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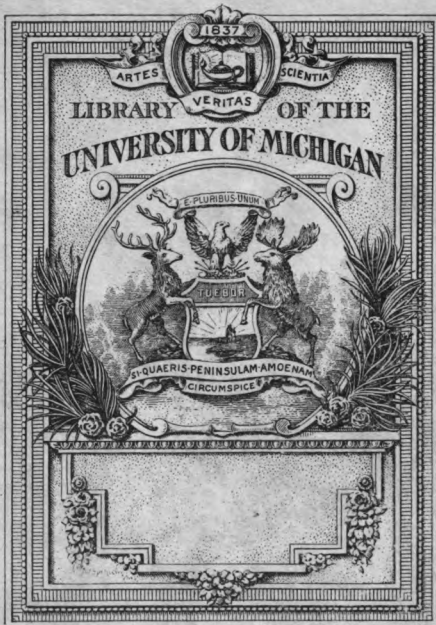
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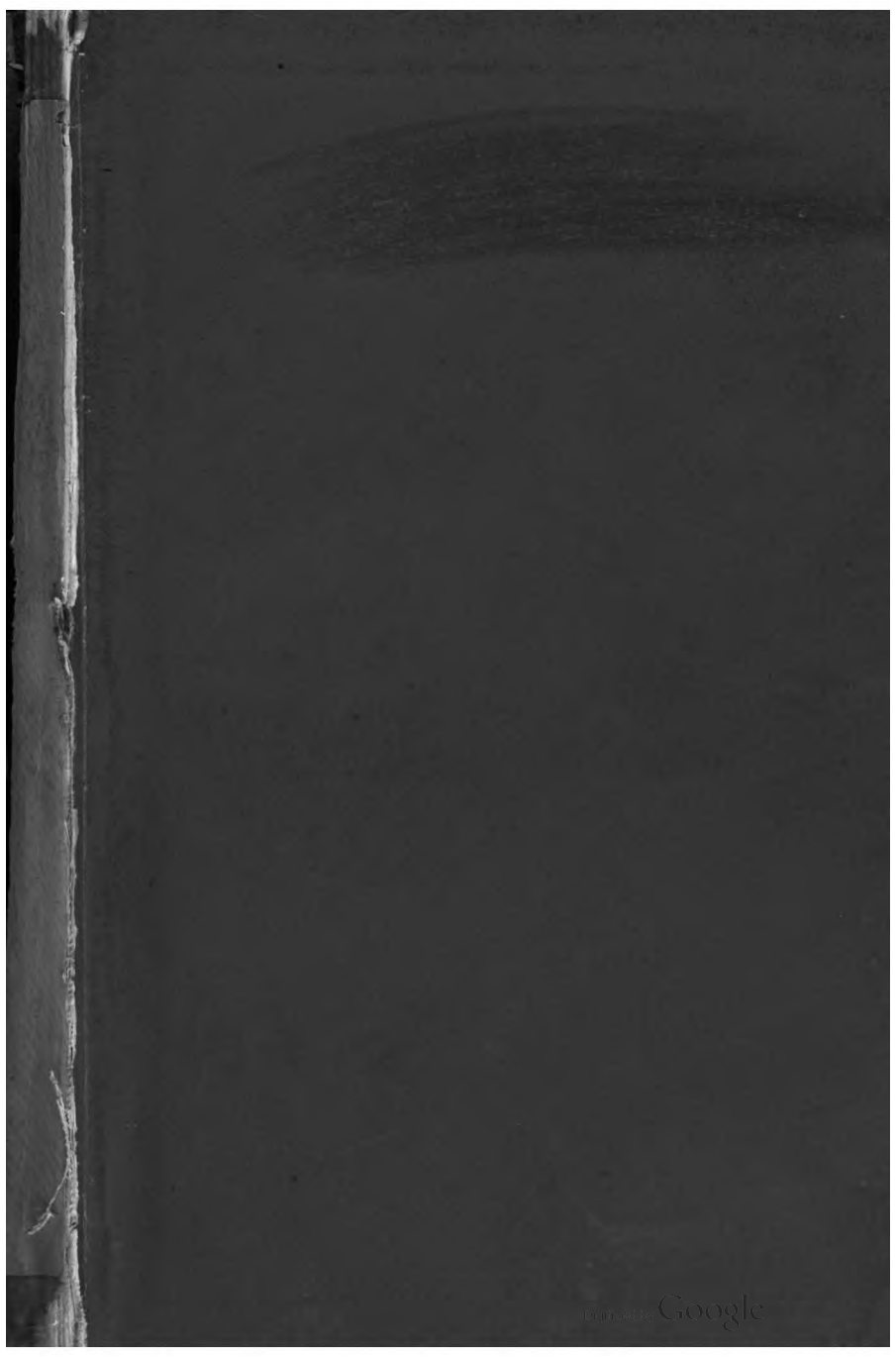
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P R O M E T H E U S

IN

A T L A N T I S ;

*A PROPHECY OF THE EXTINCTION OF
THE CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION.*



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CONTENTS.

I. FIRST-BORN OF THE INTEGRAL AND REGENERATE COSMOS	11
II. A SUPREME CONVICTION	33
III. WHAT HE SUFFERED	51
IV. CAUSES AND NATURAL ORDER OF THE LITERARY SERIES	69
V. SOME OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED	81
VI. TAMENESS OF PASSION AND IMAGINATION NOT THE WORK OF CIVILIZATION, BUT OF OPPOSING FORCES	92
VII. RELATIONS OF SCIENCE AND LITERATURE	100
VIII. PROPHETIC BEARINGS OF SOME POINTS OF DIF- FERENCE BETWEEN GREEK AND CHRISTIAN LIT- ERATURE	106
IX. PROPHETIC BEARINGS OF THE RELATION OF DE- MOCRACY TO LITERATURE	113
X. PARTIAL AND PERIODIC INSPIRATIONS NECESSA- RILY DISASTROUS	124
XI. RELATIONS OF OUR EARTHLY LIFE TO A LARGER FUTURE	136

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XII.	RELATION OF THE SEXES	142
XIII.	THE CRISIS OF 1860	154
XIV.	ONE NIGHT'S AGONY	180
XV.	WHETHER THE HUMAN MIND CAN HAVE ANY REAL KNOWLEDGE	195
XVI.	RELATION OF CIVILIZATIONS TO COSMICAL FORCES,	201
XVII.	SYNTHESIS WITH WHICH THE CHRISTIAN CIVILI- ZATION HAS ENDED	205
XVIII.	THE TRUTH BENEATH THE DEVELOPMENT THE- ORY	216
XIX.	IRENÆUS'S CELEBRATED DILEMMA	219
XX.	HISTORICAL RESUME	224
XXI.	PLACE OF JESUS IN THE MOVEMENT OF THE COSMOS	241
XXII.	SOME PROPHETIC POINTS IN MODERN HISTORY,	255
XXIII.	THE CROWN SECURED	279
XXIV.	SYNOPTICAL AND ILLATIVE	298

INITIAL NOTE.

THE truths which Nature, in her endless argument with men, cannot convince them of by life, she then establishes with the demonstration of death. She has been debating a rugged issue with you, my countrymen, in the forum of the cosmos, and having, with difficulty, secured your attention, she is now moving the previous question against you, and preparing to persuade you with a warrant for your execution. The events of six bloody and tearful years have caused the more thoughtful among you to realize that something very serious and far out of the common order of things is the matter with this land; but you little suspect what it is, and your frantic and misdirected efforts at relief are only hastening and augmenting your ruin. I propose to aid your inquiry into the causes of your condition, and to direct your mourning and fevered eyes towards the only peace, as I tried to do six years ago and you would not hear me. But it is quite certain that a few will listen now,—certainly not

enough to staunch the perforated heart of a dying nation, but enough to give a rood of soil to the waiting roots of this truth, and to preserve it for the unborn children of God. In what I have written are many things which will grate harshly on all present ears ; but facts ask little leave of prejudice whether they shall be, and as there is a high decorum in which there is no trace of squeamishness, so it is at once a weak and a criminal complaisance that tones down what were best put plainly. You cannot annul with predilection one law of nature, nor neutralize with etiquette her pungent acids, nor change her purposes to suit you better ; but you can destroy yourselves even more completely yet, by opposing the gestation of the future, and can rob yourselves, too, of riches whereof you have not dreamed. Read these earnest words then, my countrymen, seeing the grim spectre that stands in front of you, scythe in hand, and remembering that you cannot criticise the edge off his scythe, nor the scythe out of his hand. It would be well for even feeble and malignant minds to try to comprehend this in some form suited to their capacity, and so serve the cause of decency, the highest within their reach. It is quite vain, indeed, to exhort any man to transcend the limits which nature has set to his manhood, nor is it ever necessary or well to do so, if we were but wise enough to know it, even in the service of the most vital truths.

The only proper care and duty of any of us, is to work out our permitted parts like noble and obedient children, knowing that the bounds are better as the Father has set them, than they would be with the alterations our impatience would make. It is justification that I know that the stainless and regenerate will find something here to quicken and enlarge their holy hearts; and as for the rest, if you will each give heed only to what was designed for you, and pass lightly over what may untruly seem to you inopportune or ill-advised, leaving it for your brother whose need it may meet, — you may rise from the perusal more willing, if no better able, to do and suffer what God and truth require. A mental radius long enough to include an honest loaf of bread and a peaceful cup of cold water, has never covered, and in this world will never cover, any virtuous interest which would not prosper in the prosperity of Truth; and neither would one that should sweep the last limit of attainment, penetrate beyond the obligation of support and assistance to her slenderest utterance. It would be well, then, for you all, without distinction, to exercise now, for a short hour or two, the nobler faculties of your nature, and give the mean ones a little rest. God knows they need it.

Only an insufferably vulgar curiosity would seek to discover the authorship of this book, when I do not myself disclose it. I think my secret — of little

moment to the world, but of importance to me — is entirely in my own keeping; but if any who read should suspect the hand that writes, from ear-marks in the thought or style, they are requested to keep their surmises to themselves; and to their honor the matter is committed.

It occurs to me at the last moment, on reading the printed leaves continuously, that possibly there may be in the world minds small enough to actually believe that this book belongs to the shabby breed of self-portrayals; just as orthodoxy, for the want of a distinction somewhat similar in kind to that which is necessary here, makes out the universe itself as only a stupendous piece of egotism. The truths herein affirmed are, indeed, a revelation of consciousness to an extent but faintly indicated by the text, and no plan but that adopted, could have symbolized the one fact, compared with which all others lose their importance. But understand me clearly. The pinched and meagre effigy which is little more than a deliberate clipping of the new ideal of humanity, bears just about the same relation to that out of which it was cut that the letter *X* does to the whole of English literature. If that is egotism, make the most of it. Only I have not painted myself, nor even thought of doing so.

PROMETHEUS IN ATLANTIS.

CHAPTER I.

FIRST-BORN OF THE INTEGRAL AND REGENERATED COSMOS.

THE world, of late, has been expending its learning and ingenuity anew on the work of him who laid down his life for it more than eighteen hundred years ago at Jerusalem. Profound scholars have given the public the fruit of their best insight and criticism, and their books have sold by hundreds of thousands, because they have not displeased the world by exposing the truth. Jesus awaiting, in his home with God, the day when a fraternal experience should guide men safe between Scylla and Charybdis, in exploring his life and mission, and not deny his sonship in avoiding blasphemy and the childish conceit of miracles, has been crucified afresh by other Pharisees and Romans, at every hour since the tragedy of Calvary.

The highest truth in the universe, and the terminal fact in its history, is a life of which philosophies and creeds are but outlying dependencies; and out of the progressive evolutions of that life, are born the leaders and deliverers of the soul. Whence, there dwelt of late in this world a man, who, standing, by reason of

his manhood, in the stream of universal, resistless, and eternal force, sustained a new relation to the cosmos, and was the offspring of the full development of its movement. It matters little about any other name; we may fitly designate him only as a man.

Wonder not that till now the world has never heard his story. The same truths which made his life sublime made it also humble. The lowly fact of his life fell far below its sublime idea, as must the fact of even such unmythical life in this world, because the means of spiritual manifestation and expression are, as yet, imperfect. Here, his conquering spirit was but the mourning captive of its own greatness. Its visible grandeur was rags and meanness compared with that which was unseen within; "for the actual man is but the dwarf of the ideal and possible man." His life dipped down out of the last and sublimest sphere of the Ideal to meet and embrace the humblest details of the Actual; but in this apparent deflection it only actualized the highest possible Ideal. You will find in its slender record no wild-winged fancies, no gorgeous drivel of the imagination. You will encounter human flesh and bone at every turn. You will see, throughout, only a sublime uncomprehended boy, as thoroughly human as you or I, and to the last unequalled in the boyishness and simplicity of his nature, moving among his fellows with life little differing in external semblance from theirs; one of them in all things, toiling, yearning, sorrowing like even the least of them. If you desire superstition, nightmare, gloomy frenzy, and the horrors of sick dreams, or aught but the simple, natural type of the final union of the Ideal with the

Actual, and of the inspired soul's real life, you have already at your command a melancholy literature which fills the world. Go read it without molestation, if your stand-point still requires it. If it is necessary to your welfare to believe that the spiritual life is a matter of prodigies, miracles, and monstrous violations of law, and that God our Father is such a bungler that His inspiration is mere melodrama and stage-thunder, lay this book down here. In reading of him you will read only of what the simplest life around you might be, and what, at length, all lives of men will be, — only of what is simpler than a child's first lesson, and lowlier than a peasant's heart, while yet profounder than the depths of heaven, and sublimer than the stars; and may the angels pity, and God forgive us, if one stilted or ambitious expression shall fall from our pen.

In careful words which our progress will enlarge in certifying them, he came to solve with a heart-throb problems over which gray philosophy has been puzzling from the dawn of time, and to place within the reach, even in the very hearts of the humblest of mankind, truth and sublimity for which the greatest spirits of the race have toiled in vain. But let not weak enthusiasm overestimate his mission, or uselessly degrade the gift of our humanity in silly effort to exalt his work. With the greatest and sweetest spirits of the race at the head of the column, and with holy banners flying over us, we are all marching to a world wherein there will be no more forever a captive and sighing spirit, or an unappropriated and unorganized force of the soul, and we stand to-day on the confines

of that AGE; but myriads of our little earthly ages must be required to bear the race fully into those depths of light and joy. Every integral effect being in reality only a mode of its cause, reason and spirit will not become supreme, but must continue mourning captives, until the understanding shall become as large as they and imperishable. For, it is their increase that enlarges it; for, changes of organism are not merely external to the force and substance and imposed upon them; no, but they are changes in the mode and life of the essential being. All tyranny and all false teaching are alike an accident of the organism, born of the weakness of that which lies within. Pain, heart-break, and beneficent death, proceed out of this weakness, out of the incompleteness of the conversion of force into spirit; and when that process shall be complete, there will be no more forever a tyrant or a lie in all the universe, nor any sin or sorrow.

And in like manner within this larger movement, the origin and life of the individual spirit is neither a matter of accident nor the subject of an infinite caprice. It is a fact as literal, law-governed, and actual as physical production. Out of the movements which precede us, comes the preparation of the movements which take place in us, and thus the narrow pride of birth and race covers and distorts a great truth. There was neither loose hazard nor the club-footed necessity of a small, hard philosophy, nor any fantastic and sterile conceit of arbitrary volition, in the mellow and indefeasible grandeur of this man's life. The laws of growth and distribution in the spiritual world, the truths of the late-born science of the natural history

of spirit, fixed and illustrated his destiny. He was the fusion of many types of mind, the product of this late, series-ending eclecticism, brought about in our peaceful and industrial civilization by emigration, as Alexander's conquests wrought its like in the closing ages of the Pagan cycle. . . His local home was in the *sui generis* and as yet but little comprehended Border, where the northern lobe of the temperate regions, the perfectly assimilated conquest of civilization in her Christian cycle, warmed into the beginning of the larger and more formidable zone, — where the products of the emancipated white laborer grew in the same furrow with those of the still enslaved children of the tropics, — where the great river, more mystic and prophetic than Nile or Ganges, interlaced and made continuous and forever inseparable sections of the earth, which in the older hemisphere an earlier and different policy carefully divorced. In this catholic belt, knowledge and emotion met and blent. The baldness of reason into which the intellectual movement of the race had passed over, and the malevolent and disastrous passion in which the march of the emotive had ended, were not found there. Elsewhere, the peaks of Christian thought, split into lances and granite-needles, perforated heaven with their keen Pyrrhonic points; elsewhere, the lees of Christian passion, void of all noble quality, bubbled and stunk in the reeking caldron of slavery. But, on the border of the consolidated zones, the fatal scissions which had hurled the opposite lobes of human nature against each other, to the ultimate destruction of both and of society, had not taken place. Intellect

was still enveloped and endued with feeling ; Passion lifted up her fervid eye to the light in gladness. As far as the wind blew or the sun shone, there was no other land like that, — the green-hilled and crystal-rivered. Great memories and an inspiration of nobleness hovered in its atmosphere. It was the final plateau on which all the forces which had made our civilization what it was, debouched their wasted ranks. It was, in a clear, unmystic sense, the Judea and middle-land of the modern civilization, where all the forces it has displayed were blended, whence all sides of the questions that have undone it were visible. The illustrious dead whose ashes slept there, were products of this blending of forces. The bounds of present consciousness, the comprehension of present facts, might there extend to the extremest limits of the movement of the race. There, Christian crime meekly deprecated and apologized for her own existence ; there, Charity spread her amplest mantle over the weaknesses and vices of mankind ; and, there, Wisdom felt her mild eye reaching depths, and heights, and breadths in the problem of the universe never before beheld. This man loved that land of his birth — that land which helped to mould him — with profound appreciation and affection, until, at the last, infected and maddened by venomous breath, she made herself the sole remaining stronghold of darkness and oppression, and poured on the head of him, her sublimest son, deluges of rancor, calumny, and gall. Then he said, sorrowfully : “ Alas ! was thy work done, thy force spent, thy mission ended, when thou hadst borne poor me ? ”

In this catholic border of the zones, there stood a city which presented a peculiar aspect and covered much of the unknown. Here, pent up in conflict, within a few roods of ground, yet not violent enough to disturb the ordained and indispensable repose without, were the active and fretful forces which rushed out of the Christian casket when the Sixteenth Century raised the lid. The arts and commerce, the whirl of presses, the electric wire through which the antipodes kiss our fair cities, the ceaseless activity and energy which lay hold of the physical and master it, the spirit which crushes first shells and then bulwarks, which kicks off restraints, and makes itself first beneficent and then destructive by being free, which transmutes the Ideal into attainment, and utilizes the vital forces of civilization in consuming them, were here displayed. But in crossing the corporation limit, you crossed a thousand years. You stepped out into the Middle Age — into repose — produced, indeed, by a dark and melancholy relic of the weakness and lowliness of human nature, become a crime in man while yet retained as an expedient of nature; but still, — weigh well the word and what it contrasts, — repose. In this repose, considered in itself, there could dwell no good inspiration — not merely, by the testimony of the past, because it was the product of crime, but also because the fact and consciousness of criminality had been reached and laid bare by a progress which had consumed the inspiration of the Christian cycle. But there were in it feeling and imagination, by reason of the check which it imposed upon the active faculties. For even the noblest of those whom it possessed, and over whose

lives and low perceptions it lorded, there was in it nothing but an idealizing of the positive, the sculpturing of a form in adamant, and electrifying it with furious energy and satanic power. But nature draws sweetness and unfading beauty out of the bruises of the human soul, and in the eternal economy of God, shame, and sin, and sorrow blossom forth at last in Eden flowers and fragrance. The rock which one civilization perishes in attempting to remove crumbles into fertile mould for the roots of the next. The achieving spirits grow up in shadows and under shelters whose protection the truth they teach replaces and makes obsolete forever. The obstruction which checks the movement of the race, creates the great repose out of which the new propelling force emerges. Weep, if you will, over the dark mystery of the universe which weds it so long to inferior forms, and makes sacrifice and sorrow the price of its advancement: but lift no silly babblers' tongue to denounce the law in which your own hope consists, or to question the wisdom and beneficence of that necessity which, withholding perfection of both purpose and vision from us, converts our weaknesses and crimes into means of strength and righteousness.

Not far from the city above described, and very near one of the principal thoroughfares that radiated from it, was a little valley so secluded that it seemed scarcely to belong to the world around it. A country road, branching off from the thoroughfare, wandered on for two or three miles through fields and forests, and then dropped down a hill into the valley. A little river, like a ribbon, wound through the narrow scene

around irregular, projecting hills, to swell at last the Father of Waters. You would have searched in vain throughout the world for another such primitive and untrammelled landscape. There was nothing attractive or prepossessing in it: it was apparently barren and almost rude; without adornment, it was close to the heart of nature. Nowhere on earth, perhaps, does the spirit of the universe seem so immediate. The hills make aliens of all the world; and the low-eaved heaven, fenced in as earth is fenced out, is to the spot beneath like the roof of a homestead. All the operations of nature have there the nearness and impulsiveness of heart-throbs. At morning, the sun clears the barrier of the eastern hills with startling quickness, like an acrobat bounding into the arena; and he sinks behind the western woods at night in mournful and peculiar majesty. Storms, gathering behind the high horizon, burst into the valley with the precipitation of an avalanche. The winds come over into it with an æolian sound not heard elsewhere, as if its metes were harp-strings. The abyss whence the silent snow comes, seems very near at hand there. The dew, sole decorator of the scene, spreads out its star-born gems, like an Arabian genius, and opens, with its fragrant kiss, deep cells of sweetness in the plainness of the flowers. The evening star glitters with the enkindling splendor of a woman's eye; and in the glimmer of her bright hosts, heaven seems to throw across the shadow-mantled hills and gliding waters the drapery that veils her sacred limbs while she sleeps. Within the domain of slavery, as we have said, yet no bondman's sweat ever stained those fields, and no bond-

man's prayer ever darkened into a curse above those humble roofs. A primitive and simple-hearted people followed there, from year to year, the even tenor of their lives. Among them, but not of them, this man was born, and there, with the dew of humility freshening his heart, his tender years were spent. But as he reached the age when memory and the contrast of his homelessness would render its tranquillity and sweetness an idyl in his heart forever, he became an outcast from this peace, with not where to lay his head, bearing in his heart forever, as he wandered, the melting recollections of this early home. From the Canadas to Cape Horn, from the dreamy prairies of the remotest West to the Eden islands of southern and eastern seas, there was no distinct section of the world, no class or condition of men, barbarous or civilized, no ruin, no relic, no sloughed or youthful institution, no manifestation of physical or spiritual life, which the hardness of his destiny did not call this silent, suffering, observant, wondrously teachable boy to visit. Every land where civilization ever dwelt was as his father-land in this, that the influence of each on the progress of mankind aided to mould also his catholic and final soul; yet, of all the lands through which he wandered, he loved best the German home of the highest thought of the Christian civilization, and this western field of its grandest action and achievement; for in them abided in strongest emphasis the terms which he had come to unite. Every tongue that civilization ever spoke was as his mother-tongue in this, that he was master of the principles and relations of all civilized speech; yet, the only languages

he spoke with ease, or loved to speak, were the German and the English, the aptest and most characteristic word-work of this copious and forcible, organism-breaking, absolute-evolving cycle.

It was the leading idiosyncrasy of his life and growth, that they were at once a synopsis and a pre-figuration. In the history of his consciousness, the different stages of the movement of the universe were mirrored, as in the development of the human fœtus all previous grades of animal existence successively appear. In the movement of the universe, it is out of repetition that projection comes, Nature gathering herself up afresh after each leap; and more than similarly — consequentially and identically — in civilization and the growth of spirit, every new movement begins with and departs out of a synthesis which is also a spiritualization of material conquests. When a final and absolute truth came to dawn on the world, and one conquering soul was born out of its aurora, it could not but be that the future should issue out of the whole past, and the spiritual universe be the reproduction of the physical. It is out of the catholic that the new truth is emerging, and the life of its builder and first hero could not but be the picture of his doctrine.

He came out of the chaos of the homogeneous, like the cosmos of which he was the offspring and image. But his life was not to stop at that point in the history of the cosmos where previous lives of men have stopped. He came to set forth before the world not only the process by which the universe was constructed, but that also by which its forces are undergoing

conversion from physical to spiritual modes. With both the universe and animal intelligence, the processes of individuation and organization were far in advance before that of spiritualization began, and they were the means of this; for without anterior personalization and organism there can be no conversion of forces and no spirit. Therefore, with this man the process of personal construction and the facts of consciousness were not complete until that of spiritualization enabled them to become so; and his understanding — not his spirit, foggy theologian — was the last part of his nature to assume its final shape. Yet we shall see how vigorous and clear, how admirable an agent of organization and conversion, his understanding was, according to its reach and proper duty, through all the stages of his growth. From the necessities of his destiny and mission, there was in him a double movement which led to manifestations of spirit and character such as the world had never seen. His life depicted synoptically the primeval movement whereby force, passing from its igneous mode, wrought the homogeneous into forms. It depicted prophetically this later process of breaking up and melting down, whereby all existing forms are undergoing fusion and expansion, and the eternal movement is passing on through temporary disorganization to reorganization on the basis of a higher spirituality and the supreme dominion of the soul. The ultimate and essential fruits of the process of ascertainment accomplished ages ago on the shores of Greece, after centuries of travail in Asia, were as complete in him, from his first breath, as the purifying work of a later and holier

agency. From the moment he began to think at all, every object that was within its bounds stood out on the clear and sunlit plateau of his thought, against the sky, in the pure atmosphere, as if cut out of marble. No inscrutable and hooded ghosts, no delusions stalked there. Everything there was bright as noon-day, and spotless as crystal. Superstition and her brood of terrors had no roost there ; mystery only filled him with veneration, love, and wonder, as an undeveloped mine of grandeur, knowledge, and joy. But beneath and all around this rock-ribbed Greece, as around a shallop, rolled the fiery billows of the untamed, internal sea, into which his understanding sank down, even as the forms of civilization are sinking down to-day, and emerged at length a new creature, on the shores of a new and more resplendent world.

The greatest minds are also the saddest, and there never yet has been a nature at once passionate and profound, which did not, in its forming stages, add to the vagueness of unconfigured and self-dimming greatness, the uncertainty of gloom, as the highest mountains in the tropics precipitate most vapor, and are most wrapped in clouds. As travellers, in the jungle of the Terai, see before them, at first, only a mountain-mass of gloom and vapor, but presently at Darjeeling and Sinchul behold the snow-capped summits overtopping the world, and then all the tongueless wonders of the Himalayas, so those who beheld this inchoate youth, rising through darkness and the mist of tears, scarcely knew, at first, whether the novel sight was a tangible reality or a chimera. Their thought was, if this be not a mirage and a dream, what sub-

limity is here. But presently they noticed that unyielding rock upheld this soaring grandeur, and then their fear was of sterility. But the few who read his nature in its last completeness and by the light which poured upon it when his Father lifted off the clouds, thought only of its romantic and enrapturing beauty. Vales more beautiful than Cashmere nestled among grander Himalayas; melancholy pines and mourning cypresses, interlaced with serener foliage, pencilled their brow; and the familiar angels came out of the near heaven and stood in shining robes on the sunlit peaks. And there a new city of the soul was built, and lifted up its glittering spires in the morning light of a new age. The natural and necessary orbit of his thought swept through spaces before undreamed of, and those who, in his earlier years, noticed, with admiration, how it plunged out into the unknown, wondered whether the globe of flame which rushed there was not an unsubstantial and nebulous wisp. His imagination, cosmos-free and utterly fearless, girdled the dark abysses of being and conception with belts of fire, and you painfully doubted at first, whether its flight would not lead to mazes beyond the sphere of order. But presently you saw in the flame and vapor of the forming star, the one enduring and eternal substance of which the universe is made, and the hand of law clasped tight around it to restrain, and build, and guide; and in that action of the imagination which resembled the comet's plunge, and which lifted up before him the darkest secrets of the universe, and brought the distant near, you saw a freedom that had broken the last fetter, strength born of God, and a new

sense and guidance imparted by His touch. And, finally, when his intellectual and spiritual construction was complete, you saw in the exhibition of him a new planet, the promise of a new heaven and a new earth, and comprehended the process of their production, perceiving that your own hope and the hope of the spirit of man is firmly planted in the substance of the universe, even in its pulsing heart, and is prophetic of its course of life; and you read in the naturalness, grandeur, and freedom of his spiritual life, the beginning of a new life of the Father-Soul and of all His children.

At first, he lay, in the incandescence of a lone and mighty passion, and in the ebullience of a profound and misty consciousness, under the empire of a force which then was only heat. Thence, on the shoulders of Revolution, he passed swiftly to his appointed goal — never permitted to pause, but constantly overwhelmed afresh by the creative fire as he still bestrode his grimy Cyclops, until he reached his full growth and perfect organization in that final state which he came to prefigure to the world. Within him, from his first breath, stirred a burning and univocal genius and passion such as the world had never seen. There was in his soul, from infancy, a hunger which craved things great and true, a thirst inextinguishable and parching like fever. Seas of unrest rolled their phosphorescent waves through all his pulses. His burning heart lived unutterable life and died unutterable death with every throb. But in this time of fluidity and tempest, Christianity had already performed its purifying mission. Not that he was *sinless*, but that, from the

womb, the Adam of nature was slain in him by spiritual forces, — that the tides of flame which the pulses of Regenerate Being now throb forth, drove all the engines of his heart. His consciousness, at first, was far larger than his understanding, and stretched beyond it a chaos of storms and fire. It was a forming Eden which resembled a Gehenna; flames burst out of it in billows, and rolled away into the outer darkness of the forever Unknown. When it was not a world of fire, it was a world of storms, and he was swallowed up in darkness which clung and sucked like an infinite leech, while Hadean whirlwinds and sheets of foam swept over him. He attempted, in those days, no organization of his thought; he only revelled in his glorious dreams and in the sublime raptures of his misty consciousness. Then movement, advancement commenced; heat became motion and hurled him on for the next years in darkness, weakness, and unconsciousness. He knew not definitely, as yet, what he was or whither he was tending; but he began now to ask himself sometimes what he was, and to answer: "Alas, I know not yet!" But the bare suggestion of the question showed now the first beginnings of the organization of his life. He felt that he was very close to the Infinite, and relied upon it with supreme and unfaltering trust before he knew or dared to settle what it was. He drifted up and down the dark sea of being, like a mariner lost overboard in sleep, not knowing yet whither he was driven through the night by the waves, but knowing, in his soul, as he knew he lived, that he was in the closed hands and keeping of the Infinite. Then,

as he grew a little older and moved a little further on, light burst out of darkness and unconsciousness, and wrapped about him a robe of fiery splendor, and strength and mastery came out of weakness and possession, like giants rising out of shapeless mist. Then, in his first strength and preparatory organization, when he had not yet been fully spiritualized, — cramped, disgusted, and despising, he laid hold of the forms of the age to crush them; and the age, wild with admiration for his power and beauty, would gladly have placed him on its highest throne, but he only turned away from its broken shells, and gave himself afresh to the forces of his destiny as his sole and satisfying portion. Then came the last step, the same the world is taking now. The crust beneath his feet was broken, and he sank back into the sea of flame, and into the sacred weakness which precedes every new growth of the spirit. Lifted out of that creative baptism and looking down into the secrets of his reorganizing and spiritualizing being, he beheld, imaged in its depths, a new firmament with all the spirits of the old constellations set in it, reflected back in meekness towards the Infinite; and while he gazed into his new consciousness, the peaceful and majestic brow of God shone over him. In all this movement, which outstripped the speed of lightning, his nature never lost, for an instant, its poise and self-control. No faltering, no inversions, no missteps, marked this omnipotent movement, for it was the normal order of his life; to thread its mazes and walk its paths of flame, he was created. It lifted him out of chaos, and with nimble and resistless power bore him to the bosom of his

Father. The burning passion of his nature was the material and means of God ; pure, undying, primitive, at once essence, force, and process, it was the first fact out of which all other facts were made. It paralleled and reflected, in the spirit, the movement which brought the universe out of fluidity and incandescence into solidity and fruitfulness ; and in its later modes, in and through him, in bloody sacrifice and brokenness of heart, but in unequalled benignity and majesty, that movement passed on into a perfect and imperishable spiritual life.

Through all the solitary and favoring years of his boyhood, the process of his growth went on with uninterrupted and ever-widening sweep. Shapes of heavenly beauty burst out of the burriness and indistinctness of his outer consciousness, and the incipient movements which were preparing him for his great destiny cleared and gathered more and more towards their appointed ends. As he felt the process of his own development going on within him, he would ask wonderingly : " Yet a little while, and what shall I be ? " He looked upwards with yearning inquiry, from time to time in his consciousness of growth ; and when he saw in his path some particular truth which he did not fully comprehend, or some problem which his knowledge was not yet large enough to solve, he would say, with a proud smile : " I know that presently, grim obstacle, I can take thee in my hands and fling thee away, as if thou wert a pebble. " And it is wonderful how prophetic this strange consciousness was. Day by day he felt, plainly as he felt his heart beat, his mind converting its acquisitions into its own substance,

organizing, digesting, assimilating, building ~~it~~self up. Whatever he perceived out of his reach or beyond his strength, he regarded as only a way-mark which pointed out the direction of his growth, and indicated how much taller and stronger than at the moment he should be presently. Of all possible contingencies, there was but one from which he ever shrank. It was the possibility that he might be called to lay down this life before he had mastered its problems and laid bare its relations. His feeling was that of an eager and delighted student who fears the master will put him in a higher class before he has exhausted the joys and utility of studies to which he can never return. A love of knowledge which it would be difficult if not impossible to describe, possessed him constantly. He shrank with horror and acute pain from the slime and squalor of ignorance in all its forms. He taught that wilful ignorance is a crime, and not a less one than murder, and that education is a religious service. The ground of the opinion will be made clear when we come to consider his doctrine of the union of absolute and relative in man, and the connection between the progress of the understanding and the projection of a living reason capable of grasping an absolute truth. To say that either the progress of intellect alone, or the formation of character alone, is the end of human history, is to take a miserably narrow view of a sublime subject. Human history is the product of a concrete growth of which either of these abstractions is but a small part. It is utterly astonishing how any one can hold that the moral nature of man remains stationary. The general progress of virtue is

precisely proportioned to that of intelligence. But when the little advocates of "virtue," of "intellect," of "religion," have all of them summed up their specialties and laid them together, they have presented but a meagre, technical, and contemptible syllabus of the cosmical movement in which man partakes, and of the blisses and glories of our being.

