THE MODERN APOTHEOSIS OF NATURE.

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It is the almost unavoidable tendency of the human mind to associate intimately the manifestation of phenomena and their producing causes, and so intimately sometimes as to leave no clearly defined dividing line between the two. In some form or under some guise Pantheism has entered into the structure of all religions of which we have a history, with the exception, perhaps, of one, and has lent a coloring to almost every system of philosophy.

The difference between the savage who sees and worships his Deity in the sun or wind or fire and the modern theologian who would, with the philosophical Jacques,

Find tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones and good in everything,

is hardly one of kind, but of degree only. Even modern science, whose boast it is that it has cut itself loose from the trammeling influences of tradition, manifests a still lingering remnant of that cast of thought when it takes as its motto these lines from the modern poet of Nature:

To the solid ground
Of Nature trusts the mind that builds for aye.—*Wordsworth*.¹

The term "Nature" is susceptible of a very wide or a very narrow interpretation, and for the purposes of discussion it is necessary to set its confines as accurately and definitely as possible. The popular and generally accepted definition is that of the whole world external to man. A more exact one, however, is that given in the recently issued Century Dictionary, which sets it down as "the forces or processes of the material world conceived of as an agency intermediate between the Creator and the world, producing all organisms and preserving the regular order of things." Emerson says: "Philosophically considered, the Universe is composed of Nature and the Soul," and "Nature, in the common sense, refers to essences unchanged by man: space, air, the river, the leaf."

¹ The motto of the scientific periodical "Nature."

Accepting any one of these definitions, we have, then, two separate forces operating in the Universe, which are not only distinct, but for the most part antagonistic. Nature and Man are, and have always been, in relentless conflict. On every hand we find the forces of Nature turned from their regular order and made to act, under the control of man's will, with results very different from what would have followed from their inherent impulses and tendencies. Whenever the ingenuity of man conquers a natural law and controls it for his own use, Nature then ceases to be Nature and becomes Art. Emerson again says: "Art is applied to the mixture of his [man's] will with the same things [essences], as in a house, a canal, a statue, a picture."

It is some of the relations and connections of these two contending powers that it is our purpose to examine into, in order to determine whether the generally accepted opinions and current views are consonant with the facts and right reason.

This age is charged with being "materialistic," sometimes in sadness and fear, and sometimes in pride and exultant hopefulness, but in few instances, we fancy, with a correct appreciation of the exact manner in which this materialism is affecting us most powerfully. Whenever the materialism, however limited it may be, rises above us and infringes on the domain of our individualism and makes us secondary to or controllable by a power outside of ourselves, then it can be nothing else than harmful; but when we shall have lifted ourselves superior to the influence of our material surroundings and made them our tools and instruments to subserve the uses of noble and far-reaching designs and comprehensive purposes, then will they become helps and aids, which we should not only recognize at their true value, but which it is our duty to further develop and employ.

This awe of Nature, even when not a kind of worship, is the child of our inheritances. Our ancestral savage could conceive of no other medium of communication from his God to himself than the material world in which he found himself. The power and force, the ruthlessness and inexorableness of the laws as he knew them, bodied forth with a flawless exactitude his ideas of what a God should be, based on the only two human qualities which he was able to understand—determination and physical force. And to this day these are the only attributes of a God which Nature has to offer us through any of her phenomena. Viewed and studied either in the mass or in detail, we can learn from her workings nothing else than these.

We look in vain for even the slightest indication of a single one of those human qualities which we have been accustomed to regard as akin to the Divine. We applaud to the echo the sentiment expressed by the charming and ingenious Portia, when she says :

Earthly power doth then seem likest God's when mercy seasons justice ;

but where among all the countless operations of Nature's laws is there found a trace of that "quality of mercy," which "is not strained, but droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath," which is "mightiest in the mightiest," and "becomes a throned monarch better than his crown" ?

It is no part of Nature's plan to be merciful ; the fundamental law of all her actions is inexorableness. Pitiless and stern, with a deaf ear turned to all appeals for consideration or extenuation, she lays the icy fingers of her immutability upon the victim and exacts payment of the penalty in full.

