

of the suspect, in youthful debating societies, his favorite theme was classic Greece, her grand history, and her esthetic mythology, and in later years, the writer heard him deliver an original poem which bore the earmarks of the same sympathy and train of thought and expression. The reason for concealment, the writer has failed to divine, for the gentleman was naturally proud of his literary productions, and surely this would have added to his modest fame. The writer, long and well as he knew him, never ventured to make the accusation to him, but he is sure that he could have said to him: "Thou art the man."

But whosoever may be the author, the writer hopes that the poem may be deemed worthy of republication in your valued magazine, inasmuch as he thinks that it "makes a few remarks appropriate to the occasion"—the most momentous crisis in the history of the world.

HORATIO GATES GIBSON,

Brig. General U. S. A.

## THE RELIGION OF BEAUTY.

BY F. W. FITZPATRICK.

THE eye is virtually the main doorway to the mind and is undoubtedly also one of the most important factors, or instruments, or whatever you want to call them, that can be used in the process of civilizing, educating, bettering the human kind, the *genus homo*. We have evidences of it every day.

We just naturally crave for pleasant or pretty things to look at, and light is one of them. It is also one of the greatest crime-preventors known. We are not going to delve into a lot of statistics, for this is not a scientific treatise but just a chat between friends. But we do know that nearly all crimes are "deeds of darkness." The philosophy of the thing has been known for ages, but only in very recent years have we had gumption enough to apply what we knew. For instance, certain localities in our larger cities have for years been renowned for their lawlessness and bloody deeds; those were dark and dismal streets where travel was most unsafe after sunset. Policemen in pairs patrolled those beats, expedients galore were resorted to to reduce the criminality thereabout, but murders and the like went merrily on with but slight abatement. Then some one had a flash of intelligence and a few arc-lights were installed in those streets and alleys, the ash- and the garbage-man cleaned them up with greater regularity and, presto, they're as safe now for night travel as is Broadway or the main thoroughfare of any city. A bright light and crime are not congenial bedfellows, one invariably tumbles the other out.

So with our tenements and the humbler domiciles, the wisest regulation any city can introduce is that which prescribes a reasonable amount of outdoor window surface for light and air into every living- or sleeping-room. That regulation has cut down crime and disease amazingly.

Comparatively few men are attracted to the corner barroom for the actual drinking they can do there. It's the companionship, sociability, and, most of all, the bright lights, the cheer, the sparkle, the pictures, the beauty (?) of it all that allures. Provide those features in some other combination, without the *guzzling*, and you'll cut down the bar attendance mightily.

Not so many years ago a manufacturer would establish his plant at a convenient point, but that was about all he thought of. Even if the buildings were half-way respectable the surroundings were sadly neglected. All around those buildings scrap-heaps accumulated, the more unsightly the place became, the dirtier, why, the busier was it supposed to be, the more prosperous its owner. Indeed the so-called hard-headed business man would have been ashamed to make a concession to, or expend any money for, what he termed "silly prettiness." Art and Business couldn't travel together, the latter looked down upon the former as effeminate, an evidence of weakness, something to be scorned. Then came the insurance experts who made at least decency in factories profitable. They offered lowered premiums if those factories were cleaned up a bit and the refuse removed. Not that the insurance companies were doing this in any virtuous or *pro bono publico* spirit, but simply because it would lessen the danger of fire and their consequent losses. Followed then the pure-food "cranks" who had the authorities step in and insist that in at least certain factories extreme cleanliness must be the rule. And, my, there was a howl of opposition!

But after a while it was noted by the alert business men that in those "reformed" factories the operatives did better work, more of it, and seemed more cheerful. So much so that the keen business men began to put one and one together, and it dawned upon them that cleanliness, much daylight and at least half-way decent surroundings were assets instead of mere expenses, that what had been termed useless extravagance was actually producing a profit. A few pioneers plunged even farther, they made their workshops beautiful, cheerful, convenient for the workers. They actually added frills, rest-rooms, pictures, gardens with real fountains in them and behold, it all produced big returns upon the investment. The

workers felt it, they came better dressed, cleaner, brighter in mind and body; more self-respecting and self-reliant they speeded up the work and evidenced greater loyalty to their employers. To-day the man who maintains a slipshod, dirty, unattractive factory generally has an exceedingly poor investment on hand. Art in Business *does* pay.