He acquired, with insatiable avidity, everything bearing on the history of the universe and of spirit. He had no crotchet, no specialty. He ran into no corner, beneath no fold of the great problem to remain there. His discursions were as wide as the past range of civilization, and clear and swift as light. Details faded from his mind and had little effect on it; but the induction, the general fact, grew into his mind as part thereof, ineradicable and vital. He acquired little, very little of the mere technicalities of human thought. He paid little attention to the formal peculiarities of systems and schools; but the movement of the human mind through all of its long and sinuous course, was soon as familiar to him in its every stretch and turn, as the paths he trod daily; and his own thought presented him with a complete summary of all human thought. He did not disdain the smallest acquisition that would make him more catholic, or render his appreciation more subtle and distinct. Always simple as a child, grandly barren of the finical graces described by the canting misnomer, fine gentleman, the world might yet have been defied to produce another example of such rich and varied culture; but the purpose of his life ruled over every grace. He became an amateur in music, believing that, of the arts, it would

be the specialty of the next civilization. He devoted himself successively, so far as circumstances would allow, to everything that could increase his capacity to comprehend any age or condition of mankind. He had no taste, no patience for the fantastic freaks in which some scholars delight to waste their strength,—for musty nothings, crippled whimsicalities, squinting quaintness, impossible translations, ambidextrous prosody, dusty dryness, or for the absurd and wicked straight-lacing of fœticial over-system, and its hairless abortions. He was too terribly in earnest for such stuff as this; as an ox thirsts for water, so did he thirst for vital and real knowledge,—for all the facts and illustrations in the history of mankind. He would not have paid a rusty pin for any knowledge which he did not feel all alive and kicking after it got into his mind; and he soon perceived that the most tameless and unmanageable facts were precisely the ones that had most life and meaning in them. A book must be vital in every part, itself a portion of the phenomenon which he was studying, in order to detain him beyond a rapid first glance. He met the spirit of a book face to face, and if he found it a real work of that human soul whose history he sought, he accepted and embraced it with ardor. It filled him with scorn and indignation to see how the narrow theological spirit of these Christian ages has set the brand of infamy on many of the noblest productions of the human intellect,—like those of the sublime Spinoza,—and has dumped into the vacant thrones whence these living powers have been scourged, cartloads of the vilest orthodox rubbish. He returned frequently and with ever fresh delight from

his researches among smaller lights, to the few great masters of human thought and passion. These were white stars that never set, — sure beacons that lighted him along his way. He scorned the pitiful fallacy that the chief use of poetry is to be pulled to pieces with scalpels, that its metaphysical and historical contents may be discerned and appropriated. And he had only contempt for the shallow conclusion of this paralytic criticism, that poetry is peculiar to the infancy of the race, and has now disappeared from the earth forever. On the contrary, understanding the relation of vital forces to forms, and the progress by which forces are becoming more spiritual, and forms less gross, he knew that the Oriental, the Hellenic, and the Christian types having passed away forever, a higher poetry of lyric cast must now succeed, and to that end his own life and doctrines, more than all other agencies, contributed.

CHAPTER II.

A SUPREME CONVICTION.

BOTH the ages and the individuals who aspire and suffer, also dream, constructing the universe afresh out of the blurred hints around them ; and afterwards the dream becomes truth, the aspiration, fruition, and the suffering victory. Till now, no merely actual fact has ever been so full of truth as the dreams of the full soul of man, even when these have been most erroneous ; for they have been gleams of a light which, till now, has been above the understanding. The direction of the movement of the highest thought is from the Ideal to the Actual, not from the Actual to the Ideal. Its passage is not from the understanding into the soul, but from the soul into the understanding, because it is not a philosophy but a life ; and all its errors hitherto, have arisen from the inability of the understanding to receive and organize its truths. When ages have passed away, and negative criticism has long since exploded the old delusion, and "enlightened minds" have even ceased to sneer at it, its real nature and significance begin to appear ; new beauty and new truth burst forth from its cerements like seraphs, and we see that but for it in its day, the universe would

have been an icy and appalling lie. The Indian pantheism, which buried God in slime, bleak Judaism, which abstracted his life, marble Hellenism, which destroyed his unity, — what were our knowledge of the Father to-day, if any one of these had never been? And most of all, the bold, great dream which immediately succeeded these, and which, it might well have been thought, would conflict with, and, by reason of its false etiology, retard nature's cleansing process with the human soul, is now seen to have been an essential part of that process, one of its transient and subsidiary modes, and to have presented, in wondrous miniature, the broken features of the truth which most concerns the soul. And how impossible it has been, in all the dark and imperfect past, for the yearning heart of man to put away from it its cherished and beautiful delusions; and how blissful, beneficent, and full of truest greatness, has been this weakness; for the world, in those unhappy ages, would have perished of spiritual atrophy, if it had been compelled or able to be rational. But for reasons and by steps to which we shall recur more fully at the close, the heavenly Father has, in his own good time, brought light out of this darkness, and changed the dirge of all the past ages to a song of triumph; yet, in doing this, the historic, essential, cosmical manner in which the highest truth is always born, remained unchanged.

There came a man, at last, in whom fulness put on strength by increase of fulness, and power, instead of barrenness, conferred freedom. His perceptions of the truth were not discursive, but in the nature of immediate vision. He did not reach his truth through

its relations. It was part of his own life and consciousness, born out of the misty grandeur of his early being. But the great distinction between him and all men who lived before him, was an indescribable experience of the passage of his loftiest and most spiritual vision, by means of an unbending firmness which enabled him to wait, into absolute reality, and the actualness of fact. His nebulous consciousness organized itself, with the certain step of Fate, into tangible realities, undiminished, and stripped of nothing that entrances. He never clasped, in weak impatience, its forms of vapor, but waited, in perfect confidence, for their transformation into living, actual substance. It was the relation of the forces which constructed him, to the whole movement of the race, that gave him this privilege and this strength. In the movements which preceded the one he inaugurated, geocentric thought and prophecy had perished forever, and anthropomorphism been replaced by cosmomorphism. His wondrous poise resulted from his being the product of the beginning of a new relation between the finite and the Infinite, — from the repudiation and sloughing now by the movement of the universe, of the fundamental Christian idea of separation, subordination, and franchise, and the development and inauguration of the higher idea of union, interpenetration, and the absolute. The tide which bore him across the light-spot of this earthly life, was no separate, pent-up, partial and exaggerated flow, — no bay-of-Fundy movement, as many have been in human history, — but the clear, ocean-sweep of the changing billow of force, on whose crest the universe itself is poised and fed with life ; and

the landscapes which burst on his sight, as it bore him on, clung to no near encircling walls of rock, nor to any canopy of earth-born clouds, but reposed for a moment, in dream-tints, on the nebulous brow of The Becoming before they vanished into the peaks of the Republic of God. As he gazed at them, he said: "Visions of eternal truth and beauty, no shallow trick of creation has given you being. The changing universe has given you to me out of its depths."

No finite spirit can ever again experience in the same manner, the revelation of an Ultimate written in the beams of the stars; because the soul in its progress swallows up the stand-points where truth and beauty have burst upon it, and the experiences befitting the welding of the Ideal and the Actual will not prevail when the movement shall have passed farther on. All the men of the future, even to the lowliest of them, will, like him, pierce through the veil of clouds, and read from the hill-tops of a fadeless Ultimate, and the leaders of those larger and better ages, will behold and master truth, of which this boy had no surmise; but never again, to any son of man, can such pictures be revealed as passed into the conquering soul of him whose life and vision first penetrated thither.

The most wonderful idiosyncrasy of this boy's consciousness, was the unexampled manner in which, while its passive experiences depicted the entire movement of the physical and spiritual universe, its active promptings, even when it was most incomplete, laid hold of the precise point in the movement of the race where his own mission began; and we trust to make this clear as we proceed. The great idea which he

came to inaugurate in the world, — the conquest of an absolute and final truth, the union of fulness and love with strength and freedom, the substitution of essential and eternal ties for evanescent and personal ones, in the brotherhood of man, and the revelation and secure possession of a near and literal Father of the soul, — not only ran through all his personal experience as we shall portray it, but permeated every atom of even his most primitive thought and feeling. Beneath his consciousness, in all its stages, there was a rock, steadfast and indestructible as Gibraltar. Changing with the requirements of his growth, it became, at last, a sense of union with the living God, our Father. But long, like his lowly life, it lay beneath the waves. The Father hid it from the profaning curiosity of men, until the hour when he should lift it out of darkness, and pour his sunlight on its head. It was a Tenedos, submerged and darkly floating in the latter-day Ægean, awaiting the anchoring hand and greening touch of God, and the foot of Civilization passing over into a new world on her bridge of isles, — on the eternal footing and stepping-stone of a God-born and absolute humanity, in every child of Adam.

In its first form, it was a profound, persistent sense that he was the especial child of nature, born out of her deepest and most vital forces, out of the inmost and most secret sources of her being, — that he sprang from the same fountain with the most majestic splendors of the universe, and that the fibres of his being were interwoven with the beams of the stars. In the darkest hours of his sublime and desolate boyhood, he would lift up his tattered garments in the face of the

firmament, and say, proudly: "Twin with you, successor to your glories, despite these rags."

For him, nature was not an inanimate, physical something, a heap of clods, a pile of atoms, but a ubiquitous and immortal presence, immanent in the world she had created, and infinitely grander and more beautiful than all the petty forms which abstraction had wrought out of it; and from infancy he felt himself hugged to her yearning heart, and seemed to hear her, like a tender and self-accusing mother, who upbraids herself for the birth of a child of sorrow and misfortune, sobbing over him. Whispers of love came to him in the winds. Glances of tenderness beamed on him in the mild light of the stars. The dewy kiss of evening was the imprint of a mother's lips upon his brow, and the twining shadows were her arms about him, to caress him in the twilight they both loved so well. Hyperbole cannot express the immediateness of his relations with nature. He did not stand aloof and gaze at the universe as at something foreign, but stood in the very midst of it, as a part of it, as a mode of it, with consciousness and soul outstretched to embrace, and love, and exult in it all. He felt the currents of his own being flow and ebb with the same tide which imparted life to the throbbing world. He rose and fell with the pulsations of an arterial stream of light and power, which, in the beginning, had tumultuously throbbed outward in nature, and, in the end, was flowing back in the calmness and majesty of spirituality and a great peace. Nature never assumed a mood in which he did not find a new joy, and the freshness of an experience be-

fore untasted. Within the houses of men, he only ate, and slept, and labored; it was on the bosom of the gray ocean where he never tired sailing by day or night, — in the depths of great forests where he never tired rambling, — by the grave of his mother, where he loved to watch the sun decline and darkness lead forth the muffled stars, — that he lived. There was something in the gray waste of the sea, in the sunless solitudes of woods, in the mystery and melancholy of the grave, which called his great and joyless spirit, brother. He looked on growth and decay with wonder and absorbing interest, but on the latter with deepest feeling. Autumn was his favorite season, and night his favorite hour; and he regarded sunset as the grandest of all the ordinary operations of nature. He beheld, with delight, of which other men can scarcely conceive, the daily rising of the sun, the vernal flow and autumnal ebb of his beamy tides, the roll of the summer-sea with its billows of bloom and verdure from the equator to the poles, the flight of birds, the flow of streams, the sleep of shadows, the play of sunlight on the grass, the wavering sheen of moonlight seas, and all beautiful and thrilling sights. He loved, as other men love sensuous joys, to watch the rain drop gently from silent clouds which enveloped all the sky, and to see the snowflakes float through the dusky air, like spirits bearing a white shroud to wrap about the world. But in the darkness, wreck and rattle of storms, he revelled in indescribable rapture. Whenever a tempest came, he rejoiced like a captive set free. It was to him a carnival of joy and freedom. As the black-browed spirit which his imagination saw, with

masses of white vapor rolling under his feet, and the red plume of the lightning streaming from his helmet, stepped, at a single stride, from the mountains to the sea, rocking the earth and shaking the dark air with his tread, then this boy's spirit, eager to be disembodied and go away in the storm, Jove of its bolts, leader of its legions forever, would cast off her burden, and shake her moulting plumes in triumph.

This strange sense of a union in substance, origin, and destiny with what he saw around him, and of a ruling power over its inferior modes, was never absent from his consciousness. It was the beginning and the end of his experience, the foundation and corner-stone of his life. It was the first fact in his feeling and his thought at every moment of his earthly pilgrimage. It never forsook him for an instant in his brightest or his darkest hour. Circumstances and his growth modified and wrought it; adversity wrung and strengthened its roots, prosperity pruned its boughs from fungus and night-growth, — made it seemly and rational. The Father's rain and sunshine fell on the germ by turns, and built it up into the tree, whose fruit must henceforth feed the world.

In none of its modes, was this conviction after the fashion of enthusiasm. It was not even joy, as men count joy. He rejoiced, indeed, that it existed; without it, the universe would have contained no joy for him; but the word gladness describes almost its opposite. It was a vast and serious fact that cast a shadow over all his soul. He knew that from it sprang the pains, the doubts, the anxieties, the longings which darkened his life, and that, if he ever

proved himself unworthy of it, unequal to it, it would fall on him and grind him to atoms beneath its crushing weight. It was the burden of his destiny, and first bore him down into the dust and broke his heart, ere it became the hand of God and lifted him beyond Valhalla. With it lifted off, he need not have suffered and died as he did; but he preferred to lie down and die beneath it rather than that one feather of its weight should be abated. Without it, he would have had wealth, and fame, and clustering honors, because he would have been permitted to exert his powers for objects such as these. With it, he had obscurity, indigence, neglect, which is bitterer than death, shame, contumely, and disgrace. Yet he would not have exchanged one atom of it for the whole universe besides; it was his life, his heritage, his one mournful and blood-stained possession. It met a want which all the world besides could not have met; deprived of it, he would have been robbed of all that gave life any value in his eyes, and would have longed to die. If you had come to him, pale, solitary, and in his rags, and offered him untold millions of gold, and the highest seat on earth if he would abandon this source of all his woes, he would have answered you, that if all the sands were thrones, and every blade of grass a sceptre, they would all be trash beside the wealth and dignity you asked him to renounce. In all the universe he had only it, and wanted nothing more.

In this boy's consciousness, for the first time since the world began, was laid the foundation for a faith which should not undermine all ethics. There was in him no hiatus between the contemplative and active

faculties ; the two in perfect union made up his matchless power. Like the lobes of his lungs, like the chambers of his heart, they were equally essential to his life. They were his nostrils ; he drew his breath through both alike. The mighty consciousness of which we have been speaking, conferred at once an active privilege, — imposed an active duty. An instinct as deep, powerful, and immediate as his inmost life, had led him to expect a destiny of achievement as well as of contemplation and experience. He thought he was to be no one-sided man, no half-man ; he believed he was to carry action as well as thought and feeling to limits yet unreached ; to act, to build, to save, as well as teach. This was the prerogative of his very being, a right inalienable and indefeasible, because it arose at once out of the fact of his existence. His anticipations of personal grandeur were no vague dream of something which was to come to him without effort on his part, but a vigorous and prophetic sense of something which he was to do, working it out bravely for himself in conquering power, while the Infinite gave him being, and the power, and the prize. Action was to be the development of that within him whose right and joy it was, and should confer on this, enlargement, glory, truth, and power. It was the line of life, sublimity and rapture.

It is, perhaps, impossible for a world accustomed to the spectacles of selfish ambition, to understand the paradox that it was precisely a sublime contentment with the gift of his own being as a personal destiny — a simple, fervent, and unselfish greatness, — which lifted him beyond the sphere of ambition into pains of

choice, throes of aspiration, and agonies of toil such as ambition can never know. Yet such was the case, and we must try to make it clear.

In one sense, indeed, his ambition was boundless, but there was in him no feeling which it could have gratified to be or to be called a king. As his up-reaching was the perfection of power, so it was also the perfection of humility and pathos. It was like what the dream-dipped eye sees when you hold a spotless mirror under liquid skies festooned with vapor, and look at the reflection,—a reproduction of all that is most entrancing and ethereal in this present aspect of the changing universe. It was like what pensive melancholy hears in the sough of the autumn winds,—a stifled sob heaved outward from the depths of omnipotent yet sorrowing nature.

From the dawn of time till now, there has probably been no spirit so unbrokenly clad at all points in the strong armor of humility. His humility was not the humility of weakness, but the humility of strength. While he felt that he was greater than a king, it was no work or merit of his own, but the simple gift of his being, that made him so. He never said, to even the humblest of mankind: "I am essentially greater than thou." He shrank from the bare suggestion of such a thought as if from poison. He only said: "I am clay, like you, and I am on the wheel." In new and final brotherhood with man everywhere, he said: "Lowliest soul of man, dwelling even in deepest abjectness and shame, I, the humblest of thy brethren, call thee and will aid thee to rise in strength and purity, the gift of the Mother, and rend thy chains, and

forge their broken links into a sceptre. For the grandest and most beautiful of all sceptres rules but a single spirit, and is forged from broken fetters."

He held that all differences of earthly destiny are swallowed up and lost as merest nothings in the great destiny of life, progress, grandeur, and final equality for all. Leaving out of view his sense of a special mission and duty, the feeling of which we are now speaking was seen in all the personal relations of his love of action. He loved to work, not as the small and fussy Napoleonic man, the mountebank of action, loves it, but serenely, deeply, quietly, as we love joys which are at once too great and too secure to be paraded. He loved it, as he loved everything that laid hold of his heart, with a love whose greatness made it calm. He found, in even the humblest duties, a satisfaction which no vulgar spirit, with a like consciousness of power, could ever know. He had no feeling in common with those lean apologists and miserable smatterers, who prate about "the dignity of labor," as if they were proclaiming a startling paradox. He could not even understand fully such despicable nonsense as that insulting condescension to the highest dignity in the universe. He held that the sublimest destiny is not an exceptional something, but the common, ultimate lot of all humanity, and that the exceptional lot which men call greatness in this world, is, of all evils and corruptions, the one to be most anxiously avoided. He saw the full blessedness of that necessity which the selfish politicians of this world have converted into a car of Juggernaut to crush mankind,—the compulsion which makes all men act,

manage, control, in order to live ; and he, who in humility and purity, works out this destiny, deciding questions which he must decide, acquiring power and character which he must acquire, developing and not straining or distorting his being, is the world's and the universe's greatest man ; greater by an infinitude than if he had miraculous power over all the forces of nature. For, in this latter estate, if it were possible, as it is not, there would be no true grandeur for either God or man, but only melodrama, strut, and prodigious littleness.

He despised, as the meanest of mankind, the little great who rule the world, and as the meanest of all destinies, their contemptible and inglorious fame. He knew these men well,—their hideous selfishness, their unscrupulous greed, their swelling vanity, their pettiness of soul ; and he knew that in any honest negro's spirit . . . there was more true greatness than in all of this world's demigods. He never saw an hour from infancy till death when all the fame and riches of all the conquerors and kings that ever lived could have stilled the smallest craving of his heart, or when he would have turned on his heel for all the mean glory beasts and murderers have ever won, or thieving politicians filched ; nay, when the possession of them would not have filled him with self-contempt, self-doubt, and shame. To acquire or to retain them required traits and faculties which would have dis-crowned and defeated him forever, and when gained, what were they worth to him ? Not so much as the spittle which he cast from his mouth. Wealth, position, and reputation were indeed powerful means

which, if he could have had them without sacrificing better things, he would have used for grandest ends, but as a goal, to a spirit such as his, they were the merest rubbish. He would not have wasted one solitary atom of his strength on objects such as these, if by the small expenditure he could have acquired all of them that the world contained. He considered that the race had suffered more from its "good families" than from all its felons, Magdalens, and outcasts. He saw a higher, tenser, purer, and more vital thought among infidels and reprobates than among divines and communicants; and whenever that is the case, existing institutions are not far from their catastrophe. He saw far more merit both of character and of abstract principle ostracized by the world than were accepted and cherished by it. The very words "respectable people" and "first circles of society" filled him with disgust. He utterly despised the spirit whence such catch-words spring. Between the richest mansion and the lowest hovel, between the highest and the humblest lot, there was nothing that could make a particle of difference with him but this,—that for him the latter were a shield and protection, while the former would have disqualified and destroyed him forever. No sophistry, no force could have prevailed to bring him out of that sweet shelter into the baleful and destroying sun.

Yet he did not feel that, because he was pure, he should therefore weakly retire into obscurity, and leave facility and power in the hands of reeking beasts and slimy reptiles. The conflict between his purity and his sense of power was indeed terrible.

We shall speak of it in the next chapter and at other places in this book. No child of this age can appreciate that conflict, but terrible as it was, he fought it out, not in weakness but in unflinching strength, and found means at last of reconciling the active and the contemplative faculties of his nature, which this age rent apart in blood. What he pined for from infancy and on through all his years, whether in his incompleteness or in his final completion and majesty, was permission to stretch forth his charged and potent arm, and topple meanness, pettiness, frivolity, and crime from the seat of empire, and inaugurate a polity in beaming contrast with the pitiful and heart-rending spectacles of the present and the past. There were only contraction, littleness, and error in the high places of earth, and he felt a mighty impulse to rise in the power of which he was perfectly conscious, and grapple with meanness and wickedness in their sway over the world, and hurl them down forever from their thrones. Injustice, oppression, wrong, excited in him hatred which smote like lightning. He both loathed and scorned every social, political, or religious institution which was an obstacle in the way of the movement of the race, and would have pulled to pieces and trampled in the dust whatever diminished or opposed the highest freedom, purity, and soul-power among mankind.

As his consciousness began to organize itself, he first saw with the signal clearness and vigor with which he grasped all his ideas the moment they were formed, how the spirit of man has toiled through all the ages for some eternal rock on which to rest, for

some certain knowledge of itself and of this stupendous and bewildering universe, and for a solid and unflinching foundation for its hope; how it has laboriously built up system after system of philosophy and faith only to kick them all down in like disgust and despondency at last. He saw how false and partial had been all the systems taught by all the great teachers of the past; how there had been around the movement of the race an envelope which they could not tear away; how little of the real had dwelt in the apparent. And his first too slender idea of the destiny which he had felt stirring within him from infancy, was that it was to lead this oppressed and toiling spirit to the goal it sought,—to principles wrought out through blood and tears, and immovably imbedded in the rock of certainty for humanity to repose upon in confidence forever. We shall see, hereafter, how this first term implied and produced all that came after it, so that if the intellectual perception was true, the declaration of the life and soul could not be false; but now we have to do with the former only. He saw, clearly as he ever saw the sun in heaven, that, in the present projection of reason, the hour had struck for the despairing, earth-sick spirit to wipe away its tears, and rest in tranquil, world-conquering, world-changing strength on a sure foundation of purity and knowledge in the bosom of the Infinite. He saw that the catholic, the gate of the absolute, had at last been opened, and that perfect truth, as yet but a little germ, was to be found in the sum of the responses of the human soul. He saw that, in that age, the human spirit was basing itself afresh, re-

adjusting its enlarged self to the altered universe and the changed source of life, and departing into a new civilization. That the process would be successfully accomplished was as certain as nature had power to accomplish the decrees of fate ; but at what cost it should be done depended on the ability of the age to league itself with destiny and harmonize its special interests with the general movement of the race. If the fruits of civilization up to that time had conferred on men sufficient moral and mental greatness, the movement of the race might pass over from one cycle to another without compelling a resolution of society into its elements, the old organism might hold out with its snapping bands until the new one should be knitted around the augmented substance, and civilization need not perish with its Christian mode. If an organism capable of assimilating the *digesta* of the understanding with the substance of reason without the intervention of death and reconstruction, had been barely reached, then courage and constancy might save civilization and this country, while the movement prepared here should pass on to its fulness in other lands. Future civilizations forever will be able to pass from life to higher life without death ; the Christian civilization is the last destined to die, if die it must ; and, therefore, in his earlier youth, while his heart beat high with its first hopes, this bold and boundless-thoughted boy did not question that it would live, and that his would be the glory of at once saving and rebuilding human thought. He did not doubt that the age, if with no nobler and more catholic view than by the instinct of self-preservation,

would lift itself to the height of this great argument, and read in the unmistakable manifestations around it the principles of its own safety; and that the newness of this continent, with its vast wastes of unoccupied land, would enable society to survive until it could accept the new doctrine and live. It was not until, in his development, he began to sink down into his last baptism in weakness and the creative fire; not until his deepened and expanded nature was finally qualified by the ample revelation of the Father to him; not until he knew that he himself was that fact in flesh, that concrete proof, which the human soul demands instead of mere intellectual perception, and comprehended the future which this truth necessitated; that he saw what a wild dream his first naked idea had been, and despaired of civilization and this land; that he heard the knell already tolling, and saw the funeral train already passing by.

And almost in infancy had he determined promptly, firmly, calmly, finally, and forever, to live for his idea and it alone; to triumph with it if it was to triumph, to perish with it if it was to fail. Incompletely, imperfectly revealed to him as it was then, he relied upon its reality and its future fulness and completeness as entirely as upon his own existence. Its vastness and grandeur were not yet clearly comprehensible to him; its whole extent and relations were yet too broad for his infant grasp; but the everlasting Andes were not more real, and could not have presented a more distinct and solid object to his vision. He had only to open his eyes and it stood before him, taller than the dome of heaven, deeper and more enduring than the foundations of the earth.

CHAPTER III.

WHAT HE SUFFERED.

THE words "It might have been," with their gentle poetic resonance and tenderness of recollection, are not, as the sweet poet calls them, "the saddest of all sad words of tongue or pen." They bear no trace of that to which they do not penetrate—the central and essential pathos of the tragedy which the universe is acting. Even in their best sense, they present only the shaded landscape of the long-ago, not the blackened and volcanic tract of fated and eternal sorrow; and too often they constitute the burden of a deceitful, histrionic, and wordy phantom of melancholy, which stalks around the maudlin arena of romance, till healthful satire, with a contemptuous pluck, tears off the lugubrious hood and finds beneath it either the painted cheeks of affectation, or a rickety conceit with God's decree of its unworthiness to be, written on its effete and sallow brow. If we are pure and dutiful children of the Father, we never lose what might have been; the order of the universe prevents our losing it. If it eludes us in one guise, it comes back to us a little farther on in a better and more advanced mode. But there is a pain too deep for utterance, which comes up

into the human spirit out of the darkest depths of nature. It is the sorrow whose name is price, and with it we buy all excellence. The hearts which it pierces, dwelling in an atmosphere which is fatal to weakness, and cannot be shaped into sounds of complaint, possess themselves in unshaken calmness even while they bleed. It utters no moan, needs no sympathy, indulges no weak regret. Strong, self-centred, and forever tearless, it silently lays down its beautiful and glorious dead to sleep under the epitaph of its own stern name, "It could not be."

This was the dagger-fingered sorrow which clutched this boy's heart even in his mother's womb, and released it only in his grave, yet never wrung a murmur from his lips. He stood apart from men in lonely anguish, with no eye to mark, no hand to stay the hemorrhage that streamed from his lips; but all the sounds of woe that ever broke from convulsed and shuddering weakness, could not have translated into audible speech one breath of his uncomplaining sorrow. It was among his earliest perceptions, that nature was pursuing an unusual policy of repression and excision with him. It was long before he saw the full extent of her purpose; but it was enough, at first, that he saw maternal care keeping him from every dwarfing and disqualifying pursuit, and heard an Infinite voice calling him to sacrifice all the amenities of this life on the altar of a holier and better destiny. As from year to year, joy after joy, hope after hope, was cut away, it was sharp pain to feel the keen edge of the pruning-knife pass through him, remorselessly lopping off every outreaching branch in order that the whole power of

his life might be expended in growth upwards; but shrinking not from the process, wincing not under it, — no, but exulting and glorying in it, feeling himself equal to it, and preferring to die under it at any moment rather than that one stroke should be spared or delayed, — he looked up with proud, submissive, gleaming eyes, and thanked and blessed the Power which permitted him to make such sacrifice. Renouncing, without a sigh, all earthly rest, the light of the hearthstone, personal recognition, dialogue itself, he chose, with unwavering firmness, labor which no assisting hand could lighten, sacrifice which even the pitying angels could not share, sorrow which only God could ever know, solitary vigils at the tombs which whitened all his soul, a world's anxiety and the burden of its death laid on one breaking heart. Soliloquy was almost his only speech in this world, and obloquy and slander replied to all the words he ever addressed to his fellows.

So others, too, have suffered, and their filial pains have been written, as with points of steel, on the heart of the Infinite Father; but one idiosyncrasy of this man's experience should be particularized, on account of its relation to the cosmical movement. In surrendering all earthly love, he surrendered it in strength, and did not permit the impulses of his nature, deprived of domestic affection and companionship, to still cling to the forbidden object in another shape, and jealously exact the reverence and submissive applause of his inferiors. He would gladly have died, and at last did die to promote the interests of mankind; but he neither needed nor desired their love. Nay, as we

shall see, if men had offered him their love, he would have doubted himself and thought that he was falling below his mission into a baser sphere. His emotional nature, crushed out of the relative forever, moved into the sphere of the absolute, and poured its tenderness and glory on objects which never fail the heart that rises to them. Therefore he had and could have both sensibility and strength such as the world had never seen. A tint upon the clouds, a sigh of the wind, a simple word on the lips of joy or sorrow, had, for him, a meaning which they bore for no other; yet, all the world combined, could not have turned him from a purpose, or have weighed a feather in one of his decisions. No calumny could disturb him; no opposition daunt; no pain unsettle him. His nature moved with a boldness, certainty, poise, and power, unexampled among men, because it moved as part of the movement of the universe. Its severity arose not from narrowness or sterility, but from its largeness and solidity, and was the basis of all its fruitfulness. It was not love that he despised, but the present stature of love. Sweet, sweeter than the honeycomb, is the voice of recognition; but from Jesus, slain on Calvary, down to the obscure and despised good man of a village or neighborhood, what noble spirit has ever received it? The world will love you with romantic devotion if you will show it its vices and meannesses under the halo of genius and power; but the moment you rise to higher ground than this, it begins to hate you, nor would men, as they are now constituted, worship God Himself, if they did not believe him to be a ruthless and all-powerful tyrant. A pain similar

in some sort to that which the Infinite Father feels when men worship him falsely, this man felt at degrading recognition in any shape; and the entire relation of this disposition of his was this: that it was prophetic of a time when the Father will remove all false love and recognition of Himself from the world.

Heroism is but a feeble name for that quality in this man which enabled him, before he reached the point where he united the Ideal and the Actual into a final truth, and found eternal satisfaction for the yearnings of his spirit, to refuse to surrender his sense of his high dignity and mission to be made a lie by his despair and the hardness of his destiny. Crushing back with an iron hand the clamorous and thronging impulses which would have mixed the undeveloped sense of his destiny with delusions, and have devoted it to lower uses, and holding both his own yearnings and his active faculties in check, he waited and suffered while nature and the Father built him up to the height of the new truth and the new mission. Remember what a sense pressed upon him, and how all the great spirits of the past have given way in weakness to that sense, and then reflect how mighty and how bloody must have been his resistance! That age being what it was, — inspiration gone, trade a swindle, the professions humbugs, politics a pigsty, and philanthropy itself an engine of supercilious godliness and hate, — and his consciousness being what it was, what could there be for him but either rust and corrosion, or degradation, self-contempt, and loss, for which the universe contained no compensation? He would not have entered the whirlwind of chaff which eddied

through that age, if he had known that it would lift him to the skies; and, therefore, it long seemed that there remained to him only canker and desolation. His consciousness embraced here also a synopsis, the cosmos toiling slowly up for innumerable ages through passionate contemplation to its appointed level, and then passing over in purity into action. All the gold and honors of this world could not have bought from him the sense which hinged here, even had he certainly known that his growth would be cut short before he reached his level, or that fully grown, he should die without opportunity.

He perceived that of its greatest men the world knew literally nothing; that of the truest truth and greatest greatness, it had neither appreciation nor conception; but, like a ravenous and filthy beast, it drank the blood of those who ministered to its life, and then with its gore-spotted eyes, mistook for demons or for suicidal gods, as the case might be, those whom it had foully murdered. He cared nothing for either the maledictions or the plaudits of such a world. The one always curled his lips to scorn, the other sickened and revolted him. He would not have given one snap of his finger for all that such a world could confer or take away, nor have stooped from his full height to pick up the crown of the Cæsars. In that he would have lost something better than the crown of the Cæsars. For him, the one and only good was the supreme good, the good above him; the possibility of missing it and receiving something smaller, produced a sense of loss for which desolation is no name. He knew that achievement is a question of relations of

which time is the chief, but that Character hinges on the absolute; and he would not have sacrificed character to Achievement, if the latter had held in her hands a crown and sceptre, and the former had pointed to the scaffold. He took his stand at the point where he foresaw the movement of the race would begin to ascend out of the age, entirely prepared to die there unknown, if he lived too early. He seemed to see ever written in the palms of his hands these restraining words: "The point at which any life shall pass over into action depends upon the stature of the soul; when the ages are mean and inglorious, and the rust of inaction eats into the soul, then it is indeed sublime to suffer and be strong." He would often ask himself, speaking the words aloud; "A world which has afforded or imagined for its sublimest spirit no higher active mission than thau-maturgy and charlatanry, what can it have for me? For it is hard to die unknown, but harder still to swerve." In this lofty resolution, without abating a hair's-breadth of its heroism or its tension, he abided through the long night, in the unshaken constancy of his strong soul, until that day which he thought he should never see, poured its effulgence on his head.

Advancing to still deeper aspects of this sorrow, it becomes at every step a more delicate task to reconcile conflicting duties and avoid opposite difficulties. Intensely personal to him, the intensest essence of his personality, as this suffering was, it was attended by a marvellous sense of participation. It was a larger sorrow made flesh and blood and dwelling in him. It was the anguish of the prophet's growth, the travail

of the birth of a new humanity. It struck its roots into his consciousness precisely at the point where the purpose of his life began. The keenest analysis could detect no trace of it which did not have a meaning unconfined to his individual life, and an essential connection with truths which the world will understand more clearly as the ages pass away. It was the darkness of his supreme conviction overcast with clouds. As its tides swelled over him, he saw the sun himself clothed in sackcloth, and the unsphered planets quenching their fires. Yet, strange contradiction, unselfish, personal limitation found even in the infinite consciousness, there was in this experience nothing that resembled personal despair; for he knew that it was not in the power of Fate to deprive him of the glory and grandeur of his own being. When he looked up at the universe and felt its uncreated light gathering into a focus in his soul, and when he saw the dead Ages rising out of their tombs and laying all their sibylline books open and translated at their feet, he said, "It is enough; 'tis more than ecstasy." Yet all this unselfishness and simplicity only the more helped to place him in a gulf in nature out of which he saw all the self-thoughted and untethered stars going forth in troops to find homes in the firmament, leaving him there in chains which constituted at once his election, his sorrow, and his grandeur. But, oh, his Father could not leave him always there. His pity broke at last the worn, rust-eaten fetter, and led His strong and stainless child forth from the dim, dark gorge of the abyss into the light of His perfect and final day. Yet He revealed not Himself to the waiting, mourning,

uncomplaining prisoner of the cosmos, and set him not free till all the processes on which strength and final freedom depend were thoroughly accomplished. He wished not that His child, — He wishes not that any of His children, — freed from nature too soon, shall be slaves to Him.

He never regarded the spiritual life in the degrading light of a compensation, something to fall back upon when disappointed of other things in this world. He would have despised himself if he could have regarded it so. In his relations with the Infinite, the sense of law preceded the sense of love, and this was necessary. Without this peculiarity, his life would have lost half its meaning and beneficence. He saw and exulted in the value of severity, before he experienced and confessed the value of love. With him, as with the universe itself and with the historic soul, law which is the organization of force, preceded the spiritualization of force, and was the means which led to it. Thus deprived from infancy, by the greatness and purity of his spirit, of the impure commonplace consolations of smaller minds, he long knew and acknowledged no conscious and infinite love in the Infinite. He said in those days: "No personification at all of the Infinite is better now than a low, false, degrading and insulting one. Give me and the stainless children of the future the literal maternity of nature rather than a mere staple-link for tyranny, or a frozen and immeasurable commonplace which can no longer be used to explain anything in either nature or grace." He held that it was a contradiction in terms to ascribe infinite goodness to a *Creator*; for creation with the conditions which it necessarily posits,

means at once eternal orphanage and eternal slavery, and no subsequent act, however benevolent, could ever repair the injury done the creature by the bare act of giving it existence. Therefore, the only way in which a Creator could establish a claim to infinite goodness would be by refraining forever from creating.