On a summer day a child is playing alone upon the sands at the sea-shore. It gathers in heaps the glittering grains of gold which the kind ocean has swept in to be its playthings. Joy in the possession of its treasure fills its heart, and its thankful laughter finds a response in the waves which run rippling in to coquettishly kiss its bare feet. The morning sun shines brightly in the clear blue sky and is reflected as a million sparkling diamonds on the quivering bosom of the peaceful sea. The tinted shell, which it holds in its hands, rivals the rainbow in the purity of its color, and the song of the mermaid still lingers in its throat. All is fair and serene, and Innocence and Nature seem as one. The delicate sea-weed floats elusively on the water's surface, just temptingly out of reach. Intent on seizing the prize and unconscious of danger, it follows after it as the receding wave carries it farther away to sea. Then, just as it seems coming back to reward such persistency for its faithfulness, the big wave breaks over it, the treacherous undertow carries it out, and the young life is swallowed up in the great dismal gulf. The day, so bright, joyous, and happy in the morning, ends in a night of agony and sorrow. And yet the remorseless monster of the evening and the fairy godmother of the morning are the same. One is as much Nature as the other.

We might find some palliation of her heartlessness if we could discover any guiding principle of equity. But the punishment of the guilty is more often a matter of chance or misfortune than of an

even-handed justice. The natural law only finds its fulfillment in its ability to enforce itself against something weaker ; against anything stronger it is inefficient and powerless, though it may have been set at defiance in the most open manner. It is not merely that mercy does not temper justice, but that justice itself, even of the human kind, has no part in the plan. And so we might go through the whole catalogue of attributes which man has been taught to look upon as God-like and find each and every one not only absent, but, for the most instances, supplanted by its antithesis. In the place of sympathy we find indifference ; when we would expect love we encounter cruelty ; and fair promises lead, as a rule, to bitter disappointments. It is *not* true, as Wordsworth has said, that—

Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her.

Where we should look for forethought and economy we discover prodigality and extravagance, and where the means are those best adapted to the ends, it is so only by happy and fortuitous circumstances.

If from the theological side we are to see God only as he is manifested in Nature, there would be little left to appeal to our higher and diviner qualities. "Looking through Nature up to Nature's God" is not the way by which He will appear to excite our love and reverence. Not, let it be clearly understood, that Nature is always wicked and malicious. Strictly speaking, she is neither, and in justice to her it must be said that she makes no pretense of being either good or bad, and has never put forth any claim to qualities which are human or divine. These qualities have been assigned to her by man in the earlier period of his intellectual development because this form of concrete pantheism was the only method he had at command of formulating and setting forth the rudiments of his abstract conceptions of the qualities of his Deity.

But to a greater extent, probably, even than in the domain of Theology is this feeling of deference to, and respect for, Nature and her laws found in the world of Science. For this there is perhaps more of a seeming justification in the fact that here there need be no question of looking behind the operation of these laws, and the logical following back of effects to causes that are apparent is not only fascinating, but impressive, and is calculated to excite the profoundest wonder and admiration at the achievement. Nature is a

perfect exponent of the syllogism, and in the working out of the problem shows about as much heart as the demonstration of a proposition in Euclid.

But within the generation that is now passing away there has been erected a God in science, before whom its disciples bend the knee with all the unquestioning faith of an Eastern devotee. This is the law of the "survival of the fittest," first developed by Darwin and now an accepted part of the creed of Evolution as held by the majority. It would be bold, if not ungrateful, in any follower of science to attempt to detract from the glory of Darwin or the honor of Spencer, two men who, more than any others, certainly in modern times, have helped to broaden the opinions of the thoughtful classes. A part of their work will endure forever; but this law of the survival of the fittest, as they promulgated it, or at least as it is generally accepted, will be found to have only a qualified and not an absolute and universal application.

We are far from knowing that the fittest has survived. Very often the survival has been only a matter of chance or accident, and in every case it has resulted from the action of a blind law which looked not beyond the moment. The plant or animal which in the struggle for existence was ruthlessly pushed to the wall yesterday might have been far better fitted for the changed conditions of to-day than that which came out victorious. To argue otherwise is to presume a present perfection in the operation of Nature's laws, a presumption which strikes at the very foundation of development, since development can only follow from the changes incident to a conflict of laws, and perfection cannot come except when contention is over and harmony in the operation of all laws has been established. The fit has always survived, but not necessarily the fittest.

