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BELFAST ADDRESS.

BY  
JOHN TYNDALL.

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BELFAST ADDRESS.

BY  
JOHN TYNDALL.

(FROM TREATISES OF SCIENCE)

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## THE BELFAST ADDRESS.

1874.

AN impulse inherent in primeval man turned his thoughts and questionings betimes towards the sources of natural phenomena. The same impulse, inherited and intensified, is the spur of scientific action to-day. Determined by it, by a process of abstraction from experience we form physical theories which lie beyond the pale of experience, but which satisfy the desire of the mind to see every natural occurrence resting upon a cause. In forming their notions of the origin of things, our earliest historic (and doubtless, we might add, our prehistoric) ancestors pursued, as far as their intelligence permitted, the same course. They also fell back upon experience; but with this difference—that the particular experiences which furnished the web and woof of their theories were drawn, not from the study of nature, but from what lay much closer to them—the observation of men. Their theories accordingly took an anthropomorphic form. To supersensual beings, which, however potent and invisible, were nothing but a species of human creatures, perhaps raised from among mankind, and retaining all human passions and appetites,<sup>1</sup> were handed over the rule and governance of natural phenomena.

Tested by observation and reflection, these early notions failed in the long run to satisfy the more penetrating intellects of our race. Far in the depths of history we find men of exceptional power differentiating themselves from the crowd,

<sup>1</sup> Hume, 'Natural History of Religion.'

rejecting these anthropomorphic notions, and seeking to connect natural phenomena with their physical principles. But, long prior to these purer efforts of the understanding, the merchant had been abroad, and rendered the philosopher possible; commerce had been developed, wealth amassed, leisure for travel and speculation secured, while races educated under different conditions, and therefore differently informed and endowed, had been stimulated and sharpened by mutual contact. In those regions where the commercial aristocracy of ancient Greece mingled with its eastern neighbours, the sciences were born, being nurtured and developed by free-thinking and courageous men. The state of things to be displaced may be gathered from a passage of Euripides quoted by Hume. 'There is nothing in the world; no glory, no prosperity. The gods toss all into confusion; mix everything with its reverse, that all of us, from our ignorance and uncertainty, may pay them the more worship and reverence.' Now, as science demands the radical extirpation of empiricism, and the absolute reliance upon law in nature, there grew, with the growth of scientific notions, a desire and determination to sweep from the field of theory this mob of gods and demons, and to place natural phenomena on a basis more congruent with themselves.

The problem which had been previously approached from above, was now attacked from below; theoretic effort passed from the super- to the sub-sensible. It was felt that to construct the universe in idea, it was necessary to have some notion of its constituent parts—of what Lucretius subsequently called the 'First Beginnings.' Abstracting again from experience, the leaders of scientific speculation reached at length the pregnant doctrine of atoms and molecules, the latest developments of which were set forth with such power and clearness at the last meeting of the British Association. Though, no doubt, had long hovered about this doctrine before it attained

the precision and completeness which it assumed in the mind of Democritus, a philosopher who may well for a moment arrest our attention. 'Few great men,' says Lange, a non-materialist, in his excellent 'History of Materialism,' to the spirit and to the letter of which I am equally indebted, 'have been so despitely used by history as Democritus. In the distorted images sent down to us through unscientific traditions, there remains of him almost nothing but the name of "the laughing philosopher," while figures of immeasurably smaller significance spread themselves out at full length before us.' Lange speaks of Bacon's high appreciation of Democritus—for ample illustrations of which I am indebted to my excellent friend Mr. Spalding, the learned editor and biographer of Bacon. It is evident, indeed, that Bacon considered Democritus to be a man of weightier metal than either Plato or Aristotle, though their philosophy 'was noised and celebrated in the schools, amid the din and pomp of professors.' It was not they, but Genseric and Attila and the barbarians, who destroyed the atomic philosophy. 'For, at a time when all human learning had suffered shipwreck, these planks of Aristotelian and Platonic philosophy, as being of a lighter and more inflated substance, were preserved and came down to us, while things more solid sank and almost passed into oblivion.'

The son of a wealthy father, Democritus devoted the whole of his inherited fortune to the culture of his mind. He travelled everywhere; visited Athens when Socrates and Plato were there, but quitted the city without making himself known. Indeed, the dialectic strife in which Socrates so much delighted, had no charm for Democritus, who held that 'the man who readily contradicts, and uses many words, is unfit to learn anything truly right.' He is said to have discovered and

<sup>1</sup> Born 460 B. C.

adorated Protagoras the Sophist, being struck as much by the manner in which he, being a hewer of wood, tied up his faggots, as by the sagacity of his conversation. Democritus returned poor from his travels, was supported by his brother, and at length wrote his great work entitled 'Diakosmos,' which he read publicly before the people of his native town. He was honoured by his countrymen in various ways, and died serenely at a great age.

The principles enunciated by Democritus reveal his uncompromising antagonism to those who deduced the phenomena of nature from the caprices of the gods. They are briefly these: 1. From nothing comes nothing. Nothing that exists can be destroyed. All changes are due to the combination and separation of molecules. 2. Nothing happens by chance: every occurrence has its cause, from which it follows by necessity. 3. The only existing things are the atoms and empty space, all else is mere opinion. 4. The atoms are infinite in number, and infinitely various in form; they strike together, and the lateral motions and whirlings which thus arise are the beginnings of worlds. 5. The varieties of all things depend upon the varieties of their atoms, in number, size, and aggregation. 6. The soul consists of fine, smooth, round atoms, like those of fire. These are the most mobile of all: they interpenetrate the whole body, and in their motions the phenomena of life arise.

The first five propositions are a fair general statement of the atomic philosophy, as now held. As regards the sixth, Democritus made his finer atoms do duty for the nervous system, whose functions were then unknown. The atoms of Democritus are individually without sensation; they combine in obedience to mechanical laws; and not only organic forms, but the phenomena of sensation and thought, are the result of their combination.

That great enigma, 'the exquisite adaptation of one part of an organism to another part, and to the conditions of life,' more especially the construction of the human body, Democritus made

no attempt to solve. Empedocles, a man of more fiery and poetic nature, introduced the notion of love and hate among the atoms, to account for their combination and separation. Noticing this gap in the doctrine of Democritus, he struck in with the penetrating thought, linked, however, with some wild speculation, that it lay in the very nature of these combinations which were suited to their ends (in other words, in harmony with their environment) to maintain themselves, while unfit combinations, having no proper habitat, must rapidly disappear. Thus, more than 2,000 years ago, the doctrine of the 'survival of the fittest,' which in our day, not on the basis of vague conjecture, but of positive knowledge, has been raised to such extraordinary significance, had received at all events partial enunciation.<sup>1</sup>

Epicurus,<sup>2</sup> said to be the son of a poor schoolmaster at Samos, is the next dominant figure in the history of the atomic philosophy. He mastered the writings of Democritus, heard lectures in Athens, went back to Samos, and subsequently wandered through various countries. He finally returned to Athens, where he bought a garden, and surrounded himself by pupils, in the midst of whom he lived a pure and serene life, and died a peaceful death. Democritus looked to the soul as the ennobling part of man; even beauty, without understanding, partook of animalism. Epicurus also rated the spirit above the body; the pleasure of the body being that of the moment, while the spirit could draw upon the future and the past. His philosophy was almost identical with that of Democritus; but he never quoted either friend or foe. One main object of Epicurus was to free the world from superstition and the fear of death. Death he treated with indifference. It merely robs us of sensation. As long as we are, death is not; and when death is, we are not. Life has no more evil for him who has made up his mind that it is no evil

<sup>1</sup> Lange, 2nd edit., p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Born 342 B.C.

not to live. He adored the gods, but not in the ordinary fashion. The idea of Divine power, properly purified, he thought an elevating one. Still he taught, 'Not he is godless who rejects the gods of the crowd, but rather he who accepts them.' The gods were to him eternal and immortal beings, whose blessedness excluded every thought of care or occupation of any kind. Nature pursues her course in accordance with everlasting laws, the gods never interfering. They haunt

The lucid interspace of world and world  
Whom never creeps a cloud or moves a wind,  
Nor ever falls the least white star of snow,  
Nor ever lowest roll of thunder mounds,  
Nor sound of human sorrow mounts to mar  
Their sacred everlasting calm.<sup>1</sup>

Lange considers the relation of Epicurus to the gods subjective: the indication, probably, of an ethical requirement of his own nature. We cannot read history with open eyes, or study human nature to its depths, and fail to discern such a requirement. Man never has been, and he never will be, satisfied with the operations and products of the Understanding alone; hence physical science cannot cover all the demands of his nature. But the history of the efforts made to satisfy these demands might be broadly described as a history of errors—the error, in great part, consisting in ascribing fixity to that which is fluent, which varies as we vary, being gross when we are gross, and becoming, as our capacities widen, more abstract and sublime. On one great point the mind of Epicurus was at peace. He neither sought nor expected, here or hereafter, any personal profit from his relation to the gods. And it is assuredly a fact, that loftiness and serenity of thought may be promoted by conceptions which involve no idea of profit of this kind. 'Did I not believe,'

<sup>1</sup> Tennyson's 'Lucretius.'

said a great man<sup>1</sup> to me once, 'that an Intelligence is at the heart of things, my life on earth would be intolerable.' The utterer of these words is not, in my opinion, rendered less but more noble by the fact, that it was the need of ethical harmony here, and not the thought of personal profit hereafter, that prompted his observation.

There are persons, not belonging to the highest intellectual zone, nor yet to the lowest, to whom perfect clearness of exposition suggests want of depth. They find comfort and edification in an abstract and learned phraseology. To such people Epicurus, who spared no pains to rid his style of every trace of haze and turbidity, appeared, on this very account, superficial. He had, however, a disciple who thought it no unworthy occupation to spend his days and night in the effort to reach the clearness of his master, and to whom the Greek philosopher is mainly indebted for the extension and perpetuation of his fame. Some two centuries after the death of Epicurus, Lucretius<sup>2</sup> wrote his great poem, 'On the Nature of Things,' in which he, a Roman, developed with extraordinary ardour the philosophy of his Greek predecessor. He wishes to win over his friend Memmius to the school of Epicurus; and although he has no rewards in a future life to offer, although his object appears to be a purely negative one, he addresses his friend with the heat of an apostle. His object-like that of his great forerunner, is the destruction of superstition; and considering that men in his day trembled before every natural event as a direct monition from the gods, and that everlasting torture was also in prospect, the freedom aimed at by Lucretius might be deemed a positive good. 'This terror,' he says, 'and darkness of mind, must be dispelled, not by the rays of the sun and glittering shafts of day, but by the aspect and the law of nature.' He refutes the notion that anything can come out of nothing.

<sup>1</sup> Carlyle.

<sup>2</sup> Born 99 B.C.

or that what is once begotten can be recalled to nothing. The first beginnings, the atoms, are indestructible, and into them all things can be resolved at last. Bodies are partly atoms and partly combinations of atoms; but the atoms nothing can quench. They are strong in solid singleness, and, by their denser combination, all things can be closely packed and exhibit enduring strength. He denies that matter is infinitely divisible. We come at length to the atoms, without which, as an imperishable substratum, all order in the generation and development of things would be destroyed.

The mechanical shock of the atoms being, in his view, the all-sufficient cause of things, he completes the notion that the constitution of nature has been in any way determined by intelligent design. The interaction of the atoms throughout infinite time rendered all manner of combinations possible. Of these, the fit ones persisted, while the unfit ones disappeared. Not after sage deliberation did the atoms station themselves in their right places, nor did they bargain what motions they should assume. From all eternity they have been driven together, and, after trying motions and unions of every kind, they fall at length into the arrangements out of which this system of things has been evolved. 'If you will apprehend and keep in mind these things, Nature, free at once, and rid of her haughty lords, is seen to do all things spontaneously of herself, without the meddling of the gods.'<sup>1</sup>

To meet the objection that his atoms cannot be seen, Lucretius describes a violent storm, and shows that the invisible particles of air act in the same way as the visible particles of water. We perceive, moreover, the different smells of things,

<sup>1</sup> Moore's translation. In his criticism of this work ('Contemporary Review,' 1867) Dr. Hayman does not appear to be aware of the really sound and subtle observations on which the reasoning of Lucretius, though erroneous, sometimes rests.

yet never see them coming to our nostrils. Again, clothes hung up on a shore, which waves break upon, become moist, and then get dry if spread out in the sun, though no eye can see either the approach or the escape of the water-particles. A ring, worn long on the finger, becomes thinner; a water-drop hollows out a stone; the ploughshare is rubbed away in the field; the street-pavement is worn by the feet; but the particles that disappear at any moment we cannot see. Nature acts through invisible particles. That Lucretius had a strong scientific imagination the foregoing references prove. A fine illustration of his power, in this respect, is his explanation of the apparent rest of bodies whose atoms are in motion. He employs the image of a flock of sheep with skipping lambs, which, seen from a distance, presents simply a white patch upon the green hill, the jumping of the individual lambs being quite invisible.

His vaguely grand conception of the atoms falling eternally through space, suggested the nebular hypothesis to Kant, its first propounder. Far beyond the limits of our visible world are to be found atoms innumerable, which have never been united to form bodies, or which, if once united, have been again dispersed—falling silently through immeasurable intervals of time and space. As everywhere throughout the All the same conditions are repeated, so must the phenomena be repeated also. Above us, below us, beside us, therefore, are worlds without end; and this, when considered, must dissipate every thought of a deflection of the universe by the gods. The worlds come and go, attracting new atoms out of limitless space, or dispersing their own particles. The reputed death of Lucretius, which forms the basis of Mr. Tennyson's noble poem, is in strict accordance with his philosophy, which was severe and pure.

Still earlier than these three philosophers, and during the centuries between the first of them and the last, the human



intellect was active in other fields than theirs. Pythagoras had founded a school of mathematics, and made his experiments on the harmonic intervals. The Sophists had run through their career. At Athens had appeared Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, who ruined the Sophists, and whose yoke remains to some extent unbroken to the present hour. Within this period also the School of Alexandria was founded, Euclid wrote his 'Elements' and made some advances in optics. Archimedes had propounded the theory of the lever, and the principles of hydrostatics. Astronomy was immensely enriched by the discoveries of Hipparchus, who was followed by the historically more celebrated Ptolemy. Anatomy had been made the basis of scientific medicine; and it is said by Draper<sup>1</sup> that vivisection had begun. In fact, the science of ancient Greece had already cleared the world of the fantastic images of divinities operating capriciously through natural phenomena. It had shaken itself free from that fruitless scrutiny by the internal light of the mind alone, which had vainly sought to transcend experience, and to reach a knowledge of ultimate causes. Instead of accidental observation, it had introduced observation with a purpose; instruments were employed to aid the senses; and scientific method was rendered in a great measure complete by the union of Induction and Experiment.

What, then, stopped its victorious advance? Why was the scientific intellect compelled, like an exhausted soil, to lie fallow for nearly two millenniums, before it could regather the elements necessary to its fertility and strength? Bacon has already let us know one cause; Whewell ascribes this stationary period to four causes—obscurity of thought, servility, intolerance of disposition, enthusiasm of temper; and he gives striking examples of each.<sup>2</sup> But these characteristics must have

<sup>1</sup> History of the Intellectual Development of Europe, p. 290.

<sup>2</sup> History of the Inductive Sciences, vol. I.

had their antecedents in the circumstances of the time. Rome, and the other cities of the Empire, had fallen into moral putrefaction. Christianity had appeared, offering the gospel to the poor, and, by moderation, if not asceticism of life, practically protesting against the profligacy of the age. The sufferings of the early Christians, and the extraordinary exaltation of mind which enabled them to triumph over the diabolical tortures to which they were subjected, must have left traces not easily effaced. They scorned the earth, in view of that 'building of God, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' The Scriptures which ministered to their spiritual needs were also the measure of their Science. When, for example, the celebrated question of Antipodes came to be discussed, the Bible was with many the ultimate court of appeal. Augustine, who flourished A. D. 400, would not deny the rotundity of the earth; but he would deny the possible existence of inhabitants at the other side, 'because no such race is recorded in Scripture among the descendants of Adam.' Archbishop Boniface was shocked at the assumption of a 'world of human beings out of the reach of the means of salvation.' Thus reined in, Science was not likely to make much progress. Later on, the political and theological strife between the Church and civil governments, so powerfully depicted by Draper, must have done much to stifle investigation.

