

This is no unusual phenomenon of our mysterious nature. There is a general homage rendered to virtue in the world ; but it is the homage, more of a dilettanti than of an obedient and practical devotee. This is not more surprising, than that the man of profligate habits should have a tasteful admiration of sacred pictures and sacred melodies ; or that, with the heart of a coward, he should nevertheless catch the glow of at least a momentary inspiration from the music of war and patriotism. It seems the effect and evidence of some great moral derangement, that there should be such an incongruity in subjective man between his taste and his principles ; and the evidence is not lessened but confirmed, when we observe a like incongruity in the objective nature by which he is surrounded—we mean, between the external mental and the external material world. We have only to open our eyes and see how wide, in point of loveliness, the contrast or dissimilarity is, between the moral and the material of our actual contemplation—the one coming immediately from the hand of God ; the other tainted and transformed by the spirit of man. We believe with Alison and others, that, to at least a very great extent, much of the beauty of visible things lies in association ; that it is this which gives its reigning expression to every tree and lake and waterfall, and which may be said to have impregnated with character the whole of the surrounding landscape. How comes it then, that, in the midst of living society, where we might expect to meet with the originals of all this fascination, we find scarcely any other thing than