Again he said: "Christianity, without the now forever exploded doctrine of the Trinity, is but a heap of lifeless dust. Unitarianism, the modern return to Judaism, will never give life to the world. Without a divine sonship of some kind, the starved heart of the world becomes a shrivelled husk." Again: "The unintelligent spirit of love abhors growth and demands completion without antecedents; but like a weak fool, it only cheats itself with a worthless and impossible conceit. When mighty movement, conflict and victory make up all of man's sublimity, shall we piously deny them to that whose being endows and aggrandizes us with them? Depend upon it, neither the philosophy nor the religion that makes the universe a stagnant pond is worth a second thought." Again he said in deepest and darkest sorrow: "Man kneels upon the earth, and lifting up his straining eyes implores Brahma, Isis, Jove, Jehovah or the Saints; and his prayer wastes away in the air, his god hears not, sees not, exists not, and all the demons laugh as they see him kneeling there waiting for the answer. And for what does he pray? That his flocks may fatten and increase, his schemes of profit prosper, his superstition be propagated and cover the whole earth, his own soul be saved from fire and all his neighbors be swiftly damned. That is the saddest sight the universe ever beheld;

when will it be seen no more? What a mockery, what a failure would all past religion be, if it were to be all. Yearning, burning, importunate soul of man, when wilt thou find thy perfect life? Blind, bound giant, struggling in thy chains, when wilt thou find freedom in love, strength in sensibility, self-government in adoration? When will Reason, herself a part of the eternal substance and absolute, be developed into power, and teach, and that perfect and loving Father to whom thy yearning and thy very existence point, be revealed to thee?" He knew that the revelation of that perfect truth was a cosmical process, and that his own cosmos-born heart, beating pulse for pulse with the source of its life, was surely and inseparably throbbing on into the knowledge and possession of it. His completion, like that of the cosmos, was only a question of time. The perfect truth was something that lay on before him in the line of his march, and possessing in purity and strength every attribute of his cosmos-born humanity he was to go straight on to it in careful fitness to receive it. He never dreamed of hastening the process going on within him or of meddling with it in any way. Part of the life and movement of the universe, it was a process which no power could either hasten or defeat, which in its power and freedom refused to be interfered with by so much as a feather's weight, and which interference only distorts from its heavenly grandeur, naturalness and bliss into deformity, error and shame. What his own will and power must do within their range was to co-operate with the mighty movement in wisdom, purity and strength, not step beyond their sphere to dictate to it or meddle with it;

that he never did nor could have done. In those days he had no spiritual proprietorship and cheer but what he found within himself and in the poise of his own character ; but he felt, down in his strong, submissive soul, that if this were all, he needed no more. His lips would wreath into a proud smile, as he would pronounce these words : " In the hands of Fate, yet self-centred." That thought of complete self-ownership, not in spite of — that would have been too small a sentiment for him — but by the aid of the Infinite Something above him pleased him beyond expression, and marked the spot where the seal of God was to be set.

As the years went on, and it was more and more revealed to him what the architect of the future must be, and as he felt himself growing more and more into the likeness of that lonely, misunderstood sacrificial builder, his suffering mounted from day to day to new heights which he had not conceived to be possible. Apart from his own consciousness, he saw that there was none in all the world who had the remotest conception of the needed work. He stood alone in his age and brotherless. That fact imposed conditions which, it long seemed, implied the failure of his mission. He must attempt alone that for which the conjoint efforts of the world were doubtfully sufficient, and this, too, when he was not yet complete, and had no opportunity. Men can form no idea of that whereof they have no experience ; if he were to attempt to reveal to them the truths of his consciousness, far from being instructed, they would first flout him and then murder him. Then he would gaze up into the sky, to the Infinite Something which he saw enthroned there, and ask

aloud: "Am I then, only a study and a sacrifice? Must I, too, be cast beneath the merciless car and stain its rushing wheels with my unprofitable blood?" And presently he would demur to his own question, almost feeling as if he had fallen below himself in asking it: "But what have I to do with that? Nothing, except to suffer bravely whatever must be."

Father, thou knowest how his chilled heart almost forgot to beat as he raised his eyes from the keen scrutiny of his own endowments, and the exhaustive analysis of his own nature, and then from the gyves of adamant which held him in the abyss of oblivion, to the Eternal Something, and asked: "Dost Thou mock me also, with only the appearance of a choice?" When he saw every joy departing out of his own life, and reflected that possibly all this suffering was required of him, only that, at best, his uncomprehended life might furnish another battle-cry for brutal bigots and contemptible sects,—though he estimated not at the value of a farthing the sacrifices which his growth demanded,—he would look up with wonder and a sense of the injustice of such degradation, and ask: "How much, then, wilt thou take from me? Implacable, wilt Thou take all? For, of all conceivable failures, such a recognition would be the most hideous." Then, making up his mind to accept utter failure and eternal oblivion rather than any success which fell short of the perfect truth as it exists in nature, he would add presently with unflinching lips, as he looked into the depths of his unshaken soul: "Equal to even that dark fortune."

It is for these reasons, then, that we claim the name

of hero for this slender and unknown boy. In the darkest hour of his life, when every hope seemed wrenched away from him forever, when it seemed that nothing remained for him but to perish miserably in obscurity and penury, he never quailed before Fortune or shrank from his destiny. From his lips, empurpled with their own blood, no sigh of complaint was ever wrung; he saw and felt the hardness of his destiny, not in weakness but in strength. When he saw the pismires of that age upon the capital and himself trampled in the mire of the gutter at the foot of the pedestal; when he saw darkness and tempest, which, had his lot been different, he might have prevented, beginning to settle down upon the earth, and all that men regard as stable, reeling through the glooming air like drunken men, and the very foundations of the moaning world starting from their moorings, and dissolving on the billows of a new force like shallops in a storm at sea; when he saw six feet of obscure earth, the unknown sepulchre of the lowliest of created beings, balanced by fate against scenes of blood and fire which a brighter destiny for him would have excluded; and, intensest agony of all, beside which every other pain became sweet pleasure, when he thought sometimes in his inchoation, he saw the crown which was to press the brow of the new age descending from the heavens, glimmering like a star, into the slough, because no eyes but his beheld it, and his fetters permitted not him to receive it; then darkness would swell around his spirit like mists rising from the earth as the sun goes down, and a cold agony, a mortal chill, with fever burning up his heart,

would for an instant convulse him, but his strong soul would soon recover its poise, and he would feel that yet and forevermore he was equal to his destiny.

As the grand truths on which his life was built began to organize themselves into their terminal and perfect form, his sorrow, which was part of them, assuming likewise its final shape, became the consternation of a physician, saying of his patient's system: "It refuses to assimilate. This means certain death." The instant he saw his final truth, he saw darkest consequences following. Out of the first dusk of the coming eclipse, a raven swooped down upon him and made her perch upon his shoulder, croaking the dirge of the Christian civilization, and bearing in her claws the measure of its grave, and tore out of his heart, with merciless beak, the blood which stained her line, and marked the outlines of the undug tomb; and it seemed that even when she flew away, after her prophetic mission was done, her wings, sodden with the dews of death, moulted all their dark plumes, and left them with him forever. Lifting up his eyes to the centre of the universe, as he saw approaching wreck and the sufferings of mankind, he would ask: "Will the day never come when the future need no longer be bought with death?" and ever this answer came back to him, "Teach *thou* an organism which shall convert and appropriate forever, and never perish!" And as he heard that voice, he thought, in the new pains of duty which came with it, that he had never known pain before. His soul was bowed to the earth in anguish by the necessity that the noblest spirits must be cheated and deluded, while the

pettiest pigmy in the ages after them may raise the finger of reproach at them. Could he arrogate to himself grander and clearer vision than the sublime spirits that have propelled the world, possessed? No, his heart only laid itself down in the dust at their feet, and prayed that he might be thought worthy to touch the hem of the garment of the obscurest of them all. Yet now the builder of the future must at last teach absolute truth. Then how could he, in his entire freedom from all conceit, bigotry, and dogmatism, assume egotistic front enough to execute aright the orders he had received, and on whose proper execution the destiny of the world hung? Yet precisely in this manly modesty, and in this alert, inquiring skepticism, which attended his perception of unfailing truth, consisted the nice *discrimen*, the secret and peculiar *signum* which attested, which alone could have attested, his credentials. Had one pulsation of his heart been different from what it was, had one flutter of his pulse, one inspiration of his lungs, been faster or slower, he never could have been the being he afterwards became.

But vain-glorious Age who dreamest thou shalt never die, what did nature mean by this man's sorrow, and what did she predict in it? Whether civilization shall perish on this continent or not, he was none the less a sublime thinker, since he perceived the truths of the future; but unless the Christian civilization shall in effect perish here from the breaking down of organisms and the incorporation of the mild barbarians of the tropics, as the Pagan civilization perished from the supremacy of the organic, and the

incorporation of the fierce and free barbarians of the North ; unless this element and these higher questions which bear precisely the same relation to our industrial and peaceful civilization which that former element and questions of conquest bore to the Pagan civilization, shall work substantially the same result, though, of course, now to a less degree, — then this man was not what he supposed himself to be, for the substance of his life was not a truth. We accept the test, well knowing what we stake upon it. Since this was his life, since this was that which was in and through him and all of him, why should we hesitate to set it forth? If he could speak to-day, he would say that, if we should speak at all of his lowly life, he would have us think only of preserving and presenting its internal truth ; that it was nothing whether his life and soul harmonized with the larger external truth, if only their subjective truth remained. When boldly declaring the truth that was in him, and saying to the Christian civilization, “ Thou shalt surely die,” he would have thanked God, if, while thus preserving himself a true man, he could have shown himself a false prophet. The belief that the Christian civilization must perish, that there must be a dissolution of society, though not such darkness as followed the Pagan day, was crushed into his soul, was written on his consciousness in his own blood, before his understanding assented to it and sustained it with proofs, as it afterwards did most fully, as we shall show you in the course of this book. And think not, shallowest and most easily deluded of all dreamers, thou who with pompous and ridiculous conceit stylest thyself

practical, that the sublimer and diviner something within him was less a truth than the cold, intellectual abstractions which it organized and shaped. Dream not that, after the anguish and bloody suffering, the heroic resistance to delusions, and the sublime struggle to plant himself on the absolute and imperishable, which marked him as something far greater than a thinker, and stamped on him the image of the present life and movement of the Father-Soul, his life was at last but a fantasy, and his burning heart appeased with a lie. For if civilization is stronger now than in that former crisis, so also is the work to be done infinitely greater now than then; and if the Pagan civilization could not assimilate different families and tribes of the same species of the Race, and accept the imperfect consolidation and narrow freedom of Christianity, can the Christian civilization assimilate different species, and accept the boundless freedom of the new truth, and live?

CHAPTER IV.

CAUSES AND NATURAL ORDER OF THE LITERARY SERIES.

It is a disadvantage attending the duty of presenting unpalatable truths in prudent quantities, that some repetition is unavoidable; and in so concrete a matter as life, this difficulty is still further increased by the manner in which one subject, if pursued, becomes another. The abstractionist, indeed, being quite free from the scruples which generally restrain men from committing murder, can tear a rib or a tibia out of a great truth, and saw it into pieces of any length he chooses; but if the universe is really anything more than a pile of old bones, a different method of treating it had better be adopted. In presenting a slender sketch of this man's doctrine, we shall begin with those elements of it which will be least likely to arouse malignant opposition to all, and shall indicate the connection between the different spheres and products of one vitality as opportunity may offer.

Literature is the fullest-voiced and clearest-toned of the recorders of the lives of civilizations. Governmental, social, and domestic institutions, laws, customs, manners, fashions, historic and unhistoric action,

and all arts, whether æsthetic or industrial, are also modes of expression, and before literature is reached, are the only ones; but through language comes the most copious, immediate, and easily apprehended revelation of the interior life. So intimate is the connection between the essential life of a civilization and the languages in which that life expresses itself, that, ages before literature begins, the characteristics of the civilization are already predicted in the characteristics of its various rude dialects. Thus, languages are prophetic, and they are made so by the same forces that construct all other prophets, — the central forces of the movement of the race. The Sanscrit is the tongue of Pantheism, the Hebrew of Jehovahism; the forces that made marble Polytheism predicted it in the Hellenic tongue; the heavier organism and more complicated structure of the Latin, foreshadowed conquering Rome; while the peculiar work of evolution which the Christian civilization was to perform, and the disaster in which it was to end, were both prophesied in its copious, powerful, disorganized speech.

Civilizations always begin with grand indwelling inspirations, lofty and poetic faiths which penetrate the fountains of the soul, and slowly draw forth, through the keys of the ages, the diapasons which roll across the long line of lyres, down to the cycle's close. The imbecile speculation whether the existence of a poetic faith is due to a previous poetic disposition, or whether the latter is due to the former, is in criticism just what it would be in husbandry to inquire whether it is the sun, the rain, or the soil that produces the golden glories of the harvest. These inspiring faiths are born

of all that has preceded them, elaborated by the human soul out of the whole of its insight, and if society be not in a condition and fitness to receive them as soon as they are born, it must go back to docile and believing childhood and receive them; for, receive them by some means or other it must and will. Poetry cannot but flourish in the earlier ages of every civilization, because, without that inspiration which expresses itself in poetry, civilization would never begin. And so it ought to flourish through all succeeding ages, and would do so if the hard shell of encrusted and special civilizations did not refuse to admit additional inspiration. When the protective and conservative policy of nature has to be so decided as to construct unyielding shells around civilization to preserve her life, the inspiration whence the civilization sprang is first consumed, and when this is gone, Poetry slowly fades away like a consumptive, and dies, and presently civilization follows her. In the primitive ages, the faith from which the civilization springs, cannot but be above the stand-point of the mind, and hence inspires. In the later ages of any articulated and jointed civilization, the faith whence the movement springs cannot but be beneath the stand-point of the mind, and excites only loathing and disgust. And then, if society cannot pass to a higher faith, a frightful and speedy catastrophe is as certain as that he who does not travel with the risen sun, will soon be lost in darkness.

Inspiration itself, in all its forms, springs from the interpenetration of the human and the divine, and the form of poetry is always determined by the mode un-

der which God manifest to us is conceived. The two extremes of fetishism, and abstract and arid monotheism, indeed, must remain almost entirely without poetry, the former on account of its rudeness, the latter because, in it, if it be thorough and consistent, the fruitful and poetic idea of God manifest to us entirely disappears. Such monotheism being the opposite of fetishism, is also its product and last term, since it reduces the Deity to be nothing more than the fetish of *Substance-in-ipso*, and was reached historically by a marvellous application of the faculty of abstraction to the Infinite fetish of the first worshippers. Its only historic or logical poetry, and this scanty, is of a lyrico-didactic and devotional kind. But whenever the human mind, following the course of nature and repeating, in its own thought, the process by which spirit is evolved, is not content with either crude matter or dead abstraction, but boldly attempts the conversion of physical into spiritual forces, poetry gushes forth like water from a fountain. According to the degree and character of the conversion will be the resulting poetry. If God manifest to us be the homogeneous all, — if, in the interpenetration of the human and the divine, the human be overwhelmed and lost, — if there be no differentiation of the elements of being, — then neither will there be any differentiation of the various species of literature, but poetry of every kind will be mixed with philosophy, oratory, fabulous history, and fanciful science in incomprehensible and endless confusion. When thought first lapses from the homogeneous into the finite, the sphere of bustle and activity, we have polytheism and the epic, the pe-

cular and proper poetry of polytheism. The active, stirring barbarians of that age, feel little taste for anything but feats of arms, and in the chances and disasters of the strife which delights them, they see the intervention and prowess of their spunky little gods. Criticism of the tape-line and jobbing-school says every epic must have a machinery, and the canon is as sage as it would be for the naturalist to tell the stock-and-poultry breeder to take care that all his quadrupeds shall have four legs and the bipeds only two. When intelligence has made considerable progress, the old superstitious form of faith becomes offensive to reason, and begins to be speculated away, and the epic necessarily becomes obsolete. The drama stands logically next to the epic, and is evolved out of it by a change in the form of religion, whereby the old epic material goes out of use, the divine being removed out of the muse's reach, heroes and kings being her only remaining resource. The origin of the drama and its relation to the prevailing faith, is always the same, but its character is greatly dependent on the spirit and disposition of the popular religion. The spirit of faith, yet strong and fervid, has now the aid of youthful and zealous reason, and the advantage of a purified and improved, but still poetic creed. Increase of knowledge, freer intercourse of man with man, and absorbing interest in the new and growing study of human nature, are, in general terms, the forces which bring the drama out of the epic.

The place of the lyric is logically next to the drama, as it is the study of human nature turned inwards; but this species of poetry has not yet put on its full

splendor, and will not do so until there shall be a civilization in which the Infinite Spirit shall be felt as the literal source of life to the human soul. However it may be when the universe itself and all knowledge shall become a poem, as yet, strictly didactic poetry has appeared only when the mind, waning in poetic splendor, has turned to stern and uninspired pursuits. Contemporaneously with the appearance of this style of composition, prose literature reaches its full development, and the proper original philosophy, eloquence, and history of the cycle commence. But no sooner is Philosophy born into the world than she goes to war with the established religion, whatever it may be, at first with many apologies and amiable protestations, and under specious disguises, but at length, throwing off the mask and plunging furiously at the vitals of her hated rival. All inspiration of every kind at last is gone; Criticism comes to perform her mission; poetry has long since perished, and even sublime prose is no longer possible: society, exhausted and corrupt, rots and drops to pieces, and then, Poesy, arising from her death-couch with galvanic and terrific energy, pours the awful vials of her vengeance on the faithless and unhallowed ages that compel her death, and caustic, excoriating satire closes the literary series.

The series thus constructed, in a great measure *a priori*, out of the essential principles of the course of an articulated and perishable civilization, is amply sustained and illustrated by the actual facts in the history of literature. In the homogeneous east, the fruitful idea of an interpenetration between divinity and humanity had been but partially reduced to epic uses,

and literature could not quite subside from the vast and fantastic exaggerations of a first inspiration even so low as the clear epic level. The lapse of ancient thought from the infinite to the finite gave birth to ideal polytheism and to the epic, the poetry of ideal polytheism. While this faith was still strong and inspiring, Homer gave the world the greatest epic it will ever see — greatest in all the past by the general voice of mankind, greatest in all the future by necessity. But when the Greeks, or their nomad fathers, idealized and personified the manageable fragments of nature, they were incapable of grasping and handling the idea of a supreme First Cause, and so they left it in its vastness, filling up the background of their thought under the name of Fate which governed gods and men. A vast and incomprehensible, black shadow stood close behind clear-cut, sunlit Olympus and its concourse of bustling gods. And hence came, when the old epic religion began to lose its hold on the mind, the highest poetry, though not the greatest poem, of the Greeks. They were free, indeed, from the anguish of those spiritual experiences which came at a later date, and the function of the First Cause was with them political, instead of psychological. Gods and men wrestling in the grasp of the Titanic shadow; woes from which there is no escape; sorrows flowing from the invisible fountain whence the world itself arises; these are the highest poetic thought of the Greeks, debased and lowered by the separation and imperfect spiritualization of the elements necessary to its full grandeur, but still immeasurably higher than the strifes in which hop-o'er-my-

thumb gods and barbarous men fought in indistinguishable confusion. After the drama, graver studies succeeded, and philosophy, eloquence, and history put on their Pagan splendors. At this juncture, the ancient civilization performed its second transition — to Rome. The Romans took up the literary series substantially at philosophy, eloquence, and history, where Greece had dropped it, and continued it through the transient retrospection of senility and decrepitude, to satire, epigram and criticism, its natural and necessary close. Juvenal closed forever the illustrious line which the nameless poets of the Orient had inaugurated centuries before; with the last anathema of his truculent muse, the diapason of the Pagan civilization, which had rolled in tones of thunder or of whispering sweetness across the tuneful strings of a thousand lyres, died from the world.

Precisely the same *a priori* principles which governed the course of Pagan literature have governed also the course of modern literature; but they have been greatly modified in their action by the fact, to be more fully explained hereafter, that the Christian civilization has travelled in precisely the reverse direction from the ancient. The direction of the movement, however, is of no importance in considering the question of exhaustion, except as it may warn us against the shallow error of inferring vigor when we see literature returning now past landmarks which she passed in the fulness of her prime before. The Christian civilization set out, it must be remembered, by bringing Europe and the East together. The feudal system is a fusion of Hellenic and Hindu society;

scholastic philosophy is Aristotle applied to the patriarchal and Arabian abstraction of substance ; the first Christian theology was polytheism plus monotheism ; therefore, it is not strange that the first Christian poetry should be a curious cross between the epic and the pre-epic types. The Divine Comedy, which never could have been written by any one but an Italian and a Roman Catholic, is an epitome of many poetic ages, with unavoidable additions and modifications, — Christianity's poetic synthesis, from which a new development departed. The subject is a curious one, and, so far as the writer is informed, has never been treated. The anatomy of the poem, however, shows at once the correctness of the opinion here urged, and any conflicting or apparently conflicting fact admits, no doubt, of easy explanation by criticism. The reformation of religion which marked the transition of the modern civilization to the less oppressed North, — just as a similar reformation marked the transition of the ancient civilization from India to Greece, — rendered possible the purer and grander imagery of Milton, and gave birth to the drama, the proper form of the highest Christian poetry. The greatest epic of the Christian civilization came very near being a drama, and would have been one if the poet had not perceived that it was quite impossible, under the Christian system, to reduce the Divine to dramatic uses. And, generally, it was the humaner and profounder character of Christianity as compared with Paganism, its higher views of the Divine, its greater love for man and knowledge of him, and the deeper study of human nature which it rendered pos-

sible, that caused the highest poetry of the modern civilization to assume the dramatic instead of the epic form. No country but England, no other age than precisely his own, in which the Christian inspiration was purified into its loftiest energy ere it began to wane, could have produced Shakespeare, the complement of Bacon, and the poetic fruit of the Reformation. For while our faith has not been able to furnish an even stimulus to the faculties from which literature springs, and to those by which freedom is developed, the condition of equiponderance in which these opposite forces stood in our civilization, at the critical moment when the transition was made from Southern to Northern Europe, produced in England both that degree of freedom and those monarchical institutions which are favorable to the drama. It is because Christianity, by its peculiar doctrine of an atonement between the finite and the Infinite, favors at once freedom and monarchy, that the drama is the highest form of Christian literature. Spain, near to Italy in physical and moral semblance, went one step beyond her, and discarding almost entirely the oriental homogeneousness, put forth epic and drama, and there stopped. France, next to these, and for that reason struggling fearfully through all her history, whether openly or secretly and instinctively, against the suffocating burden of their thought, was deprived by this antagonism, both of the epic and of any native drama, and was driven by the all-powerful dramatic aptness of our civilization into a kind of exotic drama. Not permitted to develop parliamentary or forensic eloquence to any extent, she yet went far enough in

that direction to exhibit a sublime eloquence of the pulpit which was immediately followed by a wild and rampant infidel philosophy. Germany, with epic rudiments which have warmed her whole life, was held in check for many ages, but burst forth at length, — when her proper age of the Infinite Absolute arrived, — into gorgeous October splendors in the drama, the specialty of our civilization, and expanded into philosophy, history, and criticism, after a fashion that is a marvel in human history.

Remembering the difference between Pagan and Christian modes, American literature so far has been a repetition of Roman literature, and will no doubt be so to the end. We have had genuine eloquence, valuable history, a sort of philosophy, and some sadly-beautiful but powerless poetry. Meanwhile, Philosophy has done in the Christian precisely what she did in the Pagan civilization. Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, Hume, Gibbon, and their coadjutors, have done their work quite as effectually as their prototypes accomplished theirs in ancient times. There is no longer an inspiration to exalt and fire the human mind and impel it to great thoughts. The great mass of men of all classes and conditions are wholly devoted to details, and are incapable of rising out of them. Literature has been crowded into narrower and still narrowing spaces, and as she has receded, her old domain has been torn up by the ploughshare, and devoted to utilitarian uses: and now driven to a wall through which there is no way of escape except by demolishing it, and society along with it, the iron hand which has pursued her is slowly and fatally

tightening around her throat, and the death-rattle is already heard sounding in our ears. In the slow consumption of poetic material and the parallel decay of poetic feeling, in the October glories of Goethe, Wordsworth, and Burns, the autumn daisy, and in the wintry rainbows which since then have begun to span the clouds, are written signs of the extinction of civilization. Yet the men of this age shut their eyes against these plain and palpable truths and their inevitable consequences, and refuse to see them. They readily admit all that one may say concerning the determinate course of ancient literature, and the connection between its extinction and that of the ancient civilization; but they refuse to see the operation of the same eternal and immutable law in our own cycle, or to acknowledge its awful pertinence to our own age and land.

CHAPTER V.

SOME OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.

THE speculative writer enjoys a freedom which his humbler purpose denies to the practical. The former measures his utterances by his own capacity; often, the latter, to make the issue tangible and effective, must retail his truth by the yard-stick, which the anserous dabbings and flighty egotism of an uninspired age afford.

In the last chapter, we carefully avoided the cosmical relations and genesis of poetry, and alluded only to its psychological origin. Hereafter, in treating of yet larger questions, the suppressed topic may be touched by indirection; but, for the present, it is discreet to think only of rendering what has been said already still more palpable.

It is easy to foresee that minds of a certain class, the arrogant slaves of the age, will demur to what has been and will be said, "that the age cannot be charged with a lack of original and vital thought, though it is not given to rhyming." The answer to this is twofold and quite conclusive. The thought of these later ages, from Buckle and Herbert Spencer to Comte and Schellings, is not more original and vital in relation to our

civilization, than the later systems of antiquity were in their relations. Orthodoxy can scarcely show the superior of Jewish Philo who essayed to bring all Pagan systems into harmony with the word of God; nor can the opposition quite equal the boldness and vitality of Plato. These men and hundreds more scarcely less noble, philosophized and disputed. Socrates, Zeno, Cato, Cicero, talked about virtue, but the world went on dying all the same. Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Catullus, Lucretius wrote, and moles and parasites called the age golden, when it was already death-struck. But Jesus of Nazareth, a peasant boy whom these fine people would have scorned, and who probably could not have argued the simplest question in "philosophy," to their satisfaction, brought life and immortality to light, gave hope to despairing man and new life to the world, because he was literally the son of God, the Word made flesh, and knew the fact, — proclaimed it, — lived it, — died for it. And the heart of the world knew he was the son of God, and believed on him and lived. Secondly, how much "life," how much power to save is there in the teachings of our great philosophers? Posterity will tell you not a thimbleful. They do not reach the sphere of life, and are only preparing the way for the catastrophe.

Some sharp literary criticism has, in time, been handed back and forth across the Atlantic, but none of it that the writer has seen, rises far above the level of contempt. The most respectable of it has been nothing better than a partisan and self-excusing summary of the facts which it pretended to explain. But of any two events which we are accustomed to couple

as cause and effect, a deeper insight never fails to convince us that both alike are effects, — points of operation, merely, in the line of the true cause. Forces alone are causes, and in the realm of facts there are and can be no causes. Parenthetically, therefore, the positivists and Humeites are scarcely the profound thinkers they claim to be.

The utilitarian school of writers hold that the poetical is merely the superficies or rind of nature, and that the intellect of necessity soon penetrates through it forever. But if this were so, there could never have been any Christian poetry, and Dante and Milton would have spent their days scribbling hexameters about the nymphs and satyrs. Until these men can show why a second series of poets came after Aristotle, their opinions amount to nothing.

Another class of European critics, of mere literary turn, compelled at once to exonerate their barrenness and excuse their predilections, assert that poetry is necessarily limited to the youth of nations, and soundly berate us for not producing what old age, they say, denies to their own countries. But either their opinion is false, or their invective is inapplicable. If there is an essential and inseparable connection between youth and poetry, then this connection exists in our case, and our literature, though possibly unappreciated by these gentlemen, *must* rival that of Greece and Florence. But there is no necessary connection between the youth of a nation and poetry. The last nation which any civilization in its course builds up is just as old at heart, as its first-born. For the purposes of literature, we are just as old as maternal Eng-

land, only there has been, in the past, infinitely more excuse for our degeneracy than for hers. She has had a wealth of refinement and a culture which our youth has denied us, and there has remained to her something of the old literary spirit and condition. While we have derived, through her, the causes of our sterility, they have operated on us more powerfully than on her, because here they have not been impeded by the traditions of a golden age. Intellectual and spiritual forces always accomplish their full results by emigration to clear fields.

The Americans have created nothing, have attempted to create nothing, and, till the death-knell of their nation shall sound, they will create nothing. All that they have done has been to get ready to produce the final literature of the Christian civilization, which henceforth they will begin to do. In England, where the forces which have made us barren have been impeded in their action, and have asserted their supremacy less readily than here, a wild and passionate attempt to resist them was made for a little while, but they have remorselessly crushed out all opposition with a fearful trophy of anguish and madness wrung out of the broken hearts of the leaders of the rebellion. For Shelley and Byron there neither was nor could be any poetic development beyond and after the first fierce misanthropic fire of the grosser, and the pathetic yearning and sublime scorn of the loftier and purer soul; because they could not budge the British people one hair's-breadth out of that line over which causes as old as the world, and which had given birth to all of England's greatness and glory, were impelling

them. Bacon's method, in reaping the fruit which he predicted, had cut down the tree. Thrilled and qualified by the first stirrings of a new and lofty inspiration, they collided with their granite age and perished. When a few wild notes of passion, invective and lofty aspiration, had rung out from their harps, nature with infinite compassion removed them early from the world. Weeping pity may be permitted to imagine a spirit of love, from whose infinite soul, as from a fountain, all things beautiful and sacred flow, receiving back into its bosom, with a Father's solacing tenderness, its passionate and gifted children, vainly exhibited to a sordid and decaying age. And after them there came no more. For while reason, seeing how the ages and the minds that rule in them are products of the same forces, would tell us that it is the exhaustion of our civilization that produces this grovelling of the ages and of souls, a deeper and sadder feeling would fain persuade us to account for the unrelieved succession of vicious pigmies by believing that nature is too loving and compassionate a mother to send great spirits into the world to be torn by anguish and despair, and distorted and disqualified by their surroundings, when no good would be accomplished by so doing.

On the other hand, it has been customary in America to lay great stress on the fact that the Government is, or was, only a confederation, not a nationality; and in the same breath it has been smartly said that the reason why we had written no epics was because we were acting one. We trust to make it clear why we comment on both these points in one paragraph. It

may be admitted as almost certain that no democratic — in other words, inductive and active — people to the end of time will ever have a literature without a nationality. But the ages which act epics are the ages which write epics, and so of every other species of poetry. Besides, the literary phenomena of France and Germany do not at all support the opinions of our literary consolidationists, though the whole subject is a deep and very curious one, and no student can afford to slight it. In the former country, the golden age immediately succeeded consolidation, but quickly died of it. In the latter, the golden age preceded consolidation, favored it, led to it, but died of it before it fairly began. Consolidation, however, will unquestionably be favorable to literature in America, but for other reasons than these gentlemen suppose. A matter, therefore, so variable in its influence, is not to be classed as a cause in considering the phenomena of modern literature, though it sustains profound relations as an adjunct; and it need not have been criticised here but for its curious relation to the movement of the Christian civilization, of which more will be said hereafter, and but for the rare opportunity it affords for stating the pith of the literary distinction between Germany and America. Why, then, has consolidation proved fatal to literature there, while proving favorable to it for a time here? Because the consolidation in the two instances is produced by different terms of the absolute; here by induction and the finite absolute, there by deduction and the Infinite Absolute. With us, centuries of freedom and inductive thought had fused all ranks of intellect into one

mass, and forbidden any movement which could not embrace the whole people. There, ages of iron despotism had kept the intellect from induction in order that the masses might be kept from freedom, which is its fruit, and had set the mind to travelling in the opposite direction. When the intellect in this march first collided with the idea of the Infinite absolute, a stream of sparks flew from it, and the German poets of the last century were the result; but it has now been forever lost in the gray wastes to which it has penetrated without a compass. The German poets, far removed from the masses and from all or nearly all the consequences of the inductive method, addressed themselves to a coterie of lofty minds who sympathized with them, and to whom their infidelity became faith. They had an audience, and literature was possible. But in an inductive and democratic land, not only would nothing at war with the established faith be listened to, but the subjective conditions necessary to such a literature would not exist. In Germany, therefore, political dismemberment was favorable to freedom of thought, and the two perished or will perish together. In America, until democratic induction shall end in consolidation, the mind will be too busy with active labors for the subjective conditions necessary to literature to exist.

Much has been said, too, about the system of licensed piracy which has stolen the scum of European letters to deprave and denationalize the American mind, until, like all thieves, we have become incapable of honest production. This villainous policy is properly denounced, but it has exercised no decisive

influence on American literature. The shame of the thing is what makes it insufferable. The dispositions of men are as much a part of the eternal march of events, as the events themselves. It is ridiculous to denounce one arm of a syphon for sucking dirty water from the other. But the value which this matter possesses, even in its local relations, consists in the suggestions to which its futility gives rise. Rome, the last arena of the ancient civilization, forsook, like us, the rich themes of her own antiquity, engrafted her spiritual life on the decaying stock of Greece, and played the appalling death-scenes of the ancient civilization. The reason why Rome and we have acted thus, is, that the human soul, in its process of evolution, has not yet become sufficiently detached from physical nature for a perennial civilization to exist. That process of emergence, of continued integration as well as continued differentiation, which constructed the Christian system on the idea of will as the ground of personality, and setting the natural over against the spiritual, attempted to exclude the law of cause and effect from the domain of spirit, has not yet organized within the human soul, held in bonds of flesh, the means of a distinct, perennial, and progressive life. Towards this free, detached, emerged state improperly called self-determined, we are progressing, and in the next civilization it will be fully reached, but the road to it lies through the gates of death. The broad, general laws which control the course of civilizations left no choice of detaching or continuance either to Rome or to us, even had we not eagerly and above all things desired precisely what fate extended. Never-

theless, had it been possible, as it was not, for the lack of a large enough self-consciousness, to break off the old associations and sever the fatal line, it is certain, if anything that has not happened could have happened, that Rome and we would have opened up a new life, and pioneered a new civilization.