Whewell makes many wise and brave remarks regarding the spirit of the Middle Ages. It was a mental spirit. The seekers after natural knowledge had forsaken that fountain of living waters, the direct appeal to nature by observation and experiment, and given themselves up to the re-manipulation of the notions of their predecessors. It was a time when thought had become subject, and when the acceptance of more authority led, as it always does in science, to intellectual death. Natural events,

<sup>1</sup> Depicted with terrible vividness in Haman's 'Antichrist.'

instead of being traced to physical, were referred to moral, causes; while 'an exercise' of the phantasy, almost as degrading as the spiritualism of the present day, took the place of scientific speculation. Then came the mysticism of the Middle Ages, Magic, Alchemy, the Neoplatonic philosophy, with its visionary though sublime abstractions, which caused men to look with shame upon their own bodies, as hindrances to the absorption of the creature in the blessedness of the Creator. Finally came the Scholastic philosophy, a fusion, according to Lange, of the least mature notions of Aristotle with the Christianity of the west. Intellectual immobility was the result. As a traveller without a compass in a fog may wander long, imagining he is making way, and find himself after hours of toil at his starting-point, so the schoolmen, having 'tied and untied the same knots, and formed and dissipated the same clouds,' found themselves at the end of centuries in their old position.

With regard to the influence wielded by Aristotle in the Middle Ages, and which, to a less extent, he still wields, I would ask permission to make one remark. When the human mind has achieved greatness and given evidence of extraordinary power in one domain, there is a tendency to credit it with similar power in all other domains. Thus theologians have found comfort and assurance in the thought that Newton dealt with the question of revelation—forgetful of the fact, that the very devotion of his powers, through all the best years of his life, to a totally different class of ideas, not to speak of any natural disqualification, tended to render him less, instead of more, competent to deal with theological and historic questions. Goethe, starting from his established greatness as a poet, and indeed from his positive discoveries in Natural History, produced a profound impression among the painters of Germany, when he published his 'Farbelehre,' in which he endeavoured to overthrow Newton's theory of colours. This theory he deemed so obviously absurd,

that he considered its author a charlatan, and attacked him with a corresponding vehemence of language. In the domain of natural history Goethe had made really considerable discoveries; and we have high authority for assuming that, had he devoted himself wholly to that side of science, he might have reached, in it, an eminence comparable with that he attained as a poet. In sharpness of observation, in the detection of analogies apparently remote, in the classification and organisation of facts according to the analogies discerned, Goethe possessed extraordinary powers. These elements of scientific enquiry fall in with the disciplines of the poet. But, on the other hand, a mind thus richly endowed in the direction of natural history, may be almost shorn of endowment as regards the more strictly called physical and mechanical sciences. Goethe was in this condition. He could not formulate distinct mechanical conceptions; he could not see the force of mechanical reasoning; and, in regions where such reasoning reigns supreme, he became a *non ingens fulens* to those who followed him.

I have sometimes permitted myself to compare Aristotle with Goethe—to credit the Stagirite with an almost superhuman power of amassing and systematising facts, but to consider him fatally defective on that side of the mind, in respect to which incompleteness has been just ascribed to Goethe. Whewell refers the errors of Aristotle not to a neglect of facts, but to 'a neglect of the idea appropriate to the facts; the idea of Mechanical cause, which is Force, and the substitution of vague or inapplicable notions, involving only fictions of space or emotions of wonder.' This is doubtless true; but the word 'neglect' implies mere intellectual misdirection, whereas in Aristotle, as in Goethe, it was not, I believe, misdirection, but sheer natural incapacity which lay at the root of his mistakes. As a physicist, Aristotle displayed what we should consider some of the worst attributes of a modern physical investigator—indefiniteness of ideas,

confusion of mind, and a confident use of language which led to the delusive notion that he had really mastered his subject, while he had, as yet, failed to grasp even the elements of it. He put words in the place of things, subject in the place of object. He preached Induction without practising it, inverting the true order of enquiry, by passing from the general to the particular, instead of from the particular to the general. He made of the universe a closed sphere, in the centre of which he fixed the earth, proving from general principles, to his own satisfaction and to that of the world for near 2,000 years, that no other universe was possible. His notions of motion were entirely unphysical. It was natural or unnatural, letter or worse, calm or violent—no real mechanical conception regarding it lying at the bottom of his mind. He affirmed that a vacuum could not exist, and proved that if it did motion in it would be impossible. He determined *a priori* how many species of animals must exist, and shows on general principles why animals must have such and such parts. When an eminent contemporary philosopher, who is far removed from errors of this kind, remembers these abuses of the *a priori* method, he will be able to make allowance for the jealousy of physicists as to the acceptance of so-called *a priori* truths. Aristotle's errors of detail, as shown by Eucken and Lange, were grave and numerous. He affirmed that only in man we had the beating of the heart, that the left side of the body was colder than the right, that men have more teeth than women, and that there is an empty space at the back of every man's head.

There is one essential quality in physical conceptions, which was entirely wanting in those of Aristotle and his followers. I wish it could be expressed by a word untainted by its associations; it signifies a capability of being placed as a coherent picture before the mind. The Germans express the act of picturing by the word *vorstellen*, and the picture they call a *Vorstellung*. We

have no word in English which comes nearer to our requirements than *Imagination*; and, taken with its proper limitations, the word answers very well. But, as just intimated, it is tainted by its associations, and therefore objectionable to some minds. Compare, with reference to this capacity of mental presentation, the case of the Aristotelian, who refers the ascent of water in a pump to Nature's abhorrence of a vacuum, with that of Pascal when he proposed to solve the question of atmospheric pressure by the ascent of the Puy de Dôme. In the one case the terms of the explanation refuse to fall into place as a physical image; in the other the image is distinct, the descent and rise of the barometer being clearly figured as the balancing of two varying and opposing pressures.

During the drought of the Middle Ages in Christendom, the Arabian intellect, as forcibly shown by Draper, was active. With the intrusion of the Moors into Spain, order, learning, and refinement took the place of their opposites. When smitten with disease, the Christian peasant resorted to a shrine, the Moorish one to an instructed physician. The Arabs encouraged translations from the Greek philosophers, but not from the Greek poets. They turned in disgust from the lewdness of our classical mythology, and denounced as an unpardonable blasphemy all connection between the impure Olympian Jove and the Most High God. Draper traces still farther than Whewell the Arab elements in our scientific terms, and points out that the under garment of ladies retains to this hour its Arab name. He gives examples of what Arabian men of science accomplished, dwelling particularly on Alhazen, who was the first to correct the Platonic notion that rays of light are emitted by the eye. Alhazen discovered atmospheric refraction, and showed that we see the sun and the moon after they have set. He explained the enlargement of the sun and moon, and the shortening of the vertical diameters of both these bodies when near the horizon.

He was aware that the atmosphere decreases in density with increase of elevation, and actually fixed its height at 55½ miles. In the 'Book of the Palace Wisdom,' he sets forth the connection between the weight of the atmosphere and its increasing density. He shows that a body will weigh differently in a rare and dense atmosphere, and he considers the force with which plunged bodies rise through heavier media. He understood the doctrine of the centre of gravity, and applied it to the investigation of balances and steelyards. He recognised gravity as a force, though he fell into the error of making it diminish simply as the distance, and of making it purely terrestrial. He knew the relation between the velocities, spaces, and times of falling bodies, and had distinct ideas of capillary attraction. He improved the hydrometer. The determinations of the densities of bodies, as given by Alhazen, approach very closely to our own. 'I join,' says Draper, in 'the pious prayer of Alhazen, that in the day of judgment the All-Merciful will take pity on the soul of Abur-Raihan, because he was the first of the race of men to construct a table of specific gravities.' If all this be historic truth (and I have entire confidence in Dr. Draper), well may he 'deplore the systematic manner in which the literature of Europe has contrived to put out of sight our scientific obligations to the Mahomedans.'<sup>1</sup>

The strain upon the mind during the stationary period towards ultra-terrestrial things, to the neglect of problems close at hand, was sure to provoke reaction. But the reaction was gradual; for the ground was dangerous, and a power at hand competent to crush the critic who went too far. To elude this power, and still allow opportunity for the expression of opinion, the doctrine of 'twofold truth' was invented, according to which an opinion might be held 'theologically,' and the opposite opinion

<sup>1</sup> 'Intellectual Development of Europe,' p. 259.

philosophically.'<sup>2</sup> Thus, in the thirteenth century, the creation of the world in six days, and the unchangeableness of the individual soul, which had been so distinctly affirmed by St. Thomas Aquinas, were both denied philosophically, but admitted to be true as articles of the Catholic faith. When Protagoras uttered the maxim which brought upon him so much vituperation, that 'opposite assertions are equally true,' he simply meant to affirm men's differences to be so great, that what was subjectively true to the one might be subjectively untrue to the other. The great Sophist never meant to play fast and loose with the truth by saying that one of two opposite assertions, made by the same individual, could possibly escape being a lie. It was not 'sophistry,' but the dread of theologic vengeance, that generated this double dealing with conviction; and it is astonishing to notice what lengths were possible to men who were adroit in the use of artifices of this kind.

Towards the close of the stationary period a world-weariness, if I may so express it, took more and more possession of men's minds. Christendom had become sick of the School Philosophy and its verbal wastes, which led to no issue, but left the intellect in everlasting haze. Here and there was heard the voice of one impatiently crying in the wilderness, 'Not unto Aristotle, not unto subtle hypothesis, not unto church, Bible, or blind tradition, must we turn for a knowledge of the universe, but to the direct investigation of nature by observation and experiment.' In 1543 the epochmaking work of Copernicus on the paths of the heavenly bodies appeared. The total crash of Aristotle's closed universe, with the earth at its centre, followed as a consequence; and 'the earth moves' became a kind of watchword among intellectual freemen. Copernicus was Canon of the church of Frauenburg in the diocese of Ermland. For three-and-thirty years he had

<sup>2</sup> 'Lange,' 2nd edit. pp. 191, 192.

withdrawn himself from the world, and devoted himself to the consolidation of his great scheme of the solar system. He made its blocks eternal; and even to those who feared it, and desired its overthrow, it was so obviously strong, that they refrained for a time from meddling with it. In the last year of the life of Copernicus his book appeared: it is said that the old man received a copy of it a few days before his death, and then departed in peace.

The Italian philosopher, Giordano Bruno, was one of the earliest converts to the new astronomy. Taking Lucretius as his exemplar, he revived the notion of the infinity of world; and, combining with it the doctrine of Copernicus, reached the sublime generalisation that the fixed stars are suns, scattered numberless through space, and accompanied by satellites, which bear the same relation to them that our earth does to our sun, or our moon to our earth. This was an expansion of transcendent import; but Bruno came closer than this to our present line of thought. Struck with the problem of the generation and maintenance of organisms, and duly pondering it, he came to the conclusion that Nature, in her productions, does not imitate the technic of man. Her process is one of unravelling and unfolding. The infinity of forms under which matter appears was not imposed upon it by an external artificer; by its own intrinsic force and virtue it brings these forms forth. Matter is not the mere naked, empty *capacity* which philosophers have pictured her to be, but the universal mother, who brings forth all things as the fruit of her own womb.

This outspoken man was originally a Dominican monk. He was accused of heresy and had to fly, seeking refuge in Geneva, Paris, England, and Germany. In 1592 he fell into the hands of the Inquisition at Venice. He was imprisoned for many years, tried, degraded, excommunicated, and handed over to the Civil power, with the request that he should be treated gently, and 'without the shedding of blood.' This meant that he was to be

burnt; and burnt accordingly he was, on February 16, 1600. To escape a similar fate Galileo, thirty-three years afterwards, aljured upon his knees, with his hands upon the holy gospels, the heliocentric doctrine, which he knew to be true. After Galileo came Kepler, who from his German home defied the ultramontane power. He traced out from pre-existing observations the laws of planetary motion. Materials were thus prepared for Newton, who bound those empirical laws together by the principle of gravitation.

In the seventeenth century Bacon and Descartes, the restorers of philosophy, appeared in succession. Differently educated and endowed, their philosophic tendencies were different. Bacon held fast to Induction, believing firmly in the existence of an external world, and making collected experiences the basis of all knowledge. The mathematical studies of Descartes gave him a bias towards Deduction; and his fundamental principle was much the same as that of Protagoras, who made the individual man the measure of all things. 'I think, therefore I am,' said Descartes. Only his own identity was sure to him; and the full development of this system would have led to an idealism, in which the outer would be resolved into a mere phenomenon of consciousness. Gassendi, one of Descartes's contemporaries, of whom we shall hear more presently, quickly pointed out that the fact of personal existence would be proved as well by inference to any other act, as to the act of thinking. I eat, therefore I am; or I love, therefore I am, would be quite as conclusive. Lichtenberg, indeed, showed that the very thing to be proved was inevitably postulated on the first two words, 'I think,' and it is plain that no inference from the postulate could, by any possibility, be stronger than the postulate itself.

But Descartes deviated strangely from the idealism implied in his fundamental principle. He was the first to reduce, in a manner eminently capable of bearing the test of mental presenta-

tion, vital phenomena to purely mechanical principles. Through fear or love, Descartes was a good churchman; he accordingly rejected the notion of an atom, because it was absurd to suppose that God, if He so pleased, could not divide an atom; he puts in the place of the atoms small round particles, and light splinters, out of which he builds the organism. He sketches with marvellous physical insight a machine, with water for its motive power, which shall illustrate vital actions. He has made clear to his mind that such a machine would be competent to carry on the processes of digestion, nutrition, growth, respiration, and the beating of the heart. It would be competent to accept impressions from the external sense, to store them up in imagination and memory, to go through the internal movements of the appetites and passions, and the external movements of the limbs. He deduces these functions of his machine from the mere arrangements of its organs, as the movement of a clock, or other automaton, is deduced from its weights and wheels. 'As far as these functions are concerned,' he says, 'it is not necessary to conceive any other vegetative or sensitive soul, nor any other principle of motion or of life, than the blood and the spirits agitated by the fire which burns continually in the heart, and which is in no wise different from the fires existing in inanimate bodies.' Had Descartes been acquainted with the steam-engine, he would have taken it, instead of a fall of water, as his motive power. He would have shown the perfect analogy which exists between the oxidation of the food in the body, and that of the coal in the furnace. He would assuredly have anticipated Mayer in calling the blood which the heart diffuses, 'the oil of the lamp of life,' deriving all animal motions from the combustion of this oil, as the motions of a steam-engine are deduced from the combustion of its coal. As the matter stands, however, and considering the circumstances of the time, the boldness, clearness, and precision with which Descartes grasped the problem of vital dynamic,

constitute a marvellous illustration of intellectual power.<sup>1</sup>

During the Middle Ages the doctrine of atoms had to all appearance vanished from discussion. In all probability it held its ground among sober-minded and thoughtful men, though neither the church nor the world was prepared to hear of it with tolerance. Once, in the year 1345, it received distinct expression. But retraction by compulsion immediately followed; and, thus discouraged, it slumbered till the seventeenth century, when it was revived by a contemporary, and friend, of Hobbes of Malmsbury, the orthodox Catholic provost of Digne, Gassendi. But, before stating his relation to the Epicurean doctrine, it will be well to say a few words on the effect, as regards science, of the general introduction of monotheism among European nations.

'Were men,' says Hume, 'led into the apprehension of invisible intelligent power by contemplation of the works of Nature, they could never possibly entertain any conception but of one single Being, who bestowed existence and order on this vast machine, and adjusted all its parts to one regular system.' Referring to the condition of the heathen, who see a god behind every natural event, thus peopling the world with thousands of beings whose caprices are incalculable, Lange shows the impossibility of any compromise between such notions and those of science, which proceeds on the assumption of a never-changing law and causality. 'But,' he continues, with characteristic penetration, 'when the great thought of one God, acting as a unit upon the universe, has been seized, the connection of things in accordance with the law of cause and effect is not only thinkable, but it is a necessary consequence of the assumption. For when I see ten thousand wheels in motion, and know, or believe, that they are all driven by one motive power, then I

<sup>1</sup> See Huxley's admirable 'Essay on Descartes,' 'Lay Sermons,' pp. 364, 365.

know that I have before me a mechanism, the action of every part of which is determined by the plan of the whole. So much being assumed, it follows that I may investigate the structure of that machine, and the various motions of its parts. For the time being, therefore, this conception renders scientific action free.' In other words, were a capricious God at the circumference of every wheel and at the end of every lever, the action of the machine would be incalculable by the methods of science. But the actions of all its parts being rigidly determined by their connections and relations, and these being brought into play by a single motive power, then, though this last *prima mover* may elude me, I am still able to comprehend the machinery which it sets in motion. We have here a conception of the relation of Nature to its Author, which seems perfectly acceptable to some minds, but perfectly intolerable to others. Newton and Boyle lived and worked happily under the influence of this conception; Goethe rejected it with vehemence, and the same repugnance to accepting it is manifest in Carlyle.<sup>1</sup>

The analytic and synthetic tendencies of the human mind are traceable throughout history, great writers ranging themselves sometimes on the one side, sometimes on the other. Men of warm feelings, and minds open to the elevating impressions produced by nature as a whole, whose satisfaction, therefore, is rather ethical than logical, lean to the synthetic side; while the analytic harmonises best with the more precise and more mechanical bias which seeks the satisfaction of the understanding. Some form of pantheism was usually adopted by the one, while a detached Creator, working more or less after the manner of

<sup>1</sup> Boyle's model of the universe was the Strasburg clock with an outside Artificer. Goethe, on the other hand sang—

'Ihm ziemt's die Welt im Innern zu bewegen,  
Natur in sich, sich in Natur zu regen.'

