The Human Mind*, and to his numerous essays, it will be seen that the first business Æsthetics undertakes is to define the Beautiful. The definition given by Professor Bain, and accepted by Mr. Herbert Spencer, is the one most widely approved by writers on Æsthetics, and is the one which Mr. Sully adopts. Turning to Mr. Bain's *The Emotions and the Will* (Longmans, Green, and Co., 1875), to the chapter headed "Æsthetic Emotions," we find "most of the inquirers" (into the nature of the Beautiful) "laboured under a fallacy," supposing "that some single thing could be found entering as a common ingredient into the whole class of things named beautiful. Now, excepting the feeling itself, which may be presumed to have a certain uniform character, from the circumstance of the employment of the same name to denote it throughout, there is no one thing common to all the objects of beauty" (p. 227). These feelings are named Æsthetic feelings and emotions, and it is supposed that the aim of the Fine Arts is to produce these feelings. So by defining Beauty the aim and end of the Fine Arts are made explicit, and a scientific means of judging the value of a work of art is found, by comparing the effect it produces, with the

* *Ency. Brit.*, article "Æsthetics"; *The Human Mind* (Longmans, Green, and Co., 1892); *Sensation and Intuition* (1874); *Mind*, vol. i, p. 467.

effect it ought to produce. The Beautiful, according to Mr. Bain, is that which (1) can give us delight as its primary end, or does not minister to our necessities; (2) has no disagreeable accompaniments; and (3) is not restricted to individual enjoyment; or, as the theory is generally more briefly expressed, Beauty is (1) the Useless, (2) the Pleasant, and (3) what is not restricted to individual Enjoyment. If this definition can be accepted, and the preliminary assumptions of Æsthetics can be justified, a theory of the greatest practical advantage has been attained. The definition of Beauty shall first engage our attention, and I may say at once that as the third clause of it contains nothing I wish to dispute or criticise, and as moreover it does not appear to me to have any importance, I propose to ignore it, concentrating attention on the other two clauses.

2. *The Contrast between the Pleasant and the Useful.*—Mr. Bain writes: "A contrast has always been considered to exist between the Beautiful and the Useful," seeming to imply that there is a necessary and undisputed connection between Beauty and Uselessness. But this is not the case. The connection has been very largely disputed, by Socrates and Aristotle amongst the ancients, by Goethe and Hegel amongst moderns. And the trend of all our new-found knowledge of the relations of mankind to its environment points unmistakably to the identification of what is Pleasant as useful or beneficial, and not as useless. If only on these grounds, I should have been glad if Mr. Bain had given the reasons for his assumption. Debarred from attempts to check or verify his arguments, we can only fall back upon the exposition of his theory to see if the detailed statement of it must, as Mr. Bain seems to think, carry conviction with it.

3. *Special Difficulties in Testing any Definition of the Beautiful.*—But it is a matter of great difficulty to find any means of verifying a theory or definition of the Beautiful. Definitions of other orders of phenomena aim at expressing

that which is common to all members or particulars that constitute the group. If the definition is found not to include all members of the class, the definition is altered or enlarged. In *Æsthetics* it is different. Starting out to define everything to which the word Beautiful can be applied, presuming "a certain uniform character from the circumstance of the employment of the same word," yet, when a definition has once been attained, it is customary to deny the right to use the word Beautiful to anything not covered by the definition. In the same way, by defining Beauty it is asserted that Art is defined. But if it is pointed out that certain works of art do not fit into this theory, it is held to show, only that these are not "real" works of Art. It is evident that ordinary methods of verifying a definition are not applicable here. There is, somehow, such prestige attaching to a theory of the Beautiful that the fact of its mere existence stamps all things that can be admitted into its sacred circle as the "really" Beautiful, and as "real" Art, whilst what cannot be included, becomes, solely on that account, not truly Beautiful and not true Art. It is as well to realise these special difficulties, as they may make us more careful and critical in examining the demonstration of this theory.

4. *Is there anything Pleasant and Useless?*—This definition of Beauty as the Pleasant and at the same time the Useless may seem plausible enough, until one thinks about it. To make sure that we clearly and fully apprehend it, let us seek in the concrete the full meaning of the abstract. Let us endeavour to find tangible objects which answer this definition. Mr. Bain, feeling the same desirability, promises to devote a part of the chapter under consideration to "a brief survey of the principal forms and objects of Nature . . . which will contribute to elucidate" his doctrines. But it is a matter for surprise that the expectations thus raised are disappointed. We can only find vague assertions that there are, in the mineral world, in the vegetable and animal worlds, objects in which pleasing colours, outlines, forms, and movements may be found.