Why, in Cuba they've known that for years, and in the big cigar factories a good reader is employed to read interesting stories to the workers. Their work is the better for it.

A man who puts a fresh coat of paint on his house feels an inch taller when he goes down the street. Take a hobo and wash him up and dress him in natty raiment and he'll act like a gentleman—for a while anyway. When he falls it will be because he's very far gone in some disease or other and very weak. Isn't drink a disease?

An old school-teacher was telling me some time ago that in the old times when he took a village school where the big bullies had a reputation for manhandling every teacher who had attempted to preside there, his first move was to whitewash and clean up that schoolroom, hang up a few chromos in it, put a couple of cans of flowers in the window, and then invite those bullies to help him keep the flowers watered and a certain daintiness about. He avers he never had any trouble, and his physique was not such as to inspire awe, so he attributes the reform to the power of Art over Matter!

The civic leagues and societies that get after the authorities to compel the cleaning up of cities and who offer prizes and other inducements for well-kept lawns, attractive flower-beds, reformed back yards, and the like, are doing more real good work to advance culture, civilization, and Christianity than are the missionaries sent, at infinitely greater cost, into far distant lands.

Perhaps I may be thought to be a bit radical when I say that Art should be made more or less compulsory. I mean by *Art*, Beauty. A little child may and probably will squirm at being bathed. We know that bathing is necessary, therefore it is administered willy-nilly. So in this case, we know that the general public, much as the little child, rebels, just naturally squirms at anything intended for its own good. Here's the point: By years of patient hammering we have gotten our cities to insisting upon buildings being erected a certain way, so they will neither fall down, nor burn up with the old-time alacrity; we've secured the relegation of soap or other smelly factories to regions where they no longer

offend us; so with boiler and such noisy shops; we're cutting down the bell-ringing, yelling, and other unnecessary noises in our cities. Our ears and our noses are being fairly protected, albeit it has been hard work, for each step was most bitterly opposed, it was fought for tooth and nail. The broad principle of the greater good of the many even at the cost of the individual is not very well understood here. The average American citizen, proud of his liberty and rights, couldn't get it out of his noddle that he ought to be able to build where and how he pleased upon his own property and make all the racket he wanted to and be as much of a nuisance as he might elect. His "personal" liberty stuck out all over him porcupine-like. Well, we've done so well for the ears and nose and progressed so far for the safety of the rest of our anatomy that, it seems to me, we ought to give some little thought and attention to the comfort and pleasure of the eyes as well.

In many cities they've followed Washington's example and have an Art Commission that passes upon all public work to keep it in harmony with some established plan of artistic development. I'm urging that we go further than that. Our Building Departments carefully examine every plan made for private as well as for public buildings and prescribe just how the walls shall be for strength, how high the building may go, what the sanitary details must be, etc., etc., all in the effort to make our buildings safe and healthful. The people have become used to such control and direction. Why not go a step more? There have been many such steps since the first big fight that was made because the city wanted its sidewalks alike and the same width and level. Theretofore personal liberty was such that you walked on brick, stone, plank, or cinders, all in the same block, and you went up or down steps to the different levels to which the kind-hearted owners of property built their sidewalks in an earnest endeavor to have you break your neck.

The city Art Commissions should have greater power and should cooperate with the Building Departments and pass on all plans for all buildings, private as well as public. Not that I'm clamoring for a certain style of architecture, or that greater expense and elaboration be insisted upon in private buildings, all I want is that our eyes should not be abused, offended, murdered any more than we permit our ears and noses to be. Buildings on any one block should conform to certain major lines, they should not be allowed to scream at each other, there should be a certain harmony of color and material, an effort made toward the really artistic. As it is now buildings are planted down every one differ-

ent from the other, a new and sometimes startling creation every twenty-five feet, for all the world as if a confectioner attempted a novel confection by sticking together slices of every imaginable kind, color, shape, and previous condition of cake he could lay hands upon and then wonder at the hodge-podge effect.