See also Carlyle, 'Past and Present,' chap. v.

men, was often assumed by the other. Gassendi, as sketched by Lange, hardly to be ranked with either. Having formally acknowledged God as the great first cause, he immediately dropped the idea, applied the known laws of mechanics to the atoms, and deduced from them all vital phenomena. He defended Epicurus, and dwelt upon his purity, both of doctrine and of life. True he was a heathen, but so was Aristotle. Epicurus assailed superstition and religion, and rightly, because he did not know the true religion. He thought that the gods neither rewarded nor punished, and he adored them purely in consequence of their completeness: here we see, says Gassendi, the reverence of the child, instead of the fear of the slave. The errors of Epicurus shall be corrected, and the body of his truth retained. Gassendi then proceeds, as any heathen might do, to build up the world, and all that therein is, of atoms and molecules. God, who created earth and water, plants and animals, produced in the first place a definite number of atoms, which constituted the seed of all things. Then began that series of combinations and decompositions which now goes on, and which will continue in future. The principle of every change resides in matter. In artificial productions the moving principle is different from the material worked upon; but in nature the agent works within, being the most active and mobile part of the material itself. Thus this bold ecclesiastic, without incurring the censure of the church or the world, contrives to outstrip Mr. Darwin. The same cast of mind which caused him to detach the Creator from his universe, led him also to detach the soul from the body, though to the body he ascribes an influence so large as to render the soul almost unnecessary. The aberrations of reason were, in his view, an affair of the material brain. Mental disease is brain-disease; but then the immortal reason sits apart, and cannot be touched by the disease. The errors of madness are those of the instrument, not of the performer.

It may be more than a mere result of education, connecting itself, probably, with the deeper mental structure of the two men, that the idea of Gassendi, above enunciated, is substantially the same as that expressed by Professor Clerk Maxwell, at the close of the very able lecture delivered by him at Bradford last year. According to both philosophers, the atoms, if I understand aright, are *prepared materials*, which, formed once for all by the Eternal, produce by their subsequent interaction all the phenomena of the material world. There seems to be this difference, however, between Gassendi and Maxwell. The one *postulates*, the other *infers* his first cause. In his 'manufactured articles,' as he calls the atoms, Professor Maxwell finds the basis of an induction, which enables him to scale philosophic heights considered inaccessible by Kant, and to take the logical step from the atoms to their Maker.

Accepting here the leadership of Kant, I doubt the legitimacy of Maxwell's logic; but it is impossible not to feel the ethic glow with which his lecture concludes. There is, moreover, a very noble strain of eloquence in his description of the steadfastness of the atoms: 'Natural causes, as we know, are at work, which tend to modify, if they do not at length destroy, all the arrangements and dimensions of the earth and the whole solar system. But though in the course of ages catastrophes have occurred and may yet occur in the heavens, though ancient systems may be dissolved and new systems evolved out of their ruins, the molecules out of which these systems are built—the foundation stones of the material universe—remain unbroken and unworn.'

The atomic doctrine, in whole or in part, was entertained by Bacon, Descartes, Hobbes, Locke, Newton, Boyle, and their successors, until the chemical law of multiple proportions enabled Dalton to confer upon it an entirely new significance. In our day there are secessions from the theory, but it still stands firm.

Loschmidt, Stoney, and Sir William Thomson have sought to determine the sizes of the atoms, or rather to fix the limits between which their sizes lie; while only last year the discourses of Williamson and Maxwell illustrate the present hold of the doctrine upon the foremost scientific minds. In fact, it may be doubted whether, wanting this fundamental conception, a theory of the material universe is capable of scientific statement.

Ninety years subsequent to Gassendi the doctrine of bodily instruments, as it may be called, assumed immense importance in the hands of Bishop Butler, who, in his famous 'Analogy of Religion,' developed, from his own point of view, and with consummate sagacity, a similar idea. The Bishop still influences superior minds; and it will repay us to dwell for a moment on his views. He draws the sharpest distinction between our real selves and our bodily instruments. He does not, as far as I remember, use the word soul, possibly because the term was so hackneyed in his day, as it had been for many generations previously. But he speaks of 'living powers,' 'perceiving or percipient powers,' 'moving agents,' 'ourselves,' in the same sense as we should employ the term soul. He dwells upon the fact that limbs may be removed and mortal diseases assail the body, the mind, almost up to the moment of death, remaining clear. He refers to sleep and to swoon, where the 'living powers' are suspended but not destroyed. He considers it quite as easy to conceive of existence out of our bodies as in them; that we may animate a succession of bodies, the dissolution of all of them having no more tendency to dissolve our real selves, or 'deprive us of living faculties—the faculties of perception and action—than the dissolution of any foreign matter which we are capable of receiving impressions from, or making use of for the common occasions of life.' This is the key of the Bishop's position: 'our organised bodies are no more a part of ourselves than any other matter around us.' In proof of this he calls



attention to the use of glasses, which 'prepare objects' for the 'percipient power' exactly as the eye does. The eye itself is no more percipient than the glass; it quite as much the instrument of the true self, and also as foreign to the true self, as the glass is. 'And if we see with our eyes only in the same manner as we do with glasses, the like may justly be concluded from analogy of all our senses.'

Lucretius, as you are aware, reached a precisely opposite conclusion; and it certainly would be interesting, if not profitable, to us all, to hear what he would or could urge in opposition to the reasoning of the Bishop. As a brief discussion of the point will enable us to see the bearings of an important question, I will here permit a disciple of Lucretius to try the strength of the Bishop's position, and then allow the Bishop to retaliate, with the view of rolling back, if he can, the difficulty upon Lucretius.

The argument might proceed in this fashion:—

'Subjected to the test of mental presentation (*Forstellung*), your views, most honoured prelate, would present to many minds a great, if not an insuperable, difficulty. You speak of "living powers," "percipient or perceiving powers," and "ourselves;" but can you form a mental picture of any of these, apart from the organism through which it is supposed to act? Test yourself honestly, and see whether you possess any faculty that would enable you to form such a conception. The true self has a local habitation in each of us; thus localised, must it not possess a form? If so, what form? Have you ever for a moment realised it? When a leg is amputated the body is divided into two parts; is the true self in both of them or in one? Thomas Aquinas might say in both; but not you, for you appeal to the consciousness associated with one of the two parts, to prove that the other is foreign matter. Is consciousness, then, a necessary element of the true self? If so, what

do you say to the case of the whole body being deprived of consciousness? If not, then on what grounds do you deny any portion of the true self to the severed limb? It seems very singular that, from the beginning to the end of your admirable book (and no one admires its sober strength more than I do), you never once mention the brain or nervous system. You begin at one end of the body, and show that its parts may be removed without prejudice to the perceiving power. What if you begin at the other end, and remove, instead of the leg, the brain? The body, as before, is divided into two parts; but both are now in the same predicament, and neither can be appealed to to prove that the other is foreign matter. Or, instead of going so far as to remove the brain itself, let a certain portion of its bony covering be removed, and let a rhythmic series of pressures and relaxations of pressure be applied to the soft substance. At every pressure "the faculties of perception and of action" vanish; at every relaxation of pressure they are restored. Where, during the intervals of pressure, is the perceiving power? I once had the discharge of a large Leyden battery passed unexpectedly through me: I felt nothing, but was simply blotted out of conscious existence for a sensible interval. Where was my true self during that interval? Men who have recovered from lightning-stroke have been much longer in the same state; and indeed in cases of ordinary concussion of the brain, days may elapse during which no experience is registered in consciousness. Where is the man himself during the period of insensibility? You may say that I beg the question when I assume the man to have been unconscious, that he was really conscious all the time, and has simply forgotten what had occurred to him. In reply to this, I can only say that no one need shrink from the worst tortures that superstition ever invented, if only so felt and so remembered. — I do not think your theory of instruments goes at all to the bottom of the matter. A telegraph-operator

has his instruments, by means of which he converses with the world; our bodies possess a nervous system, which plays a similar part between the perceiving power and external things. Cut the wires of the operator, break his battery, demagnetise his needle; by this means you certainly sever his connection with the world; but, inasmuch as these are real instruments, their destruction does not touch the man who uses them. The operator survives, and he knows that he survives. What is it, I would ask, in the human system that answers to this conscious survival of the operator when the battery of the brain is so disturbed as to produce insensibility, or when it is destroyed altogether?

Another consideration, which you may consider slight, presses upon me with some force. The human may change from health to disease, and through such a change the most exemplary man may be converted into a debauchee or a murderer. My very noble and approved good master had, as you know, threatenings of lewdness introduced into his brain by his jealous wife's philter; and sooner than permit himself to run even the risk of yielding to these base promptings he slew himself. How could the hand of Lucretius have been thus turned against himself if the real Lucretius remained as before? Can the brain or can it not act in this distempered way without the intervention of the immortal reason? If it can, then it is a prime mover which requires only healthy regulation to render it reasonably self-acting, and there is no apparent need of your immortal reason at all. If it cannot, then the immortal reason, by its mischievous activity in operating upon a broken instrument, must have the credit of committing every imaginable extravagance and crime. I think, if you will allow me to say so, that the gravest consequences are likely to flow from your estimate of the body. To regard the brain as you would a staff or an eyeglass—to shut your eyes to all its mystery, to the perfect correlation of its condition and our consciousness, to the fact that a slight excess or defect of blood

in it produces the very swoon to which you refer, and that in relation to it our meat, and drink, and air, and exercise, have a perfectly transcendental value and significance—to forget all this does, I think, open a way to innumerable errors in our habits of life, and may possibly, in some cases, initiate and foster that very disease, and consequent mental ruin, which a wiser appreciation of this mysterious organ would have avoided.

I can imagine the Bishop thoughtful after hearing this argument. He was not the man to allow anger to mingle with the consideration of a point of this kind. After due reflection, and having strengthened himself by that honest contemplation, of the facts which was habitual with him, and which includes the desire to give even adverse facts their due weight, I can suppose the Bishop to proceed thus: "You will remember that in the 'Analogy of Religion,' of which you have so kindly spoken, I did not profess to prove anything absolutely, and that I ever and over again acknowledged and insisted on the smallness of our knowledge, or rather the depth of our ignorance, as regards the whole system of the universe. My object was to show my deistical friends, who set forth so eloquently the beauty and beneficence of Nature and the Ruler thereof, while they had nothing but scorn for the so-called absurdities of the Christian scheme, that they were in no better condition than we were, and that, for every difficulty found upon our side, quite as great a difficulty was to be found upon theirs. I will now with your permission adopt a similar line of argument. You are a Lucretian, and from the combination and separation of insensate atoms deduce all terrestrial things, including organic forms and their phenomena. Let me tell you in the first instance how far I am prepared to go with you. I admit that you can build crystalline forms out of this play of molecular force; that the diamond, amethyst, and snow-star are truly wonderful structures which are thus produced. I will go farther and acknowledge that even a tree or flower

might in this way be organised. Nay, if you can show me an animal without sensation, I will concede to you that it also might be put together by the suitable play of molecular force.

Thus far our way is clear, but now comes my difficulty. Your atoms are individually without sensation, much more are they without intelligence. May I ask you, then, to try your hand upon this problem. Take your dead hydrogen atoms, your dead oxygen atoms, your dead carbon atoms, your dead nitrogen atoms, your dead phosphorus atoms, and all the other atoms, dead as grains of shot, of which the brain is formed. Imagine them separate and sensationless; observe them running together and forming all imaginable combinations. This, as a purely mechanical process, is *seeable* by the mind. But can you see, or dream, or in any way imagine, how out of that mechanical act, and from these individually dead atoms, sensation, thought, and emotion are to rise? Are you likely to extract Homer out of the rattling of dice, or the Differential Calculus out of the clash of billiard-balls? I am not all benefit of this *Fantollungs-Kraft* of which you speak, nor am I, like so many of my brethren, a mere vacuum as regards scientific knowledge. I can follow a particle of musk until it reaches the olfactory nerve; I can follow the waves of sound until their tremors reach the water of the labyrinth, and set the otoliths and Corti's fibres in motion; I can also visualise the waves of ether as they cross the eye and hit the retina. Nay more, I am able to pursue to the central organ the motion thus imparted at the periphery, and to see in idea the very molecules of the brain thrown into tremors. My insight is not baffled by these physical processes. What baffles and bewilders me is the notion that from those physical tremors things so utterly incongruous with them as sensation, thought, and emotion can be derived. You may say, or think, that this issue of consciousness from the clash of atoms is not more incongruous than the flash of light from the union

of oxygen and hydrogen. But I beg to say that it is. For such incongruity as the flash possesses is that which I now force upon your attention. The "flash" is an affair of consciousness, the objective counterpart of which is a vibration. It is a flash only by your interpretation. *You* are the cause of the apparent incongruity; and *you* are the thing that puzzles me. I need not remind you that the great Leibnitz felt the difficulty which I feel; and that to get rid of this monstrous deduction of life from death he displaced your atoms by his monads, which were more or less perfect mirrors of the universe, and out of the summation and integration of which he supposed all the phenomena of life—sentient, intellectual, and emotional—to arise.

Your difficulty, then, as I see you are ready to admit, is quite as great as mine. You cannot satisfy the human understanding in its demand for logical continuity between molecular processes and the phenomena of consciousness. This is a rock on which Materialism must inevitably split whenever it pretends to be a complete philosophy of life. What is the moral, my Lucretian? You and I are not likely to indulge in ill-temper in the discussion of these great topics, where we see so much room for honest differences of opinion. But there are people of less wit or more bigotry (I say it with humility), on both sides, who are ever ready to mingle anger and vituperation with such discussions. There are, for example, writers of note and influence at the present day, who are not ashamed publicly to assume the "deep personal sin" of a great logician to be the cause of his unbelief in a theologic dogma.<sup>1</sup> And there are others who hold that we,

<sup>1</sup> This is the aspect under which the Editor of the 'Dublin Review' presents to his readers the memory of John Stuart Mill. I can only say, that I would as soon take my chance in the other world, in the company of the heathen, as in that of his Jesuit detractor. In Dr. Ward we have an example of a wholesome and vigorous satire, scoured and perfected by a posthumous crowd.

who cherish our noble Bible, wrought as it has been into the constitution of our forefathers, and by inheritance into us, must necessarily be hypocritical and insincere. Let us disavow and discountenance such people, cherishing the unswerving faith that what is good and true in both our arguments will be preserved for the benefit of humanity, while all that is bad or false will disappear.

I hold the Bishop's reasoning to be unanswerable, and his liberality to be worthy of imitation.

It is worth remarking that in one respect the Bishop was a product of his age. Long previous to his day the nature of the soul had been so favourite and general a topic of discussion, that, when the students of the Italian Universities wished to know the leanings of a new Professor, they at once requested him to lecture upon the soul. About the time of Bishop Butler the question was not only agitated but extended. It was seen by the clear-witted men who entered this arena, that many of their best arguments applied equally to brutes and men. The Bishop's arguments were of this character. He saw it, admitted it, took the consequence, and boldly embraced the whole animal world in his scheme of immortality.

Bishop Butler accepted with unwavering trust the chronology of the Old Testament, describing it as 'confirmed by the natural and civil history of the world, collected from common historians, from the state of the earth, and from the late inventions of arts and sciences.' These words mark progress; and they must seem somewhat heavy to the Bishop's successors of to-day. It is hardly necessary to inform you that since his time the domain of the naturalist has been immensely extended—the whole science of geology, with its astounding revelations regarding the life of the ancient earth, having been created. The rigidity of old conceptions has been relaxed, the public mind being rendered gradually tolerant of

the idea that not for six thousand, nor for sixty thousand, nor for six thousand thousand, but for *ages* embracing untold millions of years, this earth has been the theatre of life and death. The riddle of the rocks has been read by the geologist and paleontologist, from sub-cambrian depths to the deposits thickening over the sea-bottoms of to-day. And upon the leaves of that stone book are, as you know, stamped the characters, plainer and surer than those formed by the ink of history, which carry the mind back into abysses of past time, compared with which the periods which satisfied Bishop Butler cease to have a visual angle.

