

**PERSONAL APPEARANCE
AND THE CULTURE
OF BEAUTY, WITH
HINTS AS TO CHARACTER**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649669387

Personal Appearance and the Culture of Beauty, with Hints as to Character by T. S. Sozinsky

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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BY

T. S. SOZINSKEY, M. D., PH. D.

"The proper study of mankind is man."—POPE.

PHILADELPHIA:
ALLEN, LANE & SCOTT, 233 SOUTH FIFTH STREET.
1877.

Entered, according to act of Congress, in the year 1877, by
T. S. SOZINSKEY, M. D., Ph. D.,
In the office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington, D. C.

Printed by
ALLEN, LANE & SCOTT,
231 South Fifth Street,
Philadelphia.

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INTRODUCTION.

"Thro' Nature's boundless reign
No charm is lost, no beauty blooms in vain."—MRS. HEMANS.

In the appearance of things, what is the great source of attractiveness? What is it in forms and colors that awakens our sensibilities and thrills us with pleasure? It is beauty. Beauty! There is no charm so potent to captivate; no power sways such delightful influence. It is the aim of creation. If you doubt it, cast your eyes towards heaven, or look out over the face of nature. From the infinitely great to the infinitely small, it is all-pervading. How beautiful are the stars! How beautiful the minute crystals of the dust beneath our feet! And what of the rainbow or the flowers?

"O thou Goddess,
Thou divine Nature, how thyself thou blazon'st!"—SHAKESPEARE.

It is the soul of art,—its portrayal the aim and end of artists. Painters, sculptors, architects, poets—everybody who has any harmony in himself pays homage and court to this divine principle in nature. It is possessed of a subtle fascination. Having seen it, we crave communion with it. As by instinct we kneel before it, and the more we know of it the more faithful and joyous the spirit of our devotion.

Now, if everything were perfect everything were beautiful, and the pleasure of existence would be complete and unbroken. There would be no jarring notes; heavenly harmony would embrace creation. Would that it were so! Alas! imperfections are plentiful, and especially in our race—in man. While this is so, or rather in proportion as it is so, the beauty of all else is lost to him. Like a shattered mirror, the imperfect mind distorts the images of the most perfect things. It is as an unstrung harp, which, struck even by a master's hand, yields naught but discord. Our sensibility and taste must be attuned before we can receive the full measure of enjoyment from the beauties of the world. As the noted English art critic, Ruskin, writes, "The sensation of beauty is dependent on a pure, right, and open state of the heart both for its truth and its intensity." On this principle, that it is what is perfect in us that is alive to perfection, the same author again remarks:—"Beauty has been appointed by the Deity to be one of the elements by which the human soul is continually sustained."

There are certainly plenty of inducements to cultivate our feelings for the beautiful—our æsthetic sensibilities. In this way we open up to ourselves unlimited sources of joy and happiness. Nature's myriad works and all the productions of art will minister to our delights and enable us to banquet continually on pleasures. Springs of enchantment will surround us on every hand. Every bud and blossom, every lawn and landscape, every picture and statue—whatever comes within the range of our senses, will invite our attention and proffer charms which will give zest and sweetness to our lives. Thus can we

make all things pay us tribute, and in a manner claim them as our own.

But even without cultivation nearly everybody is, in some fashion, a devotee of beauty. Let it be present in an object, and we believe there is scarcely anyone who shall fail to recognize and relish it. He must be the veriest barbarian—nay, a creature not completely human in nature, who is entirely insensible to the beautiful. When asked why people like to spend much time with beautiful things, Aristotle replied:—"That is a question fit for a blind man to ask."

We are devoted to the beautiful in minerals, in plants, in animals, in our dress, in a word, in everything, and no expense or pains are spared in gratifying the taste. Everybody will acknowledge that this is so and nobody has any fault to find. But notwithstanding this and all that we have said about beauty being a universal aim in creation and the cultivation of it the end and aim of the fine arts, and about the most beautiful things being the most perfect, there still lingers in the minds of many the foolish idea that it is wrong to prize and cultivate personal beauty. They seem to think that it is pious to denounce it, or at least to profess to disregard it. These people must be insincere in what they say, because they cannot but understand that what nature strives for is not a vanity or an unworthy object of human ambition. Nobody is silly enough to advocate ugliness as sacred and desirable. Yet, as a matter of fact, the man who denounces personal beauty is precisely in that position. His sentiment is false; he misrepresents himself. St. Paul was very emphatic in recommending people to duly regard