This is not, of course, to the point. What is sought is something pleasing and useless which can be considered Beautiful. But Mr. Bain does not seem to find much Beauty in the world. He exclaims somewhat testily that "Poets and painters have often dwelt on this region of Nature, till a sort of delirious idolatry has overwhelmed their faculty of discrimination, and it is hardly allowed to say that any vegetable species is not instinct with beauty." Mr. Bain by no means allows his discrimination to be overwhelmed, and, as far as I can find, three examples exhaust the list of Beautiful things he cares to specify. These are "blue skies," "green woods," and "Beauty of Character." But, surely, Human Beauty may be considered Beautiful! and though not specified, perhaps by an oversight, it would be safe to accept it as an example in the concrete of this definition. Unfortunately it labours under one important disqualification. The human form is somehow necessary to human beings, it cannot be regarded as useless, therefore it would stultify the definition. Under these circumstances the human form together with most of the things which by universal consent are considered Beautiful are stated to be not Beautiful. We shall come across several of these things when we come to treat of the Ugly.

5. *Examples of Beauty given are not Useless.*—Returning to the three samples of concrete Beauty Mr. Bain does give us, I must remark that Beauty of Character, though a very pleasant thing to contemplate, does not seem to me useless or unnecessary to human welfare. Curiously enough, neither does it seem so to Mr. Bain, for he describes it as that character which is most beneficial to the rest of mankind. If this is Mr. Bain's idea of uselessness, he must use the word in a somewhat different sense from most people. A consideration of the other two objects named, woods and sky, seems to point to the same conclusion. To say the sky is no use to mankind individually or collectively, neither are woods, seems a most astonishing statement. Far from elucidating the author's

doctrines, the examples he does give seem to me only to involve them in obscurity.

6. *But Examples of Ugliness given are Useless.*—If Mr. Bain is chary of particularising what objects he considers Beautiful, he has no such scruples with what is not Beautiful—the Ugly. We will examine these negative instances and see if they can help us. But I must ask a question at the threshold of our inquiry into the Ugly. In *Æsthetics* is it considered logical to argue that a definition of Beauty implies a definition of the reverse of Beauty—the Ugly? That the definition of the Ugly must necessarily be the reverse of the definition of Beauty? I feel diffident on this point because Mr. Bain, whom I have regarded as an authority on Logic, does not seem to admit this implication. I should have thought that if his definition of Beauty be accepted, his definition of the Ugly must be (1) the Unpleasant, and (2) the Useful.

Among the things not Beautiful enumerated by Mr. Bain are “beasts of prey, vermin, and the natural enemies of mankind, snails, earthworms, centipedes, frogs, blackbeetles, and earwigs.” Some of these things are certainly rather unpleasant, but are they useful? Mr. Bain’s chief reason for considering them not Beautiful, is “the presence of mischievous qualities, or power to inflict palpable damage to person or property.” Truly a very useful quality to mankind. If Beauty is pleasant and useless, and the Ugly is unpleasant and also useless, why is Uselessness a necessary part of the definition of Beauty?

7. *Human Beauty is not Beautiful because of its Unpleasant Associations.*—From the ugly in the animal world Mr. Bain passes to human ugliness. “A graceful figure is approved on architectural grounds of adequate, yet light support. The curvature of the outline passes repeatedly through points of contrary flexure, turning from convex to concave, and again resuming the prevailing convex.” In spite of this handsome acknowledgment, the fact that “great beauty in the human form must involve in its depths the sensualities of love seems

to disqualify the human form in the concrete from any claim to Beauty." Not being able to claim the human form as Useless and Pleasant, the requirements of his theory force it into the other category. Being Useful it must be Unpleasant, and "great Beauty" must be considered Ugly.

8. *Qualities Associated together in the Concrete are Associated together in Idea.*—But it may be argued that Mr. Bain would regard animals and things as Beautiful in so far as they possess the bodily attractions which would meet the requirements of his theory, apart from the characteristics which may exist together with these qualities. And he would, perhaps, argue that these objects were not absolutely Beautiful, but only Beautiful in regard to these qualities. But is it possible to dissociate in the mind of any intelligent person qualities which throughout the whole experience of the human race have always been found inseparable? Is it possible to consider only the Beauty of colour, outline, &c., of, say, a tiger or a lion, without somewhere or other taking into consideration the "unpleasant accompaniments" which are involved in the nature of these animals? That it is not possible to make this abstraction is proved by Mr. Bain himself, by his treatment of the human form. It would also contradict the Psychological Law of Contiguity.