The lode of discovery, once struck, those petrified forms in which life was at one time active, increased to multitudes and demanded classification. They were grouped in genera, species, and varieties, according to the degree of similarity subsisting between them. Thus confusion was avoided, each object being found in the pigeon-hole appropriated to it and to its fellows of similar morphological or physiological character. The general fact soon became evident that none but the simplest forms of life lie lowest down; that, as we climb higher among the superimposed strata, more perfect forms appear. The change, however, from form to form was not continuous, but by steps—some small, some great. 'A section,' says Mr. Huxley, 'a hundred feet thick will exhibit at different heights a dozen species of Ammonite, none of which passes beyond its particular zone of limestone, or clay, into the zone below it, or into that above it.' In the presence of such facts it was not possible to avoid the question: Have these forms, showing, though in broken stages, and with many irregularities, this unmistakable general advance, been subjected to no continuous law of growth or variation? Had our education been purely scientific, or had it been sufficiently detached from influences which, however dominating in another domain, have always proved hindrances

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and delusions when introduced as factors into the domain of physics, the scientific mind never could have swerved from the search for a law of growth, or allowed itself to accept the anthropomorphism which regarded each successive stratum as a kind of mechanic's bench for the manufacture of new species out of all relation to the old.

Biased, however, by their previous education, the great majority of naturalists invoked a special creative act to account for the appearance of each new group of organisms. Doubtless numbers of them were clear-headed enough to see that this was no explanation at all—that in point of fact it was an attempt, by the introduction of a greater difficulty, to account for a less. But, having nothing to offer in the way of explanation, they for the most part held their peace. Still the thoughts of reflecting men naturally and necessarily simmered round the question. De Maillet, a contemporary of Newton, has been brought into notice by Professor Huxley as one who 'had a notion of the modifiability of living forms.' In my frequent conversations with the late Sir Benjamin Brodie, a man of highly philosophic mind, he often drew my attention to the fact that, as early as 1794, Charles Darwin's grandfather was the pioneer of 'Charles Darwin.' In 1801, and in subsequent years, the celebrated Lamarck, who, through the vigorous exposition of his views by the author of the 'Vestiges of Creation,' rendered the public mind perfectly familiar with the idea of evolution, endeavoured to show the development of species out of changes of habit and external condition. In 1813 Dr. Wells, the founder of our present theory of Dew, read before the Royal Society a paper in which, to use the words of Mr. Darwin, 'he distinctly recognises the principle of natural selection; and this is the first recognition that has been indicated.' The thoroughness and skill with which Wells pursued his work, and the obvious

<sup>1</sup> 'Zoonomis,' vol. i. pp. 300-310.

dependence of his character, rendered him long ago a favourite with me; and it gave me the liveliest pleasure to alight upon this additional testimony to his penetration. Professor Grant, Mr. Patrick Matthew, Von Buch, the author of the 'Vestiges,' D'Halley, and others,<sup>1</sup> by the enunciation of opinions more or less clear and correct, showed that the question had been fermenting long prior to the year 1859, when Mr. Darwin and Mr. Wallace simultaneously, but independently, placed their closely concurrent views before the Linnean Society.

These papers were followed in 1859 by the publication of the first edition of the 'Origin of Species.' All great things come slowly to the birth. Copernicus, as I informed you, pondered his great work for thirty-three years. Newton for nearly twenty years kept the idea of Gravitation before his mind; for twenty years also he dwelt upon his discovery of Fluxions, and doubtless would have continued to make it the object of his private thought, had he not found Leibnitz upon his track. Darwin for two-and-twenty years pondered the problem of the origin of species, and doubtless he would have continued to do so had he not found Wallace upon his track.<sup>2</sup> A concentrated, but full and powerful, epitome of his labours was the consequence. The book was by no means an easy one; and probably not one in every score of those who then attacked it, had read its pages through, or were competent to grasp their significance if they had. I do not say this merely to discredit them; for there were in those days some really eminent scientific men, entirely raised above the heat of popular prejudice, and willing to accept any conclusion that science had to offer.

<sup>1</sup> In 1823 Mr. Herbert Spencer ('Principles of Psychology,' 2nd edit., vol. i. p. 463) expressed 'the belief that life under all its forms has arisen by an unbroken evolution, and through the instrumentality of what are called natural causes.' This was my belief also at that time.

<sup>2</sup> The behaviour of Mr. Wallace in relation to this subject has been dignified to the highest degree.

provided it was duly backed by fact and argument, who entirely mistook Mr. Darwin's views. In fact the work needed an expounder, and it found one in Mr. Huxley. I know nothing more admirable in the way of scientific exposition than those early articles of his on the origin of species. He swept the curve of discussion through the really significant points of the subject, enriched his exposition with profound original remarks and reflections, often summing up in a single pithy sentence an argument which a less compact mind would have spread over pages. But there is one impression made by the book itself which no exposition of it however luminous, can convey; and that is the impression of the vast amount of labour, both of observation and of thought, implied in its production. Let us glance at its principles.

It is conceded on all hands that what are called 'varieties' are continually produced. The rule is probably without exception. No chick, or child, is in all respects and particulars the counterpart of its brother and sister; and in such differences we have 'variety' incipient. No naturalist could tell how far this variation could be carried; but the great mass of them held that never, by any amount of internal or external change, nor by the mixture of both, could the offspring of the same progenitor so far deviate from each other as to constitute different species. The function of the experimental philosopher is to combine the conditions of Nature and to produce her results; and this was the method of Darwin.<sup>1</sup> He made himself acquainted with what could, without any manner of doubt, be done in the way of producing variation. He associated himself with pigeon-fanciers—bought, begged, kept, and observed in-

<sup>1</sup> The first step only towards experimental demonstration has been taken. Experiments now begun might, a couple of centuries hence, furnish data of incalculable value, which ought to be supplied to the science of the future.

every breed that he could obtain. Though derived from a common stock, the diversities of these pigeons were such that 'a score of them might be chosen which, if shown to an ornithologist, and he were told that they were wild birds, would certainly be ranked by him as well-defined species.' The simple principle which guides the pigeon-fancier, as it does the cattle-breeder, is the selection of some variety that strikes his fancy, and the propagation of this variety by inheritance. With his eye still directed to the particular appearance which he wishes to exaggerate, he selects it as it reappears in successive broods, and thus adds increment to increment until an astonishing amount of divergence from the parent type is effected. The breeder in this case does not produce the elements of the variation. He simply observes them, and by selection adds them together until the required result has been obtained. 'No man,' says Mr. Darwin, 'would ever try to make a fantail till he saw a pigeon with a tail developed in some slight degree in an unusual manner, or a pouter until he saw a pigeon with a crop of unusual size.' Thus nature gives the hint, man sets upon it, and by the law of inheritance exaggerates the deviation.

Having thus satisfied himself by indubitable facts that the organisation of an animal or of a plant (for precisely the same treatment applies to plants) is to some extent plastic, he passes from variation under domestication to variation under nature. Hitherto we have dealt with the adding together of small changes by the conscious selection of man. Can Nature thus select? Mr. Darwin's answer is, 'Assuredly she can.' The number of living things produced is far in excess of the number that can be supported; hence at some period or other of their lives there must be a struggle for existence; and what is the infallible result? If one organism were a perfect copy of the other in regard to strength, skill, and agility, external conditions would decide. But this is not the case. Here we have the

fact of variety offering itself to nature, as in the former instance it offered itself to man; and those varieties which are least competent to cope with surrounding conditions, will infallibly give way to those that are most competent. To use a familiar proverb, the weakest comes to the wall. But the triumphant fraction again breeds to over-production, transmitting the qualities which secured its maintenance, but transmitting them in different degrees. The struggle for food again supervenes, and those to whom the favourable quality has been transmitted in excess, will triumph as before.

It is easy to see that we have here the addition of increments favourable to the individual, still more rigorously carried out than in the case of domestication; for not only are unfavourable specimens not selected by nature, but they are destroyed. This is what Mr. Darwin calls 'Natural Selection,' which 'acts by the preservation and accumulation of small inherited modifications, each profitable to the preserved being.' With this idea he interpenetrates and leavens the vast store of facts that he and others have collected. We cannot, without shutting our eyes through fear or prejudice, fail to see that Darwin is here dealing, not with imaginary, but with true causes; nor can we fail to discern what vast modifications may be produced by natural selection in periods sufficiently long. Each individual increment may resemble what mathematicians call a 'differential' (a quantity indefinitely small); but definite and great changes may obviously be produced by the integration of these infinitesimal quantities, through practically infinite time.

If Darwin, like Bruno, rejects the notion of creative power acting after human fashion, it certainly is not because he is unacquainted with the numberless exquisite adaptations, on which this notion of a supernatural Artificer has been founded. His book is a repository of the most startling facts of this description. Take the marvellous observation which he cites

from Dr. Crüger, where a bucket with an aperture, serving as a spout, is formed in an orchid. Bees visit the flower: in eager search of material for their combs they push each other into the bucket, the drenched ones escaping from their involuntary bath by the spout. Here they rub their backs against the viscid stigma of the flower and obtain glue; then against the pollenmasses, which are thus stuck to the back of the bee and carried away. When the bee, so provided, flies to another flower, or to the same flower a second time, and is pushed by its comrades into the bucket, and then crawls out by the passage, the pollen-mass upon its back necessarily comes first into contact with the viscid stigma, which takes up the pollen; and this is how that orchid is fertilised. Or take this other case of the *Catantus*. Bees visit these flowers in order to gnaw the labellum; in doing this they inevitably touch a long, tapering, sensitive projection. This, when touched, transmits a sensation or vibration to a certain membrane, which is instantly ruptured, setting free a spring, by which the pollen-mass is shot forth like an arrow in the right direction, and adheres by its viscid extremity to the back of the bee. In this way the fertilising pollen is spread abroad.

It is the mind thus stored with the choicest materials of the teleologist that rejects teleology, seeking to refer these wonders to natural causes. They illustrate, according to him, the method of nature, not the 'technic' of a man-like Artificer. The beauty of flowers is due to natural selection. Those that distinguish themselves by vividly contrasting colours from the surrounding green leaves are most readily seen, most frequently visited by insects, most often fertilised, and hence most favoured by natural selection. Coloured berries also readily attract the attention of birds and beasts, which feed upon them, spread their unnumbered seeds abroad, thus giving trees and shrubs possessing such berries a greater chance in the struggle for existence.



With profound analytic and synthetic skill, Mr. Darwin investigates the cell-making instinct of the hive-bee. His method of dealing with it is representative. He falls back from the more perfectly to the less perfectly developed instinct—from the hive-bee to the humble bee, which uses its own cocoon as a comb, and to classes of bees of intermediate skill, endeavouring to show how the passage might be gradually made from the lowest to the highest. The saving of wax is the most important point in the economy of bees. Twelve to fifteen pounds of dry sugar are said to be needed for the secretion of a single pound of wax. The quantities of nectar necessary for the wax must therefore be vast; and every improvement of constructive instinct which results in the saving of wax is a direct profit to the insect's life. The time that would otherwise be devoted to the making of wax, is now devoted to the gathering and storing of honey for winter food. Mr. Darwin passes from the humble bee with its rude cells, through the *Melipona* with its more artistic cells, to the hive-bee with its astonishing architecture. The bees place themselves at equal distances apart upon the wax, sweep and excavate equal spheres round the selected points. The spheres intersect, and the planes of intersection are built up with thin laminae. Hexagonal cells are thus formed. This mode of treating such questions is, as I have said, representative. The expositor habitually retires from the more perfect and complex, to the less perfect and simple, and carries you with him through stages of *perfecting*—adds increment to increment of infinitesimal change, and in this way gradually breaks down your reluctance to admit that the exquisite climax of the whole could be a result of natural selection.

Mr. Darwin shirks no difficulty; and, saturated as the subject was with his own thought, he must have known, better than his critics, the weakness as well as the strength of his

theory. This of course would be of little avail were his object a temporary dialectic victory, instead of the establishment of a truth which he means to be everlasting. But he takes no pains to disguise the weakness he has discerned; nay, he takes every pains to bring it into the strongest light. His vast resources enable him to cope with objections started by himself and others, so as to leave the final impression upon the reader's mind that, if they be not completely answered, they certainly are not fatal. Their negative force being thus destroyed, you are free to be influenced by the vast positive mass of evidence he is able to bring before you. This largeness of knowledge, and readiness of resource, render Mr. Darwin the most terrible of antagonists. Accomplished naturalists have levelled heavy and sustained criticisms against him—not always with the view of fairly weighing his theory, but with the explicit intention of exposing its weak points only. This does not irritate him. He treats every objection with a soberness and thoroughness, which even Bishop Butler might be proud to imitate; surrounding each fact with its appropriate detail, placing it in its proper relations, and usually giving it a significance which, as long as it was kept isolated, failed to appear. This is done without a trace of ill-temper. He moves over the subject with the passionless strength of a glacier; and the grinding of the rocks is not always without a counterpart in the logical pulverisation of the objector. But though in handling this mighty theme all passion has been stilled, there is an emotion of the intellect, incident to the discovery of new truth, which often colours and warms the pages of Mr. Darwin. His success has been great; and this implies not only the ability of his work, but the preparedness of the public mind for such a revelation. On this head a remark of Agassiz impressed me more than anything else. Sprung from a race of theologians, this celebrated man combated to the last the theory of natural selection. One of

the many times I had the pleasure of meeting him in the United States was at Mr. Winthrop's beautiful residence at Brookline, near Boston. Rising from luncheon, we all halted as if by common consent in front of a window, and continued there a discussion which had been started at table. The maple was in its autumn glory; and the exquisite beauty of the scene outside seemed, in my case, to interpenetrate without disturbance the intellectual action. Earnestly, almost sadly, Agassiz turned, and said to the gentlemen standing round, 'I confess that I was not prepared to see this theory received as it has been by the best intellects of our time. Its success is greater than I could have thought possible.'

In our day grand generalisations have been reached. The theory of the origin of species is but one of them. Another, of still wider grasp and more radical significance, is the doctrine of the Conservation of Energy, the ultimate philosophical issue of which are as yet but dimly seen—that doctrine which 'binds nature fast in fate' to an extent not hitherto recognised, exacting from every antecedent its equivalent consequent, from every consequent its equivalent antecedent, and bringing vital as well as physical phenomena under the dominion of that law of causal connection which, so far as the human understanding has yet pierced, asserts itself everywhere in nature. Long in advance of all definite experiment upon the subject, the constancy and indestructibility of matter had been affirmed; and all subsequent experience justified the affirmation. Mayer extended the attribute of indestructibility to force, applying it in the first instance to inorganic, and afterwards, with profound insight, to organic nature. The vegetable world, though drawing almost all its nutriment from invisible sources, was proved incompetent to generate anew either matter or force. Its matter is for the most part transuted gas; its force transformed solar force. The animal world was proved to be equally

energetic, all its motive energies being referred to the combustion of its food. The activity of each animal, as a whole, was proved to be the transferred activity of its molecules. The muscles were shown to be stores of mechanical energy, potential until unlocked by the nerves, and then resulting in muscular contractions. The speed at which messages fly to and fro along the nerves was determined, and found to be, not as had been previously supposed, equal to that of light or electricity, but less than the speed of sound—less even than that of a flying eagle.

This was the work of the physicist; then came the conquests of the comparative anatomist and physiologist, revealing the structure of every animal, and the function of every organ in the whole biological series, from the lowest zoöphyte up to man. The nervous system had been made the object of profound and continued study, the wonderful and, at bottom, entirely mysterious controlling power which it exercises over the whole organism, physical and mental, being recognised more and more. Thought could not be kept back from a subject so profoundly suggestive. Besides the physical life dealt with by Mr. Darwin, there is a psychical life presenting similar gradations, and asking equally for a solution. How are the different grades and orders of Mind to be accounted for? What is the principle of growth of that mysterious power which on our planet culminates in Reason? These are questions which, though not thrusting themselves so forcibly upon the attention of the general public, had not only occupied many reflecting minds, but had been formally broached by one of them before the 'Origin of Species' appeared.

With the mass of materials furnished by the physicist and physiologist in his hands, Mr. Herbert Spencer, twenty years ago, sought to graft upon this basis a system of psychology; and two years ago a second and greatly amplified edition of his work appeared. Those who have occupied themselves with the beautiful experiments of Plateau will remember that when two

spherules of oliveoil, suspended in a mixture of alcohol and water of the same density as the oil, are brought together, they do not immediately unite. Something like a pellicle appears to be formed around the drops, the rupture of which is immediately followed by the coalescence of the globules into one. There are organisms whose vital actions are almost as purely physical as that of these drops of oil. They come into contact and fuse themselves thus together. From such organisms to others a shade higher, from these to others a shade higher still, and on through an ever ascending series, Mr. Spencer conducts his argument. There are two obvious factors to be here taken into account—the creature and the medium in which it lives, or, as it is often expressed, the organism and its environment. Mr. Spencer's fundamental principle is, that between these two factors there is incessant interaction. The organism is played upon by the environment, and is modified to meet the requirements of the environment. Life he defines to be "a continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations."