What has been lost through this blind, aimless struggle is fearful to contemplate. That the material forces of Nature have been ordered for the best ultimate results in all cases and with the greatest economy and forethought cannot, I think, be admitted by any one who takes at all a comprehensive view of the subject. Nature's processes are crude and often inefficient, and the results seldom perfect. Out of millions of attempts she gives us only an occasional flawless crystal. Moreover, her dealings are exclusively with actualities. With possibilities and potentialities she has no concern. For her there exist no fair promises or potencies for the future. She basks, like the spendthrift, in the sunlight of the present, living upon the

fruits of the eternity of the past, unmindful and careless of the debt she should pay to the eternity to come.

There is nowhere apparent in the operations of Nature the evidence of a directly acting or controlling intelligence, and her pathway is everywhere strewn with the broken fragments of her failures ; and it is not too much to say that even ordinary human intelligence, if it had been sufficiently extensive in its application, could and would have prevented some of the direst calamities the world has known.

It is, however, in the attempted application of this accepted law of the survival of the fittest in the lower forms of life to the science of Society that the greater danger of the doctrine lies. In theoretical science its effects upon mankind are, in the main, general and remote, but in a practical science, like Sociology, they become immediate, direct, and personal.

No one doubts the necessity of the survival of the fittest in the evolution of society ; but whether the struggle for existence in the purposeless manner as we see it manifested in the lower world can lead to such an end, in the most direct and in the best manner, must be questioned, it seems to me, by any one who has any adequate conception of what human society is and should be.

In their firm belief in the supremacy of the law as the guiding and controlling power in the working of the universe, the advocates of this theory wish to eliminate from the organism of society the one element which could assist most powerfully in advancing its development, namely, the Mental Force of society as represented in its individual members, acting, by both its intellectual and moral qualities, upon itself as a whole. The members of the *laissez faire* school of Sociologists oppose all or almost all organized government and would allow Society to develop only from its own unsystematized internal conflicts and contentions. To them the ideal warfare is not that of a well-trained and disciplined army, but of the mob. That some sort of evolution and a certain adaptation of living things to their environment would result from the method is acknowledged, but that in every case it would be development and that the survivors would always be the fittest, is by no means certain, while the enormous waste of energy that must necessarily accompany such a want of system is even more deplorable than that following from the struggle for existence among the lower forms of life.

Here, more than anywhere else, is needed that inventive and

organizing power, which is the peculiar genius of Man, to lay the plans of this struggle and marshal properly the forces engaged. The art of constructing and governing Society is the greatest and noblest which can employ the powers of human endeavor; for here is the culminating point of all progress, to which every other force is accessory and contributory.

That there should be a disposition to exclude from participation in this struggle, as an organized governing and directing energy, the supreme single force in the universe—the Mind of Man—can only be accounted for on the supposition of a failure, on the part of the advocates of this theory, to recognize the extent, efficiency, and character of this force, and their abiding faith in the law of Natural Selection in its universal application. That the selection by Man is not always successful in bringing about the most desirable results is only what should be expected from the restriction of his power and the limited extent of its application and from the imperfection of his wisdom inherent in the present state of humanity; but it is the only power which can control the machinery of society with an intelligent design and a definite purpose. In a certain sense we must regard society at large as under the government of, and controlled by, what may be properly denominated natural laws—that is, the inherent tendencies, desires, and impulses of man. These impulses and desires of what theologians have called the “natural man”—that is, man in his primeval condition—are but little more beneficent and altruistic than those which have been found to govern the unthinking world. To bring order out of this chaos of social forces and to hold these natural impulses in proper keeping for the benefit of man collectively and individually, for the future as well as the present, is as much the province of the higher functions of the mind as is the subjugation of the laws of purely material nature. Indeed, it is the primary function to which all others are subsidiary.

The one principal argument that has been brought against a systematic, general representative government, with a central controlling power, is that it tends to crush out the individual. Without entering into a defense of the existing forms of government or claiming that a single one is perfect or in any manner approaching it, it can be truthfully asserted that the obvious tendency of legislation in those which are acknowledged to be the best is more and more toward the protection of the individual, not only in his person and property, but, more important still, in his opinions, and that the

object of the best government is to give to each individual member of it the opportunity to develop in that direction to which his tastes and abilities incline him. In the ideal society this will have become an accomplished fact.

