

The profoundly earnest way in which we criticise and narrowly consider every part of a woman, while she on her part considers us; the scrupulously careful way we scrutinise, a woman who is beginning to please us; the fickleness of our choice; the strained attention with which a man watches his _fiancée_; the care he takes not to be deceived in any trait; and the great importance he attaches to every more or less essential trait,--all this is quite in keeping with the importance of the end. For the child that is to be born will have to bear a similar trait through its whole life; for instance, if a woman stoops but a little, it is possible for her son to be afflicted with a hunchback; and so in every other respect. We are not conscious of all this, naturally. On the contrary, each man imagines that his choice is made in the interest of his own pleasure (which, in reality, cannot be interested in it at all); his choice, which we must take for granted is in keeping with his own individuality, is made precisely in the interest of the species, to maintain the type of which as pure as possible is the secret task. In this case the individual unconsciously acts in the interest of something higher, that is, the species. This is why he attaches so much importance to things to which he might, nay, would be otherwise indifferent. There is something quite singular in the unconsciously serious and critical way two young people of different sex look at each other on meeting for the first time; in the scrutinising and penetrating glances they exchange, in the careful inspection which their various traits undergo. This scrutiny and analysis represent the _meditation of the genius of the species_ on the individual which may be born and the combination of its qualities; and the greatness of their delight in and

longing for each other is determined by this meditation. This longing, although it may have become intense, may possibly disappear again if something previously unobserved comes to light. And so the genius of the species meditates concerning the coming race in all who are yet not too old. It is Cupid's work to fashion this race, and he is always busy, always speculating, always meditating. The affairs of the individual in their whole ephemeral totality are very trivial compared with those of this divinity, which concern the species and the coming race; therefore he is always ready to sacrifice the individual regardlessly. He is related to these ephemeral affairs as an immortal being is to a mortal, and his interests to theirs as infinite to finite. Conscious, therefore, of administering affairs of a higher order than those that concern merely the weal and woe of the individual, he administers them with sublime indifference amid the tumult of war, the bustle of business, or the raging of a plague--indeed, he pursues them into the seclusion of the cloisters.