In the lowest organisms we have a kind of tactual sense diffused over the entire body; then, through impressions from without and their corresponding adjustments, special portions of the surface become more responsive to stimuli than others. The senses are nascent, the basis of all of them being that simple tactual sense which the sage Democritus recognised 2,500 years ago as their common progenitor. The action of light, in the first instance, appears to be a mere disturbance of the chemical processes in the animal organism, similar to that which occurs in the leaves of plants. By degrees the action becomes localised in a few pigment-cells, more sensitive to light than the surrounding tissue. The eye is incipient. At first it is merely capable of revealing differences of light and shade produced by bodies close at hand. Followed, as the interception of the light is, in almost all cases, by the contact of the closely adjacent opaque

body, sight in this condition becomes a kind of 'anticipatory touch.' The adjustment continues; a slight bulging out of the epidermis over the pigment-granules supervenes. A lens is incipient, and, through the operation of infinite adjustments, at length reaches the perfection that it displays in the hawk and eagle. So of the other senses; they are special differentiations of a tissue which was originally equally sensitive all over.

With the development of the senses, the adjustments between the organism and its environment gradually extend in space, a multiplication of experiences and a corresponding modification of conduct being the result. The adjustments also extend in time, covering continually greater intervals. Along with this extension in space and time the adjustments also increase in speciality and complexity, passing through the various grades of brute life, and prolonging themselves into the domain of reason. Very striking are Mr. Spencer's remarks regarding the influence of the sense of touch upon the development of intelligence. This is, so to say, the mother-tongue of all the senses, into which they must be translated to be of service to the organism. Hence its importance. The parrot is the most intelligent of birds, and its tactual power is also greatest. From this sense it gets knowledge, unattainable by birds which cannot employ their feet as hands. The elephant is the most sagacious of quadrupeds—its tactual range and skill, and the consequent multiplication of experiences, which it owes to its wonderfully adaptable trunk, being the basis of its sagacity. Feline animals, for a similar cause, are more sagacious than hoofed animals,—attainment being to some extent made in the case of the horse, by the possession of sensitive prehensile lips. In the *Primates* the evolution of intellect and the evolution of tactual appendages go hand in hand. In the most intelligent anthropoid apes we find the tactual range and delicacy greatly augmented, new avenues of knowledge being thus opened to the animal. Man crowns the

edifice here, not only in virtue of his own manipulatory power, but through the enormous extension of his range of experience, by the invention of instruments of precision, which serve as supplemental senses and supplemental limbs. The reciprocal action of these is finely described and illustrated. That chastened intellectual emotion to which I have referred in connection with Mr. Darwin, is not absent in Mr. Spencer. His illustrations possess at times exceeding vividness and force; and from his style on such occasions it is to be inferred, that the ganglia of this Apostle of the Understanding are sometimes the seat of a nascent poetic thrill.

It is a fact of supreme importance that actions, the performance of which at first requires even painful effort and deliberation, may, by habit, be rendered automatic. Witness the slow learning of its letters by a child, and the subsequent facility of reading in a man, when each group of letters which forms a word is instantly, and without effort, fused to a single perception. Instance the billiard player, whose muscles of hand and eye, when he reaches the perfection of his art, are unconsciously co-ordinated. Instance the musician, who, by practice, is enabled to fuse a multitude of arrangements, auditory, tactual, and muscular, into a process of automatic manipulation. Combining such facts with the doctrine of hereditary transmission, we reach a theory of Instinct. A chick, after coming out of the egg, balances itself correctly, runs about, picks up food, thus showing that it possesses a power of directing its movements to definite ends. How did the chick learn this very complex coordination of eye, muscles, and beak? It has not been individually taught; its personal experience is *nil*; but it has the benefit of uncestral experience. In its inherited organisation are registered the powers which it displays at birth. So also as regards the instinct of the hive-bee, already referred to. The distance at which the insects stand apart when they sweep their hemispheres and build their cells is 'organically remembered.' Man also carries with

him the physical texture of his ancestry, as well as the inherited intellect bound up with it. The defects of intelligence during infancy and youth are probably less due to a lack of individual experience, than to the fact that in early life the cerebral organisation is still incomplete. The period necessary for completion varies with the race, and with the individual. As a round shot outstrips a rifled bolt on quitting the muzzle of the gun, so the lower race, in childhood, may outstrip the higher. But the higher eventually overtakes the lower, and surpasses it in range. As regards individuals, we do not always find the precocity of youth prolonged to mental power in maturity; while the dulness of boyhood is sometimes strikingly contrasted with the intellectual energy of after years. Newton, when a boy, was weakly, and he showed no particular aptitude at school; but in his eighteenth year he went to Cambridge, and soon afterwards astonished his teachers by his power of dealing with geometrical problems. During his quiet youth, his brain was slowly preparing itself to be the organ of those energies which he subsequently displayed.

By myriad blows (to use a Lucretian phrase) the image and superscription of the external world are stamped as states of consciousness upon the organism, the depth of the impression depending upon the number of the blows. When two or more phenomena occur in the environment invariably together, they are stamped to the same depth or to the same relief, and indissolubly connected. And here we come to the threshold of a great question. Seeing that he could in no way rid himself of the consciousness of Space and Time assumed them to be necessary 'forms of intuition,' the moulds and shapes into which our intuitions are thrown, belonging to ourselves, and without objective existence. With unexpected power and success Mr. Spencer brings the hereditary experience theory, as he holds it, to bear upon this question. 'If there exist certain external relations which are experienced by all organisms at all instants of their waking

lives—relations which are absolutely constant and universal—there will be established answering internal relations, that are absolutely constant and universal. Such relations we have in those of Space and Time. As the substratum of all other relations of the Non-Ego, they must be responded to by conceptions that are the substrata of all other relations in the Ego. Being the constant and infinitely repeated elements of thought, they must become the automatic elements of thought—the elements of thought which it is impossible to get rid of—the “forms of intuition.”

Throughout this application and extension of Hartley's and Mill's ‘Law of Inseparable Association,’ Mr. Spencer stands upon his own ground, invoking, instead of the experiences of the individual, the registered experiences of the race. His overthrow of the restriction of experience to the individual is, I think, complete. That restriction ignores the power of organising experience, furnished at the outset to each individual; it ignores the different degrees of this power possessed by different races, and by different individuals of the same race. Were there not in the human brain a potency antecedent to all experience, a dog or a cat ought to be as capable of education as a man. These predetermined internal relations are independent of the experiences of the individual. The human brain is the ‘organised register of infinitely numerous experiences received during the evolution of life, or rather during the evolution of that series of organisms through which the human organism has been reached. The effects of the most uniform and frequent of these experiences have been successively bequeathed, principal and interest, and have slowly mounted to that high intelligence which lies latent in the brain of the infant. Thus it happens that the European inherits from twenty to thirty cubic inches more of brain than the Papuan. Thus it happens that faculties, as of music, which scarcely exist in some inferior races, become congenital in superior ones. Thus it

happens that out of savages unable to count up to the number of their fingers, and speaking a language containing only nouns and verbs, arise at length our Newtons and Shakespeares.’

At the outset of this Address it was stated that physical theories which lie beyond experience are derived by a process of abstraction from experience. It is instructive to note from this point of view the successive introduction of new conceptions. The idea of the attraction of gravitation was preceded by the observation of the attraction of iron by a magnet, and of light bodies by rubbed amber. The polarity or magnetism and electricity also appealed to the senses. It thus became the substratum of the conception that atoms and molecules are endowed with attractive and repellent poles, by the play of which definite forms of crystalline architecture are produced. Thus molecular force becomes *structural*.<sup>1</sup> It required no great boldness of thought to extend its play into organic nature, and to recognise in molecular force the agency by which both plants and animals are built up. In this way, out of experience arise conceptions which are wholly ultrasensory. None of the atomists of antiquity had any notion of this play of molecular polar force, but they had experience of gravity as manifested by falling bodies. Abstracting from this, they permitted their atoms to fall eternally through empty space. Democritus assumed that the larger atoms moved more rapidly than the smaller ones, which they therefore could overtake, and with which they could combine. Epicurus, holding that empty space could offer no resistance to motion, ascribed to all the atoms the same velocity; but he seems to have overlooked the consequence that under such circumstances the atoms could never combine. Lucretius cut the knot by quitting the domain of physics altogether, and causing the atoms to move together by a kind of volition.

<sup>1</sup> See Art. VIII., Part II., of this volume, or ‘Lectures on Light,’ III.

Was the instinct utterly at fault which caused Lucretius thus to swerve from his own principles? Diminishing gradually the number of progenitors, Mr. Darwin comes at length to one 'primordial form,' but he does not say, so far as I remember, how he supposes this form to have been introduced. He quotes with satisfaction the words of a celebrated author and divine who had 'gradually learnt to see that it was just as noble a conception of the Deity to believe He created a few original forms, capable of self-development into other and needful forms, as to believe He required a fresh act of creation to supply the voids caused by the action of His laws.' What Mr. Darwin thinks of this view of the introduction of life I do not know. But the anthropomorphism, which it seemed his object to set aside, is as firmly associated with the creation of a few forms as with the creation of a multitude. We need clearness and thoroughness here. Two courses and two only are possible. Either let us open our doors freely to the conception of creative acts, or, abandoning them, let us radically change our notions of Matter. If we look at matter as pictured by Democritus, and as defined for generations in our scientific text-books, the notion of conscious life coming out of it, cannot be formed by the mind. The argument placed in the mouth of Bishop Butler suffices, in my opinion, to crush all such materialism as this. Those, however, who framed these definitions of matter were but partial students. They were not biologists, but mathematicians, whose labours referred only to such accidents and properties of matter as could be expressed in their formulae. Their science was mechanical science, not the science of life. With matter in its wholeness they never dealt; and, denuded by their imperfect definitions, 'the gentle mother of all' became the object of her children's dread. Let us reverently, but honestly, look the question in the face. Divorced from matter, where is life? Whatever our *faith* may say, our *knowledge* shows them to be

indissolubly joined. Every meal we eat, and every cup we drink, illustrates the mysterious control of Mind by Matter.

On tracing the line of life backwards, we see it approaching more and more to what we call the purely physical condition. We come at length to those organisms which I have compared to drops of oil, suspended in a mixture of alcohol and water. We reach the *protogones* of Haeckel, in which we have 'a type distinguishable from a fragment of albumen only by its finely granular character.' Can we pause here? We break a magnet and find two poles in each of its fragments. We continue the process of breaking; but, however small the parts, each carries with it, though enfeebled, the polarity of the whole. And when we can break no longer, we prolong the intellectual vision to the polar molecules. Are we not urged to do *something* similar in the case of life? Is there not a temptation to close to some extent with Lucretius, when he affirms that 'Nature is seen to do all things spontaneously of herself without the meddling of the gods?' or with Bruno, when he declares that Matter is not 'that mere empty capacity which philosophers have pictured her to be, but the universal mother who brings forth all things as the fruit of her own womb?' Believing as I do, in the continuity of nature, I cannot stop abruptly where our microscopes cease to be of use. Here the vision of the mind authoritatively supplements the vision of the eye. By an intellectual necessity I cross the boundary of the experimental evidence,<sup>1</sup> and discern in that Matter which we, in our ignorance of its latent powers, and notwithstanding our professed reverence for its Creator, have hitherto covered with opprobrium, the promise and potency of all terrestrial life.

If you ask me whether there exists the least evidence to prove

<sup>1</sup>This mode of procedure was not invented in Belfast. See first paragraph, Art. III., Part I., of this volume; written in 1866.

that any form of life can be developed out of matter, without demonstrable antecedent life, my reply is that evidence considered perfectly conclusive by many has been adduced; and that were some of us who have pondered this question to follow a very common example, and accept testimony because it falls in with our belief, we also should eagerly close with the evidence referred to. But there is in the true man of science a desire stronger than the wish to have his beliefs upheld; namely, the desire to have them true. And this stronger wish causes him to reject the most plausible support, if he has reason to suspect that it is vitiated by error. Those to whom I refer as having studied this question, believing the evidence offered in favour of 'spontaneous generation' to be thus vitiated, cannot accept it. They know full well that the chemist now prepares from inorganic matter a vast array of substances, which were some time ago regarded as the sole products of vitality. They are intimately acquainted with the structural power of matter, as evidenced in the phenomena of crystallisation. They can justify scientifically their belief in its potency, under the proper conditions, to produce organisms. But, in reply to your question, they will frankly admit their inability to point to any satisfactory experimental proof that life can be developed, save from demonstrable antecedent life. As already indicated, they draw the line from the highest organisms through lower ones down to the lowest, and it is the prolongation of this line by the intellect, beyond the range of the senses, that leads them to the conclusion which Bruno so boldly enunciated.<sup>1</sup>

The 'materialism' here professed may be vastly different from what you suppose, and I therefore crave your gracious patience to the end. 'The question of an external world,' says J. S. Mill, 'is the great battle-ground of metaphysics.'<sup>2</sup> Mr. Mill

<sup>1</sup> Bruno was a Pantheist, not an Atheist, or a Materialist.

<sup>2</sup> Examination of Hamilton, p. 134.

himself reduces external phenomena to 'possibilities of sensation.' Kant, as we have seen, made time and space 'forms' of our own intuitions. Fichte, having first by the inexorable logic of his understanding proved himself to be a mere link in that chain of eternal causation which holds so rigidly in nature, violently broke the chain by making nature, and all that it inherits, an apparition of the mind.<sup>1</sup> And it is by no means easy to combat such notions. For when I say I see you, and that I have not the least doubt about it, the obvious reply is, that what I am really conscious of is an affection of my own retina. And if I urge that I can check my sight of you by touching you, the retort would be that I am equally transgressing the limits of fact; for what I am really conscious of is, not that you are there, but that the nerves of my hand have undergone a change. All we hear, and see, and touch, and taste, and smell, are, it would be urged, mere variations of our own condition, beyond which, even to the extent of a hair's breadth, we cannot go. That anything answering to our impressions exists outside of ourselves is not a fact, but an inference, to which all validity would be denied by an idealist like Berkeley, or by a sceptic like Hume. Mr. Spencer takes another line. With him, as with the uneducated man, there is no doubt or question as to the existence of an external world. But he differs from the uneducated, who think that the world really is what consciousness represents it to be. Our states of consciousness are mere symbols of an outside entity which produces them and determines the order of their succession, but the real nature of which we can never know.<sup>2</sup> In fact, the whole process of evolution is the mani-

<sup>1</sup> Bestimmung des Menschen.

<sup>2</sup> In a paper, of more popular and profound, entitled 'Recent Progress in the Theory of Vision,' contained in the volume of lectures by Helmholtz, published by Longmans, this symbolism of our states of consciousness is also dwelt upon. The impressions of sense are the mere signs of external things. In this paper Helmholtz contends strongly against

festation of a Power absolutely inscrutable to the intellect of man. As little in our day as in the days of Job can man by searching find this Power out. Considered fundamentally, then, it is by the operation of an insoluble mystery that life on earth is evolved, species differentiated, and mind unfolded from their prepotent elements in the immeasurable past. There is, you will observe, no very rank materialism here.

The strength of the doctrine of evolution consists, not in an experimental demonstration (for the subject is hardly accessible to this mode of proof), but in its general harmony with scientific thought. From contrast, moreover, it derives enormous relative strength. On the one side we have a theory (if it could with any propriety be so called) derived, as were the theories referred to at the beginning of this Address, not from the study of nature, but from the observation of man—a theory which converts the Power whose garment is seen in the visible universe into an Artificer, fashioned after the human model, and acting by broken efforts as man is seen to act. On the other side we have the conception that all we see around us, and all we feel within us—the phenomena of physical nature as well as those of the human mind—have their unsearchable roots in a cosmical life, if I dare apply the term, an infinitesimal span of which is offered to the investigation of man. And even this span is only knowable in part. We can trace the development of a nervous system,

the view that the consciousness of space is inherent, and he evidently doubts the power of the chick to pick up grains of corn without preliminary lessons. On this point, he says, further experiments are needed. Such experiments have been since made by Mr. Spalding, aided, I believe, in some of his observations by the accomplished and deeply lamented Lady Amberly and they seem to prove conclusively that the chick does not need a single moment's tuition to enable it to stand, run, govern the muscles of its eyes, and peck. Helmholtz, however, contending against the notion of pre-established harmony, and I am not aware of his views as to the organization of experiments of this or kind.

and correlate with it the parallel phenomena of sensation and thought. We see with undoubting certainty that they go hand in hand. But we try to soar in a vacuum the moment we seek to comprehend the connection between them. An Archimedean fulcrum is here required which the human mind cannot command; and the effort to solve the problem—to borrow a comparison from an illustrious friend of mine—is like the effort of a man trying to lift himself by his own waistband. All that has been said in this discourse is to be taken in connection with this fundamental truth. When 'nascent senses' are spoken of, when 'the differentiation of a tissue at first vaguely sensitive all over' is spoken of, and when these processes are associated with 'the modification of an organism by its environment,' the same parallelism, without contact, or even approach to contact, is implied. Man the *object* is separated by an impassable gulf from man the *subject*. There is no motor energy in the human intellect to carry it, without logical rupture, from the one to the other.