Indeed, the whole structure of our society as it exists to-day is a complete reversal of the law of the destruction of the weak in the struggle for existence. Our laws and social institutions are all founded on the humanitarian—in contradistinction to the natural—law of the protection of the weak and the conserving of the potential energy of Man as a unit and an organization for future development and use.

But no less powerfully than in our theology and in our science is this feeling for Nature felt in those offsprings, largely of the imagination, which we denominate the "Fine Arts." So far has this been carried that there has been founded a cult or school which claims for itself the distinctive title of "Naturalists," and just at this time it would seem that they ride on the topmost wave.

It is only another evidence of the tendency of the times toward a grosser materialism and of an ignoring, temporarily, however, let it be hoped, of all of that finer and more sublimated quality of the mind without which Art could not have existed at all. It will, I think, be acknowledged by even the most ardent Realist that Art is wholly a work of the imagination, and that its highest development can exist only alongside of the most intense power of abstraction. The fine arts have this to distinguish them from the applied or practical arts, in that they not only deal with the purely abstract qualities of objects, but also create from these others which had no existence before. In their highest and purest forms they are genuine creations.

Mr. Walter Pater regards music as the typical representative of pure art, for in that the subject and expression are one and inseparable. It is the one, too, which is the most nearly a complete creation, for it can derive hardly more than a mere suggestion—and I deny even that—from anything in the material world outside. The singing of birds is not music, though there is sometimes a semblance of melody in it, and, besides, it was not this which suggested the idea of music to man. The impulse to musical expression did not come from anything in the external world, but from a desire to give utterance to emotions for which ordinary language was inadequate, and music, even of the higher kind, is much more the exponent of a state of feeling than an intellectual process.

And what is true of music is true also of every art, in so far as it claims to belong to the higher, purer forms.

The status of an art is gauged by its power to set forth in an intelligible and comprehensible manner the states of feeling, the abstraction of the mind, and the creations of the imagination. That which can do this most acceptably is the highest art, and in this we have nothing to learn from Nature and her laws. Nature has no emotion to express, no imagination which can create, and no intelligent conception of abstract qualities. It is Man alone who has these, and their expression is through some form of Art which he has created for that purpose. All Art, therefore, must come from within. It is impossible that it can come from without. The ignoring of this fact has wrought much harm both in the cultivation and practice of most, if not all, of the fine arts.

That the study of Nature leads to the development of the arts and is, indeed, the most important factor in that development, is held as a cardinal principle by the school of Realists who maintain, if I understand them rightly, that the highest art is the nearest approach to Nature as she is. The canons of art criticism are, unfortunately, by no means fixed, and on certain points judgment must yet remain largely a matter of mere opinion; but even a casual survey of the relations of Nature to Art will show how slight is the connection between their essential elements. It will probably be said that without Nature there can be no Art, or at least that Nature must form the substratum of all Art, which though specious is not true, for the art of music, as we have seen, has no connection whatever with Nature. The misapprehension has arisen from the circumstance that the ideal interpretation of certain aspects of the natural world is the basis of some of the most popular forms of art. This is especially true of the pictorial arts, because in these the phases of Nature is the vocabulary of the language by means of which the artist conveys his ideas and meanings to others; and when he uses them it is in the same way and for the same purpose as the writer or speaker uses words whose meaning and value are commonly understood, and a work of Art is comprehensible by a given person only in so far as that language is intelligible to him, and satisfactory in proportion as the feeling of the artist is agreeable and consonant with his own feeling.

Art is expressive always of the Artist and not of the essential nature of the Thing represented. To examine into the nature of things is the province of Science. A certain subject or landscape is treated by

ten different men, and when compared no two pictures are in feeling or expression exactly the same. Each has painted what he saw that corresponded to his own mentality, and it is himself that is reflected in the picture. Nature was only the mirror, and how could she reflect what was not in the man himself? Art is but the projection outward of the Consciousness within.

Hundreds of artists had passed to and fro along the plains of Barbizon and seen the homely peasants laboring in the fields, but it was only Millet who saw and showed to the world, in a manner which has impressed them as powerfully as it did him, the significance of that life, and of all life through it. Other men had painted peasants and fields, and many with as much technical skill, but none like Millet, because he, above them all, saw and portrayed the poetry, the patience, and the hopeful confiding trust of these humble souls in something bigger and higher than themselves, which made the Angelus to ring its sweet music in their hearts, even in the mid-day of their toil. And in looking at his pictures it is not the peasants or the flocks or the fields we see, but the Soul of Millet.