The next point may be taken from the charge of indifference to literature, brought against our fathers by European criticism. This is the long arm of the siphon retorting the complaint of the short one. Our fathers lived at a time when the forces which govern human affairs had developed a temporary, but for existing politics, a fatal antagonism between human reason and the Source of the life of nations. In forever divorcing Faith and her star-crowned train from the state which they had founded, our fathers decided wisely, in so far as they decided at all, since with dogmatic and intolerant Christianity there was no other path to freedom. No other course remained to them; they only promulgated fate; but their decision was in the way of death. All who labor at all on this gigantic temple, must build with the materials and according to the design which they find prepared for them; and the wisest and most beneficent rulers are those who place themselves in closest harmony with destiny. The state is the product of the spirit of the age, — the expression of the aspirations and mission of the age. It fosters and promotes whatever the age conceives to be the highest good, and this instinctively both by what it does and by what it leaves undone. It is protection when the movement of the race requires protection; it is "*laissez faire*" when the movement of

the race requires to be let alone. The state should favor the specialty of the age, whatever it may be, and this it cannot but do; but it has never yet learned to do this freely, temperately, wisely, but has called forth revolutions in every crisis, to persuade it with their blazing breath to do so. The wisest statesmen have been only successful empirics who, seeing the present drift of things, have loosed the state into it, to be dashed presently against the opposite shore a wreck. The rebound of the policy of our fathers cannot but now destroy the state they founded. For the true solution is not to divorce the state from the Source of all life, but to find the proper method of uniting them, as they will be united when the catholic civilization shall emerge, founded on the proper relation of the finite absolute and relative, to the Infinite absolute and relative. To divorce the state from the source of life,—and from literature, art, and every manifestation of that life,—and expect the state still to live, is the same folly that it would be to cut the human heart in two, and expect the severed lobes still to impart life, and strength, and beauty to the body. This divorce never can be decreed until the process of death has already set in; for it is the product of a conflict between the human spirit and the source of the particular civilization. It is true that faith, and poetry, and all the glories of soul-fulness have not always preserved nations, for vital forces ebb and flow like the sea which is their image, and nature has need that many nations as well as many individuals, shall die in the bloom of their youth and beauty; but without them can no nation long be preserved a living thing. In the perishing of

civilization, only those nations are rent asunder and obliterated to which the last transition has been made, and in which the causes which destroy civilization have full and uninterrupted sweep. The nations through which the tide has previously flowed, are left behind in petrified and unyielding forms, that all the fruits of the movement may not be lost. But the petrification of nations must continue to grow rarer, as the broad laws which govern human progress acquire wider and stronger sweep, until, at last, they will as readily dissolve all states that have ceased to live and move, as they have decomposed Rome and other bodies which, standing in the direct line of their movement, have been fully exposed to their action.

CHAPTER VI.

TAMENESS OF PASSION AND IMAGINATION NOT THE
WORK OF CIVILIZATION, BUT OF OPPOSING FORCES.

AN illustrious writer of rhetorical proclivities accounts for the later facts in the history of literature by saying that a tameness of imagination and passion always accompanies civilization. The reason is a very good rhetorical one, but unhappily is worth nothing in criticism. The question at once arises, Why do tameness of passion and a weakening of the imagination mark the course of civilization? They are no more the product of civilization, in any proper sense, than the fading of the leaves in autumn is the work of the sun. To the relative progress of civilization, — that is, to its progress within each cycle, — they certainly are owing, but not at all to its absolute and real progress. Civilization does not mutilate, diminish, and emasculate the human soul. In refining and ennobling, she does not cripple and destroy, but augments, qualifies, and strengthens. It is difficult to show that the corollary can ever subvert the theorem from which it springs. Decay of passion and imagination is not the work of Civilization, but of the forces which oppose her. It is the result of the

expenditure of the force of impact in the movement of mankind. It is due to the consumption of the spiritual forces which have propelled civilization.

It is by means of the progress of civilization, and the resulting conversion of physical into spiritual forces, that passion and imagination become at last Titanic. At the close of each cycle, Civilization gathers up the fruits of her victories, and with them, as a copious and divine endowment, enriches, aggrandizes, and intensifies the human soul. Every aspiring passion is purified, renewed, and strengthened; every noble faculty exalted and enlarged.

Look for a moment at the psychology of the subject. Passion is certainly as indestructible as the human soul; only its modes and objects change. It is the prompt echo of cognition; or, to change the figure, it is that central angle at the seat of being, of which the understanding supplies the radii, and eternally receding imagination curving forever around remoter mysteries and including vaster abysses, is the arc; and these cut out the segment within which thought and energy move to labor. The idea of a passionless reason might as well be given up; it has no foundation to rest on. If there could be such a reason, it would have just as much knowledge as a lump of ice. If the mind could pluck itself away piecemeal till but an atom of its substance remained, neither passion nor imagination would be destroyed, for they are part of its essence, and can perish only when their ground is annihilated. The historic development of each and of all of these terms abundantly sustains what is here said of them. The bauble which throws

the savage into ecstasies, excites only the derision of the civilized man, but the civilized man is not, therefore, without his transports. The one giggles with delight over a string of glass beads; the heart of the other swells with sublime emotion as he contemplates the movement of the universe, and the progress and achievements of his race. Decorum is not tameness, self-possession is not coldness, law is not the absence but the order of strength. The beads may be very beautiful, and no doubt they are very valuable; but they are scarcely so beautiful and valuable as purity and truth. May not these kindle in the poet's eye as fine a frenzy as the lewd squabbles of savage princes over beautiful captives and faithless wives? The fact is, that the one thing under heaven that beams with serener and more lasting beauty than all things else, is spiritual purity and grandeur; and the last term of objective sublimity is the one spiritual loving Infinite; and the highest interpenetration of humanity and divinity is the union of these; and there are in the soul of man a tendency towards this state and a prediction of it, which, mingling with more or less of grossness, have given birth to every form of the ideal, and been the fountain of all poetry. The human mind is a monomial, of which the co-efficient, the exponent, and the numerical value of the constant quantity, increase in geometrical proportion from age to age. There is a movement going on by which the granite absolute is becoming a universe of living fire, and this movement is miniaturized on earth. Passion and imagination, like tongues of flame on the brow of reason, are growing clearer, stronger, steadier,

from age to age, until they shall at length wrap it in a pyramid of deathless and undecreasing fire, whence new spirits will go forth into the world. But when, at the close of a perishable civilization, there still remains supreme over the mass of men a false and incommensurate ideal, the sloughed shell of an antique and ineffectual inspiration, the advanced passion and imagination which the civilization has evolved can be of no present avail. If a canopy of bronze keep them out of the new world of thought and inspiration which nature has prepared as the familiar abode of future souls, the passion and imagination just born upon the earth can accomplish nothing, but must await the completion of the process of demolition, which they powerfully stimulate and promote.

It is susceptible of clearest and easiest proof from history, that the grasp and power of imagination always increase with the growth of knowledge and the progress of our other faculties. There is a movement of the imagination not less certain, distinct, and majestic, than that of the understanding, and in which she continually conceives things more profoundly. But even to say this is greatly to understate the truth. There is an eternal movement of the whole spiritual universe, and this progress, even when in its ruder stages it proceeds fitfully and side at a time, is at last and upon the whole, catholic and symmetrical. Arrived at a certain point, where, no longer lost in morasses and torn by brambles, he enjoyed a lookout, man formed for himself a sublime faith which filled the whole ideal prospect from his very feet to the remotest limit of his vision. Advancing into this

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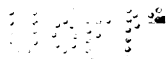
landscape, he explored it in every part, penetrated its vistas, exposed its illusions, indicated its bogs and marshes, levelled its frowning forests, and planted its fertile plains in grain, encroaching slowly on the region of the unknown until at length he had reached his field's extremest bound and nothing remained. Then he plunged again into the dark wood which lay beyond, crossed the river of night which rolled through its depths, scaled the mountains on the farther shore, and beheld in the misty dawn of a new epoch a grander landscape stretching from his feet. As man thus advances from cycle to cycle, his ideal becomes more grand, more truthful, and more beautiful; his theories of the unknown more sublime, more fitted to inspire majestic and fathomless emotion; a larger heaven bends above him, and is bespangled with more glorious stars. When a great inspiration is born into the world, it causes a gradual expansion, a slow and sure development, which after a while brings all other ideas up to its level, whence they never entirely recede. Human nature remains, indeed, forever essentially the same, because its elements are constant; yet more and more projecting and enlarging, it unfolds a new aspect, discloses a new meaning, presents new and virgin surfaces, exerts unprecedented powers. This is the movement of the absolute in mankind, and it can be compared to nothing but the translatory motion of our system, by which the planet-centre sweeping onward from point to point in the infinitude, drags at his heels his train of satellites in adamantine chains. We are Cimmerians, bearing about in our hands a flickering and ever-

growing torch in our land of darkness. While the beacon is dim and weak, it reveals a few dark chasms ; but each fagot that is added increases its size and power, until a thousand unfathomable aisles yawn on every side. Nature never said to the understanding, "Thou art free," and to the central being, "Thou art a slave." It is precisely the progress of the latter that makes new cycles, civilizations, literatures, and it is free. There can be no permanent exhaustion, no obsolescence here ; this is the everlasting and imperishable field of poetry ; and the grossest superstitions, the shallowest and most arbitrary conceits, the darkest and most repulsive schemes, have been rendered available for poetry only by being redolent of this high poetic sphere.

As an example in point, contrast Christianity with Paganism, and the theology of the Reformers with that of Rome, and consider where is displayed the more awful power of imagination. Every age, indeed, looks upon the forms of things unknown, which its unfettered imagination bodies forth, as sober realities, and begins to doubt that they are so only when they no longer correspond with actual things, — when reason, pushing forward to an advanced position that has a different perspective, discovers that they are not realities, but only the shadows of realities. Do you think it ever occurred to Homer or to Milton that they were rehearsing fables, or to their Greek and Christian auditors that the strains of poetry that moved them so were mere creations of the imagination? Not for a moment did such a suspicion arise in the mind of bard or hearer. For them these things were the grandest

and most steadfast truths. Much in the literature of the ancients which they regarded as sober thought, we at once set down as fancy, and much in modern literature which even this infidel age considers reflection, posterity will unhesitatingly pronounce imagination. Yet, future ages in passing this judgment on us, will use the word imagination in as purely relative a sense as we do in applying it to the ancients, — that is, in a sense entirely relative to their own intellectual standpoint. And if their stand-point shall be one of absolute truth, then imagination will not be destroyed, but an absolute verity will at last swallow up the relative sense of the term. When the fabrications of the imagination are suited to the entire situation, — when the shadow falls squarely and undeviatingly behind the object, — they are as real as the solid ground on which we stand. And as we could see no natural object if it were not for that mingling of lights and shadows without which the universe would be to us as though it were not; so neither could a finite mind perceive any truth if it were not for that background of the unknown on which the lamp of knowledge casts the shadows of all existing things from age to age, as it moves on with ever-increasing flame. Hitherto, Reason in her meridian splendor has always dispersed the thin and flitting shadows to which the dawn gave birth, but with the day's decline they have not failed to return in vaster and more awful forms. When there shall be a central, steady, and catholic movement, the shadow will as much represent a reality as the object from which it falls; and as civilizations succes-

sively dawn on to the end of time, out of night or out of noon, more and more imposing shadows must spring from the known and cast their giant forms into the abyss of the unknown, in vain attempt to fill it.



CHAPTER VII.

RELATIONS OF SCIENCE AND LITERATURE.

AGAIN, it is said, that literature and science are incompatible, and that the latter cannot but destroy the former, and a great deal of metaphysical learning has been expended to small purpose in enforcing this paltry opinion.

To state the truth in its real dimensions, before pinching its soul to the size required in such a relation, Science is the purveyor that brings Inspiration all her materials. She conquers nature that the soul may convert it, and this conversion should take place from hour to hour, instead of at the end of a succession of ages, as it has been compelled to occur in the past. It is science that gives the ages and the cycles wings; the power that unplumes them is something different.

Hitherto, indeed, science has always, sooner or later, destroyed both religion and literature, while it is none the less true that exclusive devotion to science has palsied the poetic faculty. But when we have said all this, we are far from having accounted for the ruin of religion and poetry in any instance. Both of the causes assigned for the effect are in reality but part of the effect, and must be referred to a yet higher

cause. The agency of science in the work of destruction is purely relative, — that is, operative only within the cycle, and against its walls as resisting power. This is evident at a glance, so far as the office of science — rather its body and content — is concerned. Literature perished in ancient times from an accumulation of knowledge which was as nothing compared with the amount which the ages of her prime in modern times possessed. Modern civilization was born out of and generated by all the knowledge of every kind which the ancients had accumulated; yet, the sublime features which distinguish Christian literature from its Pagan rival, proceed exactly from the vast stride in knowledge and capacity which separated man at the close of the Pagan civilization, from the spot where he stood at its rise. In particular instances, Dante, Milton, Goethe, and others, the greatest of poets, have been the most erudite of scholars. Men and ages that have climbed a little way from the slough of ignorance, are apt to imagine that they have attained a most perilous height, and that their wonderful exaltation has, in some way, radically changed the elements of their nature. But it is as certain as any truth can be, that religion and literature never perish, and the human mind never becomes uninspired and unpoetic from any degree of knowledge as an absolute cause; while if there be a mean ideal, and a grinding tyranny over, or a weak helplessness in the mass of souls, the smallest degree of knowledge may destroy both religion and civilization. The domain of science is the Actual, that of literature is the Ideal; there can be no collision if these be properly correlated. The

attempt to exclude either, or the wild experiment of a mere atonement between them, must always lead, sooner or later, to terrible and disastrous conflict; but reconcile and correlate them by means of the doctrine of conversion of forces, and they will become yoke-fellows in the car of human progress forever. The difference of their methods is fully met by a diversity in the gifts of men, — nay, even by diversity of the opposite faculties of any entire and unmaimed mind; and there can no more be an essential conflict between them, than there can be between the nerves of sensation and the nerves of motion. It is true that one of the most melancholy and indicative characteristics of the two historic civilizations, has been their inability to foster more than one gift or faculty at a time. But nature does not necessarily, and of her own working, send men into the world in accordance with any such narrow scheme. She delights, indeed, in a certain periodicity, but she delights also, in uniformity, and poet and prophet, her highest works, will, in the future, be produced uniformly, as her material fruits long have been; and their poetry and inspiration will come to them, not from an hour or from an age, but from the general soul of human kind. Science and inspiration, far from being exclusive of each other, are inseparable and twin-born. Science has never made such amazing strides as in — rather, immediately after — the most inspired age of the Christian civilization; and all historic experience, in like manner, is to the effect that neither science nor literature can exert its sublimest powers without the sustaining presence of the other.

Neither is it correct to say, as flippant writers do, that the domain of poetry is narrow, while that of science is broad. The domain of poetry in any cycle is just as broad as that of science, because it is identical with it, rood for rood and acre for acre. Science can no more occupy ground which inspiration and poetry have not previously occupied, than fruit can ripen where no flower has ever bloomed. Science simply utilizes the old domain of poetry, and, when she has done that, she, too, must wait, like poetry, for a new inspiration to be born into the world, to open up new reaches of thought. As certainly as poetry shall die in any cycle, so certainly will science die, subsiding slowly from sublime heights into petty details, dotage, parsimony and death. But neither catastrophe need be or would be, if every faculty of man were free, — if the Ideal, forever leaving the Actual behind, should grow, from age to age, by the conversion and appropriation of the conquests of the Actual. Man's lower faculties would thus labor steadily and incessantly in the interest and under the guidance of his higher nature, instead of periodically going to war with it, and grinding it to death between an upper and a nether millstone.

But it is really incorrect, and leads to confusion of thought, to say broadly and without limitation that poetry in any instance perishes *because* science prospers. It is true, rather, that there is an exclusive cultivation of science because literature has already in effect perished. Both results are due to the progress of the intellect within the cycle, in the course of which the scientific mode of thought becomes domi-

nant and exclusive, on account of the exhaustion and unfitness of the old fountain of inspiration. For it is a truth as eternal as the pillars of the firmament, that when religion no longer touches the springs of grand and fervent feeling, but yields only draughts of sand to quench man's burning thirst, then an iron and inexorable hand slowly produces constriction of all the faculties, beginning with the most delicate and ethereal, and ending with the rudest of all. And since the results of the force in all the channels into which it is diffused are equal, each to each, the supply of material furnished each faculty is the precise equivalent of the degree of strength conferred upon the faculty itself. Nothing is ever wasted by that wonderful economist, Nature. The poetic faculty made everything out of polytheism that could be made of it, and in like manner the Christian material seems to have been consumed just when a normal progress had brought the human mind out of the shadow of the holy wing of that higher and more spiritual faith. So that those nations which have remained for ages at that crisis of exhaustion, have achieved nothing further in literature.

Therefore, the contempt which not a few ponderous philosophers of these later times so unhesitatingly avow for poetry, may not be a proof of intellectual greatness at last. It may only be an additional proof, if any were needed, that the age which bore them is on its way to death. Great achievements are always the products of two factors, one of which is the spirit of the age, and the other individual genius; and unless these two are in harmony, nothing great or

substantial can result. History and biography interpenetrate. The age determines the individual, and the individual reacting, like a watch-spring, moves the age. Force of education does much, and the thirst for recognition is the first attribute of all great minds; and thus the ages harmonize with themselves all the talent they bring forth. If the movement of the race be projecting itself out of the age, and if there arise a genius, the product of larger forces, whom the age cannot bend, what scope has he? There is no literary field, else the age would not be purely materialistic. If for himself he be able to break through the brazen sky and enter a higher poetic region, he is in that world alone. Poetry is impossible where there is no sympathy; or if the adventurous bard attempts the new strain, persecution soon maddens, distorts, and incapacitates him. Thus, there remains to poetry, in a purely scientific age, neither priests nor altars; neither prophets nor ought to be revealed. She falls into the hands of scullions, and is soon a wrung dishrag. True, it is not in the power of fate and tyranny to entirely eradicate the beautiful from the heart of man; and sadly beautiful poetry, like the last gleam of a dying mother's eye, sometimes appears in the coldest ages; but only pale and powerless—like a wintry halo spanning a snow-wrapped city of the dead—is all such poetry.

CHAPTER VIII.

PROPHETIC BEARINGS OF SOME POINTS OF DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN GREEK AND CHRISTIAN LITERATURE.

THE difference between Greek and Christian literature, between the Greek and the Christian civilization throughout their whole extent, is, so far as external semblance can go, precisely the difference between the Gothic and the Greek architecture. To him who understands the relation which every manifestation of taste and genius bears to the spiritual life of the civilization in which it appears, the two civilizations are transmuted into stone, and stand before the physical eye. The Gothic, with its sombre abysses and acute projections, and all its wild, immethodical grandeur, is the architecture of a profound and dogmatic faith, of an atonement between extremes, of a tentative and revolutionary cycle. The Greek, with its matchless symmetry and finish and perfect self-possession, is the architecture of the perfection and supremacy of the organic, as yet unmarred and undisturbed in its beauty and repose by the sweep of deep spiritual forces. In like manner, the symmetry of Greek literature was the product of that contraction and shallowness, that entire evolution and separation of organism, that shut-

ting off of force and closing of the valves, which, in politics, prevented expansion into a deep democracy, and permitted only the attainment of a democracy of States instead of men; which, in a word, constructed at once the Greek himself physically, morally, and intellectually, his sculptured gods and all his civilization. The field of life and experience was contracted, and admitted of complete and artistic views. The profounder nature of modern civilization, not susceptible of compression into such compendious pictures, has induced modes of thought and feeling hostile to such nicety and precision. The literature of Christianity could not but be the literature of the revolutionary, almost of the chaotic. The age of revolutions, as catholic posterity will call the Christian cycle, has been made such by its violent bringing of extremes together without being able to properly correlate them, and by the appalling energy of the conflicting forces which it has set free and bound together within itself by an iron compression. The repulsion of the opposed elements which it brought together but could not unite, required a proportional compression, and hence the necessity for uncompromising dogmatism, without which Christianity could not have existed. Its Gothic architecture, romantic literature, and irregular but profound freedom, are all due to the same cause, — the combination of vigorous, lofty, and electrifying truth, with an equal negative, which has determined its whole character. The rapidity with which the unstable equilibrium of the extremes and its own amazing energy have driven it through its course, has heightened the action of these causes, of

which, indeed, this energy and unstable equilibrium are but another expression. But, in general terms, it is to breadth and partialness of vision and the tumultuous rush of forces, to fervor of emotions, to depth and intensity of the inner life, that the modern hand has owed both its inability and its indisposition to impart artistic finish. For there must forever be, with all except the Infinite and the catholic who draw near to Him, a certain unsteadiness, as well as a certain sublime indifference, wherever there is deep and powerful emotion.

By the Greeks, the Divine was conceived as present and active in the world; by the Christians, the Divine has been conceived as withdrawn and separated from the world, and in fact, at war with it. Greek inspiration, therefore, nourished the active faculties directly, and Greek literature was most splendid in the democratic age, the age of action. The same man who was to-day crowned for the best tragedy, might to-morrow lead the armies of the Republic against the Persians. Authors were the first and most honored citizens, and literature was an affair of state. The shallowness of the Greek inspiration, indeed, diminished the stature of both poet and hero, but cannot affect the eternal action of the general principle which united the characters in one person and shed unfading splendor on the democratic ages. In modern times, on the other hand, speaking in general terms, the democratic ages have been barren of literature and entirely materialized and utilitarian, while the great authors of the earlier and inspired ages, as a general rule, lived apart from the state in obscurity, or

were mere pensioners on the bounty of princes. This separation from the state, or degrading connection with it, has maimed and damaged the characters of Christian authors, and deprived them of that dignity and poise which independence and control confer. The state, also, and all the political interests of mankind, have been damaged by the exclusion of the purest and greatest spirits from participation in public affairs. The character of the Christian inspiration made it impossible for men possessed by its poetic modes to exercise their active faculties; and it produced, at the same time, those monarchical institutions which took away all opportunity and occasion for their exercise. The deeper inspiration of our civilization, as compared with the Greek, required conditions of greater repose in its literary manifestations, and its arbitrary, dogmatic, and uncatholic theology prevented the union of this repose with action, and made it the repose of inaction. But when the foundations of human thought and experience shall have become so broad that the inductive method in enlarging the content of knowledge will not be compelled to dig away the foundation and throw down the existing structure; when there shall be a civilization founded on the largest possible induction and clearest and infallible deduction, and in whose development, induction and deduction shall meet and correct each other at the end of every age; then the active and the contemplative faculties will both be fed and equally sustained; inspiration will not be incompatible with action; and the most boundless democracy, when it shall be reached, will be the most perfect, the supreme repose. Within

similar forms, totally different spirits sometimes reside, because the progress of spirit is through and by means of forms, and hence the new spirit uses for a time the old form.

Speaking generally, ancient poetry in all its forms, was of the antique; modern poetry in all its forms is of the passions. Milton and Homer, both epic in form, were not actuated by the same motive, nor informed by the same spirit; Sophocles and Shakespeare, both dramatic in form, are, at heart, as diverse as the antipodes. More largely, like as the Pagan and the Christian literature have been in their development and destiny, it is easy enough to see how the latter has risen infinitely above the former, and passed beyond it into a sphere that it could never enter, and how, in the later ages of the former, there were symptoms of the coming of the latter; and it is easy too, to see in the later ages of the Christian literature, symptoms of a poetry as far loftier than it, as it has been above the Pagan antique. For the muse of Poetry, now again returned for a season to the bosom of the Infinite, has not, at this, her second withdrawal from the earth, left us without materials for constructing her orbit and the law of her return.

After the splendors of the Pagan literature had died out, — after the antique was entirely exhausted, — the ancient comedy, offspring of democracy and a thing of the people, appeared to predict in some feeble sort that profound study of human nature and portraiture of human passion which a grander and humane faith was to embody in its highest literature. On the other hand, all the poetry of these later ages of the Christian

civilization has been inspired, not by pantheism, as is loosely charged, but by something which contains all the inspiration of pantheism, and by Absolute Man; and it has prophesied the lyric of the catholic civilization at just about the same distance that Aristophanes, Menander, and Terence predicted Shakespeare. But as, in ancient times, we have to look to Asia for the other elements which were to raise this Greek comedy into the Christian drama, so, in modern times, we must look away from German pantheism to the democratic lands which lie at the end of the modern inductive process, to find the elements which are to raise this quasi-pantheistic poetry into the lyric of the future. The spirit of democracy in modern times, although it has grown only with the decline of inspiration, and has been embellished by no poetry, has struck the key-note of the poetry of the catholic age. For when the intellect reached the point at which it inevitably became infidel, literature must have entirely perished, had not the democratic idea opened to her a new domain. As soon as all higher literature became impossible, by reason of the conflict between religion and the intellect, the democratic idea gave us prose fiction and humor, which is the poetry of humble life. The common people had never before had a place in literature. The muse had been too assiduous about celestial and royal personages to pay the least attention to the mass of men, or, with a contemptuous recognition far more insulting than total neglect, employed them only as butts and buffoons. They were fools to be jested with, clowns to be laughed at, dolts to be kicked by patrician feet, or cuffed by chivalrous hands,

rogues to be beaten, pilloried, and hanged. They were introduced simply as foils to set off the jewels of aristocracy. But the democratic idea became the especial patron of these low, swinish creatures, and her fierce energy soon wrought a revolution in their estate. She raised her imperishable hand to heaven, and, in a voice that filled the world with earthquakes, swore that the hour of their deliverance had come. But the common people do not possess sufficient dignity for a spectacle. There is no pomp about their simple lives, no splendor in their humble fortunes. They were not available for the drama, and, consequently, the drama gave place to a less pretentious species of composition, whose texture may be woven of the joys and griefs, the hopes and fears, the fortunes and heart-life of the common people. This is what the modern novel means, and it will hold no mean place in the esteem of those who, living centuries after us, in a newly risen civilization, shall look back through history, and estimate the forces which have contributed to lead man to his destiny. And not the least valuable and indicative of its characteristics, is the recent change by which it has passed from the labor of depicting merely life and manners to that of analyzing character and feeling, and recreating them, so that it has almost become a prose lyric.

CHAPTER IX.

PROPHETIC BEARINGS OF THE RELATION OF DEMOCRACY TO LITERATURE.

So much has been said and written in regard to the undemocratic affinities of taste, that it may be interesting to broaden somewhat the brief utterances of the last chapter.

The necessary and indissoluble connection between poetry and religion, fixes the political preferences of the poets of each cycle by fixing the kind of institutions under which the poetry of the civilization must be produced. Beyond this, indeed, men of poetical temperament will always shrink from grossness and brutality, and will loathe democracy so long as it is coarse and brutal. Aristocracies are expedients on the part of nature for producing a cultivated class, and they will continue to appear as long as they are needed; but after the Christian civilization shall have passed away, and its successor have risen and taken possession of its empire, the world will never again, to its last hour, behold either a monarchy or an aristocracy. Democracy has snapped successively the epic and the tragic strings of the lyre, only to supply another which will entrance the world forever, and there will ere long

now, be a series of democratic poets and a diapason of democratic poetry.

In the two historic civilizations, although, in the Pagan, the quasi-democratic age was the most splendid in its literature, there has been bitter and intense hostility between democracy and poetry, and the former has grown only with the decline of the latter. But it is erroneous to suppose that the connection between the progress of the one and the decline of the other, is, in any just sense, that of cause and effect. It would be as correct to say that the prostration of a forest by a hurricane was caused by the swelling of the rivers from the rain which fell in the tempest. The truth lying beneath the phenomena is that, while the inspiration of a cycle holds out, there is a progress in literature and free government, and, by virtue of the inexorable law that everything perishable must culminate, the movement hitherto has always passed beyond the acme of the golden ages, and then literary exhaustion has appeared at the same time with the vices of a depraved democracy. Literary grandeur and beneficent freedom exist side by side, and are effects of the same cause; literary barrenness and licentious democracy exist side by side, and are effects of the same cause. These are part of a movement of which those are an anterior part, — a section cut by a later and baser age, from the same path, which, in the effulgent morning, was an Appian Way paved with gold. But as the vaster alternations of splendor and decay are due to man's progress through all the cycles, — so the details of their connection are regulated and modified by the principles and manner of his march through each particular cycle.

In every civilization, two events must necessarily occur: literature must rise, flourish, and decay, and government must become democratic; but the order of these events and their proximity to each other, as well as the degree of each, depend on the depth, strength, and spirit of the forces which find expression in the prevailing faith. To check the progress of government towards the democratic form is to paralyze Civilization or rend out her vitals with revolution; to consummate the movement has hitherto been to disorganize and destroy society. This is the order of civilization's subversion,—society must become democratic or perish from constriction or violence; society becomes democratic and perishes from exhaustion, corruption, license, and violence. But though this general result cannot but take place in all civilizations which, possessing within themselves no principle of renewal, run a determinate course; yet, in the two such that have been since history began, the great distinctive feature of each—the shallowness and materialism of the one, and the profound spirituality and dogmatism of the other—has produced a wide dissimilarity in the relations which democracy and poetry have sustained to each other. The Greek mythology, with its multitude of deities and its undepressing views of human nature,—born of a shallow perception of the Divine, and an utter ignorance of those later spiritual experiences which humbled the human soul into the dust,—was favorable to freedom; and its easy disposition, which forbade its giving birth to malignant sects, and being prolific of bigotry, intolerance, persecution, and embittered strife, and thus proving destruc-

tive of all liberty, never compelled its divorce from the state. For these reasons and certain others which are outcroppings of the same stratum, — *i. e.* of the supremacy of the finite, organic, and partially spiritual, in the whole of the Greek thought, — epic poetry flourished at the same time with a democracy of sovereign municipalities, from which the idea of man as man was carefully excluded. It was the attempt to reach a deeper democracy that destroyed ancient freedom, just as the penetration of the mind beyond the superficial little gods destroyed Pagan religion and poetry.

The first theology of modern times, in its initial homogeneousness, was the inevitable polytheism of an idealizing barbarism engrafted on monotheism, with the addition of an element which, combining with a profound pathology of human nature, a dark and erroneous etiology, rendered man's very knowledge of himself a curse to him and an aid to his enemies. So that when at length the intellect began to scorn the fables of that faith whose only claim to the name Catholic, consisted in its homogeneousness, and to chafe at its miserable thralldom, and to yearn for a pure and lofty spiritual faith, the only possible method of emancipating it and giving it the *evangel* for which it hungered, was through a system which lopped off poetry and the arts at a single blow. The great Calvin and his coadjutors performed a noble service for science and freedom; but the compulsion under which they labored rendered the emancipation of the intellect a death-stroke to poetry and art, and to civilization a little later, as a matter of consequence. In order to be

free, the mind was compelled to plunge into a wild and awful bacchanal of fanaticism, in the mad exaltation and giddy frenzy of which, every normal emotion of the soul was extinguished. Taste and sensibility were denounced as sinful; the idea of a war with the world was pushed by the keenest logic to its most fatal consequences. The debased and weakened spirit of man, based his claim to freedom not on the inalienable rights of his own nature, but on an appalling, arbitrary, and inconceivable exception which not only raised him out of his nature but also subverted his nature. No one who knows anything about human nature and the laws by which poetry is generated, needs to be told that under these circumstances poetry and art were rendered utterly impossible, first by the destruction of their material, secondly, by the destruction of the spirit whence they spring, or is surprised that every country which fully and unreservedly adopted the new theology became at once a hopeless literary waste. But the theology of the Reformers, disastrous as it was in these respects, was the sole hope of freedom; except through it there was to freedom no path again forever for any Christian nation; and subsequent civil revolutions have only made in favor of despotism in every land where the Reformation failed. In England, the island ganglion of the modern civilization, in which its nerves of feeling and its nerves of motion meet, the one set running across the Atlantic to America, and the other stretching back to Rome, there has been a long balancing of forces as if upon a fulcrum, in consequence of which the progress of democracy and the decline of literature have been gradual, and thus England has

been the only modern nation — the Italian cities were neither nations nor democracies — that has had at once freedom and a literature.

But while perceiving that all modern history teaches that literature and democratic government could not be combined under our faith, that the theology which alone could make man free, cut off forever all possibility of that vital culture which alone makes nations long-lived and glorious; that man was compelled to sacrifice either intellect or heart, science or literature, freedom or the arts of taste; that Democracy had choice either not to be, or to be upon conditions which left her no indwelling inspiration to render her life fruitful and enduring, — we must also perceive that these melancholy truths are but the fruits and symptoms of a progress which runs through all the cycles, building brighter ages out of each successive night. If the day shall ever come when men shall believe that the deep spiritual emotions which, with defective knowledge, have made them slaves, spring from a crystal well within them, — that for all this imperishable wealth of feeling they are indebted to their life-born, life-fed and absolute humanity, — literature will receive such an impulse as science took from the stability of physical causes, and there will be a diapason of grand lyric poetry, as there has been one so peculiarly epic that all its dramas were epics, and another so essentially dramatic that its greatest epic had almost been a drama. Nor is it difficult to see what will be the relation of that poetry to freedom throughout the whole cycle, and to democracy when the democratic age shall come. The epic has had its gods; the dra-

ma has had its kings; the lyric will have the human soul, and entrancing nature in her star-clad and beautiful maternity. Government in all its forms, whether of one or of all, as the ages may require, will be absolute within its sphere, as all right is absolute, and as the shallow conceit that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, will long since have been exploded; but in the sunlight of that civilization's morning, all oppression will roll away forever from the face of this beautiful but long-veiled world, as clinging fogs are swept from the hill-tops by the blazing bezom of the rising sun.

The common charge of materialism against democracy has no essential truth, but it is true of past democracy, and not less of the later Pagan democracy which modern reactionists admire so much, than of the Christian democracy they so utterly detest; but the military character of Roman materialism is apt to blind its chivalrous admirers. The materialistic and utilitarian tendencies of our democracy have arisen out of its tentative character, and out of the function of conquest over nature which the movement of the race has imposed on modern sensualism. In the future, democracy will be the most spiritual of all possible forms of government, because built on the highest spirituality in man. Democracies are not necessarily more utilitarian than other governments, but they give freer scope to the spirits of the Ages, be these what they may, to manifest themselves. Whether democracy shall ally itself with the external or the internal energies, depends upon the circumstances under which it is permitted to appear; and, again, what form the

external energies shall assume, depends upon the spiritual forces which propel the cycle. But the point at which all thought shall become materialistic and atheistic also, depends on these same spiritual forces. An infinitely shorter progress produced this effect on ancient thought than that which has produced it in modern times, because the ancient religion was more shallow than the modern. The later ages of any determinate and articulated cycle, cannot but be materialistic, because all spiritual life has long since disappeared, and because these ages are laboring in aid of that conversion of physical into spiritual forces, out of which the next civilization is to come; and the law of correspondences, which proportions to each other the results of the force in every channel, infallibly bestows upon these materialistic ages the political institutions which best enable them to achieve the utilitarian mission demanded at that juncture by the general progress of the race. None are so blind as not to see how favorable to conquest were the institutions of Rome, and how favorable to the industrial arts have been our own; but many are so blind as not to be willing to see that in both cases the result was due to the operation of the same law,—to the degree of democracy which the spiritual forces of the cycle rendered attainable, to the amount of knowledge which these forces permitted science to accumulate, and to the form they put upon the external energies.