Further, the doctrine of evolution derives man, in his totality, from the interaction of organism and environment through countless ages past. The Human Understanding, for example,—that faculty which Mr. Spencer has turned so skillfully round upon its own antecedents—is itself a result of the play between organism and environment through cosmic ranges of time. Never, surely, did prescription plead so irresistible claims. But then it comes to pass that, over and above his understanding, there are many other things appertaining to man, whose prescriptive rights are quite as strong as those of the understanding itself. It is a result, for example, of the play of organism and environment that sugar is sweet, and that aloes are bitter; that the smell of henbane differs from the perfume of a rose. Such facts of consciousness (for which, by the way, no adequate reason has ever been rendered) are quite as old as the understanding; and many other things can boast an equally ancient origin. Mr.



Spencer at one place refers to that most powerful of passions—the amatory passion—as one which, when it first occurs, is antecedent to all relative experience whatever; and we may pass its claim as being at least as ancient, and as valid, as that of the understanding itself. Then there are such things woven into the texture of man as the feeling of Awe, Reverence, Wonder—and not alone the sexual love just referred to, but the love of the beautiful, physical, and moral, in Nature, Poetry, and Art. There is also that deep-set feeling, which, since the earliest dawn of history, and probably for ages prior to all history, incorporated itself in the Religions of the world. You, who have escaped from these religions into the high-and-dry light of the intellect, may decide thus; but in so doing you deride accidents of form merely, and fail to touch the immovable basis of the religious sentiment in the nature of man. To yield this sentiment reasonable satisfaction is the problem of problems at the present hour. And grotesque in relation to scientific culture as many of the religions of the world have been and are—dangerous, nay, destructive, to the dearest privileges of freedom as some of them undoubtedly have been, and would, if they could, be again—it will be wise to recognise them as the forms of a force, mischievous if permitted to intrude on the region of objective knowledge, over which it holds no command, but capable of adding, in the region of poetry and emotion, inward completeness and dignity to man.

Feeling, I say again, dates from as old an origin and as high a source as intelligence, and it equally demands its range of play. The wise teacher of humanity will recognise the necessity of meeting this demand, rather than of resisting it on account of errors and absurdities of form. What we should resist, at all hazards, is the attempt made in the past, and now repeated, to found upon this elemental bias of man's nature a system which should exercise despotic sway over his intellect. I have no fear of such a consummation. Science has already to some extent

leavened the world: it will leaven it more and more; and I should look upon the mild light of science breaking in upon the minds of the youth of Ireland, and strengthening gradually to the perfect day, as a surer check to any intellectual or spiritual tyranny which now threatens this island, than the lures of princes or the swords of emperors. We fought and won our battle even in the Middle Ages: should we doubt the issue of another conflict with our broken foe?

The impregnable position of science may be described in a few words. We claim, and we shall wrest from theology, the entire domain of cosmological theory. All schemes and systems which thus infringe upon the domain of science must, *in so far as they do this*, submit to its control, and relinquish all thought of controlling it. Acting otherwise proved disastrous in the past, and it is simply fatuous to-day. Every system which would escape the fate of an organism too rigid to adjust itself to its environment, must be plastic to the extent that the growth of knowledge demands. When this truth has been thoroughly taken in, rigidity will be relaxed, exclusiveness diminished, things now deemed essential will be dropped, and elements now rejected will be assimilated. The lifting of the life is the essential point; and as long as dogmatism, fanaticism, and intolerance are kept out, various modes of leverage may be employed to raise life to a higher level.

Science itself not infrequently derives motive power from an ultra-scientific source. Some of its greatest discoveries have been made under the stimulus of a non-scientific ideal. This was the case among the ancients, and it has been so amongst ourselves. Mayer, Joule, and Colding, whose names are associated with the greatest of modern generalisations, were thus influenced. With his usual insight, Lange at one place remarks, that it is not always the objectively correct and intelligible that helps man most, or leads most quickly to the fullest and truest

knowledge. As the sliding body upon the brachystochrone reaches its end sooner than by the straighter road of the inclined plane, so, through the swing of the ideal, we often arrive at the naked truth more rapidly than by the direct processes of the understanding.' Whewell speaks of enthusiasm of temper as a hindrance to science; but he means the enthusiasm of weak heads. There is a strong and resolute enthusiasm in which science finds an ally, and it is to the lowering of this fire, rather than to the diminution of intellectual insight, that the lessening productiveness of men of science, in their mature years, is to be ascribed. Mr. Buckle sought to detach intellectual achievement from moral force. He gravely erred; for without moral force to whip it into action, the achievement of the intellect would be poor indeed.

It has been said by its opponents that science divorces itself from literature; but the statement, like so many others, arises from lack of knowledge. A glance at the less technical writings of its leaders—of its Helmholtz, its Huxley, and its Du Bois-Reymond—would show what breadth of literary culture they command. Where among modern writers can you find their superiors in clearness and vigour of literary style? Science desires not isolation, but freely combines with every effort towards the bettering of man's estate. Single-handed, and supported not by outward sympathy, but by inward force, it has built at least one great wing of the many-mansioned home which man in his totality demands. And if rough walls and protruding rafters indicate that on one side the edifice is still incomplete, it is only by wise combination of the parts required, with those already irrevocably built, that we can hope for completeness. There is no necessary incongruity between what has been accomplished and what remains to be done. The moral glow of Socrates, which we all feel by ignition, has in it nothing incompatible with the physics of Anaxagoras which he so much

scorned, but which he would hardly scorn to-day. And here I am reminded of one among us, hoary, but still strong, whose prophet-voice some thirty years ago, far more than any other of this age, unlocked whatever of life and nobleness lay latent in its most gifted minds—one fit to stand beside Socrates or the Maccabean Eleazar, and to dare and suffer all that they suffered and dared—fit, as he once said of Fichte, 'to have been the teacher of the Stoa, and to have discoursed of Beauty and Virtue in the groves of Academe.' With a capacity to grasp physical principles which his friend Goethe did not possess, and which even total lack of exercise has not been able to reduce to atrophy, it is the world's loss that he, in the vigour of his years, did not open his mind and sympathies to science, and make its conclusions a portion of his message to mankind. Marvellously endowed as he was—equally equipped on the side of the Heart and of the Understanding—he might have done much towards teaching us how to reconcile the claims of both, and to enable them in coming times to dwell together, in unity of spirit and in the bond of peace.

And now the end is come. With more time, or greater strength and knowledge, what has been here said might have been better said, while worthy matters, here omitted, might have received fit expression. But there would have been no material deviation from the views set forth. As regards myself, they are not the growth of a day; and as regards you, I thought you ought to know the environment which, with or without your consent, is rapidly surrounding you, and in relation to which some adjustment on your part may be necessary. A hint of Hamlet's, however, teaches us how the troubles of common life may be ended; and it is perfectly possible for you and me to purchase intellectual peace at the price of intellectual death. The world is not without refuges of this description; nor is it wanting in persons who seek their shelter, and try to persuade

others to do the same. The unstable and the weak have yielded and will yield to this persuasion, and they to whom repose is sweeter than the truth. But I would exhort you to refuse the offered shelter, and to scorn the base repose—to accept, if the choice be forced upon you, commotion before stagnation, the hasty leap of the torrent before the fetid stillness of the swamp. In the course of this Address I have touched on debatable questions, and led you over what will be deemed dangerous ground—and this partly with the view of telling you that, as regards these questions, science claims unrestricted right of search. It is not to the point to say that the views of Lucretius and Bruno, of Darwin and Spencer, may be wrong. Here I should agree with you, deeming it indeed certain that these views will undergo modification. But the point is, that, whether right or wrong, we claim the right to discuss them. For science, however, no exclusive claim is here made; you are not urged to erect it into an idol. The inexorable advance of man's understanding in the path of knowledge, and those unquenchable claims of his moral and emotional nature, which the understanding can never satisfy, are here equally set forth. The world embraces not only a Newton, but a Shakspeare—not only a Boyle, but a Raphael—not only a Kant, but a Beethoven—not only a Darwin, but a Carlyle. Not in each of these, but in all, is human nature whole. They are not opposed, but supplementary—not mutually exclusive, but reconcilable. And if, unsatisfied with them all, the human mind, with the yearning of a pilgrim for his distant home, will still turn to the Mystery from which it has emerged, seeking so to fashion it as to give unity to thought and faith; so long as this is done, not only without intolerance or bigotry of any kind, but with the enlightened recognition that ultimate fixity of conception is here unattainable, and that each succeeding age must be held free to fashion the mystery in accordance with its own needs—then, casting

aside all the restrictions of Materialism, I would affirm this to be a field for the noblest exercise of what, in contrast with the *knowing* faculties, may be called the *creative* faculties of man. Here, however, I touch a theme too great for me to handle, but which will assuredly be handled by the loftiest minds, when you and I, like streaks of morning cloud, shall have melted into the infinite azure of the past.

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### *Prefatory Remarks*

#### I.

At the request of my Publishers, strengthened by the expressed desire of many Correspondents, I reprint, with a few slight alterations, this Address.

It was written under some disadvantages this year in the Alps, and sent by instalments to the printer. When read subsequently it proved too long for its purpose, and several of its passages were accordingly struck out. Some of them are here restored.

It has provoked an unexpected amount of criticism. This, in due time, will subside; and I confidently look forward to a calmer future for a verdict, founded not on imaginary sins, but on the real facts of the case.

Of the numberless strictures and accusations, some of them exceeding fierce, of which I have been, and continue to be, the object, I refrain from speaking at any length. To one or two of them, however, out of respect for their sources, I would ask permission briefly to refer.

An evening paper of the first rank,<sup>1</sup> after the ascription to me of various more or less questionable aims and motives, proceeds to the imputation, that I permitted the cheers of my audience to 'stimulate' me to the utterance of words which no right-minded man, without a sense of the gravest responsibility, could employ. I trust the author of this charge will allow me in all courtesy to assure him that the words ascribed by him to the spur of the moment were written in Switzerland; that they stood in the printed copy of the Address from which I read, and were in the hands of various London editors some days previous to the reading; that they evoked no 'cheers,' but a silence far more impressive than cheers; and that, finally, as regards both approbation and the reverse, my course had been thought over, and decided, long before I ventured to address a Belfast audience.

A writer in an able theological journal represents me as 'putting religion on the back.'<sup>2</sup> The thought of doing so is certainly his, not mine. The facts of religious feeling are to me as certain as the facts of physics. But the world, I hold, will have to distinguish between the feeling and its forms, and to vary the latter in accordance with the intellectual condition of the age.

I am unwilling to dwell upon statements ascribed to eminent men, which may be imperfectly reported in the newspapers, and I therefore pass over a recent sermon attributed to the Bishop of Manchester with the remark, that one engaged so much as he is in busy and, I doubt not on the whole, beneficent outward life, is not likely to be among the earliest to discern the more inward and spiritual signs of the times, or to prepare for the condition which they foreshadow.

<sup>1</sup> The 'Pall Mall Gazette.'

<sup>2</sup> The same journal was good enough to speak with approval of my address on the Scientific Use of the Imagination, the 'materialism' of which is quite as pronounced as that of the 'Belfast Address.'

In a recent speech at Dewsbury, the Dean of Manchester is reported to have expressed himself thus: 'The Professor [myself] ended a most remarkable and eloquent speech by terming himself a material Atheist.' My attention was drawn to Dean Cowie's statement by a correspondent, who described it as standing 'conspicuous among the strange calumnies' with which my words have been assailed. For myself I use no language which could imply that I am hurt by such attacks. They have lost their power to wound or injure. So likewise as regards a resolution recently passed by the Presbytery of Belfast, in which Professor Huxley and myself are spoken of as 'ignoring the existence of God, and advocating pure and simple materialism;' had the possessive pronoun 'our' preceded 'God,' and had the words 'what we consider' preceded 'pure,' this statement would have been objectively true; but to make it so this qualification is required.

Cardinal Cullen, I am told, is also actively engaged in erecting spiritual barriers against the intrusion of 'Infidelity' into Ireland. His Eminence, I believe, has reason to suspect that the Catholic youth around him are not proof to the seductions of science. Strong as he is, I believe him to be impotent here. The youth of Ireland will imbibe science, however slowly; they will be leavened by it, however gradually. And to its inward modifying power among Catholics themselves, rather than to any Protestant propagandism, or other external influence, I look for the abatement of various incongruities, conspicuous among which stand those medieval proceedings which, to the scandal and amazement of our nineteenth century intelligence, have been revived among us during the last two years.

In connection with the charge of Atheism, I would make one remark. Christian men are proved by their writings to have their hours of weakness and of doubt, as well as their hours of strength and of conviction; and man like myself share, in

their own way, these variations of mood and tense. Were the religious moods of many of my assailants the only alternative ones, I do not know how strong the claims of the doctrine of 'Material Atheism' upon my allegiance might be. Probably they would be very strong. But, as it is, I have noticed during years of self-observation that it is not in hours of clearness and vigour that this doctrine commends itself to my mind; that in the presence of stronger and healthier thought it ever dissolves and disappears, as offering no solution of the mystery in which we dwell, and of which we form a part.

To coarser attacks and denunciations I pay no attention; nor have I any real reason to complain of reviling<sup>s</sup> addressed to me, which professing Christians, as could readily be proved, do not scruple to use towards each other.<sup>3</sup> The more agreeable task remains to me of thanking those who have tried, however hopelessly, to keep accusation within the bounds of justice, and who, privately, and at some risk in public, have honoured me with the expression of their sympathy and approval.

JOHN TYNDALL.

ATHENÆUM CLUB:

September 15, 1874.

<sup>3</sup> I had some notion of comparing at this place the unenities of Christian men towards each other, with those of the Christian towards the 'infidel.' I refrain from doing so, simply because the samples before me, on both sides (I say it with deliberation), are too brutal to be repeated. Give me, for my part, a resigned and dignified atheism, rather than a theism with an outcome such as this. It would, however, be unjust to take these critics of the baser sort as illustrations of the influence of theologic dogma. Even in this discussion liberality of thought and of courtesy of language have not been wanting on the part of some of my opponents. 1875.

*Prefatory Remarks.*

II.

BEING AN APOLOGY FOR THE BELFAST ADDRESS.

I TAKE advantage of a pause in the issue of this Address to add a few prefatory words to those already printed.

The world has been frequently informed of late that I have raised up against myself a host of enemies; and considering, with few exceptions, the deliverances of the Press, and more particularly of the religious Press, I am forced to admit that the statement is only too true. I derive some comfort, nevertheless, from the reflection of Diogenes, transmitted to us by Plutarch, that 'he who would be saved must have good friends or violent enemies; and that he is best off who possesses both.'<sup>1</sup> This 'best' condition, I have reason to believe, is mine.

Reflecting on the friction I have read of recent remonstrances, appeals, menaces, and judgments—covering not only the world that now is, but that which is to come—I have noticed with mournful interest how trivially men seem to be influenced by what they call their religion, and how potently by that 'nature' which it is the alleged province of religion to eradicate or subdue. From fair and manly argument, from the tenderest and holiest sympathy on the part of those who desire my eternal good, I pass by many gradations, through delicate unfairness, to a spirit of bitterness which desires with a fervour inexpressible in words my eternal ill. Now, were religion the potent factor, we might expect a homogeneous utterance from those professing a common creed, while, if human nature be the really potent factor, we may expect utterances as heterogeneous as the characters of

<sup>1</sup> 'Fortnightly Review,' vol. xiv. p. 436.

men. As a matter of fact we have the latter; suggesting to my mind that the common religion, professed and defended by these different people, is merely the accidental conduit through which they pour their own tempers, lofty or low, courteous or vulgar, mild or ferocious, as the case may be. Pure abuse, however, as serving no good end, I have, wherever possible, deliberately avoided reading, wishing, indeed, to keep, not only hatred, malice, uncharitableness, but even every trace of irritation, far away from my side of a discussion, which demands not only good temper, but largeness, clearness, and many-sidedness of mind, if it is to guide us even to provisional solutions.

At an early stage of the controversy, a distinguished Professor of the University of Cambridge was understood to argue—and his argument was caught up with amusing eagerness by a portion of the religious Press—that my ignorance of mathematics renders me incompetent to speculate on the proximate origin of life. Had I thought his argument relevant, my reply would have been simple; for before me lies a printed document, more than twenty-two years old, bearing the signature of this same learned Professor, in which he was good enough to testify that I am ‘well versed in pure mathematics.’