The study of Nature or the living among grand or beautiful scenery never yet made an artist, and no great picture was ever painted out of doors.

That we can find beauty in the landscape, and sublimity in the mountains, and grandeur or sweet repose in the contemplation of, or communion with, Nature is not to be denied. We are all Artists in our way, and are gifted in various degrees with the power of abstracting from natural objects the qualities in harmony with our own states of feeling; but the gratification of our æsthetic sense from this source is in no wise different from the enjoyment of an art the work of man's hand alone. And when we come to analyze the feeling our enjoyment of Nature comes from no substance of quality resident in Nature herself, but only as she typifies or calls to mind some virtue of Humanity. The violet suggests sweetness and modesty, the lily purity, the rose the refinement and richness and exuberance of vitality, while the peace and quietude of the summer woods are comforting only as they allow us to "loaf and invite our soul," removed from the turmoil and distractions of Nature and other men. Were, however, our reverie interrupted by one of those workings of Nature called a thunder-storm, coming up suddenly and unexpectedly, the attitude of our minds toward Nature would probably undergo a rapid and radical change.

That a human element is necessary to the complete enjoyment of Nature, even under the circumstances most favorable for her display, has been acknowledged by some of the greatest Nature-lovers. Many of my readers doubtless remember that exquisite description of a "Night among the Pines," by Robert Louis Stevenson, in his "Travels with a Donkey." In all English literature there is nothing, within my knowledge, which comes so near to Nature pure and simple as this. He lays his hand upon her heart and feels sympathetically its every throb. But in winding up he says: "I thought I had rediscovered one of those truths which are revealed to savages and hid from political economists—at the least I had discovered a new pleasure for myself—and yet even while I was exulting in my solitude I became aware of a strange lack. I wished a companion to lie near me in the star-light, silent and not moving, but ever within touch, for there is a fellowship more quiet even than solitude and which rightly understood is solitude made perfect. To live out of doors with the woman a man loves is, of all lives, the most complete and free."

Probably no one in modern times has been regarded in the light of a Physiophile more unreservedly than Thoreau, and yet even he says: "Nature must be viewed humanly to be viewed at all—that is, her scenes must be associated with human affections such as are associated with one's native place, for instance. She is most significant to the lover. If I have no friend, what is Nature to me? She ceases to be morally significant."

Extract the suggestions of humanity from Nature and she holds nothing that can or should attract the soul of man, and to pretend that we are so attracted is either an affectation or an evidence of a falling from our high estate back toward our original condition of savagery.

What has been said regarding the pictorial is applicable, in its general principles, to the literary forms of art; but in the latter an important difference in many details comes in which is likely, and in fact has, led to confusing and conflicting opinions. It is assumed by some that Literature is primarily, probably, a practical art, one which concerns itself with the diffusion of a knowledge of facts and with a distinctly ethical power to guide to right thought and conduct. It certainly does both of these; but that its greater function is that of a fine art working, as the others do, through the higher faculty of the imagination and, in any event, adding to the power

and efficiency of the other two functions, is hardly now an open question.

In some respects it is the most powerful, because the most widely operating, of all the arts. It will not be claimed, I think, that Literature can have been suggested or fostered in any way by Nature. There is nothing outside of man to which it has any resemblance. It is the product of his ingenuity alone. Yet in spite of this fact there exists a sect of literateurs and a class of critics who insist that in the use of this art the power of the imagination or of ideality must be held in abeyance, or at least, in strong subjection to the existing realities.