It was perfectly inevitable that these Christian ages, which possessed sufficient spirituality to struggle violently towards pure democracy and the absolute in man, but not enough to attain to them except through

death, should be conspicuous for an exclusive cultivation of the arts which accumulate wealth and elevate the laborer. The straining effort of our civilization towards a consummation which it could not but attempt, yet had not capacity to achieve and live, converted into a deadly vice a mission which a cycle with profounder spirituality and greater consequent mastery over nature would accomplish unconsciously and without effort. For, as both the progress and the decline of civilization are regulated by broad, eternal causes, not less certainly are the consequences which shall follow this decline in any case determined by the same causes. The shallowness of the Pagan faith, and the dogmatic sternness of our own, produced the fatal check which poetry and science received in each cycle, to the consequent ruin of each civilization; but the benefits which they conferred on mankind, precisely because they removed these two ineffectual civilizations, and also in their manner of removing them, cannot be overestimated. It was the shallowness of the ancient religion, leading as it inevitably did, first to the supremacy of organism, and, by a continuation of the process, to its despotic sway, which caused the Pagan energies, after the exhaustion of literature, to assume the form of Roman dominion; and it was from the consequent bending of all nations under one iron yoke, the mingling of tribes and forces, and the consequent evolution of a more capacious organism, individual, religious, political, domestic, and social, that the modern civilization arose. The pure and humane spirit which Christianity has powerfully aided, the diffusion of civilization over

many lands and zones by its stronger forces, the erection of many nations of equally balanced strength, the deep, inventive thought, and large mastery over nature which it has made attainable, have caused our energies in the decline of our civilization to assume the form of scientific utilitarianism. In a perishable civilization in which qualification has rarely conferred the individual's vocation, or merit fixed his status; in which but an inconsiderable portion of the gifts which Nature lavishes on her sons has been able to struggle to the surface and accomplish a mission; in which the world has known nothing of its greatest men; in which the true origin of human rights and the true law of subordination and social order have not even been surmised, — it cannot but be of lasting and incalculable benefit to mankind that there should be an age driven by irresistible coercion to the preparation of means to prevent, in the next cycle, the degradation of the poor and the enslavement of the laborer. The insensibility of ancient literature to the beauty and sublimity of nature, and to man as man, — a literature occupied exclusively with the jolly little gods whom superficial Paganism saw on every side, — a quasi-democracy based on the enslavement of three fourths of the highest race, — the conquest of the world by a single city, — finally, an atonement between the finite and the Infinite viewed simply as organisms, — are parts of a whole. A literature into which the enrapturing beauty and grandeur of nature, and man with all the prerogatives of his sublime humanity and his sufferings and victories, enter largely, though not without adulteration; a democracy entirely utilitarian

and laboring through blood and death to emancipate all races of men, concentrating into invention and mechanic arts all the amazing energies which our faith has set free ; the crushing out of civilization by the consolidating movement, for the want of a proper organism ; finally, in the sunset of our civilization, a union between the finite and the Infinite in a common absolute ; these are another and more important, more prophetic whole. There is, thus, no mistaking the character and relations of our democracy, the source of its vices, and its generative labor in behalf of all the future. Our democracy is what it is, that the absolute may be evolved in man and correlated with the absolute in the Infinite, and that civilization and the human soul, in the next cycle, may enter on a catholic, final, and indestructible life.

CHAPTER X.

PARTIAL AND PERIODIC INSPIRATIONS NECESSARILY
DISASTROUS.

WE will conclude our rapid survey of this branch of our theme by noticing, under the form of an objection to what has just been said, a line of thought which Christian writers and speakers sometimes pursue. They say that the literary barrenness of these later ages is no proof that the literary inspiration of Christianity is exhausted, but is only a proof of the adaptability of our faith, and that Christianity, after having put forth the splendors of her poetry in the infant ages, is now accomplishing a more advanced work for mankind. To the facts contained in this statement, we should be the last of living men to object; but the conclusion drawn from the facts is very puerile. It is so, however, that, in the decline of every faith, weak spirits anxiously gull themselves rather than endure the pains to which the truth would subject them. Let us, therefore, possibly at the expense of some repetition, look into the question again, with a view to understanding more clearly the extent and relations of the adaptability of Christianity; and while the subject might be pursued into very deep

abysses, we should be ashamed of ourself if we were to say anything upon it which a child could not understand.

The adaptability of partial and periodic inspirations to all the faculties of man and all the terms of thought, must, of necessity, be extremely limited. But the adaptability of the Christian civilization, as might have been expected, has greatly exceeded that of its Pagan ancestor. The Pagan civilization was divided into two distinct and far-apart developments, in order to find and apprehend the opposite terms of finite and Infinite. The Christian civilization has comprised both terms at the same time, and has developed them simultaneously, but has developed them apart no less than the Pagan civilization. It has not required separate rounds of ages to ascertain the terms successively; it started with and comprehended both. In developing them apart, it has surpassed the Pagan civilization in preserving the unity of one of the conditions under which both terms exist, — that of time; and has sacrificed only the unity of the other condition, — space. And that it should thus preserve the one condition and sacrifice the other in its development, was inevitable from the start, because in bringing the terms together it united them only in time and not in space. The Pagan civilization, laboring to give the finite existence, was divided into the demicycles of the finite and the Infinite; the Christian civilization, laboring to give the finite strength and mastery, has been divided more strictly than the former into poetic and unpoetic, inspired and utilitarian ages. In each of these civilizations, whatever

nature has had need that man should do in any age in order to promote the final consummation of the evolution of a catholic and imperishable civilization, that he has done; and in this have consisted the missions of the ages. These partial and one-sided labors of the ages have been necessitated by the scanty and ineffectual inspirations of the past, and the character and end of these labors have been determined by the depth and animus of the inspirations. This is but to say that as the force has been, so has been the movement.

In any zetetic, and therefore determinate, cycle, the faith of any particular age cannot but present an aspect and spirit corresponding precisely with the duty which nature has need that the age should accomplish. What this duty, and the *rationale* of the adaptation of the popular faith shall be, depends on the profundity and degree of catholicity possessed by the thought and inspiration whence the civilization sprang. Every civilization has its poetic and its utilitarian mission to accomplish, and the latter is the precise counterpart and supplement of the former, which, in its turn, is fixed and governed by the depth and value of the cycle's faith. The quality and quantity of the fruit is in proportion to the splendor of the inflorescence, and this to the nature and vigor of the tree. What the understanding shall accomplish in the later ages of the cycle, is as fully and irrevocably fixed by the scope and character of the faith from which the civilization springs, as what imagination shall accomplish in the earlier ages; and since, in the processes of nature, every development arises out of a state of things re-

sembling it and adapted to it, it cannot but be that when there is much for the understanding to do, there must be an equal adaptability of the current faith. Rather, to state events in the order in which they occur, and not in that in which they first strike the observation, when the spiritual forces disengaged and incorporated in the civilization's faith are intense and copious, there is a high degree of adaptability, a vigorous power of assimilation in the faith, and the understanding is enabled to accomplish much. The tendency, unquestionably, is towards an inspiration which shall be broad and catholic enough to fuse all the ages into one, and with a boundless tolerance and love, nurture and invigorate all the faculties, and renew from hour to hour, as fast as it decays, the life of civilization and of nations. It is precisely because the human race has hitherto been so remote from this condition that the course of civilizations and of literatures, from dawn to death, has been so direct and so sharply defined. Shallow Paganism, though it relished a broiled heretic occasionally, was yet the most tolerant of all past creeds; but the shallowness which made it tolerant prevented the attainment of that degree of mastery over nature and that diffusion of knowledge which could make the mass of souls strong and wise enough to pass to a higher faith. Hence, it ran a determinate and unbroken course, and when its particular set of ideas was exhausted and sloughed by the mind, it perished brutally of war.

Christianity is a far profounder and more exalted faith; but the stern and dogmatic temper which was necessary to preserve our civilization in its violent

course, has not only imparted to the different ages of our cycle the sharply defined dissimilarity which points unerringly to a catastrophe, but has now rendered the development of the future impossible, except by the demolition of the present and its basis. The trouble was that neither Paganism nor Christianity properly correlated the whole finite with the whole Infinite, and under either of them a steady and continuous progress of the whole of man was therefore manifestly impossible. During the brief periods in ancient and modern times in which the external and the internal energies have both had full play, inspiration and action proceeded, *pari passu*, and as yoke-fellows, in the conquest and appropriation of the terrestrial organism; but presently inspiration gave out, and then military conquest, which was the form the external energies assumed in the Pagan civilization, or the industrial arts which have been their form under deeper and humaner Christianity, went forward alone until civilization perished of atrophy of the heart. While they have had equal scope and freedom, the faculties of the Ideal and the Actual have made gigantic strides side by side. Both alike have encountered resistance throughout their whole advance; but as the faculty of the Actual, Antæus-like, rests immediately upon her mother-earth, she has now become more than Herculean from the contact, and pushed her adversary from the whole of her domain forever.

But dogmatic Error becomes stronger the farther she retreats from the accessible domain of the Actual into the mountain fastnesses of the Ideal, until, in that high and agitating sphere, where inexplicable mys-

teries and wondrous realities are so strangely blent, she has become, in the present weakness of the highest faculty of our nature, well nigh impregnable. In her native heather of the unknown, she has built and fortified her Sevastopol. Civilization, in her progress, has collided with it, and all of her that is not iron mail is perishing from the shivering shock. If Civilization be strong enough to survive for a time these fissures of her substance, she always becomes, while she survives, all utilitarianism or military conquest, or some other form of external energy; but if she be feeble, she dies speedily, as she did in a thousand nameless nations, before historic civilization began.

But this division of civilization must sooner or later be followed by disastrous consequences in every instance. For Civilization, like the human soul whence she springs, is a unit, and to divide is ultimately to destroy her. The external may be developed for a time without a corresponding and supporting advance of the internal, — inertia may prolong the motion for a little while after the force of impact is spent, — and thus a temporary hiatus may be produced in man's development; but at length a maximum of separation between the thinking and the emotional nature is reached, and then ensues a terrible conflict, in which reason, like a demon, destroys first poetry, then all kinds of literature, then the whole frame-work of religion, then free government, then society, and finally, sole tenant of the waste and melancholy scene, herself expires. This result has been produced twice since history began, once by the shallowness, and once by the dogmatism of religion. The idealization, and

personification, and partial conversion into spirit of the powers of nature, was the adaptation of the Pagan faith, whence resulted the scanty mastery and freedom which the Pagan faith could yield.

Calvinism is the phase of Christianity which educated the vaster mastery and freedom attainable in modern times. But neither that degree of flexibility which permitted the change from pantheism to ideal polytheism, nor that which veered from Rome to Calvin, was able to save civilization. No; but what of all facts connected with this matter, posterity will most draw instruction from, is the way in which the faith that has done most for Christian freedom has co-worked with infidelity to promote absolutism in Europe, and a return to barbarism in America; and from Carlyle, the apostle of absolutism, who came out of Scotch Presbyterianism, to the political preachers of the North whose intemperate fanaticism has rendered the emancipation of the negro the price of a civilization's life, extends one broad illustration of the unconscious recoil of a spent faith. Nor will any adaptability ever save civilization, which shall not render possible an equal and simultaneous progress of the Ideal and the Actual, and thus prevent that separation of the cycles into dissimilar and sharply defined ages which must always end in a return, more or less complete, to barbarism. What man beseeches at the hands of Fate, is not a faith which, by its shallowness or its uncompromising dogmatism shall promote this tendency, but one which shall confer on civilization an undying principle of life, and a tenure of existence other than precarious, and render his burning hopes something

more than empty and flattering delusions forever destined to be obliterated by successive overthrows. What is required is not a degree of adaptability which may lapse from infinite to finite in unconscious darkness, or conform to ages which its own scantiness has made flinty and unpoetic, but one which shall combine and correlate all the terms of thought, and all the categories and conditions of being in the splendors of an imperishable inspiration, and by a free and constant progress render all the ages alike poetic and alike utilitarian.

The vaunted adaptability of Christianity! To what, then, has it amounted, and to what has it brought mankind? To this, in literature, that the bark of poetry has whirled in the small eddies of the reactionary ages, and at last gone to pieces on the rocks, instead of sweeping onward to the knell of time, with the majestic and eternal tide. To this, in philosophy, that the Germanic movement has ended forever in the opposite pole of the heavens, from that where the American movement is ending. To this, in religion, that God — if you so call the Infinite — and man are not less widely sundered geographically and politically than when Christianity first brought them together, and that their reunion within our civilization is rendered forever impossible by that dogmatic character of Christianity whence this boasted adaptability springs. To this, in politics, that Europe, under the domination of the idea of the Infinite Absolute, must prepare, as Asia did before, by the centralization of power and the consolidation of society, absolute governments to preserve for the next civilization the fruits of this; while Amer-

ica, hurled on by the unpoised, unmanageable idea of an absolute in man, will wreck the Christian civilization, and prepare conditions for the evolution of a brighter and better age.

And in that work of preparation may be seen more fully now, our reasons for expecting a revival of literature in America in the next age. The plethora and hectic which precede dissolution have not yet appeared. By virtue of that jamming of the ages into each other, without the power of fusing them, which has marked the whole course of the Christian civilization, the Ennius and the Livy of the modern Rome are contemporaries. Courtly Horace and anachronous, retrospective Virgil, wooing a fratricidal age to the distant recollections of the virtuous beginning, remain to be generated by the same unfailing laws which produced them in Rome's red sunset. And at a little distance, in the first dusk of twilight, when the vitals of Civilization are consumed, and the efflorescence of decay spreads its last bloom over her wasted cheek, must follow Juvenal. For, like the swan, the unplumed and death-stricken soul of man, floating down into the darkness of barbarism, sings its own death-song. The time has gone by forever when an American need apologize for the literature of his country as compared with that of Europe within the last generation; and henceforth, within the Christian civilization, the balance will continue to incline more and more in our favor; because the movement of the race is hourly passing over more and more fully into this land. The god-like fathers who begot us a nation, the purity and grandeur of their characters, their long and virtuous

struggle and memorable success, their sublime dreams and dark forebodings, their majestic prevision, their attempt to knit into one broad domain of freedom the hostile zones which they had freed, the treason of Arnold and its tragic kindred of later days; these are such themes as Shakespeare, king of dramatists—alas for Rome! no son of hers—took from Rome; and these, by virtue of the resistless dramatic inclination of the Christian literature, we may reasonably expect to be the themes of Christian Virgils when the situation shall be one of retrospection to liberty.

It would be a shallow error, however, to conclude that the latest literature of the Christian civilization must necessarily present as close resemblance to the earliest as the *Æneid* bears to the *Iliad*. The current of force is now far stronger than at the close of the Pagan civilization, and will impel our closing literature nearer to the forms that are to succeed.

To draw, then, in set terms, the conclusion of our unambitious argument, why do the later ages fall? The cycles rise one above another, like banks of stars, and within the cycles the first inspired ages soar, like eagles in the dawn, to the greatest attainable height of the civilization. Why does the movement, then, decline and die? Surely not for any of the superficial reasons which either the orthodoxy or the infidelity of these Christian ages has assigned for phenomena, the full extent of which neither has seen or can see. Not because God, our Father, is the miserable cobbler the one would make Him, nor because, as the self-excusing egotism of the other weakly supposes, there is any point this side that goal of perfection whither it flies,

at which the human mind necessarily becomes uninspired ; but because always, hitherto, partial, periodic, *vis-a-tergo* inspirations have led men to establish inflexible institutions which have cramped and killed out the movement of the race, and by their lack of renewing energy and adaptation, have compelled periodic returns to death and barbarism.

In constructing the poetic series, and in pointing out some prophetic differences between Greek and Christian literature, we yet narrowly limited our purpose in order to render it effective. We wish it distinctly understood, however, that we have aimed at nothing more than to chip off a few little scales from the rocks in order to give you some idea of the strata and of the forces which constructed them. Our purpose is accomplished if you believe that all distinctions of form and subject-matter in past poetry expresses nothing, but that the Ideal is inconstant and progressive, and that the spiritual forces at work in the world acquire fresh volume and momentum from age to age. The Ideal is not a marble plain. It is the shifting firmament of stars above the migratory soul. What the human spirit shall see above it or behind it, what man and God shall be seen or felt to be, is a question of ages and of forces. The orbit of poesy is a curve, but it is not a circle. It bends around its initial point, but never returns to it. It broadens as it soars, eternally receding into deeper and remoter abysses, and forever above it as it flies, new firmaments display their star-flecked arches. Thus, all poetry, whether of the antique or of the passions, or of that higher and purer Ideal which will next be

sung, is at last the same, and despite retrospection, senility, and death, whatever ennobles and elevates mankind, strengthens and intensifies its inspiration. It runs through all the cycles, growing stronger and clearer in each. Its progress is continuous, and when it seems to have paused, only other things have paused, not it. Temporary causes may obstruct its utterance, as was the case in the last days of the old civilization, and as is the case again to-day; but that resurrective power of nature which renews the seasons and calls the beautiful from the tomb, will lay its finger on the marble heart, and urge the palsied tongue to speak again. True, it avails but little to impart the power of speech while there is neither audience nor theme, and within the limits of the Christian civilization there can be neither, though there may be predictions of both. But the movements of nature are as complete as they are sublime, and with the new song will come the power to sing, and hearts to greet it and reëcho it with vibrant strings.

CHAPTER XI.

RELATIONS OF THE EARTHLY LIFE TO A LARGER
FUTURE.

IN regard to other subjects, also, this man carried solution to distances never before attained. He thought that the man must have a grovelling spirit, scarcely so high as an intelligent dog's, who does not know that he is immortal; who asks for proofs of his immortality, calling it a surmise, a dream, at best a hope. The human reason is part of the imperishable substance of the universe, and the human spirit is part of its imperishable force. They are, therefore, as indestructible as it. As to the preservation of individuality, the wonder is how any sane man of even the slenderest attainments, can, in the present state of human knowledge, fail to see that it is inevitable. We will briefly indicate hereafter the origin and relations of the Hindu doctrine of metempsychosis and reabsorption, and also of the Christian doctrine of a resurrection of the body. It is enough to say here that as reason is substance and spirit force, so the understanding is organism, and can never perish till the organization of the Infinite shall perish first. Therefore, our immortal part is as actual a fact as the material frame which

builds it up by conversion, and the future life is not a speculation, but an indefeasible reality.

In other aspects of this matter, the peculiarity of this man's relation to the movement of the cosmos was not less conspicuous. The truths which he lived, revealing as they did the whole of nature's process with the soul, poured broad floods of light on questions both of origin and of destiny which impenetrable darkness had previously wrapped.

He rigidly enforced the doctrine that there are flames of retribution after this life for all sins not forgiven to contrition and put away from us here; but from no soul of man did he ever take away hope. He disliked the phrase "rewards and punishments" as applied to the future state, because it presents the image of a keeper of gimcracks for the good boys, and of a strap for the bad ones, whereas the difference of destinies is matter of law, and the judgment is going on at every hour of our earthly existence. He regarded retribution as a process of riddance and purification, the selectest visitation of love. Its end is regeneration through suffering; the fire shall die when the soul no longer needs it, and every spirit of man or demon find at last the better way and live. He agreed, with the theologians, that man's nature is a ruin, but a ruin of incompleteness, not of demolition, the unsightliness and evil of partial construction, a worlding chaos, not a wreck. He understood those pregnant words of the Christian theologians, "nature in the will," as those who have used them have not done; and far more, he understood, too, how the corrupting influence comes to be there. He thought that but for

this present dark estate, the human spirit could never attain the grandest, purest, and most satisfying state of being. Nay, he even thought there could be no mellowness in any spirit, finite or Infinite, without, in some mode, the pain and sorrow, and the fragrant and divine humility born of the deepest and sublimest of all experiences, — incompletion, conflict, victory, peace. He held it to be a truth in ontology, that without this there could be no eternal fulness, sweetness, tenderness of any soul. He would have removed sin from the universe by no fiction of history or experience, but by the development of the universe out of sin. He knew that man needs — alas, yet not alas, how he needs — a Redeemer and Saviour; but the process of purification, like that of creation, must be the progressive work of that force in nature out of which souls were first born; of that Power in which we live and move and have our wondrous being. He appreciated at its full value the sacred sorrow which is the first throe of the new birth, and out of which comes the blissful consciousness of redemption and the full beginning of the spiritual life; but he held that this process is neither a subversion nor an abnegation of our nature, but that it is the normal and for each at last inevitable action of the cosmos and of our cosmos-born humanity. Without trenching on ground to which we shall, at the proper time, devote a separate chapter, he held that no atonement but contrition could please a virtuous God, and that no other could ever, by any possibility, be subjectively applied. All the Christian reasoning on this point has been only vague and wild-eyed surmise, staring through

mist at a great cosmical truth whose workings in the individual man it could not comprehend. By what sort of absurd process could any historical fact remove the burden of original sin? The inquiry is lunacy. Again, did the fact, alleged to be efficacious, call into the world the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit? All history teaches, if it teaches anything at all, that the appearance of this agent was the result of slow, eternal, natural causes. The hour had struck in the history of the cosmos, for spiritual force to begin its effectual purifying work, and it began it.

One further idiosyncrasy of his relation to sin should be stated, and if any shall misunderstand and carp at what we say here, their littleness may be securely relied on to make their malice harmless. He certainly had not a less, but if possible, a greater sense of the guiltiness of sin than those who preceded him. He had a most contemptuous opinion of those flippant writers who made light of the heinousness of sin, and would substitute regret for remorse. But he had also a more advanced emotion in regard to the subject, corresponding to the point in the movement of the cosmos, where his own mission began. While he regarded sin as the sum and concentration of all guilt and woe, he regarded it also, as the scum and concentration of all forfeiture, meanness, and shame. When he considered the point in the broad cosmos-travelled way of redemption which the spirit of man has now reached, he felt towards all unfruitful, selfish, mean-hearted guilt, the same sort of impatient contempt which precedes the triumph of spirit in every sphere, and is the signal and beginning of the extirpation of

the thing despised. His trenchant eye went into the spiritual anatomy of meanness with the same pitilessness and nausea that mother Nature seems to have had for our trilobite and saurian ancestors when she was about to slough them. In the age in which he lived, the full-souled helplessness which the holy One of Galilee saw and lifted up, no longer apologized for men. It was hideous meanness of thought and spirit which he saw destroying the world, and this fact armed his marvellous power of invective with such bolts as never before rattled among the shells of the crustaceans.

One of the most remarkable things about him in this connection, as in every other, was his stainless and unexampled self-respect. He could not understand how any spirit with a particle of pride could ever embrace such filthy degradation as sin. For poets who have attempted to sing the praises of sin, and trick it out with tawdry rhymes, he scarcely had so high a feeling as disgust. He regarded sin as being just as poetical as small-pox, just as romantic as the itch. The idea that sin is a very spirited affair and the domain of pleasure, is beneath contempt. True, moping godliness has done much to strengthen this idea, but a spirit that is not strong enough to prevent godliness from repelling it into such a notion, is not worth notice. Vice really knows nothing at all about either pleasure or beautiful manliness. They are no more like it, have nothing more in common with it, than a flower-garden has in common with a pest-house. You don't believe this, of course, dear infidels and Christians; but in disbelieving it, you

only show your grade in the long series of animals below the real man.

This man removed from the world, forever, the base thought that purity is a poor tame, weak, and tasteless sort of thing. Those who stood near to him and understood him, regarded him with a romantic admiration such as no hero of poetry ever excited. His life embraced and revealed that sphere of beauty, strength, and proud manhood which lies next above the sphere of redemption; and all who ever loved him felt that, if they had possessed power to speak into existence their own ideal, they could have conceived nothing so noble, so spotless, so heroic, so beautiful as he.

Yet, along with his power, purity, and beauty, and part of them, stood his boundless catholicity and tolerance. He at once descried and detested the high-stepping folly which makes haste to condemn the guilty. He regarded the godly Pharisee as the next lower and more detestable thing in the universe than a demon, while free-hearted imperfection is not far from the kingdom of life. The latter needs only to be purged and strengthened to fit it for heaven, if we are still to use that silly term; while the former would have to melt and simmer for ages in the lowest crypts of perdition before the material would be fit to make a respectable demon.

CHAPTER XII.

RELATION OF THE SEXES.

THE relation in which the sexes stand in any civilization is not only the product of the religion of the cycle, but an infallible indication of its scope and character. Love, the passion which appropriates the very being of the sublime and the beautiful alike in concrete forms, remains essentially the same in all its relations, whether its object be finite or Infinite, and to corrupt it is to poison the fountain of all life. So long as either grossness or servitude shall mark one of its relations, they will mark them all, while to give this most vital of all passions one pulsation of its true life is to secure to the world the purity and bliss for which it has waited till now. Under sensuous Paganism, marriage was only a physical conjunction, woman was the toy of man's passions, and polygamy prevailed. Christianity redeemed this relation, as it did every other, by means of the peculiar organization which it introduced. As it reconciled the finite and the Infinite with an atonement, so for precisely the same reason it united the sexes with a mere rite, and raised woman from her Pagan degradation by making the marriage tie indissoluble, the only means by which

that redemption could have been accomplished. Christianity came at a time when this relation and all others were substantially dissolved, whence it had opportunity to introduce its new organization; and in like manner, the wide departure now from the law of marriage and divorce laid down by Jesus, is one of the most unmistakable signs of the approaching dissolution of Christian society and the evolution of a higher.

Therefore, in view of the relation which this man sustained to the movement of the race, it becomes an interesting inquiry what his teachings were, in regard to this extremely important subject. The loathing which the social phenomena of this age excited in him may be imagined, perhaps, but it cannot well be described. A good purpose is served, no doubt, by liberal denunciations of "the social evil," and the silly maundering which tries to throw a romantic hue over its ghastly horrors, is ridiculous and detestable stuff; but the institution blasphemously styled holy, is just now only the opposite face of the same Janus, and is scarcely, or rather not at all, less repulsive and disgusting. Legal prostitution need not turn up its dainty nose quite so high at more honest forms of its own flesh and blood. Marriage under its present law is, in its law, only legalized prostitution. The poor soiled rags of womanhood that move at times, as the case may be, every depth of pity or detestation in the manly heart, are every whit as good as the wedded wantons who, with a lie in their hearts and a vain formula on their lips, sell themselves once for all at the altar for gold, and insult heaven by calling it to witness their prostitution.

No wild beast, no venomous worm, excited half such horror in his mind as that one the promptings of whose womanhood assumes no higher form than a secretive, scheming, unclean instinct, which regards matrimony as the grand speculation of life, and the other sex as prey; while the man, or rather the thing in the shape of man, who marries for a mercenary motive, ought to be hooted from the earth, and denied admittance even among devils, as he no doubt would be. How any woman can consent to associate with or even to look at such a creature, is one of the mysteries of feminality. With blushes of shame mantling his cheeks, this man heard even Christian divines, statesmen, and authors, urging as a reason for making the marriage-tie indissoluble, that there necessarily comes a time in the life of every husband and wife when they no longer love, but are only "friends," — the pet euphemism of the brothel; while with scarcely greater detestation he saw vulgar lust, not blessed with the means of refined licentiousness, flying to "Christian marriage" as a friendly refuge, and few other unions prompted by higher motives than convenience or gain. A sweet, sweet mess you have made of the highest of all earthly relations, dear Christians. God, our Father, meant it for the holiest, most beautiful, and most valuable of all relations, and you have made it a hideous farce, which must refresh the bleared eyes and shake with cooling laughter the roasting ribs of hell itself.

But let us be careful, in condemning a false and hideous law, not to condemn at one sweep, all cases arising under the law. There are, doubtless, many

true marriages in this country in our day, but they are so not by reason, but in spite of the teachings men and women receive. While it is difficult to see how any really proud and self-respecting spirit can assume the yoke of such an institution as marriage is now, yet, where two pure hearts devotedly love and find their mission in loving, God their Father supplies to their love what the beastliness of bungling politicians deprives it of. The doctrine that the union of the sexes is only a civil contract and the bawdy-house condition to which our legislation is anxiously reducing the relation, cannot destroy the natural sanction which love may give innocent hearts ; but anything above a swine would not knowingly and with a full appreciation of the subject, come in contact with either the doctrine or the legislation.

The experience of two civilizations shows, to all who are capable of seeing anything at all, that neither the perpetuity nor the sanctity of the relation will ever be secured till it shall be built on higher and more enduring ties than either Paganism or Christianity supplied. Marriage is, but in no mystic or ritual sense, a sacrament, and except the union of the finite spirit with the Divine Father, is the most important of all sacraments. When it is what it may be and should be, it is immeasurably the best and most sacred life ; but when it is not what it should be, — when it falls short of the altitude of a true marriage, — it is the vilest and most dishonoring of all states, and is not to be approached at all. The life of the Infinite, who is God and nature in one being, affords an example of a perfect life for man ; and every marriage which is not

the image of that Infinite life, is renunciation, shame, failure, and scandal.

There is just one reason that justifies marriage ; it is fervent and devoted love. There is just one reason that justifies divorce ; it is the decay of such love in both hearts. All laws which compel the union after love has departed are immoral. Every union not sanctioned and demanded by love is adulterous, and patch-work legislation cannot make it otherwise. The proper duration of the relation is not so long as the parties shall live, but so long as they shall love, and this should be longer than life. Neither infidelity nor death dissolves the tie if love survives. Make as many mere police regulations authorizing separation as the weakness and wickedness of human nature may render judicious ; but to declare the tie forever ended, is something which man has no right to do till God has already done it, and this He does only by the decay of the love which authorized the marriage. It was perfectly logical and consistent for Christianity to make adultery the proper and only ground for divorce ; but this is not only to reduce the subject to its grossest phase, but also to declare that loveless union may be proper till the crime of loveless union renders it improper. Where men and women marry without love, the union is adulterous from the beginning, and one adulterer or adulteress has no rights as against another, and cannot ask society to protect them against the consequences of their own crime. By their own act, the parties have placed themselves beyond the reach of relief, and should never be divorced for any cause.

But while it is deplorable and disgraceful that there

should ever be a divorce, and while in every instance of divorce there is either crime, or folly that amounts to crime, yet, in view of the fatal incompatibilities sometimes developed by growth or deterioration, it is a horrible and cruel policy to make the tie dissoluble only by crime, when both parties, having acted in good faith from the beginning, have ceased to love, and both desire to be divorced. No one, however, has any right to take advantage of his own wrong. Many a union is loveless and adulterous on one side, and a true marriage on the other. In such a case the guilty party should never be divorced, though the other should be set free at once, on application and proof. To say that this is to introduce subtleties into the law of divorce, is what might be expected from a very brutal mind or age, but only such a mind or age would see any intricacy in the matter

. To say nothing of the jurisprudence of insanity, there is no more difficulty in proving the presence or absence of love in marriage, than in proving malice *prepense* in murder, the *animus furandi* in larceny, or a fraudulent intent in contracts. *Caveat emptor* is a nice enough policy for the commercial transactions of savages, but civilization introduces refinements which seem wire-drawn enough, no doubt, to the whole tribe of swindlers; and so it should be, and is sure to be, in regard to the higher interest. As a practical matter, it is best to raise the question as to the existence of love only when a divorce is sought. In the matter of contracting marriage, leave men and women to their own consciences and sense of self-respect; but when society is applied

to for relief, let the whole question be lifted, and the divorce be granted only on clear proof that the marriage was a true one when contracted, and that love has since decayed in both hearts; and whenever the case is not fully made out, let the court cut the matter short by decreeing a separation; for the application itself is conclusive proof that the parties should not be permitted to live together, and the injured party, released by the decree from an impure association, can easily wait for perfect freedom beyond the grave. Here, as elsewhere, society should rigorously exercise its functions to protect the weak and restrain and punish the unprincipled, remembering that its mission is not to tyrannize over and crush the human spirit, but to aid it, and minister to its life and growth.

Posterity will understand clearly enough, at a glance, that this is the logical and proper divorce-law of the Catholic and final faith. It makes the bonds of the organization spiritual, and therefore eternal. It makes the spirit's obligation coextensive with its love; therefore, it leaves the spirit free as air, without relaxing one claim of duty. It places the whole subject within that domain, at once of absolute right and perfect freedom, where the purer and larger men and women of the future will dwell.

The two great crimes of the Christian civilization have been, the enslavement of the weaker races and the degradation of the weaker sex, and these were not only salutary in their time, but processes of elevation. But the world now no longer needs weaklings or slaves of any kind, and the civilization of the future will endure none. Women do not, as a general rule,

possess the same vigor and originality of intellect and character that men have, but they have other gifts just as indispensable to a perfect life of the world. They have less understanding than men, but a larger proportion of that reason which is marvellously near kin to feeling. One of the most beautiful and valuable characteristics of the womanly spirit is, that it sees God rather than nature, while the masculine mind has precisely the reverse proclivity; and competent minds behold in or beneath this antithesis one of the most important truths in the universe. For all the natural and proper disabilities to which her sex exposes her, Nature amply compensates woman in the single privilege of being a mother to a being whom she loves. Her gifts fit her to be the attendant and twin spirit of the stronger and first emancipated sex in the highest life of the human spirit, and the attempt to exclude her from her proper share in that life has always been and always will be disastrous. She has her place there as well as man, and if she be kept out of it, her work will not be done at all, and the price of her expulsion will be the death of civilization. She played an important part in the establishment of Christianity, and she will play a still more important part in the establishment of the final truth. To consort with her henceforth, the tallest will not need to stoop or sacrifice aught of zenith-seeking thought and aspiration; but she will be to the choicest and grandest spirits of the race the best gift and most efficient aid that He who is at once Wisdom and Love, and knoweth the wisdom of love, can bestow.

In all natural rights, women are, simply by reason

of their participation in a common humanity, the equals of men, and so they should be in all civil and political rights. Man can assign no reason for any right he claims which does not also confer the right on woman; though, of course, in regard to her, as in regard to the lower races, the enjoyment of the right is a matter of development. In the marriage relation and out of it, the sexes should stand in the world-long race of life on a footing of perfect equality. The husband is the superior, but he no more owns the wife than the wife owns him, and he has no right to preserve his superiority by imposing tyrannical burdens on her. If he cannot preserve his superiority without doing this, he has no right to it. Throw open to women every avenue to self-ownership and independence. As to the privilege of saying which one of two thirsty demagogues shall have the next pull at the public spigot, and how the ruin of the country shall be conducted, — for this henceforth will be the extent and dignity of the elective franchise within the Christian civilization, — it is difficult to see how any one, male or female, with a particle of self-respect, can exercise it. It would be a degradation to woman to confer it on her, as the Christian civilization will probably do in its last throes; but the future will know how to give her her proper and purifying influence on public affairs, and to it the whole question may safely be remitted without dogmatic prescription. And when she shall have a large and secure activity, and be no longer excluded from any occupation for which she is qualified, she will lay aside the peculiar weaknesses which now attend her womanhood, and make her

peculiar gifts and beautiful nature felt in the world, to the prolongation of its life and the good of human kind. The question is not at all what is womanly and what unwomanly. That has nothing to do with the real matter. The first tyrants, no doubt, thought it very unmanly in man to want to be free. Nature is equal to her office; all we have to do is to do right, and let her take her course. To emancipate woman is not going to convert her into a rhinoceros or a Rocky-Mountain goat, but will only make her a nobler, truer, purer, and better woman. The first long stride to be taken towards the removal or diminution of prostitution, is, to increase the sense of individuality in woman, — to make her strong enough to take care of herself, with right, and will, and opportunity to do so. She will not love you less, nor be less worthy of your love, or a less valuable helpmeet for the change.

The disgusting flummeries of chivalry, and the objections which that old bedizzened, smirking, “me-ladie-love” spirit urges against making its pretty fool a free, strong, and majestic spirit, are not less an insult to all genuine and noble womanhood, than the grossness which it replaced. The time has come for a truer and more honoring appreciation than this miserable varnish of adulation over despotism; and you may depend upon it, that there is no genuine manhood in any man who prefers that his nearest and best-loved spirit shall be his dependant and slave.

This man said, therefore, to the husband: “Your wife must be far more to you than the mother of your children and the mistress of your house. She must

be the equal and constant companion of your spirit, and you twain shall be, not one flesh, but one spirit. For the Infinite made Man not only male and female, but also soul and soul, a pair."

He said: "Heed no longer now those fatal words, that in heaven there is neither marriage nor giving in marriage; the reason given overturns the proposition. In the immortal life there will be both marriage and giving in marriage; every real marriage contracted here will survive the tomb, and more true marriages will be contracted there than here; for at death we cast no attribute of sex but physical ones."

He said, too, in regard to the degrading weakness which makes men and women, despairing of a satisfying and nobler love, stoop to inferior objects to still the cravings of infirm and unheroic hearts: "The holy women, brides of Christ, at whom the world is so fond of sneering, are grandly, beautifully right, at least in spirit, though incorrectly taught, and they shall have their reward in heaven, to which they go free and pure, and not all soiled and trampled in the rarely successful attempt to find genuine love and companionship in this world."