9. *But these Ideas by some "Magic" can shed, on occasions, some of the Elements that constitute them.*—However, Mr. Bain explicitly states that many things in the concrete, which are disqualified by their disagreeable or useful accompaniments from being Beautiful, can be considered Beautiful in idea,—if ideally re-presented. As I understand it, Mr. Bain says that, for example, Sensuality in the concrete is not Beautiful, the idea we form of sensuality from witnessing it, or experiencing it, is likewise not Beautiful, but this same idea, when stimulated by some work of Graphic Art, is frequently Beautiful. "Great beauty in the human form must involve in its depths the sensuality of love." The idea of the human form is the mental

representative of the actual human form and its associates, the emotions stimulated by its presence "enter into mental partnership with that object and the two individuals of the couple are henceforward able to revive each other, the object recalling the emotion, and the emotion restoring the object." But we are asked to believe that when the object is recalled by a work of Art, the object only restores the pleasing emotions, and the idea appears in consciousness shed of all its unpleasant associations. Pleasures of the table and the senses, in the concrete, have disagreeable accompaniments, and the ideas formed of them contain representations of these elements, but when these ideas are stimulated or called into being in one certain way they are supposed, in some inexplicable manner—by some "magic" is Mr. Bain's scientific way of describing it—to get rid of these disagreeable elements.

10. *Which cannot be Reconciled to the Law of Contiguity.*—How is this wonderful proceeding to be reconciled to the Law of Contiguity, perhaps the best established and most important law of Psychological Science, and which Mr. Bain has so ably expounded? "Actions, Sensations, and States of Feeling, occurring together or in close succession, tend to grow together or cohere, in such a way that when any one of them is afterwards presented to the mind, the others are apt to be brought up in order" (*The Senses and the Intellect*, 4th Edition, p. 341). And again: "The properties that we find to hold of sensation in the actual, we may ascribe to the ideal" ("Sensation in the actual" meaning, I presume, the concrete cause of the Sensation). Or what becomes of the complete "identity between actual and revived feelings"? (an "actual feeling" being, as I guess from the context, a feeling aroused by an actual object, a "revived feeling" being one called into being by any other means, by objects associated with the actual object, by words or signs).

11. *Definition of the Beautiful as a Definition of the Aims of the Fine Arts.*—Thus far we have studied Mr. Bain's theory as a

definition of the Beautiful. It will be remembered it is also a definition of the Fine Arts, or rather the aims of the Fine Arts. What the aims of Poetry and Music are, or should be, I do not feel myself competent to discuss. But it may be useful to recall what is known of the aims of the Arts of Painting and Sculpture. I have not space to enter upon fresh contentious matter here, so I will briefly indicate what archæologists and historians of Art are practically unanimous upon.

12. *Contradicted by History of Art.*—In Egypt the aim and end of Painting and Sculpture was religious, social, and monarchical, expressing in the oldest language the doctrines of its priests, glorifying its rulers and the achievements of the race, teaching the nation to respect itself.

In Greece the Graphic Arts were similarly employed in the service and in the popularisation of religion, and as a means for the propagation of what were considered national and social virtues.

In Italy they were found the most effective means of bringing before the minds of men the horrors of hell—the fearful punishments awaiting evildoers in the hypothetical future—which the wise men of that time considered the best means of preventing wrongdoing here on earth. They voiced vividly and unmistakably the temporal splendour and power of the Christ who was regarded as the founder of their Church. And the bewitching grace and loveliness of the tender Mary became in their hands the symbol of the sacredness of motherhood, the supreme manifestation of woman's affection and self-sacrifice. The written word, with its tedious and cumbersome methods of calling up ideas by means of arbitrary signs whose significance has to be learnt by a long process, was found to require supplementing, and was even to a large extent superseded by the Graphic language, which calls up ideas by signs invariably associated with them by experience, and whose power of recall is therefore so instantaneous and so impressive. In Mediæval Italy the social virtues, from

being the care of the State, had become the care of the Church. And Art, as the servant of the Church, popularised only those virtues whose importance the Church wished to emphasise.