Both Art and Morality (though they seem to have overlooked the real connection between the two) are considered by these to be best subserved by a rigid adherence to things as they appear to be. The only subject worthy of, or allowable in, literary art is the thing that Is; in other words, the highest form of literature is the most rigid reproduction of natural phenomena, whether it be scenery or events or the actions or motives or characters of men as they are commonly recognized. The truer the picture is drawn to Nature, the higher the art. There is more than one fallacy mixed up with this proposition, so captivating at first glance. The first is the implied assumption that the truth of Nature lies on the surface and is that which is seen of all men, whereas the fundamental—that is, the real—Truth is most frequently hid under a mass of confusing details which must be cleared away before the kernel is revealed. The second, and the one most frequently flourished as an unanswerable argument by all the schools of realists, is that we must have “truth for art’s sake.” If we have succeeded in making our meaning clear, it must be apparent that Truth is not always art; more often than not it is quite the contrary. Neither is it always necessary or desirable to know the truth—such truth, at least, as they would deal in. Truth is often wicked and harmful, and sometimes more disastrous in its consequence than untruth. What is wanted more than simple, naked, isolated truths, but which really comprehends all Truth, is a grand, noble, and exalting Ideal, which it is the function of Art to create for us, not from the world outside, but from the aspirations of the Soul within.

A Literature which does not do that, though it be clever and analytical and wonderful in its vividness of presentation, cannot attain to the dignity of Art in its truest and only proper significance.

A work may deal with the sternest and most uncompromising

realities and yet in its presentation of them be artistic even to the highest degree, provided it carries along with it such meaning or import as shall appeal to our finer feelings and purer ideality. Poverty, suffering, sin, and crime can be laid before us in a manner to enlist our sympathies, enlarge our charity, and increase our faith in humanity, as in "*Les Misérables*" of Hugo; or it may be done in a way to arouse only our disgust and abhorrence and make us despair of our race, as in some of the writings of Zola. The one man was a great artist; the other, at least in these instances, is not an artist at all.

High art is always high morality. The effect of all good art, of whatever kind, is to teach and to elevate. Nothing which is not good can be beautiful, and nothing can be artistic which is not in harmony with that which we believe to be grand and noble in sentiment and feeling. We are probably not fully aware what a great power the Art of man, in its comprehensive sense, is in molding our every-day lives and opinions. Our very animal existence depends upon it. Has it ever occurred to you that not one of us could live a year in this latitude of Washington if we trusted to the protection of Nature alone and made use of none of the devices of man? Nature cares not whether we live or die. The carrying out of her law is the only matter of concern to her.

The conduct of our lives is much more a matter of taste than we are aware of, even where art does not merge itself distinctly into morality as generally understood.

Right-doing, particularly in minor actions, springs more frequently from our æsthetic sense than from any distinctly reasoned-out conception of duty, and wrong-doing is avoided because a wrong action does violence to our idea of the Eternal harmonies.

If it be claimed by any one that the Soul of man is also a part of Nature and must be included in any consideration of its operations in the general scheme of the Universe, I shall have no contention with him. Neither will I dispute with him if he further holds that all Nature, including man's Soul, is but a manifestation or a component part of a Universal Mind or Intelligence or God, and into which it will finally resolve itself after the conflict of laws shall have led to a real survival of the fittest and universal harmony shall have been established. From any point of view, scientific or theological, that seems the only possible outcome. But the contention that I do make is that the greatest single force acting in the world to-day

is the Mind of Man, and that it is the only Force which is capable of advancing the development of man with the greatest rapidity and the least expenditure of energy toward that final harmony. It is the only force which has given to it a power over itself and a capacity of directing its own energy, and the only one to which is accorded the Sense of Responsibility. To it is entrusted more than to any other one force the task of redeeming the elements of Nature, including itself, from the primeval incubus of sin or imperfection and of bringing them back in perfection to the Original Mind from which they emanated; and this, it can do only by the cultivation and development of the real Humanities: Justice, Mercy, Faith, Love, Hope, and Charity.

These are the qualities which are peculiar to it and which distinguish it from all the other forces in the universe, and place it nearer to and in closer connection with the Universal Mind. In the possession of these attributes or qualities lies its great responsibility, and it is a responsibility in which each individual must bear his own burden as it is given to him, and which he cannot shirk except to his own detriment as well as that of the community at large. There must be added to these another solely human faculty, probably paramount to all, that of Aspiration. It is through Aspiration that the other Humanities must work out the salvation of man from his original savagery, for through it alone is real progress possible. A dull satisfaction with a present condition must ever result in a degree of stagnation which holds in its partial crystallization the dross of its imperfections. A wholesome discontent with the existing state of affairs, united with an intelligent effort at reform, must necessarily lie at the foundation of all advance toward a perfect civilization.

