

Stray Thoughts

Flowers and trees are the poetry of Nature; the gardener is a romantic poet who has added richness, complexity of effect and symmetry to a language otherwise distinguished merely by facility, by directness and by simplicity of colour and charm.

Sound is more essential to poetry than sense. Swinburne who often conveys no meaning to the intellect, yet fills his verse with lovely & suggestive melodies, can put more poetry into one such line than Pope into a hundred couplets of accurate sense and barren music. A noble thought framed in a well-rounded sentence, will always charm by virtue of its satisfying completeness, but will never convey that exquisite agony of rapture which a line of perfect melody conveys to the sensitive soul.

The melody of words has this advantage over the melody of mere sounds that it needs only a soul to understand poetry but to comprehend music a technical education as well.

To govern life by fixed laws and a pocket-hand-book.

Beware of heavy touches above all in tragedy: comedy heavily stressed becomes the grotesque, which has its value in Art: tragedy heavily stressed becomes melodrama, which has no value anywhere.

One step beyond the sublime & you are in the grotesque.

The Greek mythology was evolved by poets and sculptors; therefore it is beautiful. The Hindu mythology fell into the hands of priests and moralists; therefore it has become hideous.

Art holds the mirror up to Nature that Nature may see her own image beside that of Art and realise her own deformity and imperfections.

It was Meredith who taught me that the epigram is the soul of style, and Plato who whispered that rhythm is its body. Words are the texture of the flesh and sentences the system of hard matter that gives it consistency: the texture of the flesh may be coarse or delicate, and as you design so you shall build.

Just as Socrates was nothing without his *daemon*, so the artist is helpless if he has not his daemon at his elbow. And who is the artist's daemon?

The artistic conscience.

Inspiration means that the papyrus of your imagination is held to the fire of memory and reveals characters written in Indian ink by unseen compositors.