That this has been the aim and end of Art in these three countries is not disputed. And when it is remembered that at least ninety-nine hundredths of the Art which the general consent of mankind regards as Beautiful—as “true” Art—aimed directly at serving the cause of religion and of sociological stability and advancement, and was produced under the guidance and immediate superintendence of the wisest and most capable men of the time, the bearing of these facts upon Mr. Bain’s theory becomes manifest. If any successful Art has been produced that has aimed at giving “delight as its primary end” and that has shunned all disagreeable accompaniments, I have not been able to discover it. If such exists Mr. Bain should have specified it, and he has not done so.

13. *Mr. Bain’s definition of Beauty does not include anything generally considered Beautiful.*—This is the result then of a careful and I hope I may say an impartial and respectful examination of Mr. Bain’s definition of everything to which the word Beautiful is generally applied. I can find nothing which this definition can be considered to define. In the absence of any concrete examples of this theory we are not able to, or sure that we can rightly, apprehend his abstraction. Moreover, the three examples of the Beautiful given by the author seem to contradict his definition because they must be considered Useful, whilst many of the things expressly excluded from his definition—examples of the Ugly—seem to fit the definition better, as they must be regarded as Useless. Most of the things universally regarded as Beautiful are by Mr. Bain himself confessed as not included in his definition, because they must be acknowledged as Useful. In short, nothing has been found to reconcile what seems the inherent contradiction between the two parts of the definition. We can find no grounds to justify the severance of the Pleasant from the

Useful, which Biological Science has done so much to join together. And the definition of the Beautiful, which is also claimed to define the end of Art, is found to be in direct contradiction to what we already know of the aims of the greatest number and by far the most important productions of the Graphic Arts.

14. *The words Useless and Useful are vague terms.*—But what is meant by Useless and Useful? It is sometimes assumed that this theory only means that Beauty and Art are not immediately necessary to the support of life. And it is, of course, true that Beauty and Art cannot be eaten. But if what is sufficient to barely support any kind of life is all that is to be regarded as Useful, the slightest consideration will show that not the Fine Arts alone, but almost all our Arts and Industries are Useless; neither can Science or Religion be considered Useful. Of course Mr. Bain does not use the word in this very limited sense, and everything that can help the full life, mental, moral, as well as physical, of the individual or the race is, to that extent, useful. If we turn to Mr. Herbert Spencer's treatment of the same subject we find this more clearly stated,

15. *Words Useful and Useless defined by Mr. Spencer.*—Mr. Spencer emphatically adopts the definition which we have found such grave reasons for suspecting. In the ninth chapter of his *Principles of Psychology* (vol. ii) "the bodily powers, the intellectual faculties, the instincts, appetites, passions," and those "egoistic sentiments which prompt care of property and liberty, or those ego-altruistic and altruistic ones which regulate conduct towards others," are demonstrated as necessary and useful, as they have for their immediate or remote end the maintenance of individual and social life; if these do not act, "impediments to complete life are caused by absence of means or by the alienation of fellow-men." And we are asked to regard Art as useless because the maintenance of individual and social life is not its immediate or remote end. We have seen that, as a matter of fact, nearly all Graphic Art has had

the maintenance of the social life as its immediate aim, but, as Mr. Spencer says, "it is a large subject, demanding more time and space than I can give it." He has only time to spin a theory of the genesis and development of the faculties employed in Art, if Art were such as Mr. Bain imagines it. I venture to suggest this theory is not necessary ; it can hardly be considered plausible.

16. *Æsthetic Sensations, Perceptions, and Emotions are the same as ordinary Sensations, Perceptions, and Emotions.*—"Throughout the whole range of sensations, perceptions, and emotions, which we do not class as *Æsthetic*, the states of consciousness serve simply as aids and stimuli to guidance and action." This, as I understand it, is a statement of a well-ascertained fact that every sensation has some motor or ideational outcome. Mr. Spencer's theory, and he does not produce one shred of evidence to support it, is that the sensations, &c., classed as *Æsthetic* must be assumed as producing no motor or ideational effect whatever. Yet "the *Æsthetic* feelings and sentiments are not, as our words and phrases lead us to suppose" (indeed they do!), "feelings and sentiments that essentially differ in origin and nature from the rest. They are nothing else than particular modes of excitement of the faculties, which, otherwise excited, produce those other modes of consciousness constituting our ordinary impressions, ideas, and feelings. The same agencies are in action" (p. 646).