Why should we have to look upon buildings that appal us with their utter ugliness? Why should we put all our efforts into one class of building? For instance, here in Washington there are wondrously fine public buildings, marvels of art, but the private individual is permitted to build any freak construction he wishes and the uglier it is the better it seems to serve his purpose. In consequence there are miles and miles of hideous brick rows and, spite of the beautiful government buildings, the city as a whole is irreparably marred, spoiled beyond redemption. Everywhere, in Cleveland as well as Washington, in San Francisco as well as in New York there are misfits, awful efforts at originality, colors that swear at one, "designs" that were conceived in sin and brought forth in terrible travail. In some cities they rule distressingly crippled beggars off the streets; by the same token why must we tolerate advertising signs and such things that literally insult any sense of beauty we may possess.

It's a big field, there's endless work to be done in it. We need to cultivate beauty in our homes, in our schools, on our streets, everywhere in our lives and wherever we are, and we'll be the better for it all. They say cleanliness is next to godliness and, I maintain, beauty is first cousin to cleanliness, nay, I do believe they are twins!

Now, don't get excited, art and beauty do not necessarily mean the expenditure of great sums of money, building with fine marbles and gold, dressing in satins and sables. Those words are merely synonyms for good taste and refinement. I've seen a simple gingham dress that expressed beauty as forcefully as did any elaborate gown by Worth, and one of the most beautiful bits of architecture done this year anywhere in the country was a modest little three thousand dollar bungalow on a far western hill.

Perhaps I haven't made myself quite clear as to what Art is. At first blush it may seem simple enough to decide, but lexicologists as well as artists and other recognized authorities have fussed for years over the term and are fussing still. We find variants of the term that I think have no place there, distinctions and additions that have crept in and are almost recognized. To-day you have to specify and term your art, fine art, useful art, mechanic art.

Why, even our pugs practise a pugilistic art and we are barbered by tonsorial artists and dressed by a sartorial one. It is all correct enough in a general way. There is an art of living, a gastronomical art, even the art of hatred. And others would disassociate Art from everything practical making it so that its votaries withdraw themselves in a sense from the urgencies of practical life and become esoteric and ultimately nuisances of the first water.

Some would have Art always purely decorative; true Art is the making of everything beautiful as well as useful. A picture painted without any regard as to its decorative value, the proper filling of some space, is but a bauble; a bow on a lady's dress that has no function, just a "decorative" bow, is, I claim, inartistic, useless, meaningless. Art is not essentially embellishment; it is the function of doing things well, exercising good taste, gratifying the sight.

The history of the origin and development, growth and decline of beautiful artistic form constitutes a major portion of the history of civilization. As regards each particular people, the history of their efforts to conceive and express absolute perfection, or what is commonly called Beauty, in form and color, is with the *single exception* of the history of their speculative opinions, the most reliable test of the stage of progress which they have attained; nor is it an indication of the abundance of their external resources or even of their intellectual activity alone, that the history of the Art of a people is thus important. It determines their moral, their religious position, for the inseparable connection between the beautiful and the good is in no way more clearly manifested than in that fact, that the first inroads of demoralization and social disorder are invariably indicated by a diminution in the strength and purity of artistic forms, especially in architecture.

Am I wrong in praying for greater attention to matters artistic, the popularizing of Art, making it an every-day, intimate, and working function?

We've learned that our religion, whatever it be, is not a Sunday dress to be set aside work-days; it's something we must live to, something to be with us constantly and to guide our every thought and act. To our religious beliefs, whatever they may be—and no man is so low as to be without some—let us add (for our own material and spiritual welfare, our selfish interests if you wish) the RELIGION OF BEAUTY.