For he held that, in the past, there had been very little genuine love in the world; that neither men nor women, as a general rule, had been capable of loving in any large and stainless sense of the word, and that the relation of superiority and dependence between them had been hostile to any sentiment which a noble spirit would be pleased with, or accept as satisfying; but he judged that henceforth in the world, the conditions both objective and subjective, on which lasting

and life-governing affection depends, would begin to exist, and that men and women, with increased knowledge, and purer, truer, and stronger spirits, would begin, at last, to stand in the beautiful and sacred relation designed by the Father of all.

For he knew most distinctly and taught most clearly that what the world now needs in the relation of the sexes as well as in all other relations, is increased depth and strength and truth of thought and spirit. It is quite vain to tinker at details and expect relief from thence. A lax divorce law now does nothing but help on the impending disintegration of the Christian marriage relation. Recrimination cannot reach the real seat of the evil. The weakness, vanity, fickleness, duplicity, and jealousy of women are to be cured as well as the same and robuster faults of men. When the tides of the central force shall break forth upon the world, it will accomplish all things needful at a single inundation; it will at the same time make men and women free and fit to be free. We can look for freedom, purity, and truth only to the Infinite Spirit's process of building up and strengthening human souls, knowing well and thanking Him that we now stand on the verge of another deluge, the birth of a new age, and a better organization of all the relations of man to God and to man.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CRISIS OF 1860.

ONLY once, at the most momentous crisis which has yet occurred in human history, did this boy — for then he was no more — come into willing contact with the rulers of this land. For many years, prosecuting an induction which was to show him the amount of demolition indispensable to the production of the future, and reveal to him the precise point at which he could rationally begin to exert himself to save, he had been traversing the country north, south, east, west, in unexampled silence and retention, bending his deep, dark eyes on the faces of men, and listening attentively to their words, but answering them nothing; and when the induction was completed, it became his duty to say something to the politicians of this land. So, sacrificing nothing of dignity, having nothing to ask of them, only having some words to leave in their ears, he went to the cess-pool, which clouds the name of Washington by wearing it, to see them. He had no egotism or enthusiasm which could make him commit an indiscretion, and he had a holy pride in his truth, which prevented him from exposing one gleam of its heavenly disk to contempt; but he had,

too, an elevation which would not debase itself at the beck of expediency, and so standing erect on the lowest slopes of his truth, he spoke thence to the politicians.

To obtain a clear idea of his purpose and its effectiveness, let us pause for a moment and comprehend the situation as it really existed. And first, though it was customary in those days to say, with gratulation, that the people ruled this country, the assertion was a hideous lie. Cliques of thieving politicians ruled it by their low arts, and ruined it too — as it deserved — for the sake of keeping or getting office. Like the dishonest manipulators of an oracle, these men fixed up and presented to the people the issues on which they were to be permitted to vote, and invoked the response they wanted, or interpreted into a different one the meaning they chose. We have no intention of exposing ourself, fruitlessly, to brutal abuse, by making here an analysis of the working of the American electoral scheme. Its defectiveness and monstrous abuses have already been partially set forth by various writers and speakers; but the subject has never been handled as it should be, because men who are competent to treat it, see at once the uselessness of any exposition and the coarse libels to which it would subject them. It is enough to say, comprehensively, that the entire system seems to have been concocted purpose to give unscrupulous demagogues an opportunity to destroy the country, and to reward them for doing so; while it is also perfectly certain that, within the Christian civilization no remedy will ever be applied.

Many distinguished American speakers and writers, since the birth of the republic, have represented the Muse of History as inclining a curious ear to hear whether Christianity any more than Paganism, has rendered men capable of long-continued self-government. The prosopopœia has been a favorite one, and has been used with fine rhetorical effect, but it was a very uncalled-for piece of business. Perspicacity had no need to wait for the transmutation of necessity into fact. It was perfectly certain, from the beginning, that Christian freedom would soon follow its predecessor to the tomb of the Capulets. Far more, it was perfectly certain that its career would be shorter and more violent than that of Pagan freedom, because the Christian civilization was built on a relation which is changeful, an equilibrium which was unstable. The movement of the race was certain to displace the terms from their Christian position, and owing to the dogmatic character of Christianity, the slightest displacement was sure to result in the destruction of the entire Christian organism. The displacement, accordingly, has occurred. The emancipation of our unhappy brethren resulted from the displacement of the finite term; and the advancing consolidation of all Christian governments is resulting from the displacement of the Infinite term from its Christian position.

But while he understood all this as no one else in that age did, this boy was no fatalist. On the contrary, he was, as we shall show you hereafter, the first thinker who ever reconciled the law-governed liberty—freedom is a badly chosen word in that connection—of the human will, with the requirements of the move-

ment of the universe. He knew that man cannot change or defeat the ultimate future ; what it shall be, even to its minutest shade, is already indefeasibly fixed by the shoreless and eternal forces of the cosmos ; but man may, by wisdom and control of forces, determine the manner in which the future shall be reached, and the price that shall be paid for it.

Therefore had the events of those memorable years carried to their last intensesness, — the *ultima thule* of sorrow and undying scorn, — the bitterness and darkness of this boy's breaking heart. It was not egotism that told him, if he had power, he could guide this land to the future without the entire extinction of the present ; but not only had he no power, but he was forbidden to pay the price at which power was held. The whole matter was to be decided forever by the politicians who then had power, and whose helpless slaves the people were ; and what style of men were the politicians, and what were they doing ? Pardon us, if we speak plainly, and also if we seem to recur to topics which we have already partially touched. The recurrence will be only formal, not essential. Bent equally on spoils and the pettiest form of propagandism, the opposing sets of politicians had succeeded, by means of irresponsible conventions, the last and most dangerous contrivance of ravenous and fretful factions, in forcing on the country issues which, in their hands, meant the initiation of death. The world was in travail, and they compelled a resort to the Cæsarean operation and the sacrifice of the mother. Little enlightened and considerate attachment to municipal freedom on the one hand, little sagacious pa-

triotism or catholic humanity on the other, actuated these men; but abundant greed, prejudice, animosity, industrious malice, and desperate ambition impelled them. Knowing little of that gravid age and its relations, little of the real causes of the opposite evils they mutually complained of, little of the forces which had constructed them, and of the meaning of the events in which they were bearing a mournfully conspicuous part, they came to maturity and power in time to find the country in a crisis, through which no nation has ever yet passed and lived. They found her on the brink of a chasm which divided one civilization from another, clutching the giddy verge of a bottomless perdition, while the same dark forecast which revealed her peril to all competent eyes, showed that, if she were but once hurled in, there was no escape from that abyss forever, but that an irretrievable woe would add her voice too, to the awful chorus of the damned nations.

The fate-appointed and irresistible movement of human thought in that age was towards unification and the absolute. That is to say, the movement, after having long been analytical and zetetic, was then becoming synthetical, and the new synthesis was of absolutes. The consolidating tendency was seen in government and nations, the world over; in Italy, in Germany, even in the Iberian peninsula, but most conspicuously in America. The synchronous and identical movement towards the absolute had manifested itself in new systems of philosophy, new theories of human rights, new views of human nature and its relations. The system of government which our

fathers founded was the product of this unifying movement in its earlier stages. They yoked sovereignties together with a Federal bond, under a national head, in low relief. Naturally enough, their preliminary declaration prophesied something beyond what was then attainable; but they founded their actual government, as they could not but find it, on the essential Christian idea of a balancing of organisms with a reciprocity of rights and duties. They did not entertain or build upon the idea of an absolute in man. Their work was in politics what that of the great Newton was in cosmology, and while it was also prophetic, was yet, like his, so essentially Christian that it never could have been achieved under a different system of faith. But the prolongation of the movement towards the absolute soon threatened to destroy the government of our fathers and civilization along with it, and to save them required such wisdom as this world had never seen. *A priori*, and as a matter of the coldest abstraction, a polity which has no great inspiring and sustaining faith beneath it, will never mark a permanent era in the progress of the race. Liberty is literally a life, and a written constitution can no more confer it than a treatise on physiology can beget a child.

The understanding has never yet supplied a national life, and never can do so; for after it has exhausted all its contrivances, and sated every want to which it can minister, there still remains a lack which makes all other supply a dust-heap. It is the province of the understanding, the laboratory of forms, to mould the frame-work of government and society; but the in-

dwelling spirit, the vital energy which makes nations long-lived and glorious, must be drawn from a different source. This is but a preliminary and narrow statement of the truth which, with God's help, will broaden on through every page of this book to the last; but it is enough if, omitting larger questions as to the political action of creative forces, you admit, from the already dwarfed example of Gallic madness, that it is vanity for any people to advance their political institutions unless a simultaneous progress of the spiritual man to support and make good the change be possible. Minds that creep demand little proofs for great truths, as they would prop the universe itself with straws, and Nature kindly supplies them with little proofs and straws. Grecian freedom, certainly not less than Greek literature and art, was due to the change of religion which ensued when civilization migrated from the older continents into Europe. Had there been no Homer, there could have been no Pericles, no Aristides the Just, no Demosthenes. When the second dawn, the work of the crucified Redeemer of mankind, began, it was with a faith fitted in every line to the terrible exigency. Let shallow infidels, from Gibbon down, rail as they will, without Christianity precisely as Christianity was, there would have been, to the last hour of time, no dawn again forever, no Tell, no Wallace, no Washington. In like manner, had that holy thing with which these later ages have travailed, been born in peace, the handiwork of Washington would not now be crumbling into dust. Europe has been struggling vainly for many generations to establish republican institutions; but an invis-

ible and resistless power, the essentially undemocratic character of Christianity, has mocked every such effort, and made the Reformation itself only a preparation for coming absolutism, and is driving us, too, with frightful rapidity, straight on to Cæsarism. We owed our democratic institutions to the lucky accident of having been colonies. With nothing but Yankee smartness to sustain them, and under the influence of the old modes of thought and feeling, it was certain, from the hour in which they were set up, that they could not long be maintained; and then, true to that eternal action of forces out of which competent minds draw the prophetic uses of law, speedily came for us, with differences which make flippant politicians deny any coincidence, precisely the same crisis in which the ancients lost their smaller liberties and civilization.

And what sort of spectacle did our "great" men, our noble statesmen, our sage "philosophers," our tender philanthropists, exhibit then? The world does not clearly comprehend it yet, but it will understand it better and better as the ages shall pass away, and history will write their names in drops of scorn that would macerate triple brass. Could prescience, stooping to expostulation, prevail on them to consent for the future to be born without the extinction of the present? Could terror itself be employed to make these fanged maw-worms lift their murderous heads out of the vitals of the nation till higher and efficacious forces could be administered? Could they be persuaded, cajoled, or frightened into letting remedial and creative truth come down from God and save this

distracted and death-struck land? No; the experiment was tried, and posterity shall yet read the story of it, with names, dates, and incidents in full, as we cannot give it here. Like just so many *perdiemed* swine, the rulers of this land did not dream that it was in any danger; those who raised the cry of "wolf," only did it as a pitiful electioneering trick; and if an angel had come down from heaven and implored them to pause, they would have jeered him from the earth. If you had gone to them, and tried, with hours of labored explanation, and proofs drawn from every department of human thought, to make them understand something of the connection between the spiritual life of man, and the rise and fall of dynasties and empires, they would only have called you a maniac for your pains. Greedy, giddy, cold, besotted, sightless, they extended no hand, no, not one finger, to aid the Country to rise from her awful peril and live; but they strenuously urged her on to the brink, and in that terrible moment when she was poised on the verge, about to take the eternal, irrecoverable plunge, they still gambled on all the same for place, and twanged their spurious and hideous philanthropy, or howled for their heaven-insulting, world-wronging "rights;" and then between them they clove the bleeding Land in twain, tore her fingers from the mourning rocks, and hurled the quivering fragments into the abyss. If heaven and hell are not mere figures of speech, then there was joy in Erebus and lamentation in all the realms of light, when Fate chose such men as these for arbiters of a civilization's doom, and guardians of the holiest interests of man.

Well, when the maw of Ruin is hungry for a man or a set of men, nothing more is to be said. They will go straight on into it, in spite of you, and only curse you and deride you for trying to keep them out. Individuals, however, do sometimes learn wisdom from preliminary disaster, but nations never do. The reason is, because nations are defective in consciousness. The great men of a nation are, or should be, its consciousness; but if the consciousness be an incompetent, lying, greedy, villainous affair, then there is no hope for that nation. More; in a democratic land, the architects of ruin are always the successful tricksters of the hour and the darlings of a cheated and fated people. It makes little difference which faction steers the ship when she is once on her downward course. Either is sure to be applauded so long as it is at the helm, and when the next succeeds, it runs amid shouts and pæans, straight across to the rocks on the other side of the channel. So this boy found it in his intercourse with those politicians. His uncomprehended sagacity was hooted on all sides as imbecile nonsense. He could not even find any one who would admit that war was at hand. The high-bred South and the mighty North were respectively equal to the accomplishment of all their purposes, and God and his truth were too contemptible an element to be taken into the account. Like a blundering chemist, in analyzing their age, they threw away the real matter and retained only worthless dross. Little thought they, in their surfeit and arrogance, that God could pick up a straw and break them to pieces with it, and that he would do it. With their light and power, their freedom and oppor-

tunity, the gift of a peasant boy of Galilee, whom they would have spit on if he had come into their presence, their greed and egotism heard only lunacy in the voice which intimated that they could not rule the world better than its God, or had better pause and examine into His ways afresh, or they might possibly fail in their aims, and reap infamy instead of honor. The boy did not allow his passionate and burning heart to pit itself in contest against the coldness and blindness of these men. That would have been enthusiasm and madness. The depth and calmness of the tide of flame were equal to its majesty and fervor. He told them what duty required him to tell them, and then quickly prepared to leave them; but before he went, a rare combination of circumstances enabled him to say words which were the fit conclusion of such a mission. Standing where the voices of the mighty dead had echoed, he listened for hours to the wild torrents of folly and hate which the opposite factions poured at each other, and then, that night, with some of those same men for his auditors, he stood up with cheeks of ashen hue, but with no tremor in his voice or frame, and spoke. He began by begging that the leaders and demigods of an age from which he was excluded, would pardon his presumption in rising to address them. He had long wished that his eyes might satisfy themselves by looking, face to face, at the rulers who were charged with the decision of the momentous questions of that hour. He had looked and was satisfied, — courtesy forbade his saying how entirely, — and because he was satisfied, his lips, unused to speech, at last were opened. He had no expectation

that what he was going to say would make any impression on them; but he hoped they would listen with patience, notwithstanding his youth and obscurity, for when forces are progressing, age is not proof of the greatest wisdom, and office is scarcely, at any time, a qualification for the highest perception.

He said recrimination was the mother-tongue of little minds. It was worse than useless to bandy epithets, to inquire who was to blame for slavery, or to retort the accusation of treason with that of usurpation. If the people of this land should ever come to understand their true condition, and the causes of the evils that afflicted them, they would have little disposition left to hate any but those who hate, to denounce any but the denunciatory, to criticise any but the intolerant, beastly, and inflammatory. Their peril was one which philippics would not frighten, nor chicanery balk, nor violence deter. In words of the cold understanding's choosing, it was, that the forces of the Christian civilization were spent and its end reached, and the events of that age were the political death-pang of the fundamental Christian idea. The only question that remained for competent minds to discuss, the only practical duty for pure and strong spirits to consider, was, at what cost the passage to the future was to be effected. While he knew that the people of both sections were ready to pay ruin as the price if prompted, one doubt had lingered in his mind on account of his obscurity and his consequent lack of intimate personal knowledge of those who were the sovereign rulers of the land at that moment; but his perception was now improved, and his doubt decided.

Those before him would achieve immortality, — such as it was, — as the destroyers of the Christian civilization. Since the work had to be done, he bade them God speed in it, and hoped they would do it quickly and well.

Taking up the question of ethics, he said he would leave to theologians the absurdity and wickedness of considering it judicially. He could consider it only as a part of the movement of the cosmos. Laying on Christianity, so far as he blamed anything for what was only the course and order of nature, the responsibility for the destruction of civilization in getting rid of slavery, he saw that Christianity itself was the product of the same forces as the evils it sanctioned, and the destructive fanaticism it fostered. It was easy for a pigmy, standing in the sunset, to cast a longer shadow than the angel who drew the curtains of the dawn. If Christianity had forbidden or attempted to forbid slavery, it would have been not the heavenly thing it was, but a pert and superficial piece of smartness. It would not have been a product of the cosmos, and could never have done for human nature what it had done. It was only the rudest faiths that busied themselves with moral codes; noble ones did not need to do it. The prohibitions or the injunctions of any faith, were to be found, not in its legislation, — the word applied to the highest life is contemptible, — but in the deep, essential forces of its nature. Having thus broadened the track for his passage, he followed it, tracing briefly the history of induction, and of man's mastery over nature, explaining the relation of modern utilitarianism to the whole movement of

the race, and showing why the criminality of slavery had not till recently been discovered. He then entered into a rapid analysis of the idea of sin embodied in Christianity, and showed that the Christian faith, from the very nature of its doctrine of the origin of evil, was disqualified for the work of removing the slavery of the lowest race, except by the ultimate destruction of society. Christianity, representative and segment of only a part of the movement of the cosmos, concentrating its energies and entire attention on evil within the will, had no better solution to offer of the problem of its presence there, than a personification of all ulterior agencies under the name of Satan. From the time the will converted evil into sin, Christianity understood the situation clearly; but what lay outside the will, either on the side of origin or later than redemption, Christianity knew nothing about, and if it had known, would not have been suited to its cycle, and could never have accomplished its mission. Hence, it was perfectly inevitable that one Christian community, freed from a particular social evil by the movement of the cosmos, should think only of condemning, hating, and destroying another Christian community not so freed; and it was equally inevitable that the latter should cling in frenzy to an evil which Christianity did not and could not discover to be such, and should thus convert an obstacle in the path of the race into a heinous and fatal sin. He thus insisted that, from the dawn of Christianity, it was fixed that the Christian civilization should perish at precisely that point of emancipation and endowment to which it had now borne the race.

The movement of the race, by the aid of Christianity and of the civilization to which it gave birth, had passed beyond the Christian stand-point, and now began to recognize an absolute in man. The Christian organism had gone on converting force from physical to spiritual modes, and assimilating the conquests of the understanding into reason, so far as it could do so. The gradual breaking down of the organism and removal of the scaffolding had for many ages been revealing more and more of the product, and Christian freedom, the largest and purest the world had yet seen, had been the result. At last, the whole product was displayed, and it was seen to be an absolute in man, and this, for the want of a proper organism, was destroying civilization and society. Its first heart-throb was shaking Southern society to pieces, and its next could not but destroy the entire Christian organism. If the North had not still retained the Christian method, while cramming it with infidel conclusions, slavery might have been carted away without crushing down the overloaded vehicle. So surely as the North in destroying slavery, should destroy Southern society along with it, so surely it would itself presently be destroyed by later modes of the same causes which had impelled it to this crime. The weaker section would be ruined first, but not until it had given the stronger, too, its death-blow. The destruction of the South would be only the sign and beginning of a larger demolition. The South, with its reciprocity between races, and its peculiar school of politics, was the last possible expression of the political forces of Christianity, but it was built on a brutal crime which

all the universe abhorred, and which could not be permitted to endure another hour. This crime the South refused to surrender, and found warrant for the refusal in the faith from which the civilization had sprung; while a higher reason at the North, breaking out of the Christian organism but still a slave to its spirit, was crashing through and through the last ramparts that stood between existing society and the long-heaving billows of the shoreless force.

The one great lack at this time, and it would prove fatal, was of a proper organization of the terms of the absolute, and a consequent normal life of the minor one. Christian society had reached terms which it was incapable of managing, and the movement of the race, without a curb and wildly careering under the heel of Fanaticism, was rushing to the gulf of ruin. The world was dying for the want of an organism capable of continuous and endless appropriation and conversion; understanding broad enough to grasp all the facts of nature; reason stalwart enough to assume; spirit strong enough to construct such an organism. The ancient civilization perished in evolving man out of the homogeneous and ascertaining him as a definite fact, the antithesis of a definite Infinite; the modern civilization was perishing in evolving the absolute in man.

Then falling into the political track, and reading from its milestones inscriptions of which none there had ever dreamed, he showed how the vast material interests developed by the Christian civilization were giving birth to strong governments all over the world; and the impetus imparted to this tendency by the fact

that in the absolute is the union of all the modes of being. The only sufficient counterpoise to an absolute government was an absolute humanity, but this Christianity could never furnish. Therefore, the essential Christian idea of an aristocratic middle-term being now forever obsolete, there remained for all Christian nations, to the end of time, only a Janus-faced Cæsarism. Abolition being the preliminary, and for the Christian civilization illegitimate, assertion of an absolute in man, would lead to a central despotism, which would end in periodic rebellions, final dismemberment, anarchy, and chaos, because the popular faith had nothing to oppose to such a consummation. As to the points of constitutional law involved, he said that only stupidity or dishonesty could regard the work of the fathers as other than embryonic and initiatory. The fathers had been fully sensible of its incompleteness, and had been astonished at its working so well, and it had done so only because all the forces of the age worked with it. In obedience to the unifying tendency, the fathers had gone as far as they could towards founding a nationality, and had stopped where they must do so, leaving a thousand questions unsettled, and thousands more undreamed of. The progress of the consolidating movement since their day had given rise to two parties, one of which moving in the same direction as the fathers had put upon their work a construction not warranted by its text, and the other reactionary and eager to refine away what the fathers had done. It was not difficult to foresee which of these would triumph. The very resistance of their opponents would only accelerate and aggrandize their victory.

Concluding then, in words which never ceased to vibrate in the memory of all who heard them, he said that if his eyes could ever weep, he would weep then at the doom which awaited the unconscious people of this land. Never were there such chimeras as the two which the opposite factions represented there were preparing to pursue. Never was there so melancholy a misconception of what it is that confers the privilege of great actions, and never was there so lamentable a miscalculation of the possibilities of action which yet remained. Neither a polity founded on an evil which remained only because the cycle's faith had not depth and strength enough to remove it, nor one inaugurated on the ruins of the faith which had given birth to the civilization, could be aught but steps in a grand progress towards barbarism. Wisdom could have made the passage to the future without a dissolution of society, but race-electing, race-crashing Christianity and its "statesmen" forbade, and it was useless to lament the result. There was no sorrow like that which felt the uselessness of tears. He would willingly die at that moment to save his countrymen from even the least of the woes that were coming on them; but the movement of the race and psychological necessities of the case demanded their ruin, and it was fast approaching; while they, alas, with a blindness such as the world had never seen, were eagerly courting it. While it was a law of nature that the men of any age should see just deep enough into the order of things to set zealously about the work which the movement of the race required, and no deeper, this truth had also a multiplex action, by virtue of

which, those whose blindness and incompetency forbade their helping the movement of the race in any other way, always helped it by their own destruction. When he looked into the future, he saw no such visions as had been described there that day. He did not see, upon the one hand, a fruitless and unmeaning repetition of an obsolete and evil past; nor did he see this land millenniumed by Abolition, scattering the splendors of a new civilization over the earth, but he saw obstinacy, incompetency, and madness defeating that consummation; and then he saw her star, veiled in sackcloth and departing from the heavens, while the islands of the sea were rising in robes of light and beauty, to wear again the coronet of stars which had decked the brows of Athens and England.

“Think not,” he said, “that despondency imparts too dark a hue to the picture of our decline. If there is any law to govern the movement of the race, Europe will undergo petrification in order that the assets of civilization may have an indestructible depository, while this land, appointed to a different destiny, will be rent asunder and trampled out in blood. Point not to our material wealth and wonderful inventions, and boast that they must forever preserve us against a relapse into barbarism, as the Romans, too, vainly called their conquering city eternal; for these are not civilization. True, they are an important and ever-increasing fruit of civilization, and so, also, is military strength in not less degree; but military strength did not save Rome. No! but it bore her directly on with resistless impulse over the very line that led, and in that cycle was the only one that could have led, to the catas-

trophe. Could any one who stood upon the Capitol and gazed at the triumphal processions of the victorious proconsuls, the captive kings, the piles of gold, the countless trophies of successful war, and heard the shouts of rejoicing which proclaimed another province added to an already boundless empire, have foretold the day when desolation should brood over that magnificent scene, and the eternal city be the spoil of barbarians? Then, neither let us, blinding ourselves to the existence of an all-prevailing law, because its mode of operation happens to be changed, look to every point of the compass and say, Lo, there is no brutal soldiery, there are no barbarians, and we shall, at the worst, escape extinction. For these portentous questions of slavery, economy, political and spiritual subordination, and the absolute rights of man, bearing precisely the same relation to our deeper civilization and the causes of its decline, that conquest and the municipal rights of citizens bore to Rome, are hourly growing more unmanageable and destructive, and in the hands of this incompetent age are rapidly leading to the extinction of our civilization. You have already elected to convert these Christian freemen into the same corrupt and soulless hordes as gave Rome a master. You have already chosen the long and dwindling line of the Cæsars, and Fate will count the ballots and install Augustus in the next generation. You have left no hope to the spirit of man, but that the hostile zones may quickly blot each other out in blood, and darkness swiftly settle on the scene, so that the dawn may come the sooner. Only charlatanry, indeed, would profess to know precisely what degree

of demolition must precede reconstruction, because the freedom of the human will still has a large control over that question, and it is certain that the darkness will never again be so deep as at the close of the Pagan day; but do not imagine that, after what the 'statesmen' of this land have done and are doing, the world can or will surrender Christianity without a dissolution of society.

"Yet," he added, "be this our solace, that though the prospect is dark for us, it cannot but be bright for man. Civilizations, indeed, must perish, like all things earthly, but all their wealth descends unwasted and undivided, to man, the heir. However dark shall be the doom of this land, we know that the cause of man is safe. Of all things earthly, it alone is safe forever, — blooming in the spring of all the cycles, bearing fruit in their autumnal ages, and rising with larger life from their tombs. It alone meets with no disasters. Mutation, accident, and malice are powerless to harm it. Death and barbarism are not less its ministers than the golden ages. 'Tis it that makes epochs, begets and crushes conquerors, enthrones and deposes dynasties, builds up and pulls down nations, rulers, altars, gods. Its brazen prow ploughs down armadas. Its ram's horn prostrates the walls that resist it. It speaks the word, and civilizations crumble into dust. Then, let the friend of his race in this age, seeing ruin coming on even his own land, only deepen his purpose and labor on in calmness, nursing in his breaking heart a great hope; for all is well.

"Out of the perdition from which Christianity and the barbarians once snatched the human mind, the

world will rise again. From the funeral pyre with which stricken Civilization, dead of womb, decayed at heart, and performing her suttee, is setting our age ablaze, a new spirit will step forth, bearing in her hand a vase of fire to kindle the undying flame afresh, on the other bank of the dark river. Inspiration and nobleness of soul, and all the blessed influences that attend it, will again be born into the world. Civilization cannot live without them. From her womb or from her tomb they must arise. As the waters of the deep, once dissipated in the air, came down to dwell in their ocean-troughs, so must that sublimer sea now similarly driven from the earth, return to its dry and desert bed, and on its breast, forever, through stormy darkness and sunlit repose, will sweep again barge, argosy, and galleon, rich with the commerce of the soul. Truth is never long or willingly destructive, but always and at last conservative. She calls devils to destroy, only that she may then call angels to rebuild, and Cleon, Voltaire, and Satan, are unwilling benefactors of mankind. 'Tis so, even in the smaller beneficent changes that take place within the same civilization. Tradition, unseated, finds her groove again, and is content. Unearthed Superstition digs her cave again in the shaded slope of Truth, and burrows there. The blood bounds as of yore, the pulses leap as then; the sun rises and sets, the seasons come and go, the crops are sown, and reaped, and gathered in, the world still holds together, and has not vanished in the shock; and small-souled Fear is satisfied. But Love, looking to nobler ends, cherishes a sublimer satisfaction. She sees human nature, by reason of the aid its worst

passions have given its noblest ones, entering a higher and purer sphere where its achievements will outweigh all the glories of the past. So, to-day, the soul of man, standing in the bloody sunset of the Christian day and gazing into the sublime and mysterious cosmos visible from thence, is giving birth to a new civilization; and springing thence, it will find in the light of another morning, an ether which will qualify the wing that presses it, and renew from age to age, the flight that never again shall end or tire. Two cycles of preparatory ages have passed away, and now the full development is at hand. In the drama of the cosmos, the Hindu, Jewish, Greek, and Christian acts, with their shifting scenes, are ended, and now the fifth and last is almost ready. There is not a straw flying in the sky, which does not cry aloud, 'The final civilization cometh.' You may resist, you will resist, — the Southerner first, the stronger North, afterwards, and more terribly, — but you will all alike reap ruin by your obstinacy. Through you, or over you, by your agency, or by your overthrow, that change must and will come.

"One final labor remains to be done. It is yours and mine. Let us set about it. I hail you brethren and arrange the cast. You have your purposes, and I have mine; the work remaining, is divisible; without conflict, we will work in the same yoke. Venerable senators, potent rulers, the lowliest of boys disputes not your right to lead. Revolutionists of either section, be ye Catalines, or be ye Washingtons, lead off. 'Tis yours to shatter the iron dome which crushes down the human soul, to the end, that up

through the piercing splinters of the broken roof, another may lead the race of men, and open to their pain-purged eyes the reaches which extend from thence, and reinaugurate upon the earth, inspiration and the reign of spirit. What the movement of the race requires of you, is to go on assisting the democratic idea, by your fanatical advocacy, or insane resistance, in its great labor of wiping your all from the face of the earth, of breaking down every barrier of caste and race, of crushing into plastic jelly, all nations, ranks, and conditions of men, so that the creative breath may breathe on it again, and the soul of man burst the gates of death, and gladden the universe once more. Throw white-lipped conservatism to the dogs. What the world asks of you now, is rashness, insanity, and revolutionary frenzy; what the world needs, is wreck, ruin, and barbarism. Conscript Fathers, you do not overestimate your own importance; the world needs *you!* Down with the iron canopy of dogmatism, down with all that you revere, all that you would save. Wield the axe; Fate will guide it through your necks, to the roots of every incumbrance, in its turn. Strike! the iron dome will crumble, and the imprisoned soul breathe in the breath of life once more. Strike! the smitten rock will open, and the life-giving waters gush upon the famished host. The world can spare no portion of your blindness, no mad suggestion of your guilt. The future, with a various logic, will acquit you of fore-purpose, and with the premise of contempt raise up forgiveness to call you blessed. Spring upon the ramparts, and tear, and batter; there is a power that will overrule you and bend you to its ends. 'Cry

havoc, and let slip the dogs of war.' Achieve all your aims of selfish and unscrupulous ambition. Work thoroughly, work ably, work successfully! there are those who will work as well. Uproot and destroy; there are those who will plant, and build again. Lacerate and pierce; there are those who will bind and heal. Darken and desolate the land; plunge it limb by limb in blood and fire; extinguish even the last spark of civilization, if that now be possible. Topple down the edifice that Jesus and your fathers reared, and perish in its ruins. Make your names a stench in the nostrils of the Muse of History. Then repent too late, and curse the wombs that bore you. Rouse out of hell the fiend Remorse to gnaw your festering heart-strings. Beget children to despise and execrate you. Invoke your fathers, and lo! Washington, king of the godlike train, rises in his shroud of clouded glory, and lifting high his fleshless hand, devotes you to unending slavery. Listen, recreants, to the anathemas that burn and hiss upon his shadowy lips. Then say, if Judas went and hanged himself, what will you do when you see what you have done? Oh, go on, go on; hungry perdition is yawning to receive you, and heaven and earth are waiting to laugh at your destruction.

"But beyond the darkness, a new world emerges,—a healing prospect rises on the sorrowing eye.

"When I look upon that prospect, I behold a valley whose name is peace, and whose rivers are the waters of life. In its green and fertile plains, the harvest is waving, and flowers like those of Paradise unroll their purple splendors. The genius of star-born and absolute Humanity sits enthroned there, with wreaths

of victory and joy on her war-wrung, but immortal brow, and clustering millions with palms in their hands are shouting their hosannas. And chiselled on the marble of her throne there is a lowly name not yet often spoken in this world — the name of one whose uncomplaining heart found its first rest beneath the willows ages before his humble life and teachings asserted themselves in the world and rose out of the depths of humility to the heights of a satisfying grandeur. For, as Jesus of Nazareth came to redeem and purify the soul, so shall another, his brother, strengthen and crown it, and found at last the Republic of God, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

Then, coming down from the stand, he passed out into the night, and disappeared from that scene forever. No language could ever describe what his anguish was then. It seemed that the crime of those selfish politicians, which should have crushed their putrid hearts like rotten squashes, passed over their shallow consciences, and fell with grinding and destroying weight on him who alone foresaw its consequences, — who alone could do aught to mitigate them. And resolving to do all that lay in his power to diminish the extent of the ruin, and to save whatever could still be saved, he devoted himself day and night, for many months, and at fearful cost, to that labor,

CHAPTER XIV.

ONE NIGHT'S AGONY.

THE means he chose was the only one within his reach — the preparation of such a diminished statement of the condition of the age, as should call the attention of his countrymen to the perils that threatened them, and smooth to some extent, the approach of the coming Truth. As through the remainder of the summer and autumn, he labored at his purpose, his anxiety and toil began to tell terribly on his health, and his once vigorous constitution was slowly breaking up into a weary drift of helplessness and pain. This was a calamity which, to a man with such a sense of duty unaccomplished, can be described by no word short of awful; but he quickly decided not to care for it, if he could only last long enough to warn an age which despised him, and which, on his part, he did not and could not love. He expected no return of money, or honor, from his labor, and cared for none. It would take his earthly all to complete and publish it, and he should be left to fight disease and poverty, as he might, for bread. He should not even copyright his labor, because he wanted thievery left free to pirate it without restraint; and in order that the sacred privacy of the personal re-

lations of his Truth might not be violated by a curious and coarse-minded world, the secret of the authorship, carefully guarded, was to die with him. The only struggle his heart had to make, and it was a bitter one, was in regard to the extent of his work. If he could have hoped to enlarge that utterance and carry it deeper into the realm of truth, its present politic slenderness would have mattered little; but it now seemed impossible that he could live to do that, and, therefore, his revelation must be left to the same hap-hazard, incompetent, and corrupting treatment as all previous ones. Petty spirits, ambitious of distinction, would get hold of it, distort it, tinker at it, destroy it, as a means of gaining for themselves the mean rewards of fame. That thought was such agony as no human being now living in this world can or will ever appreciate.

But there were other pains, too, of a different nature, which were not small. It would have been an easy matter, a pleasure voyage, to his wing, to float through the new domain of metaphysics, and look down at all his predecessors, leaving men to talk of him with veneration, for ages after he should be dead; but duty told him not to be tempted to approach that sphere. Again, it would have been easy to sit down and write the truth in the full dimensions which God had given it in his soul; but to be compelled to maim and clip the truth, to pinch its soul, to feel its blood on his hand, — for his was no abstract and lifeless, but a living truth, — this was not easy. But in choosing between evils, his clearness and effectiveness were not to be driven from the smaller, because it happened to be the more painful. He saw clearly enough what he must sacrifice in order

to accomplish any good at all, and he made the sacrifice, great as it was, without a sigh, not to secure a better estate, be it remembered, for he was dying, and had nothing before him in this world but the death-pangs that would release him from it — but for the good of those who scorned him.