17. *But, unlike ordinary Sensations, &c., have no ideational or motor outcomes.*—It is, indeed, a striking commentary on Mr. Bain's theory that Mr. Spencer has been driven to invent such an extraordinary assumption to support it. Is it easy to believe, or even imagine, that sensations excited in a certain manner produce certain psychic results at one time, and the same sensations, using the same nerve-tracks, excited at another time, produce different results ? That force or energy applied to any sensible part of our organism should be lost in its

nervous track seems to "flaunt itself" even in the face of the Law of the Conservation of Energy. How can the same agencies produce at one time one result, and at another a different? If Nature is thus capricious, what knowledge can we hope to attain? It seems to me more reasonable to suppose that Nature always produces uniform results, and that Mr. Bain's theory is a mistake, than to accept the theory and suppose, with Mr. Spencer, that Nature, even for one occasion only, is not uniform.

18. *Biological Science necessitates the Pleasant being regarded as Useful.*—But there is an important implication in Mr. Bain's theory that if Mr. Spencer had had "more time" he might have considered. How is it that Æsthetic activities can be supposed to be a source of such extraordinary delight to the human race, and which Mr. Spencer expects "to play an increasing part in human life as evolution advances," and yet can be regarded as Useless? How is it, in fact, that in the human race agreeable or desired feelings are not the concomitants of activities conducive to the maintenance of life? It is not that Mr. Spencer takes a pessimistic view of human development. His optimism, somewhat "chastened" it is true, is well known. And as no one has stated more lucidly and admirably than Mr. Spencer himself the connection Biology renders inevitable between pleasures and actions beneficial to the individual and the race, I cannot do better than quote him:—"If we substitute for the word Pleasure the equivalent phrase—a feeling which we seek to bring into consciousness and retain there—and if we substitute for the word Pain the equivalent phrase—a feeling which we seek to get out of consciousness and to keep out; we see at once that, if the states of consciousness which a creature endeavours to maintain are the correlatives of injurious actions, and if states of consciousness which it endeavours to expel are the correlatives of beneficial actions, it must quickly disappear through persistence in the injurious and avoidance of the beneficial. In other words, those races of beings only can have

survived in which, on the average, agreeable or desired feelings went along with activities conducive to the maintenance of life, while disagreeable and habitually-avoided feelings went along with activities directly or indirectly destructive of life" (*Princ. Psych.*, vol. i, p. 280).

19. *It is an inevitable corollary from the Theory of Evolution that the Pleasant cannot be the Useless.*—And again it is "the inevitable corollary from the general doctrine of Evolution, that pleasures are the incentives to life-supporting acts and pains the deterrents from life-destroying acts. Not only do we see that among inferior sentient creatures this guidance is undeniably efficient, but also that it is undeniably efficient in ourselves, so far as regards the functions on which life immediately depends. And we cannot here suppose that a regulative system, efficient for all essential actions, has to be reversed for the actions growing out of them" (*Princ. Psych.*, vol. i, p. 284). It is on these grounds, I submit, that Mr. Bain's definition of Beauty and Art as the Pleasant and the Useless is no longer tenable.

20. *Nugatory Results of Æsthetics.*—Yet this theory is the one most widely accepted in England at the present time, and its influence can be traced in almost every writing on Æsthetic and kindred subjects, as Archæology and Anthropology. It is taught in Schools and Universities, and I believe University Extension lecturers are employed to spread it, and the deductions that can be drawn from it, as though it were possessed of all the validity of a scientific Law. And it is the foundation upon which the Science of Æsthetics—to which we must now return—has elected to base itself. If the arguments I have endeavoured to produce possess any degree of validity, the whole structure itself must fall to the ground. For deductions, however logically perfect they may be, can possess no more authority than the assumption from which they derive. Depending on such a foundation it is not to be wondered at

that Æsthetics has thrown no light on the nature and possibilities of Art, or its relations to our other activities. No wonder it has not cleared up, or made less obscure, one single problem it has set itself to solve; that it has, on the contrary, only succeeded in obscuring the issues; and has been a most fruitful source of untenable theories, of baseless and absurd assumptions.