It is questionable whether our conservatism, as we are wont to call it, is not, after all, but a cloak that hides our indolence and cowardice. To make a change requires both effort and courage. It is this fetichism of the established order of things, from the "divine right of kings" to the law of "the survival of the fittest" and "truth for art's sake," that is more than anything else retarding our intellectual and moral development to-day, and they are the last shackles we shall have to strike off before entering into that freedom which leads finally to the light of the Everlasting Day.

There can be no peace until the Soul of man has put Nature under his feet and made the Universe his own by adjusting himself and its

laws into a symphony of concordant action ; and in the attainment of this there is required of each individual soul the intelligent use of all the powers it stands possessed of, not only separately and as single units, but collectively and as a whole under an organization of society where such individual action is possible.

The real and vital question is not in respect to our attitude toward material Nature or any of the manifestations of the universal spirit in that Nature, which are governed by fixed, immutable, and inhuman laws, but in regard to our relation to ourselves and those immense and fathomless possibilities of ourselves which it is our glorious privilege to attain, or our everlasting shame and destruction to lose. All the present aspects of material Nature will disappear, leaving not even a wrack behind ; the inflexibility of its laws is the element of its destruction. But

Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul.

My plea, then, is for Individualism ; not the narrow, contracted egoism which can see nothing beyond its own needs, desires, or wishes, but the comprehensive form which recognizes that its own welfare, happiness, and advancement are inextricably interlocked with that of all its fellow-souls, and which is conscious of its responsibility as supreme among all the forces in the universe in working out the *Grand Design*. Let no man therefore bemean himself with the thought that he is insignificant or valueless, but let him ever insist, within himself and before all men, that his Soul is his own, and demand its recognition while acting up to the highest requirements of its possession.

There is nothing new in this. Its essence is as old as Philosophy itself. But in these latter days, and among the more energetic and less contemplative peoples, who are busily engaged in the hand-to-hand contest with Nature, wresting from her the secrets of her laws and making them subservient to their physical well-being, these relations of the Soul to Nature are in danger of being unrecognized or forgotten. It is the message coming from Eternity to Time, and has been received understandingly by the few, even in the ancient days. These Seers of the older civilizations, certainly from Aristotle downward, were infused with it, and it is to be read between the lines of their writings, even when it is not outspoken. It was the golden thread of thought which held together the disconnected

fragments of the reflections of Antoninus, and it found expression through the philosopher Plotinus in these words: "Nature is but an image or imitation of wisdom, the last thing of the soul, Nature being a thing which doth only *do*, but not know." This last sentence is found as a motto or text on the title page of a little pamphlet of ninety-five pages entitled "Nature," and published anonymously in Boston in 1836. That little essay has since become a classic and its author accepted as a great Seer of his age. It was the announcement to the thinking world that Emerson had broken from the bonds of tradition and sect and come into the rightful heritage of his own soul; and through all his writings, from that time forth, this message is the sweet undertone of music which can always be heard by the ear attuned to its harmonies. "Nature," he says, "is not fixed, but fluid; Spirit alters, molds, makes it; build therefore your own world. As fast as you conform your life to the pure idea in your mind that will unfold its great proportions."

TABOO OF NAMES BY THE MALAGASY.—There are no family names in Madagascar, and almost every personal name has some distinct meaning, being, with few exceptions, the names of things—birds, beasts, plants, trees, inanimate objects—or names describing color, quality, etc., or words which denote actions of various kinds; so that the names of the chiefs most always contain some word which is in common use by the people. In such a case, however, the ordinary word by which such thing or action has hitherto been known must be changed for another, which henceforth takes its place in daily speech. Thus, when the Princess Rabôdo became queen, in 1863, at the decease of Radâma II, she took a new name, Rasohérina. Now *sohérina* is the word for chrysalis, especially for that of the silkworm moth; but, having been dignified by being chosen as the royal name, it became sacred (*fady*) and must no longer be employed for common use; and the chrysalis thenceforth was termed *zâna-dândy*, "offspring of silk." So again, if a chief had or took the name of an animal, say of the dog (*ambôa*), and was known as Rambôa, the animal henceforth would be called by another name, probably a descriptive one, such as *fandrôaka*, "the driver away," or *famôvo*, "the barker," etc.—(Rev. James Sibree, in *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, London, February, 1892.)