It has been stated, with many variations of note and comment, that in the Address as published by Messrs. Longman I have retracted opinions uttered at Belfast. A Roman Catholic writer is specially strong upon this point. Startled by the deep chorus of dissent which my dazzling fallacies have evoked, I am now trying to retreat. This he will by no means tolerate. ‘It is too late now to seek to hide from the eyes of mankind one foul blot, one ghastly deformity. Professor Tyndall has himself told us how and where this Address of his was composed. It was written among the glaciers and the solitudes of the Swiss mountains. It was no hasty, hurried, crude production; its every sentence bore marks of thought and care.’

My critic intends to be severe: he is simply just. In the ‘solitudes’ to which he refers I worked with deliberation; endeavouring even to purify my intellect by disciplines similar to those enjoined by his own Church for the sanctification of the soul. I tried, moreover, in my ponderings to realise not only the lawful, but the expedient; and to permit no fear to act upon my mind, save that of uttering a single word on which I could not take my stand, either in this or in any other world.

Still my time was so brief, and my process of thought and expression so slow, that, in a literary point of view, I halted, not only behind the ideal, but behind the possible. Hence, after the delivery of the Address, I went over it with the desire, not to revoke its principles, but to improve it verbally, and above all to remove any word which might give colour to the notion of ‘heat and haste.’ In holding up as a warning to writers of the present the errors and follies of the denouncers of the past, I took occasion to compare the intellectual propagation of such denouncers to that of thistle-germs: the expression was thought offensive, and I omitted it. It is still omitted from the Address. There was also another passage, which ran thus: ‘It is vain to oppose this force [of religion] with a view to its extirpation. What we should oppose, to the death if necessary, is every attempt to found upon this elemental bias of man’s nature, a system which should exercise despotic sway over his intellect. I do not fear any such consummation. Science has already to some extent leavened the world, and it will leaven it more and more. I should look upon the mild light of science breaking in upon the minds of the youth of Ireland, and strengthening gradually to the perfect day, as a surer check to any intellectual or spiritual tyranny which might threaten this island, than the laws of princes or the swords of emperors. Where is the cause of fear? We fought and won our battle even in the Middle Ages; why should we doubt the

issue of a conflict now?

This passage also was deemed unnecessarily warm, and I therefore omitted it. I fear it was an act of weakness on my part to do so. For, considering the aims and acts of that renowned organisation, which for the time being wields the entire power of my critic's Church, not only resistance to its further progress, but, were it not for the intelligence of Roman Catholic laymen, positive restriction of its present power for evil, might well become the necessary attitude of society as regards that organisation. With some slight verbal alterations, therefore, which do not impair its strength, the passage has been restored.

My critic is very hard upon the avowal in my Preface regarding Atheism. But I frankly confess that his honest hardness and hostility are to me preferable to the milder but more unfair treatment which the passage has received from members of other Churches. He quotes the paragraph, and goes on to say: 'We repeat this is a most remarkable passage. Much as we dislike seasoning polemics with strong words, we assert that this Apology only tends to affix with links of steel to the name of Professor Tyndall, the dread imputation against which he struggles.'

Here we have a very fair example of subjective religious vigour. But my quarrel with such exhibitions is that they do not always represent objective fact. No atheistic reasoning can, I hold, dislodge religion from the heart of man. Logic cannot deprive us of life, and religion is life to the religious. As an experience of consciousness is perfectly beyond the assaults of logic. But the religious life is often projected in external forms—I use the word in its widest sense—and this embodiment of the religious sentiment will have to bear more and more, as the world becomes more enlightened, the stress of scientific tests. We must be careful of projecting into external nature that which belongs to ourselves. My critic commits

this mistake: he feels, and takes delight in feeling, that I am struggling, and he obviously experiences the most exquisite pleasures of 'the muscular sense' in holding me down. His feelings are as real, as if his imagination of what mine are were equally real. His picture of my 'struggles' is, however, a mere delusion. I do not struggle. I do not fear the charge of Atheism; nor should I even disavow it, in reference to any definition of the Supreme which he, or his order, would be likely to frame. His 'links' and his 'steel' and his 'dread imputations' are, therefore, even more unsubstantial than my 'streaks of morning cloud,' and they may be permitted to vanish together.

Soon after the delivery of the 'Belfast Address' the able and respected Bishop of Manchester did me the honour of noticing it; and in reference to that notice a brief and, I trust, not uncourteous remark was introduced into my first Preface. Since that time the Bishop's references to me have been very frequent. Assuredly this is to me an unexpected honour. Still a doubt may fairly be entertained whether this incessant speaking before public assemblies, on a profoundly emotional subject, does not tend to disturb that equilibrium of head and heart which it is always so desirable to preserve—whether, by giving an injurious predominance to the feelings, it does not tend to swathe the intellect in a warm haze, thus making the perception, and consequent rendering of facts, indefinite, if not untrue. It was to the Bishop I referred in a recent brief discourse as 'an able and, in many respects, a courageous man running to and fro upon the earth, and wringing his hands over the threatened loss of his ideals.' It is doubtless to this sorrowing mood—this partial and, I trust, temporary overthrow of the judgment by the emotions—that I must ascribe a probably unconscious, but still grave, misrepresentation, contained in the Bishop's last reference to me. In the 'Times' of November 9 he is reported

to have expressed himself thus: 'In this lecture in Manchester Professor Tyndall as much as said that at Belfast he was not in his best mood, and that his despondency passed away in brighter moments.' Now, considering that a verbatim report of the lecture was at hand in the 'Manchester Examiner,' and that my own corrected edition of it was to be had for a penny, the Bishop, I submit, might have afforded to repeat what I actually said, instead of what I 'as much as said.' I am sorry to add that his rendering of my words is a vain imagination of his own. In my lecture at Manchester there was no reference, expressed or implied, to my moods in Belfast.

To all earnest and honest minds acquainted with the paragraph of my first Preface,<sup>1</sup> on which the foregoing remark of Bishop Fraser, and similar remarks of his ecclesiastical colleagues, not to mention those of less responsible persons, are founded, I leave the decision of the question, whether their mode of presenting this paragraph to the public be straightforward or the reverse.

These minor and more purely personal matters at an end, the weightier allegation remains, that at Belfast I misused my position by quitting the domain of science, and making an unjustifiable raid into the domain of theology. This I fail to see. Laying aside abuse, I hope my accusers will consent to reason with me. Is it not competent for a scientific man to speculate on the antecedents of the solar system? Did Kant, Laplace, and William Herschel quit their legitimate spheres, when they prolonged the intellectual vision beyond the boundary of experience, and propounded the nebular theory? Accepting that theory as probable, is it not permitted to a scientific man to follow up, in idea, the series of changes associated with the

<sup>1</sup> P. 537.

condensation of the nebula; to picture the successive detachment of planets and moons, and the relation of all of them to the sun? If I look upon our earth, with its orbital revolution and axial rotation, as one small issue of the process which made the solar system what it is, will any theologian deny my right to entertain and express this theoretic view? Time was when a multitude of theologians would be found to do so—when that arch-enemy of science which now vaunts its tolerance would have made a speedy end of the man who might venture to publish any opinion of the kind. But, that time, unless the world is caught strangely slumbering, is for ever past.

As regards inorganic nature, then, we may traverse, without let or hindrance, the whole distance which separates the nebulae from the worlds of to-day. But only a few years ago this now conceded ground of science was theological ground. I could by no means regard this as the final and sufficient concession of theology; and, at Belfast, I thought it not only my right but my duty to state that, as regards the organic world, we must enjoy the freedom which we have already won in regard to the inorganic. I could not discern the shred of a title-deed which gave any man, or any class of men, the right to open the door of one of these worlds to the scientific searcher, and to close the other against him. And I considered it frankest, wisest, and in the long run most conducive to permanent peace, to indicate, without evasion or reserve, the ground that belongs to Science, and to which she will assuredly make good her claim.

Considering the freedom allowed to all manner of opinions in England, surely this was no extravagant position for me to assume. I have been reminded that an eminent predecessor of mine in the Presidential chair, expressed a totally different view of the Cause of things from that enunciated by me. In doing so he transgressed the bounds of science at least as much as I did; but nobody raised an outcry against him. The freedom



he took I claim. And looking at what I must regard as the extravagances of the religious world; at the very inadequate and foolish notions concerning this universe, which are entertained by the majority of our authorised religious teachers; at the waste of energy on the part of good men over things unworthy, if I might say it without discourtesy, of the attention of enlightened heathens; the fight about the fripperies of Ritualism, and the verbal quibbles of the Athanasian Creed; the forcing on the public view of Pontigny Pilgrimages; the dating of historic epochs from the definition of the Immaculate Conception; the proclamation of the Divine Glories of the Sacred Heart—standing in the midst of these chimeras, which astound all thinking men, it did not appear to me extravagant to claim the public tolerance for a hour and a half, for the statement of more reasonable views; views more in accordance with the verities which science has brought to light, and which many weary souls would, I thought, welcome with gratification and relief.

But to come to closer quarters. The expression to which the most violent exception has been taken is this: 'Abandoning all disguise, the confession I feel bound to make before you is, that I prolong the vision backward across the boundary of the experimental evidence, and discern in that Matter which we, in our ignorance, and notwithstanding our professed reverence for its Creator, have hitherto covered with opprobrium, the promise and potency of every form and quality of life.' To call it a 'chorus of dissent,' as my Catholic critic does, is a mild way of describing the storm of opprobrium with which this statement has been assailed. But the first blast of passion being past, I hope I may again ask my opponents to consent to reason. First of all, I am blamed for crossing the boundary of the experimental evidence. This, I reply, is the habitual action of the scientific mind—at least of that portion of it which applies

itself to physical investigation. Our theories of light, heat, magnetism, and electricity, all imply the crossing of this boundary. My paper on the 'Scientific Use of the Imagination,' and my 'Lectures on Light,' illustrate this point in the simplest manner; and in the brief discourse which follows this Address I have sought, incidentally, to make clear, that in physics the experiential incessantly leads to the ultra-experiential; that out of experience there always grows something finer than mere experience, and that in their different powers of ideal extension consists, for the most part, the difference between the great and the mediocre investigator. The kingdom of science, then, cometh not by observation and experiment alone, but is completed by fixing the roots of observation and experiment in a region inaccessible to both, and in dealing with which we are forced to fall back upon the picturing power of the mind.

Passing the boundary of experience, therefore, does not, in the abstract, constitute a sufficient ground for censure. There must have been something in my particular mode of crossing it, which provoked this tremendous 'chorus of dissent.'

Let us calmly reason the point out. I hold the nebular theory as it was held by Kant, Laplace, and William Herschel, and as it is held by the best scientific intellects of to-day. According to it, our sun and planets were once diffused through space as an impalpable haze, out of which, by condensation, came the solar system. What caused the haze to condense? Loss of heat. What rounded the sun and planets? That which rounds a tear—molecular force. For aeons, the immensity of which overwhelms man's conceptions, the earth was unfit to maintain what we call life. It is now covered with visible living things. They are not formed of matter different from that of the earth around them. They are, on the contrary, bone of its bone and flesh of its flesh. How were they introduced? Was life implicated in the nebulae—as part, it may

be, of a vaster and wholly Unfathomable Life; or is it the work of a Being standing outside the nebula, who fashioned it and vitalised it; but whose own origin and ways are equally past finding out? As far as the eye of science has hitherto ranged through nature, no intrusion of purely creative power into any series of phenomena has ever been observed. The assumption of such a power to account for special phenomena, though often made, has always proved a failure. It is opposed to the very spirit of science, and I therefore assumed the responsibility of holding up, in contrast with it, that method of nature which it has been the vocation and triumph of science to disclose, and in the application of which we can alone hope for further light. Holding, then, that the nebula and the solar system, life included, stand to each other in the relation of the germ to the finished organism, I reaffirm here, not arrogantly or defiantly, but without a shade of indistinctness, the position laid down at Belfast.

Not with the vagueness belonging to the emotions, but with the definiteness belonging to the understanding, the scientific man has to put to himself these questions regarding the introduction of life upon the earth. He will be the last to dogmatise upon the subject, for he knows best that certainty is here for the present unattainable. His refusal of the creative hypothesis is less an assertion of knowledge than a protest against the assumption of knowledge which must long, if not for ever, lie beyond us, and the claim to which is the source of perpetual confusion upon earth. With a mind open to conviction he asks his opponents to show him an authority for the belief they so strenuously and so fiercely uphold. They can do no more than point to the Book of Genesis, or some other portion of the Bible. Profoundly interesting, and indeed pathetic, to me are those attempts of the opening mind of man to appease its hunger for a Cause. But the Book of Genesis has no voice in scientific

questions. To the grasp of geology, which it resisted for a time, it at length yielded like potter's clay; its authority as a system of cosmogony being discredited on all hands, by the abandonment of the obvious meaning of its writer. It is a poem, not a scientific treatise. In the former aspect it is for ever beautiful: in the latter aspect it has been, and it will continue to be, purely obstructive and hurtful. To *knowledge* its value has been negative, leading, in rougher ages than ours, to physical, and even in our own 'free' age to moral, violence.

No incident connected with the proceedings at Belfast is more instructive than the deportment of the Catholic hierarchy of Ireland; a body usually too wise to confer notoriety upon an adversary by imprudently denouncing him. The 'Times,' to which I owe nothing on the score of sympathy, but a great deal on the score of fair play, where so much has been unfair, thinks that the Irish Cardinal, Archbishops, and Bishops, in the recent manifesto, adroitly employed a weapon which I, at an unlucky moment, placed in their hands. The antecedents of their action cause me to regard it in a different light; and a brief reference to these antecedents will, I think, illuminate not only their proceedings regarding Belfast, but other doings which have been recently noised abroad.

Before me lies a document, bearing the date of November 1873, but which, after appearing for a moment, unaccountably vanished from public view. It is a Memorial addressed by Seventy of the Students and Exstudents of the Catholic University in Ireland, to the Episcopal Board of the University; and it constitutes the plainest and bravest remonstrance ever addressed by Irish laymen to their spiritual pastors and masters. It expresses the profoundest dissatisfaction with the curriculum marked out for the students of the University; setting forth the extraordinary fact that the lecture-list for the faculty of

Science, published a month before they wrote, did not contain the name of a single Professor of the Physical or Natural Sciences.

The memorialists forcibly deprecate this, and dwell upon the necessity of education in science: 'The distinguishing mark of this age is its ardour for science. The natural sciences have, within the last fifty years, become the chiefest study in the world; they are in our time pursued with an activity unparalleled in the history of mankind. Scarce a year now passes without some discovery being made in these sciences which, as with the touch of the magician's wand, shivers to atoms theories formerly deemed unassailable. It is through the physical and natural sciences that the fiercest assaults are now made on our religion. No more deadly weapon is used against our faith than the facts incontestably proved by modern researches in science.'

Such statements must be the reverse of comfortable to a number of gentlemen who, trained in the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas, have been accustomed to the unquestioning submission of all other sciences to their divine science of Theology. But something more remains: 'One thing seems certain,' say the memorialists, viz., 'that if chairs for the physical and natural sciences be not soon founded in the Catholic University, very many young men will have their faith exposed to dangers which the creation of a school of science in the University would defend them from. For our generation of Irish Catholics are writhing under the sense of their inferiority in science, and are determined that such inferiority shall not long continue; and so, if scientific training be unattainable at our University, they will seek it at Trinity, or at the Queen's Colleges, in not one of which is there a Catholic Professor of Science.'

Those who imagined the Catholic University at Kensington to be due to the spontaneous recognition, on the part of the Roman hierarchy, of the intellectual needs of the age, will derive

enlightenment from this, and still more from what follows: for the most formidable threat remains. To the picture of Catholic students acceding to Trinity and the Queen's Colleges, the memorialists add this darkest stroke of all: 'They will, in the solitude of their own homes, unaided by any guiding advice, devour the works of Hæckel, Darwin, Huxley, Tyn dall, and Lyell; works innocuous if studied under a professor who would point out the difference between established facts and erroneous inferences, but which are calculated to sap the faith of a solitary student, deprived of a discriminating judgment to which he could refer for a solution of his difficulties.'

In the light of the knowledge given by this courageous memorial, and of similar knowledge otherwise derived, the recent Catholic manifesto did not at all strike me as a chuckle over the mistake of a maladroit adversary, but rather as an evidence of profound unconsciousness on the part of the Cardinal, the Archbishops, and the Bishops who signed it. They acted towards it, however, with their accustomed practical wisdom. As one concession to the spirit which it embodied, the Catholic University at Kensington was brought forth, apparently as the effect of spontaneous inward force, and not of outward pressure, which was rapidly becoming too formidable to be successfully opposed.

