

**THE DESIRE OF BEAUTY:
BEING INDICATIONS
FOR ÆSTHETIC CULTURE**

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The Desire of Beauty: Being Indications for æsthetic Culture by Theodore Child

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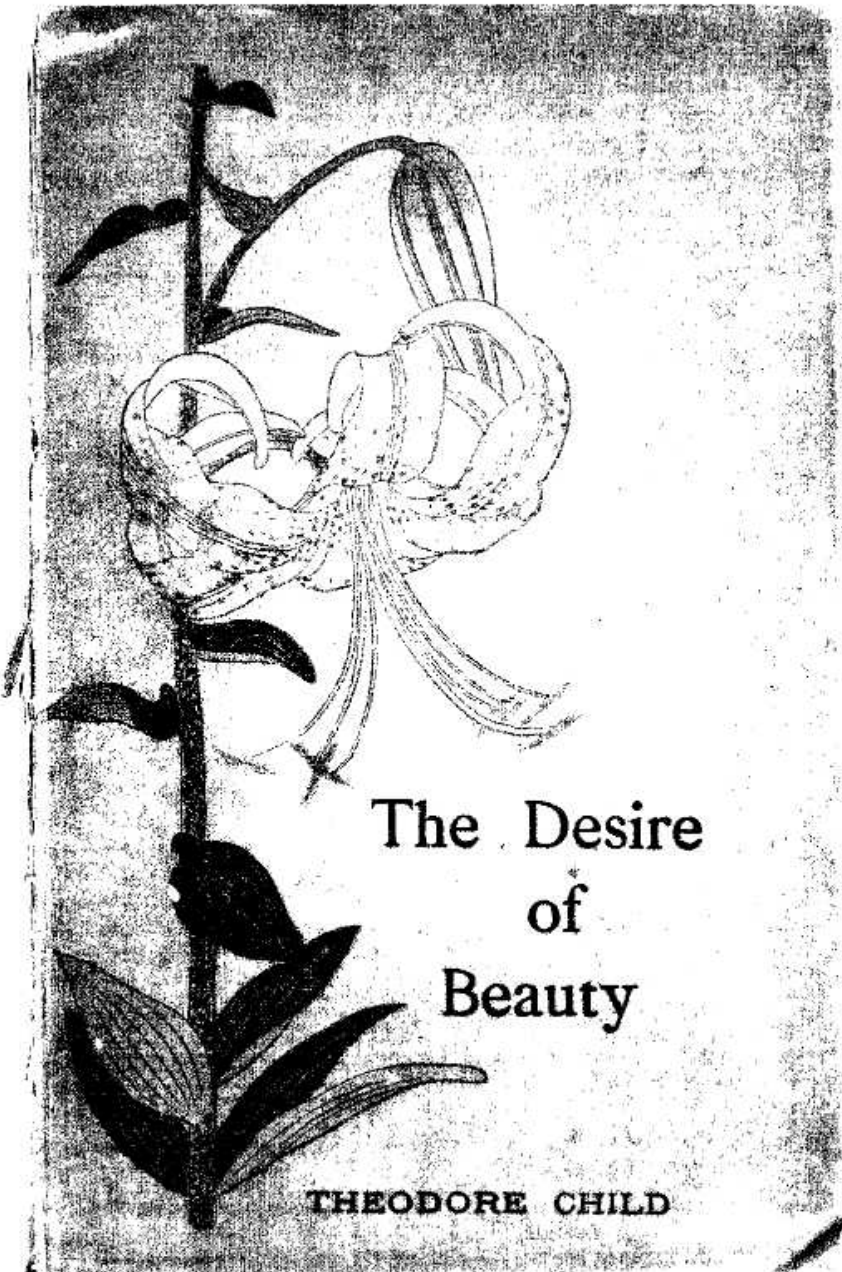
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of
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*BEING INDICATIONS FOR
ÆSTHETIC CULTURE*

BY
THEODORE CHILD



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THE SOLITUDE OF THE SOUL

WHAT a difficult thing it is to discuss orally with one or more persons! How difficult to make them understand one's own thoughts and to understand theirs in turn! Above all things, how difficult and how full of snares and of pitfalls is a discussion on some æsthetic subject, for in the domain of the sensations and emotions produced by art and its manifestations there seems to reign nothing but confusion, ambiguity, and misunderstanding. On almost every point that can be raised, clear comprehension is rarely attained by those who discuss. If we ask what is meant by the art

sentiment, what is the nature of the artist, what the nature of the critic, and what the *rôle* of criticism, the replies will be innumerable ; but, for the want of the leisure and method of Socrates and his tenacious pupils, those who take part in the argument generally lose sight of truth and of the question at issue, and their discourse soon degenerates into a flux of words without serenity.

The souvenir of many such empty discussions and of the sensations of loneliness, disappointment, and irritation which one feels when the argument ends, as it must end, in a *fiasco*, has prompted me to endeavour to write out clearly in the tranquillity of my closet some of the affirmations and suggestions that I would fain have made in many a past debate had my tongue been readier and had my interlocutors been more calm and tenacious of truth.