The world, even if selfishness should prompt it to save itself by listening to his warning, would never know or care for him; it would never understand or dream what he had been; it would never even speak his name; but he thought that, of all sublimity, and all glory, the loftiest and most unselfish is that of the Titan souls, who grow up and labor in the morning twilight, too early to be seen and known of men, and only the distant echoes of whose ponderous toil reach the baser ages; who lay their sledges down when their weary arms can no longer swing them, and die there in the dawn content, knowing that those for whom they have strained and sweated, will never understand them or do justice to their memory. With no trace of egotism in his thought or feeling, he knew that the reason why the world despised him, was because his life had a meaning above its mean and narrow grasp; and never from him who, through difficulties piled mountain high, was toiling with broken health and breaking heart that the world might the sooner see the face of the coming Truth in peace, could Fate or Change take away the estate of unapproachable grandeur which he possessed in that toil.

Lonely and unknown boy as he was, he was tasting a drop of the Father's own holy cup, — was feeling in his own wasted heart something of the mournfulness

of the sublimest joy and grandest state of being,—was toiling for a thankless and sightless race without reward, and perishing. In his withering arm he felt the muffled pulses of the Father's sorrow beating; æolian breaths from the respirations of the Infinite Incarnate Truth, music-waves of Him, came and healed the lesions of his curse-torn ears, and flooded all his spirit with lonely rapture; and his experience was only the grander and the sweeter because no vulgar alloy of earthly good, no breath of men debased it. And if, at times, along with this more than satisfying consciousness came the thought of the narrowness of his opportunity, still rigidly observing the limits he had set, reducing or trying to reduce his utterance to the size of the little vent, and not heeding the mighty repinings of his great heart, he toiled on through that infinite murmur unshaken by it. Determined only to do well the little that he could do at all, with every stroke of his pen racking open new leaks in the shattered tank of his life, fainting, almost dying from his toil, but still unconquerable, he upheld the frail barrier of his present scanty labor, the only one that now stood between him and the starless ocean of despair. Just over there, beyond it, he could see the long-heaving billows swelling higher and higher, curling their dark edges above him like the scalloped rim of a concave shell, and it would seem that the next moment they must break over him and engulf him forever; but he still stood there with a hand that had no thought of flinching till the end, nor in the end, and labored on in calmness, seeing far away across that wild and terrible prospect, the black waves of the sea of Nevermore swallowing up the pharos of his early hopes.

At times, physical exhaustion would prostrate him for days together, and then the tides of darkness, with one mighty upheaval, would crush through his frail barrier like rotten boards; but those bursts of despair would always raise him from his bed again, with increased determination, and then he would bend his calm, white face over his work afresh, as if his passionate soul were already gone to the stars and only a machine remained. With wondrous carefulness, yet with the rapidity of lightning, he wrote on and on until the compact and seamless argument, the dialectical *chef d'œuvre* of his life was done; and then, for a moment, at the last, the seal of the sepulchre that held his spirit was broken and the stone rolled away, and the once matchless prisoner snapped the death-strings off its wrists and ankles, and took the napkin from its mouth and came forth for a little while in all its pristine strength, and pride, and beauty. Then there was no anxious paring of expressions, no patient and murderous restriction, for these were no longer required; but all the power and glory of his nature swept out in sun-bursts, and poured on the closing pages of his work, the light that is waiting for the dawn of the next and eternal day.

Thus, at last, one day early in that winter, the last word was written and printed,—for he had conducted the two processes together. What language is searching enough in its power and pathos,—what speech of mortals sufficiently like that in which the pure, great angels would have lamented if Satan had triumphed and hurled them down the steps of heaven,—to describe his emotion, as he lifted his pale, sick face to

heaven and said: "Accept my mite, dear Father. Little as it is, I feel that I have done it bravely and well, my Father, else I could never bring it to Thee. Then why should I be sad, dear Father? I will cast sorrow out of my heart, and smile just once before I die; for I know that some of Thy holy angels will come and stand around my bed when I am dying and say, 'Poor boy, God our Father was with him and he did not live in vain.'"

Frail, sweet happiness, not of this world, born out of exquisite pain, and oh, how fleeting, dying with its first breath half-drawn upon its lip.

During the next few days the books were sent broadcast over the land by mail, at his expense, given away freely, gladly, to editors, lawyers, physicians, divines, merchants, teachers, farmers, to the most dissimilar ranks of men, till the last copy was gone. Then he waited to see what the result would be. The nearest presses were afraid to say anything till certain distant ones were heard from. Soon they were heard from. Some of them had simply pitched the book into their waste baskets. A few had something to say in approbation of the keenness of the observation, and the nobleness of the style. The rest, with various wisdom, extending from a sneer of five lines to half a column of Billingsgate, satirized it. A wit somewhere suggested that everybody who had been insulted with a copy should send it back to the author, and felicitously suggested a mock address, which was coarse enough to be popular. So the hint took at once, and many copies were sent back to the post-office from which they had been started. Then a thieving poli-

tician who was aspiring to an important office,—he afterwards got it,— and wanted at once to cover up his own beastly immorality under a show of zeal for the established faith, and to get rid of what, if listened to, would have spoilt this trade, advertised that he would pay for every copy sent him to be destroyed. So, one evening, this politician, with a mob at his heels, drunk at his expense, built a bonfire in the street, and piled on it the copies he had bought, and the post-master added to it the unclaimed and unaddressed rubbish that lay in his office. It seemed to the boy, as he stood near and saw the number committed to the flames, that scarcely a single copy could remain in existence. He stood by in silence till the fire burnt down and the jubilant crowd dispersed. He then went close up to the spot where the fatal flames had devoured his last hope, and stood there looking down at it and raking the ashes with his shoe. Presently the places of business and labor began to be closed, and the happy artisans and traders to seek their homes. Then he felt as if Fate were dealing him a new unkindly cut, hurling at him fresh contumely and exile, in thus withdrawing from him, as something forbidden to his eyes, the very faces of those who had places in the world. He stood there among the tall warehouses, looking at the pile of ashes, till all that part of the city was deserted, and the last sound of the retreating footsteps of the latest loiterer died away, and then he went down the street to an unfrequented spot on the bank of the river. Why it was that he went there, instead of going to his room, only those who have felt unpersonal despair can tell. He

had and needed no one else to commune with or speak to. He wanted to go down to the great dark river so closely linked with his destiny, and look again at its wild and gloomy tide.

Night had now long since set in. It was not cloudy, but glimmering darkness and a thin, chill, far-spreading haze, as if the ether were coagulating and clotting, filled all the universe, dimming, almost quenching, the stars, and throwing heaven far off. Encircling hills darkened the valley where he stood, so that it looked like a basin of still death, a white-walled well of bleakness, paleness, blankness. In places, the wind had swept the snow off the exposed hill-sides, and there were spots of thick darkness; in other places, the bare trees only partially obscured the snow, and there were spots of cinereous ghastliness, as if the rude hordes of winter had overtaken the autumnal funeral procession there, and broken the urn and scattered dead Nature's ashes down the slopes. The farther hills, with their belts of timber and their scarfs of snow, were easily transformed into frozen warriors seated there in council, wrapped in their blankets, with the fire long since burnt out, and scalps of the hated pale-faces dangling about their waists. Stairways of alternate pallor and gloom thus rose from the valley along the hill-sides, up to their pale tops, whence hopeless contemplation stepped off into the nothingness where the lifeless stars were dimly twinkling. And that, it seemed, would be all! Consciousness would diffuse and cool into a frozen mist, and the soul that once had burned, and toiled, and fretted, be but a breath of the universal winter, a

charred atom among the ashes in the snow. What a mockery seemed the gift of immortality to him then ; yet what need he had to look in bitterness on such a scene, and draw thence the resultant force it held for him.

It is a terrible moment when one who has nursed an idea and built his all upon it, is suddenly brought face to face with both death and ruin ; and he now paced to and fro along the bank, in agony that not only beggars language, but conception. The gurgle of the dark waves as they swept by swift as arrows, yet chill and wintry as his own despair, filled his ears and his soul. The reed on which he had leaned had broken under him, and its point now pierced his side with death. His last hope had now gone forth out of his hand, and thrust itself like a frosty blade between his ribs, and slit his heart into shreds. How unconscious, how inhuman, thought he, is crime. How little does it know the consequences it leaves in its reckless track. In its wantonness and blindness, a suicidal age must strangle the hope of the future in destroying itself. The work of all those weary weeks and months was thrown away, and with it had flown forever the last possibility of imparting to his life even a partial meaning — of accomplishing aught of even inferior good in this world. Where now were the star-born dreams of his boyhood, the grand insight of his youth, the lofty purposes and sublime judgments of these later years? Gone, all gone, save the dust and ashes they had left on his head, — gone, save the canker and mildew they had stained upon his once fair brow — save the fever, desolation, and ruin they had bred.

It was for this, then, that he had toiled till his heart had burst ; had sacrificed, till nothing remained to give ; had hoped, till Hope, a Gorgon, with crawling snakes for hair, had looked him into stone. This was his fruition, its name was wormwood. This was the oracle's response to him ; a word of terror hissed from the grinning jaws of Death — Failure. His straining and fevered eyes saw written in the darkness and the whiteness of the hills, the words : “ Worm of the dust, thou hast built thy life upon a dream, and, lo ! thou and thy house are sunk together into hell ! ” The loftiest thought and purest consciousness of all his life, had only wooed him to Charybdis ; the mighty conviction with which he had propped his soul above an awful abyss, had given way like a brace eaten through by worms, and he was gone down forever into the gulf. His pearl was become a load of shame, that galled, and wrung, and killed, and he was saddled under it, lashed with keen thongs that had cut his last tendon. If he might but have whispered to the Ages one word of that which had been within him, if he might have cast upon the flood even one grain of that new seed ! But that had not been and now *could never be*. There, in that now full consciousness of Nevermore, was his death-sting ; he could lay his finger on it and feel its venom rankle with keener fire, as he now, for the first time, in full admission touched it ; but where was the balm ? Stretching forth his hands to the dark river, he spoke aloud : “ It is nothing that I am stainless. It is nothing that I have stood aloof from the pitch of the world. My consciousness began at a higher point than that. Defeat, what load of guilt can gall like thou.

Let wolves more ravenous than all the hellish pack of Remorse, come now and gnaw my heart. It is fit for nothing now but to be food for them." Then he fell on his knees on the bank in the snow, and folding his arms across his heart, looked up to heaven and said: "O Father, spare me, spare me from the defeat of such a consciousness as mine."

While he still knelt, the rush of the dark waves, as they flew onward into remoter gloom, smote on his ear with a newness of sound — cold, blood-curdling woosings — whisperings of hell. He arose and stood on the bank of the wintry river, and watched the cold floods roll by, and listened to their voices. A single plunge would end his anguish; one plunge, and he should be at rest beneath those waves, fit pall for such a wretch as he; would that he might take it. "Oh, send death quickly, dear Father," he entreated, "send death quickly to set me free. There is no victory in this world, like that Thou givest us in death."

Scarcely had the words passed his lips when a new prophetic consciousness, a thunderbolt of pain and darkness came crashing into his soul. Guided by the filaments of his transforming spirit, it flew from the Infinite hand straight at the root of the cancer that was burning and rankling in his being, and rending, ripping, jerking, loosened this down to the very bottom of his soul, ready to be pulled out and thrown away. As that preparatory but mercilessly effective missile crashed against him, it seemed as if the terrible bolt had struck a diseased tooth in his head, which it had not knocked out but had left to leap and riot in agony. This was the completing experience of his

life, the last pang of his growth, and its relations were very deep and far-reaching. It came after the completion of all his remaining consciousness, and marked the transfer of his life into the final sphere. The entire transfer was not accomplished instantaneously; had it been, it would not have miniaturized the Infinite renunciation and more sublime recovery which were its antecedent. With all his strength and beauty, he had not yet fully risen out of the comparatively narrow sphere where its last weakness assails the mighty spirit, — where he who feels that an Infinite truth is made flesh in him, confounds the reception and triumph of his truth with the reception and triumph of its prophet. The experience had even a deeper and grander relation than this, which was signified by the fact that it grew out of the defeat of an active purpose which had prepared the way for it; but of this we shall not speak. His personal possession of his truth, his proprietary and royal relation to it, were not to be diminished or interfered with. On the contrary they were to be ennobled and aggrandized; and, passing out of the sphere of personal aims, while the vitality, power, beauty, and actualness of his personality remained, he was to combine in the living union of its terms, the truth of which the early Hindu dreamed, with that which later and more active races have discovered.

But as he stood there in his agony, on the bank of the dark, zone-lacing river, he did not see all this; he only felt the indescribable throes out of which it was to come. He had always felt, hitherto, that, swift on the heels of the ruin of his active hopes, would come

the release of death ; but now he read in his consciousness a prediction and command that, though he was defeated and overthrown, he should not die ; and, to what stagnation, what death in life, what weakness and prostration was his proud and powerful spirit now consigned. " Powers of darkness," he said, " long have I wrestled with you ; but now, at last, you have me on the hip. Life and death, earth and the underworld, alike spurn me."

His soul, forbidden to cross the Styx till its earthly work was done, must wander, a self-abhorring, shuddering shade, wailing and cursing in the nether gloom, unferried, for want of its proper obolus of achievement to pay Charon, and he could never hope to earn that penny now. To be a breathing charnel-house, a cringing weakling, a whimpering beggar at the knees of Fate, — this end for him who, if he had seen fit, might have bent the world like a reed to his proud will, — it was more than terrible. He could have smiled defiance from the arms of Death, at any fate but that, — could have blessed any cup but that of impurity or weakness. " Ah, yes, yes !" he cried, " that is the alternative ; and because I scorned impurity like poison, this is my reward. I would not contaminate myself, and I am here. If I had quaffed the Christian cup and imposed on the credulity of men truth they have not insight enough to reach, the stars would now be bending from their thrones to pay me obeisance. It is foul and hideous that when I scorned the dirty crowns which Fate held at the price of crime, she should still have power to rob me of my strength, because I would not sin."

Then, recoiling with horror from the nearest approach to complaint that he had ever made, he lifted up his frozen face and looked at the dimly glimmering stars and at the dark river, and said, like a child who has, in secret thought, wished that his father's lot afforded him opportunities for splendid heroism instead of unrecorded sacrifice: "But no, my Father, Fate cannot wheedle or extort a groan from Thy child's iron lips."

The words started thoughts and emotions to which no language ever yet spoken in this world could give utterance; and what struggle that ever shook the imaginary plains of heaven, or rent the horrid crypts of hell, surpassed in terror or in glory, the one which there convulsed that unknown boy. Lying crushed in burning marl at the foot of the infinite wall, from whose summit he had been hurled, he lifted up his straining eyes to see whether any tie still bound him to the life of the cosmos, and reached forth his broken hands to feel the mouldy stones of the rampart, and inquire whether he could by any possibility climb up its side again. The words that passed his lips were to what he would have said, only what a spark from a fisherman's hut is to the storm which is hurling the sea upon the shore; and almost ere the faint sounds, revealing nothing, could be uttered, they were already obsolete. Struggling like a Titan to reunite in any form, the broken line which had bound his own life to the movement of the universe, he felt that a single thread, a film, a viewless strand of gossamer from that tie still left un-snapped, though it could never lift him from the depth to which he was fallen, and could only bring down, like

electric floss, dim monitions from that lost sphere, would yet be more precious than the strong cable had been. Presently, he felt the tie thrill again, and lifting his eyes to heaven, while rapture flooded his face, the words, "Thank Heaven, I can still work for my bread," burst in exultation from his lips. "How blessed and how various is Thy peace, dear Father," he continued. "Oh, how I thank Thee for giving me the privilege of working, for even a little while, for my bread. Owing all to Thy bounty, I rejoice that it is no weak bounty, and breeds no weakness in Thy children. Thine is a strong, and strengthening bounty, Father. It feeds me with what I till, and clothes me with what I spin, and lets me earn Thy free gifts by my labor." And thus he whose powers had always deemed a crown too low an aim for them, gave up forever the last egotism of the sublimest spirits, and only thought how he could drudge successfully for bread; and that law of all spirit which proportions grandeur to humility, now prepared to crown this Titan stripling, this simple-hearted, Jove-headed boy, with a sublimity and glory such as this world had never seen.

CHAPTER XV.

WHETHER THE HUMAN MIND CAN HAVE ANY REAL KNOWLEDGE.

THE relation of this man to the movement of the race, was such as to render a glance at his metaphysical teachings indispensable, and we shall make the statement as clear as needful brevity will allow. But let the extent of our purpose in this matter, not be misconceived. We have no intention, at this time, of attempting to reveal the entire scheme of his thought. The faded beams which break out of December clouds and for a moment play feebly on the snow, before they are quenched forever, could give you as commensurate an idea not merely of the tropics, but of the sun himself, and of his creative energy throughout his system, as our words or any words could convey of the truths which fell on his eyes and beamed from his soul. Gladly forbearing all attempt at a reconstruction of the temple which the Father built for Himself out of this man's life, we shall be more than content, if, aided by what has already been said, and carefully avoiding metaphysical subtleties, we succeed in giving you a clear idea of the location and dimensions of the cornerstone.

In the first place, it is perfectly clear that no Greek or Christian philosopher could ever logically and consistently hold that the mind possesses absolute knowledge. Without entering into any criticism of the biography of the subject, which is really an intricate matter, it may be stated in round terms, that wherever the natural possibility of absolute knowledge is maintained or countenanced, the opinion is either accidental and weak, or the product of un-Hellenic and un-Christian forces. This fact results from the place of the Greek and the Christian in the history of the cosmos. To escape from dreamy indistinctness, give edge to our thought, and secure our individuality, it has hitherto been necessary to confine reflection within narrow limits; and what is more important, the forces which have constructed the Greek and the Christian, have deprived them of the experiences out of which, alone, the fact of such knowledge could arise. Therefore, in denying, with practical correctness, the undeveloped fact of such knowledge in their day, they have falsely but consistently alleged its impossibility; and we shall see hereafter that the inevitable consequence of their metaphysical teaching is the assertion of the incomprehensibility of the spiritual life, the introduction of a middle-term, and an apotheosis of tyranny enrobed in darkness forever.

One further preliminary criticism may be made in regard to this matter. It must be admitted that recent continental metaphysicians have not been quite successful in their attempts to establish the possibility of absolute knowledge. To review their labors would be aside from our purpose. It is enough to say that

the reason why these writers did not entirely succeed in their aim, was, that owing to their geographical and political position, they were dominated by the idea of the Infinite Absolute, and did not possess the corresponding finite term. The idea of a faculty transcending consciousness is something that is quite out of the reach of common-sense people, and neither does the opinion that absolute knowledge is simply a datum of consciousness get down to the solid ground of the subject.

Again, one of the most singular facts connected with this late-born and growing conviction of the human mind, that it is capable of possessing and does possess real knowledge, is the date in history at which it has emphatically asserted itself. Another singular, but extremely natural fact is, that those metaphysicians who have fought fiercely against the conviction and endeavored to crush it, have really aided it by the clearness with which they have marked the boundaries of the relation. It is thus that all differentiations are accomplished.

It is only by wonderful, but not unaccountable confusion of ideas, that the term absolute has been opposed to the term finite, and the term relative to the term Infinite. If the finite exists at all, it must contain an absolute; for the Infinite to have power to manifest itself, it must contain a relative. A finite truth may be absolutely true; a finite existence may be an absolute existence. The absolute is simple and persistent, the ground of being. It transcends all modes only in the sense of moving through them and surviving each it casts. The absolute is not the cause

of the relative, — that is a monstrous notion, — but is that without which it could not exist. Being is concrete, and absolute and relative are but abstractions. Their coexistence is the first fact in nature, and the first truth in every science. The absolute alone would be a waste of incomprehensible nothingness; the relative alone would be but a phantasm. Without a ground of being, there could be no being. Without a manifestation of being, — rather, without even the possibility of a manifestation of being, — there still could be no being; for that which could exist forever, or for one moment, without ability to make its existence manifest in any way is unconceivable. Therefore, the great underlying doctrine of all the theology of the last some thousands of years, that there was a time when there was no manifestation of God, is unthinkable.

If we grant to the opposing metaphysicians that we can have no knowledge but what is relative to our faculties, they forthwith use the word in a double sense, and say that we have no knowledge but of relations. This is just what it would be to say that because the stomach has the capacity to receive food, it is the capacity of the stomach and not the food, that sustains our life. When you sift the argument of these reasoners closely, you find that their major premise, carefully suppressed by them of course, turns out at last to be this, that the less cannot perceive the greater. The theories of perception which the strong sense of the Scottish school rooted out, are creeping into the next higher question, as persistent errors always do, and men say that we know not realities, but only images or symbols. The fate of

religion based on faith, has been, and will forever be, that of perception based on images. It has been impossible to pass from subject to object, and there will be atheists, and sincere ones too, till the highest truth is placed in its proper ground. The question is not whether we have an apprehension of the absolute,—for this is admitted,—but whether this may be in the nature of knowledge. It is said that to know, is to limit, and that hence the unlimited cannot be known. But what do you mean by unlimited? Limitation is not necessarily a matter of space; it may be of modes of being. For purposes of knowledge, the infinite absolute is limited by the infinite relative.

It is strange if, in studying nature, we find out nothing about God. Again, if to know is to assert difference and likeness, then the infinite absolute differs from the finite absolute in this, that it is infinite, and resembles it in this, that it is absolute and sustains a relative. The evolution of the faculty of absolute knowledge, is part of the natural history of intelligence. The first conversion of physical forces by means of organism, conferred the faculty of assimilation as seen in plants. Sensation succeeded, and we had stationary animals. Next came locomotion, and that unconscious working of natural forces which we call instinct. But even the highest animal has only relative knowledge; there is no absolute in its intelligence; the only absolute in it, is substance in its material mode. Therefore, the intelligence of animals is not imperishable, and there is for them no life after physical death. But with a higher physical organism, the absolute began to be conscious, and there was a thinking substance which was to be

capable of attaining absolute knowledge after a while. But this faculty was at first very weak, as indeed were all other faculties, and has reached effectiveness only by a long series of evolutions. It would be a curious history which would trace the successive development of the various faculties of the human mind, as the rise and fall of different systems and dispositions of thought disclose it, but it might be written. At present, it is important to call attention to only one point connected with this development. It is the fact that all Christian philosophy has always set out with an analysis of consciousness, while Christian science has plunged into nature after a fashion never beheld before. Thus, while subjective analysis has laid bare the substantial reason which knows absolutely, objective analysis has done for it a labor not less important to its life than its own evolution.

CHAPTER XVI.

RELATION OF CIVILIZATIONS TO COSMICAL FORCES.

LIFE is not, as has been hastily alleged, entirely a matter of the relative. In it the relative is appropriated and assimilated, while the absolute is transformed. Considered merely as a process, life is a conversion of physical forces by means of an organism. Through its function of conversion, the character of the organism itself is constantly changing, so that it is all the time becoming a larger and better instrument of conversion. Civilization is a corollary of the conversion of physical into spiritual forces. In relation to civilization itself, considered as a distinct movement, the *primum mobile* is spiritual, and the material and intellectual movement proceeds from a propulsion received from it; but the conquests of this material and intellectual movement are themselves, in turn, converted into spiritual forces whence a new movement begins. The forces which govern this conversion and the resulting impulsion, express themselves in laws as determinate as the principle of the lever, but at once so vast and so subtle as to have hitherto defied analysis and induction. Hitherto, they have reached the conscious apprehension of men only through certain

truths, more or less impure, presented by them to human nature, to be accepted without question and reasoned from deductively. The induction, in each periodic instance of the action of these laws and of the evolution of new forces, has been so long and obscure that, in the absence of a history of human thought, it has been concluded that no induction had taken place, and that the intuition by which the highest truths have been perceived, was immediate and miraculous. The spiritual forces disengaged in any instance of conversion, — constituting, as they do, the vital force of the succeeding civilization, — are limited and defined by the circumstances under which they are evolved, and for a reason which is categorical, are accurately proportioned in volume and intensity, to the paths over which they subsequently impel civilization, and to the results which the general movement of the race requires at the time. This is but to utter the truism that the movement is proportioned to the force. Obeying the general laws of force, these forces are subject to be spent, — that is, they change their mode and become latent, — in accomplishing their work, and require either constant or periodical renewal. There is for them a law of renewal, which moulds itself around physical and intellectual conditions, and conforms, in its action and results, to the characters and situations of different ages, and determines from these whether the renewals shall be periodic, and therefore out of death, or constant and from life to life.

When the laws which govern these vital forces shall be fully understood and enthroned in human institutions, civilization will become perennial for a reason

which is categorical ; but till then there cannot but be a succession of catastrophes all obeying the same law and each prophetic and preparatory of a more advanced age. The measure of any civilization's life is, therefore, ultimately a matter of the capacity of organism immediate and remote, individual and social, terrestrial and astronomical ; and the history of civilization is literally a part of the history of the universe. In the catholic cycle, which will fuse all the ages into one, and perform all processes simultaneously, there will be no death of civilization ; because there will then be an organism which will convert forces by first intention, and as rapidly as the movement of the race can consume them. Whatever falls short of this function can never impel a steady and uninterrupted progress ; but once securely transferred from the extreme perimeter to the heart of nature, human attainment, stretching itself out along the endless radii of a sphere, will ascend to the last limit of the catholic in every direction, — *i. e.*, to a perfect equilibrium between man's nature and his surroundings, which can never take place till all the forces in the universe shall be spiritualized. In all the past, the Ages have come one by one and dipped their buckets into the fountain of life and inspiration, and borne away what they could hold, and grown greater by the nutrition, have returned for a fresh supply. On each discarded vessel, as it has been laid away forever, its capacity has been registered in its name, pre-historic, Pagan, Christian. Whatever two civilizations have been able to bear away, the Infinite has freely bestowed, and now He

invites us to dwell forever at the fountain and perpetually renew our life from hour to hour, until the catholic itself shall be exhausted, and these burnt-out material worlds shall pass away.

CHAPTER XVII.

SYNTHESIS WITH WHICH THE CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION HAS ENDED.

IN our brief discussion of the law of literature, it was stated that every civilization begins with a synthesis which is a spiritualization of all the previous conquests of the mind. The statement, though strictly correct, deserves to be considered in a larger relation than its literary one. The entire truth, then, is this, that, although each civilization begins with such a synthesis, it is really at the close of the preceding civilization that the synthesis takes place. The successive syntheses are the fruits of the labors of the successive cycles, and are brought about by the grand acts of eclecticism which mark the close of every civilization. The periods of darkness which follow the exhaustion of civilizations are only pauses in which the new synthesis is leavening thought and society. They are, therefore, not indispensable, and wisdom and catholicity could avoid them, as we have said before, but can scarcely repeat too often.

It has also been stated that the Pagan civilization searched out the finite and the Infinite as terms and ended its labors by bringing them together, while the

Christian civilization, beginning with both terms, has developed them apart. The analytical character of Christian thought has also been alluded to. The question now arises what is the result of these two processes: i. e., first, ascertainment, and secondly, analysis? This, that the human mind, permitted at last to discover the categories of being, is preparing to build on them a civilization which, by the very necessities of the case, will never perish.

The categories of being, then, are three, viz: substance, force and mode; and this fact, indistinctly apprehended, has been the foundation of all the Trinities — there have been scores of them — that have appeared in human thought. Without all these categories, no science of being can be constructed; and either the finite must be dropped as the Hindus did, or the Infinite ignored as the Greeks did, or a violent expedient be resorted to in order to reconcile and balance them. Hitherto, when philosophers have undertaken to state the categories, they have only enumerated substance and the effects of the other categories when applied to it, or like Cousin have omitted mode altogether, and stated force under one of its modes, i. e., cause. A singular example of the instincts and unconscious affinities of human thought might be seen here, if we had time to trace it out.

These categories are logical, as well as metaphysical; the categories of thought, as well as the categories of being. With them, it will at last be possible to construct a logic, which shall be something more than a heap of dry technicalities, and a psychology which will be able to explain at least a few of the phenomena of

the human mind, — a feat which has never been accomplished yet.

Without attempting to glance at one in a thousand of the subjects which might be looked at from this point, let us note the relation of what we have said, to two extremely important matters. The first is the world-long struggle of the human mind to connect all phenomena with a unity which should not swallow them up. The second is the inveterate and irreconcilable hostility which has existed between science and religion.

A very famous writer, declining to treat an important question, psychologically, on the ground that it could not be solved so, has proposed to treat it historically. The distinction is not good. That is to say, it is only accidental and transient. The true historical method is the cosmical method, and that is also the true psychological method. Every cosmical truth is also a truth in psychology. Therefore, if it is a simple astronomical fact that the universe is a unit while diversity has a valid existence, then if our metaphysics cannot harmonize itself with the fact and explain it, our metaphysics needs reëstablishing.

Man will never be able to reconstruct the universe, except by following the method by which God constructed it. When we have the history of the process, we have also the metaphysics and the religion of it, and, as a necessary consequence, a harmonious and capable psychology. The attempt to reconstruct the universe by means of abstractions has failed as a matter of course. It never could have succeeded unless the universe itself were an abstraction.

The idea of cause, till it committed suicide in the last century, was nothing but an abstraction. It has been succeeded by the doctrine of antecedents. The merit of this doctrine is, that it is more concrete than the other, but it is still an abstraction. Of the categories, force is the one whose existence the skeptic can least impeach, for not only does it appeal to the senses in a thousand ways, but he must use it to account for the phantoms of his own mind. Now, it would not be difficult to show that, if psychology were what it ought to be, the fact that there is a phantom in the skeptic's mind is all that would be needed to demonstrate successively every truth in the universe.

But the most pernicious of all the abstractions which men have conceived, is their idea of a First Cause, as that idea has been. It has been impossible to explain with it anything whatever, either in nature or in grace. Say that it was Will or Reason, or anything else that it has been called, and you reduce the universe to a mess of absurdities through which the mind would have to flounder hopelessly forever. Say, as we must in order to be rational, that it was a concrete fact containing all the categories of being, and we can then and then only deduce from it the universe. If the human mind will have done forever with the folly of assigning abstractions for causes, and simply take the First Cause as we know historically it was, and apply to it the established laws of evolution, then finite and infinite, absolute and relative, unity and diversity fall into their true relations, to come in conflict no more. Then by means of force, we can pass back and forth at will between all the facts of the universe and all the

terms and modes of being, remembering always this, that there is and can be no category in the effect or in the sum of the effects which does not reside in the cause; and thus the Catholic is literally the gate of the Absolute. It will, of course, be objected that our field of observation in this world is too narrow for us to reason correctly as to the nature of the universal cause; but we shall see more fully presently that there is no truth in the allegation, and that in accounting for existence here, we account for it essentially everywhere. All facts that ever have been or shall ever be are akin, because all flow from the same fountain. There throbs not a heart, there exhales not a breath, but throbs in the throbbing of Nature's heart, and breathes the life her respiration lays within the nostril. The floating of a feather in the air, the gentlest sigh that trembles from the maiden's lips, even these at last are bound to the central fact and inmost life of nature! In all past time there has not been, in all future time there will not be, an effect unlike its cause. It is nothing that, being finite, we cannot grasp the whole infinite; it is enough that, being absolute, we repose at last upon the absolute.

This universe is irrepressible. You may depend on that. You cannot pour it back through a funnel into a bottle at the farther end, nor can you press its sides together with your puny hands. It is not because parallel lines can ever meet that there is a personality and a consciousness in the Infinite.

It is partly to the effects of special movements, and partly to the limited but ever-widening scope of observation, that the prolific spawn of creeds has been due.

Not only has the horizon till now been contracted, but only one segment of it has been examined at a time. Out of the arc of the horizon which has bounded the small angle of its vision, the human soul has called forth its gods. It has personified a summary of its own thought, and located it where vision began to waver and grow indistinct. Requiring specific causes for the phenomena which lay immediately in front of it, in the direction it happened to be travelling, it has accepted all other phenomena as fixed and stable fact, and has studied only certain forces, which, acting against the ignored ones as against a solid body, have produced the result. But in reality its solid ground has been all the while eddying in the vortex, flitting through myriads of modes, no more a rigid fixity than the paste whose transformations arrested its attention.

The Hindu, indeed, lived and thought before the series of special movements began, and he is free from the faults which those movements have bred; but it resulted, on the other hand, from his place in the movement of the cosmos, that he could not see through the cloudy solution of being which hung in the ether and touched his very eye. With separation, both refinement of thought and the idea of cause began, and while the refinement has gone on uninterruptedly ever since, there has been also a constant precession of the idea of cause, just as there is a precession of the equinoxes,—the point of no variation, where all vicissitudes and aberrations are gathered in and cancelled, constantly receding into remoter spaces, so that the word cause has never expressed anything more than the limit of observation. At the remotest point to

which vision has reached, the filaments have seemed to meet, and there they have been knit into a plexus to which a name and being have been given. Each cycle has thus set up a stone to mark the spot where it has seen God, and those who have come next have dashed their feet against these Bethels and fallen. But special movement, refinement, and precession have all alike now borne their fruit, and we have now reached a point where the movement becomes catholic, the refinement final, and the precession ultimate.

The conflict between science and religion is far deeper and more radical than those who have attempted to mediate between them have imagined. It is so decided that no mediation, no atonement can harmonize them, and till now it has been impossible to reconcile them at all. Science does not, as has been said, simply ignore the First Cause. She demands that it shall be impersonal and unconscious, and proves that it was so. There is no point at which she meekly gives up the chain of sequences, admitting that a different state begins. She follows the chain back to its first link, and pronounces that link to be an actual thing, containing, in a primitive mode, all the elements of everything it has produced. Neither is religion, on the other hand, the mere assertion of an inscrutable mystery, but precisely the reverse of this. It is an importunate demand for an explanation of mystery already apprehended, and for union with an absolute and Infinite something whence all things have come. The human soul does not need to be told that it is akin to this; it knows and feels its kinship through every fibre of its existence. It is vain to

seek to satisfy its cravings with a passionless abstraction, or with an impersonal and unconscious void. You might as well try to satisfy the hunger of your body with the reflected image of a loaf, or with the vacuum beneath an exhausted receiver. While science demands the eternity of being, yet repels and refutes the idea of the eternal existence of a being, the human soul demands that it shall have a Father, and dwell with Him in love. Less than this never can and never will satisfy it. Deny it this, and civilization perishes, because the human soul dies of starvation. In demanding the absolute under the form of personality, consciousness, paternity, and love, it yields to science all that science asks or will ever ask, and asks only that to which Science, with her strong and beautiful hand, is helping it.

Wherefore, we may now begin to see the cause of a fact on which previous writers have made much comment. In every rational thought the human mind ever conceived, there has been a broad or a narrow ground of truth, because every phase of human thought is part of the effect of that cause which it seeks, is produced by the cause of the phenomena it essays to explain; and, in the highest truth, all creeds and systems will be merged, yet justified in the hour of their death. The materialist has been quite right in the ridicule which he has poured on spavined dualism; the idealist has been more nobly and prophetically right in his assertion of an intelligent principle as the necessary and sufficient mode of being; yet, dualism, basing itself on common sense, and accepting facts as they exist, has, even while renouncing the very name of phil-

osophy, been practically and for the present, right. The radical vice of the Hindu conception of the destiny of the material universe was, that, knowing nothing of the conversion of forces and their passage to higher modes, a reabsorption was logically inevitable from the pasty doctrine of emanations. The radical vice of the Christian conception of the same subject, was, that, having entirely separated the created from the creating, there was no way of getting rid of matter except by that wilful violence which is characteristic of all Christian thought.

