

The following of nature must also form the basis of those fine arts which are not necessarily connected with any utility, and in man's pursuit of art of this kind we see one of the most recondite and at first sight inexplicable of his correspondences with the other parts of nature ; for there is no other creature that pursues art for its own sake. Modern archæological discovery has shown that the art of sculpture began with the oldest known races of man, and that they succeeded in producing very accurate imitations of natural objects. But from this primitive starting-point two ways diverge. One leads to the conventional and the grotesque, and this course has been followed by many semi-civilized nations. Another leads to accurate imitation of nature, along with new combinations arising from the play of intellect and imagination. Let us look for a moment at the actual result of the development of these diverse styles of art, and at their effect on the culture of humanity as existing in nature. We may imagine a people who have wholly discarded nature in their art, and have devoted themselves to the monstrous and the grotesque. Such a people, so far as art is concerned, separates itself widely from nature and from the mind of the Creator, and its taste and possibly its morals sink to the level of the monsters it produces. Again, we may imagine a people in all respects following nature in a literal and servile manner. Such a people would probably attain to but a very moderate amount of culture, but having a good foundation, it might ultimately build up higher things. Lastly, we may fancy a people who, like the old Greeks, strove to add to the copying of nature a higher and ideal beauty by combining in one the best features of many natural objects, or devising new combinations not found in nature itself. In the first of these conditions of art we have a falling away from or caricaturing of the beauty of nature. In the second we have merely a pupilage to nature. In the third we find man aiming to be himself a creator, but basing his