21. *Its Methods Unscientific.*—But it is not on the score of the unsatisfactory nature of the one theory upon which Æsthetics at present depends that I have ventured to dub it a pseudo-science. It is because I feel fully convinced that its methods are essentially unscientific, and that no theory of the Beautiful that will throw any light on Artistic problems is possible, owing to the nature of its subject-matter. It is of no consequence whether the things themselves, or the ideas to which the word Beautiful may be applied, be chosen. As everyone seems at liberty to apply the term Beautiful to anything and everything in heaven or on earth, there is practically no limit to the ideas of Beauty and things of Beauty to be examined. Not only the characters of the objects, but the characters and conditions of each individual who used the word, would have to be investigated. For if individual idiosyncrasies were not studied, how would it be possible to explain why the term was applied by one individual to one thing, and not by everybody? This introduction of personal idiosyncrasies, besides making the subject-matter practically limitless, also precludes any scientific method of treatment, for language does not exist which can express modes of affection particular to only one individual.

It was to meet some of these objections that Mr. Bernard Bosanquet, whose scholarly *History of Æsthetic* gives such an admirable account of the multifarious efforts that have been made to solve the problem, has proposed to limit the inquiry, into the Beautiful as revealed in Art. But it cannot be

contended that all Art is Beautiful. The fact that the chief practical result Æsthetic Science promises itself, is to be able to judge of works of Art, and be enabled to separate the Beautiful in Art from the less Beautiful and the Ugly, shows that all Art cannot be considered Beautiful. How is it possible, then, to study only the Beautiful as revealed in Art? How can we study scientifically a part, and that an undefined part, of any subject? If our subject-matter were Art in its entirety, we have a large mass of accessible material open to our investigation, but if we are confined to study only those works of Art which contain a something which affects different people in different ways, I fail to see where a beginning can be made.

22. *And not likely to throw any light on Art.*—Many of the best and acutest intellects for over two thousand years have endeavoured to define Beauty, but we have no one definition which can command adhesion. The definition we have examined to-night, and found so unthinkable and so self-contradictory, was only the culminating point, the crystallisation of generations of effort. But even a perfect theory of the way the word Beautiful is used would only possess a sort of philological interest, and would demonstrate what is already sufficiently well known, that words are used in an illogical and loosely metaphorical manner. It would teach us nothing about Art, for the assumption that Beauty is the aim and end of Art is a purely arbitrary one, only made by those who do not know what they mean by the word Beauty. It cannot even be discussed until Æsthetics can satisfactorily define its subject-matter. As it has not yet done this, and seems never likely to be able to do so, and though the pseudo-science looms large in the encyclopædias and in the printed page of to-day, the first step towards the bringing into being of a Science of Æsthetics has not yet been taken, and does not seem likely ever to be taken.

23. *Art only to be understood by comparative study of existing works of Art.*—But it may well be asked, Are the problems Æsthetics has aimed at answering insoluble? Must we give over the endeavour to understand the function of Art? to place it in its proper relation in our intellectual hierarchy? or to find a standard of criticism which shall have more validity than mere personal bias? By no means. There are the materials at hand for the construction of a real science, as exact as any of what are known as the moral sciences. We have the works of Art themselves. And I reckon it the chief amongst the many mischievous results of Æsthetics, that it has had the tendency to withdraw attention from this legitimate field of study, to run riot after such a shadow of the mind as the Beautiful—this *Eidolon* imposed on the understanding by words “confused, badly defined, and hastily and irregularly abstracted from things.” This is the point I would insist upon most strongly. If the problems of the Graphic Arts are ever to be answered, we must accept the works of the Graphic Arts in their entirety as our subject-matter. The comparative method, the most fruitful of all the methods of the physical sciences, should be adopted. The first step will necessarily be to work out a definition which shall include every work of Art, from the first stammerings of the infant mind of mankind to the most complete work of the most highly developed intellect which has chosen this means of expression. When this first step has been taken the whole of this pseudo-science of Æsthetics will take its proper place amongst the futilities of metaphysical speculations. The Beautiful will be manifest, then, as a mere adjective, masquerading as an entity, as an attribute divorced for the nonce from its substance; and just as dangerous as other grass-widows generally are. The Graphic Arts will be recognised as merely a language, a means of communication, differing from the spoken and written languages only in degree, essentially

the same in kind. Then, and then only, may we expect a real theory of the Art, then may we expect a positive Graphic Science, fruitful not in wearisome and profitless discussions, but useful in results to the Public, to Art, and the cause of Artistic Education. And having put aside the misleading methods of *Æsthetics*, I do also hope that the word *Æsthetic* itself, this unfortunate misbirth of Time, the ill-starred offspring of German metaphysics and Psychological ignorance may at length be laid to rest.