The memorialists point with bitterness to the fact, that 'the name of no Irish Catholic is known in connection with the physical and natural sciences.' But this, they ought to know, is the complaint of free and cultivated minds wherever a Priesthood exercises dominant power. Precisely the same complaint has been made with respect to the Catholics of Germany. The great national literature and scientific achievements of that country, in modern times, are almost wholly the work of Protestants. A vanishingly small fraction of it only is derived from members of the Roman Church, although the number of

these in Germany is at least as great as that of the Protestants. 'The question arises,' says a writer in an able German periodical, 'what is the cause of a phenomenon so humiliating to the Catholics? It cannot be referred to want of natural endowment due to climate (for the Protestants of Southern Germany have contributed powerfully to the creations of the German intellect), but purely to outward circumstances. And these are readily discovered in the pressure exercised for centuries by the Jesuitical system, which has crushed out of Catholics every tendency to free mental productiveness.' It is, indeed, in Catholic countries that the weight of Ultramontanism has been most severely felt. It is in such countries that the very finest spirits, who have dared, without quitting their faith, to plead for freedom or reform, have suffered extinction. The extinction, however, was more apparent than real, and Hermes, Hirscher, and Günther, though individually broken and subdued, prepared the way, in Bavaria, for the persecuted but unflinching Frohschammer, for Dollinger, and for the remarkable liberal movement of which Dollinger is the head and guide.

Though mottled for centuries to an obedience unparalleled in any other country, except Spain, the Irish intellect is beginning to show signs of independence; demanding a diet more suited to its years than the pabulum of the Middle Ages. As for the recent manifesto in which Pope, Cardinal, Archbishops, and Bishops are united in one grand anathema, its character and fate are shadowed forth by the Vision of Nebuchadnezzar recorded in the Book of Daniel. It resembles the image, whose form was terrible, but the gold, and silver, and brass, and iron of which rested upon feet of clay. And a stone smote the feet of clay; and the iron, and the brass, and the silver, and the gold, were broken in pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors, and the wind carried them away.

Monsignor Capel has recently been good enough to proclaim at once the friendliness of his Church towards true science, and her right to determine what true science is. Let us dwell for a moment on the proofs of her scientific competence. When Halley's comet appeared in 1456 it was regarded as the harbinger of God's vengeance, the dispenser of war, pestilence, and famine, and by order of the Pope the church bells of Europe were rung to scare the monster away. An additional daily prayer was added to the supplications of the faithful. The comet in due time disappeared, and the faithful were comforted by the assurance that, as in previous instances relating to eclipses, droughts, and rains, so also as regards this 'nefarious' comet, victory had been vouchsafed to the Church.

Both Pythagoras and Copernicus had taught the heliocentric doctrine—that the earth revolves round the sun. In the exercise of her right to determine what true science is, the Church, in the Pontificate of Paul V., stepped in, and by the mouth of the holy Congregation of the Index, delivered, on March 5, 1616, the following decree:—

*And whereas it hath also come to the knowledge of the said holy congregation that the false Pythagorean doctrine of the mobility of the earth and the immobility of the sun, entirely opposed to Holy writ, which is taught by Nicolas Copernicus, is now published abroad and received by many. In order that this opinion may not further spread, to the damage of Catholic truth, it is ordered that this and all other books teaching the like doctrine be suspended, and by this decree they are all respectively suspended, forbidden, and condemned.*

But why go back to 1456 and 1616? Far be it from me to charge by gone sins upon Monsignor Capel, were it not for the practices he upholds to-day. The most applauded dogmatist and champion of the Jesuits is, I am informed, Perrone. No less than thirty editions of a work of his have been scattered abroad

for the healing of the nations. His notions of physical astronomy are virtually those of 1456. He teaches boldly that 'God does not rule by universal law . . . that when God orders a given planet to stand still He does not detract from any law passed by Himself, but orders that planet to move round the sun for such a time, then to stand still, and then again to move, as His pleasure may be.' Jesuitism proscribed Frobshammer for questioning its favourite dogma, that every human soul was created by a direct supernatural act of God; and for asserting that man, body and soul came from his parents. This is the system that now strives for universal power; it is from it, no Monsignor Capel graciously informs us, that we are to learn what is allowable in science, and what is not!

In the face of such facts, which might be multiplied at will, it requires extraordinary bravery of mind, or a reliance upon public ignorance almost as extraordinary, to make the claims made by Monsignor Capel for his Church.

A German author, speaking of one who has had bitter experience in this line, describes those Catholic writers who refuse to submit to the Congregation of the Index as outlawed—fair subjects for moral assassination.<sup>1</sup> This is very strong; and still, judging from my own small experience, not too strong. In reference to this I would ask, not without special reason, indulgence for a brief personal allusion here. It will serve a twofold object, one of which will be manifest, the other being reserved for future treatment. Sprung from a source to which the Bible was specially dear, my early training was confined almost exclusively to it. Born in Ireland, I, like my predecessors

<sup>1</sup> See the case of Frobshammer as sketched by a friend in the Preface to 'Christenthum und die moderne Wissenschaft.' His enemies contrived to take his bread, in great part, away, but they failed to enslave him, and not even the Pope's Nuncio could prevent five hundred students of the University of Munich from signing an Address to their Professor.

for many generations, was taught to hold my own against the Church of Rome. I had a father whose memory ought to be to me a stay, and an example of unbending rectitude and purity of life. The small stock to which he belonged were scattered with various fortunes along that eastern rim of Leinster, from Wexford upwards, to which they crossed from the Bristol Channel. My father was the poorest of them. Socially low, but mentally and morally high and independent, by his own inner energies and affinities he obtained a knowledge of history which would put mine to shame; while the whole of the controversy between Protestantism and Romanism was at his fingers' ends. At the present moment the works and character which occupied him come, as far-off recollections, to my mind. Claude and Bossuet, Chillingworth and Nott, Tillotson, Jeremy Taylor, Challoner and Milner, Pope and McGuire, and others whom I have forgotten, or whom it is needless to name. Still this man, so charged with the ammunition of controversy, was so respected by his Catholic fellowtownsmen, that they one and all put up their shutters when he died.

With such a preceptor, and with an hereditary interest in the Papal controversy, I naturally went into it. I did not confine myself to the Protestant statement of the question, but made myself also acquainted with the arguments of the Church of Rome. I remember to this hour the interest and surprise with which I read Challoner's 'Catholic Christian Instructed;' and on the borderline between boyhood and manhood I was to be found taking part in controversies, in which the rival faiths were pitted against each other. I sometimes took the Catholic side, and gave my Protestant antagonist considerable trouble. The views of Irish Catholics became thus intimately known to me, and there was no doctrine of Protestantism which they more emphatically rejected, and the ascription of which to them they resented more warmly, than the doctrine of the Pope's personal infallibility. Yet in

the face of this knowledge it was obstinately asserted and reasserted in my presence some time ago, by a Catholic priest, that the doctrine of the infallibility of the Pope had always been maintained in Ireland.<sup>1</sup>

But this is an episode, intended to disabuse those who, in this country or the United States, may have been misled by reckless persons, in regard to the personal points referred to. I now return to the impersonal. The course of life upon earth, as far as Science can see, has been one of amelioration—a steady advance on the whole from the lower to the higher. The continued effort of animated nature is to improve its condition and raise itself to a loftier level. In man improvement and amelioration depend largely upon the growth of conscious knowledge, by which the errors of ignorance are continually moulted, and truth is organised. It is assuredly the advance of knowledge that has given a materialistic colour to the philosophy of this age. Materialism is therefore not a thing to be mourned over, but to be honestly considered—accepted if it be wholly true, rejected if it be wholly false, wisely sifted and turned to account if it embrace a mixture of truth and error. Of late years the study of the nervous system, and its relation to thought and feeling, have profoundly occupied enquiring minds. It is our duty not to shirk—it ought rather to be our privilege to accept—the established results of such enquiries, for here assuredly our ultimate weal depends upon our loyalty to the truth. Instructed as to the control which the nervous system exercises over man's moral and intellectual nature, we shall be better prepared, not only to mend their manifold defects, but also to strengthen and purify both.

<sup>1</sup> On a memory which dates back to my fifteenth year, when I first read the discussion between Mr. Pope and Father McGuire, I should be inclined to rely for proof that the Catholic clergyman, in that discussion, and in the name of his Church, repudiated the doctrine of personal infallibility.

Is mind degraded by this recognition of its dependence? Assuredly not. Matter, on the contrary, is raised to the level it ought to occupy, and from which timid ignorance would remove it.

But the light is dawning, and it will become stronger as time goes on. Even the Brighton Congress affords evidence of this. From the manifold confusions of that assemblage my memory has rescued two items, which it would fain preserve: the recognition of a relation between Health and Religion, and the address of the Rev. Harry Jones. Out of the conflict of vanities his words emerge wholesome and strong, because undrugged by dogma, coming directly from the warm brain of one who knows what practical truth means, and who has faith in its vitality and inherent power of propagation. I wonder is he less effectual in his ministry than his more unbrothered colleagues? It surely behoves our teachers to come to some definite understanding as to this question of health; to see how, by inattention to it, we are defrauded, negatively and positively: negatively, by the privation of that 'sweetness and light' which is the natural concomitant of good health; positively, by the insertion into life of cynicism, ill-temper, and a thousand corroding anxieties which good health would dissipate. We fear and scorn 'materialism.' But he who knew all about it, and could apply his knowledge, might become the preacher of a new gospel. Not, however, through the ostentatious moments of the individual does such knowledge come, but through the revelations of science with the history of mankind.

Why should the Roman Catholic Church call gluttony a mortal sin? Why should fasting occupy a place in the disciplines of religion? What is the meaning of Luther's advice to the young clergyman who came to him, perplexed with the difficulties of predestination and election, if it be not that, in virtue of its action upon the brain, when wisely applied, there is moral and religious virtue even in a hydro-carbon? To use the old

language, food and drink are creatures of God, and have therefore a spiritual value. The air of the Alps would be augmented tenfold in purifying power if this truth were recognised. Through our neglect of the monitions of a reasonable materialism we sin and suffer daily. I might here point to the train of deadly disorders over which science has given modern society such control—discloing the lair of the material enemy, ensuring his destruction, and then preventing that moral squalor and hopelessness which habitually tread on the heels of epidemics in the case of the poor.

Rising to higher spheres, the visions of Swedenborg, and the ecstasy of Plotinus and Porphyry, are phases of that psychical condition, obviously connected with the nervous system and state of health, on which is based the Vedic doctrine of the absorption of the individual into the universal soul. Plotinus taught the devout how to pass into a condition of ecstasy. Porphyry complains of having been only once united to God in eighty-six years, while his master Plotinus had been so united six times in sixty years.<sup>1</sup> A friend who knew Wordsworth informs me that the poet, in some of his moods, was accustomed to seize hold of an external object to assure himself of his own bodily existence. No one, I should say, has had a wider experience in this field than Mr. Emerson. As states of consciousness these phenomena have an undisputed reality, and a substantial identity; but they are connected with the most heterogeneous objective conceptions. The subjective experiences are similar, because of the similarity of the underlying nervous organisations.

<sup>1</sup>But for those who wish to look beyond the practical facts,

<sup>1</sup>I recommend to the reader's particular attention Dr. Deaper's important work entitled, 'History of the Conflict between Religion and Science' (Messrs. H. S. King and Co.). There, in small compass, will be found a description of the long-continued struggle between Science and the Romish Church.

there will always remain ample room for speculation. Take the argument of the Lucretian introduced in the foregoing Address at page 495. As far as I am aware, not one of my assailants has attempted to answer it. Some of them, indeed, rejoice over the ability displayed by Bishop Butler in rolling back the difficulty on his opponent; and they even imagine that it is the Bishop's own argument that is there employed. Instructed by self-knowledge, they can hardly credit me with the wish to state both sides of the question at issue; and to show by reasoning, stronger than Butler ever used, the overthrow which awaits any doctrine of materialism based upon the definitions of matter habitually received. But the raising of a new difficulty does not abolish—does not even lessen—the old one, and the argument of the Lucretian remains untouched by anything the Bishop has said or can say.

And here it may be permitted me to add a word to an important controversy now going on. In an article on 'Physics and Metaphysics,' published in the 'Saturday Review' more than fourteen years ago [1860], I ventured to state thus the old problem of the relation of physics to consciousness: 'The philosophy of the future will assuredly take more account than that of the past, of the relation of thought and feeling to physical processes; and, it may be, that the qualities of Mind will be studied through the organism, as we now study the character of Force through the affections of ordinary matter. We believe that every thought and every feeling has its definite mechanical correlative in the nervous system—that it is accompanied by a certain generation and remanifestation of the atoms of the brain.'

<sup>1</sup>This latter process is purely physical; and were the faculties we now possess sufficiently strengthened, without the creation of any new faculty, it would doubtless be within the range of our augmented powers to infer from the molecular state of the

brain, the character of the thought acting upon it; and, conversely, to infer from the thought, the exact corresponding molecular condition of the brain. We do not say—and this, as will be seen, is all-important—that the inference here referred to would be an *à priori* one. What we say is, that by observing, with the faculties we assume, the state of the brain, and the associated mental affections, both might be so tabulated side by side, that if one were given, a mere reference to the table would declare the other.

\*Given the masses of the planets and their distances asunder, and we can infer the perturbations consequent on their mutual attractions. Given the nature of a disturbance in water, air, or æther, and from the physical properties of the medium we can infer how its particles will be affected. The mind runs along the line of thought which connects the phenomena, and from beginning to end finds no break in the chain. But when we endeavour to pass, by a similar process, from the physics of the brain to the phenomena of consciousness, we meet a problem which transcends every conceivable expansion of the powers we now possess. We may think over the subject again and again; it eludes all intellectual presentation—we stand at length face to face with the Incomprehensible!

The discussion above referred to turns on the question: Do states of consciousness enter as links into the chain of antecedence and sequence, which give rise to bodily actions, and to other states of consciousness; or are they merely *by-products*, which are not essential to the physical processes going on in the brain? Speaking for myself, it is certain that I have no power of imagining states of consciousness, interposed between the molecules of the brain, and influencing the transference of motion among the molecules. The thought 'eludes all mental presentation;' and hence the logic seems of iron strength which claims for the brain an automatic action, uninfluenced by states

of consciousness. But it is, I believe, admitted by those who hold the automaton-theory, that states of consciousness are *produced* by the maraballing of the molecules of the brain; and this production of consciousness by molecular motion is to me quite as unthinkable as the production of molecular motion by consciousness. If, therefore, unthinkability be the proper test, I must equally reject both classes of phenomena. I, however, reject neither, and thus stand in the presence of two incomprehensibles, instead of one incomprehensible. While accepting fearlessly the facts of materialism dwelt upon in these pages, I bow my head in the dust before that mystery of mind, which has hitherto defied its own penetrative power, and which may ultimately resolve itself into a demonstrable impossibility of self-penetration.

But the secret is an open one—the practical monitions are plain enough, which declare that on our dealings with matter depends our weal or woe, physical and moral. The state of mind which rebels against the recognition of the claims of 'materialism' is not unknown to me. I can remember a time when I regarded my body as a woe, so much more highly did I prize the conscious strength and pleasure derived from moral and religious feeling—which, I may add, was mine without the intervention of dogma. The error was not an ignoble one, but this did not save it from the penalty attached to error. Sober knowledge taught me that the body is no woe, and that if it were treated as such it would infallibly avenge itself. Am I personally lowered by this change of front? Not so. Give me their health, and there is no spiritual experience of those earlier years—no resolve of duty, or work of mercy, no act of self-renouncement, no solemnity of thought, no joy in the life and aspects of nature—that would not still be mine; and this without the least reference or regard to any purely personal reward or punishment looming in the future.



As I close these remarks, the latest utterances of the Bishop of Peterborough reach me. I observe with regret that, notwithstanding all their 'expansiveness,' both he and his Right Rev. Brother of Manchester, appear to know almost as little of the things which belong to our peace, as that frenzied ritualist who, a day or two ago, raised the cry of 'excommunicated heretic' against the Bishop of Natal. Happily we have amongst us our Jowetts and our Stanleys, not to mention other brave men, who see more clearly the character and magnitude of the coming struggle; and who believe unflinchingly that out of it the truths of science will emerge with healing in their wings.

And now I have to utter a 'farewell' fare from bitterness to all my readers: thinking my friends for a sympathy more steadfast, I would fain believe, if less truly, than the antipathy of my foes; and commending to these witnesses from Bishop Butler, which they have either not read or failed to try to hear, 'It seems, with the Bishop, that men would be strangely meddling and self-willed, and disposed to exert themselves with an impetuosity which would render society insupportable, and the living in it impracticable, were it not for some acquired moderation and self-government, some aptitude and readiness in restraining themselves, and concealing their sense of things.' In impudence of language, at least, his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury has set a good example.

JAMES TYNDALL.

ATHERTON CATH.

December 30, 1874.

A still more remarkable illustration of absence of directness, associated with real scientific insight, is furnished by the answer of the Bishop of Exeter, reported in the 'Oxford University Herald' for November 28, 1874. To Dr. Quare's and his colleagues in the current number of the 'British Quarterly Review' my special acknowledgment is due. (November, 1874.)



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