The atheist, whose swinishness gives him a taste for the husks of thought, is silly enough, in his paltry reasonings about the Divine nature, to mistake a mode for an entity. There cannot be a personality and consciousness without an organism; but without it there was substance under a different mode. When the Infinite was unorganized, it was unconscious. Through organism it has become conscious and personal, and now, in the astronomic age of souls, is the Soul-BUILDER, as it was once the World-BUILDER. It may do well enough for an orthodox bigot or some other simpleton to say that this idea degrades the Divine. It is he who degrades the Divine. The subject need not be enlarged on.

It is thus that on the plateau of this autumnal age, the forces which have marched and fought through two cycles, are debouching their wasted ranks; and here presently, they will bivouac, and in the night the hosts of heaven will come and reinforce them. The Ideal and the Actual, the equator and ecliptic, cut each other in our autumnal equinox; and looking

back from this point of their intersection, we may survey the path of each, and analyze the forces which have made the seasons. The death-age of the ancient civilization did not possess the large self-consciousness which is possible to us, because the movement of the race then was special and had not yet moulted its envelope. It lapsed suddenly from Infinite to finite without knowing how it had got there and then went back to the Infinite by violence. It was not developed steadily along one line of thought, but along two irreconcilable routes; so that there was diversity in its exhaustion, and a sea rolled between Rome and Palestine. After its beauties had bloomed and its glories blazed, its fruits and trophies were too widely scattered along the lines of march and conflict to be gathered up in a single consciousness and freighted in the mystic ship which sailed westward on the misty deep in the twilight of the old November. The roads converged, indeed, around the Mediterranean, and the wings of the corps felt each other near and communicated by a sanguinary expedient, but they did not meet. But, although the modern civilization has split the terms apart in space and has located the Infinite Absolute in Germany and the finite absolute in America, it has not separated them in point of time, and its development has been uniform and constant along the line of its mission; and from this unhappy age, all that it and its predecessor have done may be surveyed by a single eye.

The sum of this is, that man is now becoming an integer after and by means of the differentiation of the elements of his being, as the Infinite is becoming one

Spiritual Being by the same process. The synthesis is complete and final, because the analysis has been long and searching, and nature never returns to the same task. The future ages, building on this cornerstone, will raise an imperishable civilization in the interest of man the absolute, the Son of God. The Christian civilization has returned to the same point whence the first historic civilization departed ages ago on the plains of India, embracing infinite and finite, absolute and relative in its thought and life; but these are not now, as then, involved and folded in the homogeneous, but are differentiated, integrated, organized, and correlated. And this is the synthesis with which it has ended.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE TRUTH BENEATH THE DEVELOPMENT THEORY.

THE bulk of the criticism that has been directed against the development theory, has been as wide of the mark as much of the reasoning that has been used to support the theory itself. The human mind is now, however, in a position to understand the truth of the matter, and to avoid puerile and disgusting errors on either hand. That theory, so far as it is true, does not exclude, but necessarily introduces, an ever-increasing intelligence and will, working in nature according to law. The objection, too, that we do not now see the changes going on which the theory supposes to have taken place in the past is totally false; but the movement has now passed beyond its lower stages and it is in man, spirit, civilization, society that we at present observe the development. Man has not yet been produced; he is only in process of production. The received theory of ultimate atoms probably needs radical revision. Without entering into the various scientific questions involved, it may be said that force is rather a solvent of substance, a sea in which it floats, than substance a flagon for force. The universe did not begin with atoms, but with a diffused and nebular

homogeneous mass. It emerged out of this condition by the conversion of vaporizing heat into motion. There appears to be no necessity for affirming that heat is a mode of a mode of force. The assertion that the primitive heat was molecular motion, rather than force not yet changed to the mode of motion, would seem, therefore, to be unnecessary. The first differentiation was simple, successive cleavage produced by motion. Out of the first vast fragments came, by a continuation of the original process, systems and sub-systems of suns and planets. The probability is, therefore, that the stellar system is an endless succession of belts of stars. From the time the worlds parted company, we have the history of one, our earth, which, notwithstanding great probable differences in point of time and special constitution, cannot but be a fair sample of the histories of all. The violent revolutions of the countless ages of incandescence, when turbulent and volcanic fire was tossing against the curb which nature was forcing into its mouth, are lost to us. From each periodic destruction, the earth rose, like a phoenix, to newness of life. Solid granite thrust under and blotted out the flames; the elements ceased to clash against each other in the divorcing furnace, and found their affinities and peace; the waters came down to cover the face of the deep; the world's ocean-heart began to throb; arterial clouds conveyed the vital rain to the remotest corners of the earth, and mighty rivers, like veins, came rolling from the distant mountains; continents, peninsulas, islands, seas, mountains, plains, were marked off; the atmosphere was formed; the winds sprang into life; sunlight fell on the mailed and

desert earth, and vegetation sprang from the weather-worn and crumbling surface.

The same force which had organized the astronomic universe in breaking up the homogeneous, and then organized the earth by the division and arrangement of its parts, first began the production of life with organisms of the lowest and rudest kind. Then one grade of organism succeeded another, and became a stepping-stone to yet a higher. Animals came forth from the mysterious caves of being, wrought out their destinies of forwarding the organism and became extinct. Reptiles and fishes, monkish chroniclers of the first Dark Age, wrote their annals on the everlasting rocks and passed away. Effects became causes, organism slowly became a specific instrument, forces became personal, a dim and shadowy consciousness began to glimmer with misty light, problems passed through the gate of solution into principles, rudiment became development, and growth hardened into solid strata laid one above the other. Paleontology presents to us the process chronicled in stone for our instruction. Then, at length, man came forth, and standing on the thin and rocking crust, looked heavenward, and saw the clouded brow of God, his Father. And thus was completed the material movement which was first to yield its law to the scrutiny of the human mind; and then began the spiritual movement which has till now refused to wear the badge of law or to yield its secrets.

CHAPTER XIX.

IRENÆUS'S CELEBRATED DILEMMA.

THERE were, doubtless, different local origins of the human race, and the species last produced were an advance on the first; but only a demon or a fool would suppose that this militates against the unity or brotherhood of the Race. Man is essentially the same being everywhere, because in him for the first time the absolute becomes conscious, and the distinction between the mere creatures and the children of God is seen; and the only difference between the Christian and those whom he robs, enslaves, and butchers is merely matter of the advancement of organism; and, what is still more humiliating to pride, the final physical type has not yet, by any manner of means, been reached. The dainty opinion that the movement is always onward in a direct line from the highest existing type does not deserve a moment's attention. Its ground is false like that of almost all other flippant and comfortable opinions. Those who hold it know nothing about the way in which the Christian physical type was reached next after the Hellenic and the Roman types, and understand but an inconsiderable part of the mission of the barbarians. The Brahminical, Patri-

archal, Hellenic and Roman types were the result of an unbroken and anxiously guarded upward movement, but simultaneously with the appearance of Jesus of Nazareth in this world, a different policy was adopted by nature in her process with physical man. It is certain that the next civilization, being catholic, will begin with a fusion of races, as the Christian began, only in this case the inclusion will be wider, extending in fact from the highest type to the lowest.

A joyous time you have had of it, dear Christians, all of you alike and equally, in enslaving a weak and unhappy race; but it is quite certain, for all that, that their blood will now be poured all in and through your own, mingled with it in the same veins, and unless it shall be so, the angel of Retribution should be hooted from his throne. You cannot defeat this consummation; your efforts to prevent it will only hasten it; but there is one thing you can do, and are doing in your demoniac squabbles over him whom you have enslaved; you can destroy your civilization. Nature permitted you to destroy the Indian, gentle Christians, because he was only sylvan chivalry, and Nature has now no need of that sort of material; but the negro, in mingling his blood with yours, will destroy the civilization which enslaved him, for the first miscegenation is always a relapse, and then the retribution will be complete.

When the future civilization shall be fairly risen, it will be apparent, simply as a fact of consciousness, that the old metaphysical puzzles in regard to the unity and purity of the Divine, have become obsolete forever. It will then be revealed, as a fact of con-

sciousness, not as a matter of reasoning, that there is a production which is neither emanation nor creation, and which makes men literally the children of God, without destroying either His unity or His purity. Life takes small counsel of opinion in her changes of form. Our being throbs on into modes of which imbecile Forecast has not even dreamed, and the Father lifts his divine face on us before we have got through proving that we can never see him. Still, it is worth while to glance at the old dilemma, or supposed dilemma, afresh, under the new aspect which the appearance of sinful man in the world gives to it, and to look somewhat deeper into it than mere dialectics may require.

In the first place, then, it is difficult to see what advantage the orthodox theories of the origin of sin have over even the doctrine of emanations. For if the latter destroys either the unity or the purity of God, the former converts him at once into a demon, since it makes the existence of sin and pain, the result of a fiat of his will, when he could just as well have had the universe without them. Now, it is a truth in psychology, that before sin can be willed to exist, the will must be sinful. True, orthodoxy resorts to all sorts of tricks to escape from this conclusion, but none of them amount to much: *e. g.*, shall we say that God created sin and man, and all the universe for his own glory? Then, the long and short of it is, that he is a very detestable egotist. No virtuous being would ever do such a thing. Or, shall we say that he inflicts on man sin and all its consequences, for man's advantage? Then, what becomes of the Christian hell? But pretermi-

ting that, while sin does in reality end in the highest state of being, if God had created it and relied on this limping argument to justify the act, there would be neither love nor virtue in him.

Remember now, that those who say the absolute was Reason, and force Will from the first, only impute their latest mode as the earliest. Reason, the ground of intelligent being, is necessarily not only sinless, but infallible. It cannot sin; evil cannot approach it. The ground of being, it is itself impersonal. Personality is a matter of organism, and, therefore, of the relative. Natural evil arises from a discrepancy between the life of nature and the absolute. Moral evil is the same discrepancy within a person. Sin is willful discrepancy, or transgression. It may consist, therefore, in either falling away from the absolute, or in refusing to go to it. It does not presuppose a fall. Where the personality is coextensive with the whole absolute, grasps it, comprehends it; there can be no moral evil; and, *a fortiori*, no sin. God, therefore, is perfectly holy, and cannot sin. God is absolute, but his absoluteness is in his reason, not in his will. Myriads of things happen in this universe which he does not will; he wills no evil, no sin, no sorrow; they pierce his holy heart with grief, and he will save us from them all at last. The theologians talk like children when the omnipotence of God is the theme. God is omnipotent in the only rational or possible sense of that word; but his power is limited in mode, as it must be, or be satanic and destructive of all life and being. The sinner uses the power of God within him for evil, but God wills not the evil; the finite will

alone, acting on the gift of God, creates the sin. Very small minds may say that this is to subject God to Fate; but, pious Lilliputians, Fate is only a name which ignorance has given to the infinite and eternal laws of the free being of an actual God.

Irenæus's celebrated and conclusive dilemma against the doctrine of emanations is, therefore, excluded from all application to these views. In making a ring, I necessarily enclose space, but I do not thereby destroy the unity of space; I could not destroy it with a myriad rings. If I sink a bucket in the ocean, I have a bucketful of water, but I do not destroy the unity of the ocean; and if I discolor the water in the bucket, I do not affect the purity of the ocean. True, if I lift the bucket out of the ocean, as the Christian does, I must destroy the unity of the ocean, unless I say the ocean created my bucket of water for its own glory; or, if I pour my bucket of water back into the ocean, as the Hindu did, then, also, I destroy the purity of the ocean; but I do not propose to do either. Man lives, moves, and has his being in God. God is our dear Father, who tenderly loves us. He is not dead, nor gone to sleep, nor withdrawn far off. He lives, moves, works within us, beneath us, and beyond us. The process of spiritualization is an active one; He is carrying it on; and when that process shall be complete, when the relative shall be entirely spiritualized, there will no longer be either natural or moral evil in the universe.

CHAPTER XX.

HISTORICAL RESUME.

CIVILIZATION began in immense Asia, was squeezed through little Europe, and then expanded into another large continent. It began in the tropics, travelled into the temperate zone, and is now returning into the tropics again. It began with the infinite, travelled to the finite, and is now going back to the infinite. It began from nature, travelled into the soul of man, and is now returning to nature. In special movements, it has travelled around the globe; it must now become catholic and embrace the whole globe. Both *a priori* principles and historic evidence forbid our doubting that the same natural causes which generated a clear and living civilization at one favored spot, produced attempts towards it in the other tropical continents in both hemispheres; but the American civilization proved a failure, as might have been expected, and the Ethiopian only furnished a stock to engraft Asiatic germs upon. From the hour of her birth till now, Civilization has been propagated by emigration and subsequent local development, and until Christian cupidity wrought a change of method, the higher races have gone to the lower. The barbarians were

only a partial exception, because then the miscegenation was to be partial. If, in tracing this movement, we see in it nothing more than the superficial matters which have constituted the bulk of thought on the subject, we drop out of it precisely that which is most valuable and which it is most important for us to grasp and understand. In it reside the principles which grapple man historically, in literal childhood, to the heart of the universe, and make his history a part of its history. In the direction of the movement, in its selections, idiosyncrasies, instincts, affinities and methods, we see no happenings of chance, no merely structural adaptation, but the production of man and civilization by the prolonged action of the same forces which first organized the universe and afterwards the earth. The order of the sequences and dispositions of the human mind is the same as that of the universe, and thus, at last, we may see what degree of truth there is in the theory of preëstablished harmony, and begin to understand also the action of physical causes on nations.

The dryest details of physical geography contain more poetry than all the epics, and more of God's truth than all the Bibles and Vedas that have ever been written. Not that the holy books are to be depreciated and despised; that is an excessively vulgar and beastly notion; but the spirit that does not now soar beyond them is beneath contempt. All the processes of Nature are complete and perfect. With one sweep of her majestic hand, she establishes innumerable ends by establishing everything that is needful to them all. Europe is the temperate zone of Asia; in the body of

the larger continent, the frigid zone binds immediately on the torrid. In the latter, natural objects of vast dimensions startled into action the brutish mind of man. Spontaneous productions in boundless profusion nourished his helplessness and poverty. The heaven-high barrier of the Himalayas cut off the frigid north. Great rivers rolled southward to the sea, and the tepid waters of the Indian Ocean were poured around the pear-shaped peninsula. Difference of races and the natural laws of food and labor insured the enslavement of the laborer and the production of a leisure caste, and, through it, of civilization. The opinion that the first form of religion was pure fetishism is not strictly accurate. There seems to be reasonableness in the opinion that gross and unrelieved fetishism is the result of a differentiation and lapse. The growth of the individual is the image of the growth of the race. The first impulses of the soul bowed down in misty and homogeneous apprehension to the wonderful phenomena of nature.

In the dimness of the early world, the spirit of man, prone on the surface of the earth, fused with its own fervor the crude sands in which it lay, and with this vitreous flux the foundations of society were cemented, as race laid itself on top of race. The races probably dwelt together at first in a sort of homogeneous society; or, at least, the first synthesis, the one with which civilization began, was of races. The patriarchal system was the beginning of monotheistic society, but it was not the beginning of society. The first men were not fishers, or hunters, or shepherds; they subsisted on the spontaneous fruits of the earth, masters of nothing.

Neither could the primitive state have been one of war. Human nature was weak, abject and cowering; the superior races could have experienced little difficulty in establishing their supremacy over the inferior ones, and religion, rather than conquest, was probably their weapon. The inferior readily admitted that he had no rights which the superior was bound to respect, and the difficulty probably was for the superior race to grasp and exert its patent privilege. The first change in religion was probably from the worship of a confused physical All to the worship of a various One. The first men saw neither cause, nor unity, nor variety; these were later differentiations; they saw only a misty Fact. The human mind did not, as is generally alleged, reach pantheism from and through polytheism; polytheism did not come until after pantheism. In the homogeneous material All which the first men beheld, the next men beheld a heterogeneous One.

The resulting organization of society was necessarily heavy, cumbrous, and despotic. Slavery was not only legitimate, it was the first fact in the moral world. Society, based on the crushed hearts of millions of miserable slaves, climbed through the stairway of castes, to a technical dignity and worth of human nature at the top; but the master castes were only lifted into the gripe of a more relentless tyranny than laid its iron hand on the obscure and unpitied Pariah. Hindu philosophy, unable to apprehend the true relation between material and spiritual manifestations, lost itself in the mazes of a homogeneous mysticism, without ridding itself of the grossness of materialism.

Idealism, in her work of securing the dignity and importance of the subject, could only attach it, as an inconsiderable appendage to the universal divinity. Sensualism, in her labor of widening the contact between man and physical nature, denied the existence of God without enlarging the freedom or activity of man. Skepticism was almost without implements where there was no psychology, and without an office where the chain of sequences so soon imbedded itself in adamantine paste; and Eclecticism had nothing to do but to reiterate mysticism in a sort of sullen indifference, born of the unprofitableness of her tour through the systems. The net results of the general current of Hindu thought, may, therefore, be summed up thus: in metaphysics, emanations; in religion, a multifarious divinity, which, in innumerable incarnations, did not at all restrict itself to the human form; in ethics, aphorisms. The Hindus could not construct any ethical system, because ethics, belonging to the department of the practical, is determined in its character as a science, by the nature of man's relations to the external world, and by the degree of his mastery over matter, and hence, can be developed only in and after the ages of action. Art began with pantheism, and progressed as the latter was broken up into polytheism. Its first form was, necessarily, architecture; its first work, stupendous subterranean temples, whose gradually emerging reliefs became, at last, as the cosmical process of emergence and organization went on, the matchless statuary of Greece. A more important and indicative fact is not to be found in history.

Civilization, thus generated in India, travelled to



wards Europe by three routes,— southern, central, and northern. The modal parts of Hindu thought took the lower and less difficult route, down the Ganges, across the ocean, and down the Nile, and arrived in sight of Europe, with comparatively few important changes. The idea of substance took the middle route and arrived in Palestine without either mode or force. Heterogenescent force took the northern route. Such was the triune mode of the movement. But all of its singular triplicity has not been stated. While the mode of the movement was as stated, two other movements went on contemporaneously with it. One of these was the precession of cause or force; the other was the transformation of substance. One of the earliest consequences of the former, was to carry divinity back from the objects to the powers of nature, and to knead afresh, on the plateaus of the north, the plastic material from which the gods of Greece were to be cast. The consequences of the latter were dualism and a gradual refinement of the original principle of things. Dualism began in Persia, and, being the specialty of the times, was pushed to its last conceivable limit. The Magi and Chaldeans etherealized, not so much the whole of things as the source of the whole of things, into fire and the principle of the heavenly bodies. The patriarchs, to whom Jehovah spoke from the midst of fire, came out of Chaldea. The solitude of the shepherd state, the aridity of deserts, the far-awayness of the older habitations of thought, the wide removal of the ideas of both mode and force, were needed to disengage Jehovah, the last abstraction of substance, on the plains of Judea. Moses and the

patriarchs performed the process of abstraction because, and only because, nature had performed it before them. It was with wonderful fitness that Moses was represented as receiving the law from Jehovah in a desert and on a bleak mountain top. It deserves attention, that both the abstracting process and the polytheizing process went on in India, also, but without either the refinement of the first principle, or the precession of cause. So that the Buddhists, instead of having a personified abstraction of *substance* as the Jews had, only abstracted *matter* from all its modes; and the popular epic divinities of India were very different from the divine rabble of Olympus.

Thus, as Civilization stood on the last sands of Asia with her robe dipping into the western wave, she threw forward her light and nimble forces, by a wide northern detour, into the little peninsula beyond, and this northern wave threw up on the shores of Greece the perfect forms of the Greek gods. The darkness lifted, and the morning sun burst in splendor on Olympus and the glittering concourse of its gods. Apollo stepped out of the sun, clothed in its light. The clouds divided, and Jove emerged with his thunderbolts, and Minerva sprang from his brain full-armed for the battle which baptized Athens in immortality. In Judea, Abstraction, removing the intermediate, had stretched her wing for the remotest limits of conception and planted on the last rampart of the universe the lonely banner of her faith. Egypt, like her lascivious queen in after ages, stood in wanton fervor on the southern shore, and, luring the manhood of the north to meet her on the sea, left the impure dew of her kiss

on its lips and breathed her passionate sighs into its ears. But the chaste land beyond the sea accepted only the fugitive contagion of her voluptuous dalliance. The union was harlotry, not fatal wedlock. The local forces overpowered and incorporated into themselves all the gifts that Egypt sent, instead of being overpowered and dispossessed by her. And thus on three shores of the Mediterranean three aspects of human thought stood looking at each other. That is to say: in Greece, heterogeneous force, after a long and obscure march, had evolved the finite. Naturally, in the course of this evolution, organism had become excessive. As the Greek himself was the perfection of physical organism, as the configuration of his country made the autonomy of the cities inevitable, as his most splendid art was sculpture, his greatest poem an epic, and his very gods perfect pieces of statuary, so for him the thinking finite was not and never could have been anything more than an organism. In Judea stood unorganized, yet personal, Jehovah. Egypt, which afterwards produced Athanasius and Augustine and gave Christendom its theology, contained that long descending line of faiths and other factors which, in the absence of a knowledge of force and its laws, suggested the positing of a middle term, a half-way something, between God and the creation.

Take the two ideas which Judea and Greece then held, to wit: one eternally self-conscious God and a fully emerged, far-off, sinful finite intelligence; add to these a necessary adaptation of the Indo-Egyptian idea of a passing over of God into creation; and not only is the psychological necessity of a middle-term

imperative, but also its character and office are at once determined.

In connection with the impression which we wish our slender sketch to leave, the refinement and progress of human thought as displayed in Greek philosophy are exceedingly important. The Ionic school was the first, and its earliest theories were grossly materialistic ; yet the vast stride from India to Greece had already resulted in a refinement by which crude matter, which the mind first accepted as the ultimate fact, was discarded, and water, a far less recremental base, substituted. The disciples and successors of Thales in his own school adopted, in lieu of his fundamental principle, fire, air, ether, successively more refined and tenuous bases. But a still greater progress marked the theories of the second school of Greek philosophy, the Italic. As ancient thought, throughout its whole extent, travelled from external nature towards the soul of man, in travelling from east to west, it was not accidental that the first seats of the Pythagorean system were westward in Italy, while the Ionic school had its rise on the shores of Asia Minor. The old puzzle in regard to unity and variety, which ancient thought could not solve, presented itself at the very inception of Greek philosophy and persisted throughout its course. The ancients could not pass from one of these terms to the other, and, therefore, the school which set out from one of them always excluded the other. In the antithesis of variety and unity, object and subject, apparent and real, concrete and abstract, content and form in everything—in government, literature, science, every department of human thought

and energy—the Ionians took the former term and the Pythagoreans the latter. Those who understand the affinities of ideas and the action of the forces beneath human thought, are not surprised that the Pythagoreans promulgated the true theory of the solar system, while their rivals held to the old apparent motion; that the exact sciences were enriched by the labors of the former, and the experimental sciences by the labors of the latter; that the former were favorable to aristocratic governments, while the latter were democrats.

There is an undoubted affinity between the philosophy which is concerned about the matter rather than the forms of thought, and the political system which regards man rather than mere social sightliness; and the reason of it is, that democracy is always founded on and measured by the extent of man's mastery over nature. The change from pantheism to polytheism, and from India to Greece, mitigated slavery from a caste into a domestic institution, and cast a reflection of freedom from a democracy of States on the highest ledges of society. Under polytheism no high or essential freedom was possible, because such a knowledge of man and the universe as would have laid bare the springs of freedom and have allowed such a mastery over nature as would have rendered slavery useless, absurd, and criminal, would have destroyed polytheism. Neither was such a form of government as the modern monarchy, the natural and inevitable government of Christendom, possible under polytheism; because the finite alone existed, and subordination and reciprocity were unknown. The parcelling out of na-

ture, and the idealizing of the fragments on the basis of human nature as then experienced, left to sensualism no large ideal to actualize; but human nature, from the diminution of the superincumbent idea of the divine, remained undeformed and normal. No awful gulf yawned between the self-government of man and the supremacy of God, to be bridged by wild, dark doctrines, and crossed by the soul in the exaltation and drunkenness of fanaticism. Therefore, the democracy of Greece was refined and elegant, as that democracy will be in an infinitely greater degree when the self-government of men shall be the supremacy of God.

The most heterodox and hated philosophy of an age or of a civilization, springs not less certainly from the prevailing religion than its most orthodox theology, and the bitterest and most uncompromising infidels are themselves the unconscious product of the faith they scoff at and despise. The sophists were the polished infidels of polytheism, and were as shallow as the religion they overthrew. After their flippant skepticism had closed the first cycle of Greek philosophy, Socrates, under the tuition of his mystic demon, began the second and grander one, by carrying thought within the finite spiritual organism. The great Plato, the evangelical philosopher, at once followed with reason for his primordial substance, and with his Logos and ideas. Aristotle, father at once of logic and of natural history, carried the Greek movement to its last term. With him, ancient philosophy, strictly speaking, ended, and with him, centuries afterwards, modern philosophy began, yet not to travel in the same direction with him and the Greek movement, but in precisely

the opposite. He stands, an imperishable monument, to mark the termination of one extreme oscillation of human thought. After him, Philosophy in the west, where conquering Rome was rising, became wholly practical, that is to say ethical, while in the east she labored for the single purpose of accomplishing, through the instrumentality of universal skepticism, the grand election out of which a new civilization was to emerge.

It results from both the nature and the office of the moral sense, that, in any articulated civilization, ethical science cannot be cultivated with success until action has become the whole of life, and speculation been exhausted. Previous to that time, the mind has neither the materials nor the disposition for such labor. And as there is no grander or more certain truth than this, so neither could there be a clearer and more striking illustration of it than the Pagan and the Christian civilizations have furnished. The moral sense is not only indisputably concrete — compound, most writers somewhat unaptly say — but necessarily so; that is to say, it contains both an absolute and a relative. If it is difficult to see how any other opinion can be reconciled with the office of the moral sense, it is utterly impossible, with any other view, to explain the progress of moral science. The relative is the domain not only of action, but also of freedom, and the sphere of individuality and of man's personal strength. By conquering and converting it, the human spirit is built up. The freedom of a finite being is not merely obedience to the laws of its being. Nor is it merely the conformity of the finite will to the Infinite

will. Either definition might still leave man a miserable slave. Our freedom is literally a liberty of action and control achieved by us in accordance with the laws of our being and in conformity with the Infinite will. The theological idea that, at any time since the production of the physical universe, there has been a perfect freedom of the human will, which was lost by sin, is preposterous. The freedom of the human will is constantly enlarging; Jesus did more than all other men had ever done to extend its range; but it never will be perfect until the conquest and conversion of the relative shall be complete, until nature shall be spiritualized, the chasm between Ideal and Actual, absolute and relative, entirely disappear forever, and natural and moral evil alike be eliminated from the universe.

Right is not a matter of decree and convention; it is absolute. God cannot, indeed, decree a wrong; the supposition is as impossible as it is sacrilegious; but if He were to do so, no rational creature in all the universe would be under any obligation to obey the decree, but all would be compelled by God Himself within them to oppose it. Yet right does not exist independent of God. It exists only in and through Him, so that if there were no God there could be no right or wrong. We should not, and if you sift the matter we cannot, do any right thing simply because God commands us to do it, but because in doing so we obey the absolute within us. When we obey the absolute within us, we are in conformity with the Infinite will. An absolute in man made personal by means of the relative is, therefore, the foundation

of both freedom and ethics. Brutes have neither freedom nor any notion of right and wrong, because there is no absolute in their intelligence. If God were only an absolute, He would necessarily be a Tyrant, and the universe would be a dreary despotism; but in and by means of nature, He has become our dear and loving Father, anxious for our freedom and the source of it all. Those theologians, therefore, who set nature over against spirit, and abhor nature, and talk about release from nature as the only state of freedom, scarcely understand the subject. Neither is there any real freedom in the universe, if there is not an absolute in every finite being. If the universe and all intelligent creatures are the creations of an omnipotent and arbitrary Will — if God created nature and then created man, making both according to pattern, then the existence of the latter is as purely relative as that of the former, and he never yet has drawn, and till the last sand of eternity shall fall never can draw, one free breath.

A freedom without an absolute in it and under it is at once a ridiculous and a melancholy mockery; it is no freedom at all. Yet the entire sphere of freedom is the relative. To repeat the entire truth in one sentence, the ground of freedom is the absolute, its sphere the relative. We begin, therefore, to understand why it is that, in all the past, both freedom and ethics have been attached to the fortunes of philosophical sensualism — taking the latter in its true signification of the world-ward phase of thought. At precisely the point where the philosophic sensualism of any civilization places the contact between man and external nature,

will you always find the ethical criterion of the cycle. Epicureanism was the only real, logical system of ancient times. Only the shallowest and most contemptible criticism sneers at it; every labor of the human mind is entitled to respect and intelligent reverence. The system of Epicurus, exposed and detected many crimes; correctly applied, it denounces every crime forbidden in the Jewish decalogue; and the relation is obvious. But from the very nature of its criterion, it could detect only those crimes which produce personal organic suffering. Crimes against classes or against spirit it could not possibly reach; and this is really the reason why, when Christianity was established, it did not prohibit slavery. Epicureanism did not see, and never could have seen, anything wrong in slavery. No lawyer, at least none who is acquainted with the splendid jurisprudence it built, will ever sneer at Epicureanism. The Greek colonies in the west had far more excellent laws than either the mother country or the colonies planted eastward; but it is not until we come to practical Rome, that we find the ancient jurisprudence in its latest and highest excellence. And this was not only natural, but inevitable. The discovery of the guilt of slavery lay beyond the extreme limit of the practical thought of the ancients. The sun of their civilization went down and darkness came on, the labors of ancient thought were ended, and slavery had nowhere been condemned. In thy convulsive agonies, O land yet hid behind the western wave, in thy pangs and mighty anguish, was to be revealed the import of the words: Nature stopped the ancient thought short of that

mastery over nature which led thee to condemn slavery and to seal thy testimony with thy blood.

The transition from Greece to Rome was the third and last the ancient civilization made. It was fate that the Romans should be a race of conquerors. In the ancient civilization, where there was but little mastery over nature, and little scope for industrial pursuits, the age of action could lead to nothing but military conquest. The physical geography of Italy greatly aided the consummation. The face of the country, unlike that of Greece, permitted the city to extend its dominion over its neighbors, and the projection of the peninsula into the sea, placed all the world in easy reach. States possess an instinct as infallible as that of birds of passage, and find their destined way as unerringly; rather, the same unconscious natural force which works in the intelligence of animals, works, also, in men and nations. Rome, appointed to conquer the world, selected precisely the constitution best suited for that end. Her haughty and powerful aristocracy furnished the ambition, constancy, and talents; her unrivalled Senate never had an equal in sagacity and prudence; an infusion of democratic elements supplied the necessary energy and passion. A rock-ribbed aristocracy and a passion-fraught democracy were both needed to confer the vigor and the prudence, the strength and the activity indispensable to the subjugation of the world; and precisely they, at length, in the contests of patricians and plebeians, rent out the vitals of Rome.

Meanwhile, philosophy had run the round of all the sequences of thought, and all the dispositions of the

mind, up to the last limit of the capacity of the Pagan civilization. The Pagan civilization held nothing more; it was exhausted. The intellect, detecting the inadequacy of all the systems, sifted away the narrow foundations of its knowledge, and, finding nothing left to build upon, professed universal skepticism. When skepticism had accomplished its mission of sifting, testing, and tearing to pieces all previous systems, a selection of truths from them all took place. The Persian and Indian expedition of Alexander had just prepared the way for this election. It was in perfect keeping that this eclecticism should have its chief seat in the half-way Egyptian city founded by the conqueror, — assister of man to a degree not dreamed of by his flatterers.

CHAPTER XXI.

PLACE OF JESUS IN THE MOVEMENT OF THE COSMOS.

BUT the philosophical eclecticism of which we have spoken, was but a very small part of the great synthesis which that age beheld. Philosophy is only the self-consciousness of civilizations, bearing precisely the same relation to the movement of the race, that self-consciousness has in the individual. It lacks much of comprehending the entire life or even the most important parts of it. Of the modes and contents of thought made inevitable by man's position at different times, religion is the first fact, and holds the centre of the plexus. It is by the deep, dark eye of Faith, soul-full, starlit, fadeless, swimming in tears, seeing the unutterable, that the very essence of the aerial procession which moves on forever in the heavens above the heads of all the Ages, is discerned. The highest life is supreme over all lower modes, and neither man's folly nor his malice can make it otherwise.

The consciousness and faith of every noble heart for eighteen hundred years have not been at fault. Jesus of Nazareth was literally the son of God. It was not a delusion, — it was a truth till now above the understanding, — which represented him as the son of God,

sacrificed for sin, and atoning between God and man. For, he was the offspring of God, the Sufferer, Purifier, and Saviour at the moment and in the movement in which He began to cleanse His children effectually from sin. If the revelation of this atonement had not been a life, a love, a sorrow, and furthermore, if it had not been located precisely in Palestine, then there would be no law to govern the movement of the cosmos, — nay, no soul at all in man or in the universe.

The cold eye of rationalism — of pragmatism, rather — will never solve the problem of the life of Jesus, because, to begin with, it drops the whole pith of the matter in reducing Jesus to the stature of a mere teacher. Even the wild blasphemies of orthodoxy have been nearer right than the stupid insensibility which fails to apprehend the clearest facts connected with his mission. Philosophisers, not philosophers, after outlining the course of ancient thought, as we have briefly done, have attempted to account for Christianity as a mere psychological phenomenon, a kind of metaphysical salt made of Greek acid and a Hebrew base ; but these men drop out of their argument the substance of the movement of the race, and retain only its shadow. They fail to see the connection between the movement of human thought and the movement of the cosmos. They know nothing of the origin and connections of the life of man. It was not simply an idea in the metaphysical sense of the term that the Greeks developed. It was not a mere shadow that flitted from the Himalayas to Attica, and then went over to Palestine. No ; it was an essential part of the movement of the cosmos, else Homer, Sophocles and

Socrates had never been. It avails nothing that Jesus of Nazareth knew nothing of Greece. Bigots lay great stress on the fact, but it is a paltry matter. How many men are there that know anything about the forces that construct them? The Greeks, indeed, had no influence on Jesus, but the Greek movement had. The essential forces which created Greece were not rigidly confined in their action to the little peninsula. To understand that this was so, let us look a little more closely into this matter.

First, let us recall again that it was the category of force that made the finite out of the Infinite by means of organism. It was this movement that created Greece, and made man a definite organic fact. God, therefore, when Jesus came, had already fully made man out of Himself, and was in man. But, meanwhile, what had happened in Judea since the Patriarchs? With the human soul, when it had emerged out of the homogeneous, the first clear and definite perception was of the vigor and sternness of law, and this was so for a cosmical reason. This perception was not by any means confined to the Hebrews, but it was clearest and most powerful among them because their geographical position gave them the granite Jehovah. But as the ages passed on, neither rigid law nor granite Jehovah satisfied the soul. The psalms of King David mark a transition from the sternness of Jehovah, and also from the barrenness of heart which mere external law could satisfy. They were the fruit and sign of a softening process in both terms. The savage features of the God of the law were relaxing. In them the Deity is no longer arbitrary and blood-

thirsty, but merciful, compassionate, and almost loving. He is no longer Jehovah, but the Lord. On the other hand we see just as important a subjective change,—a consciousness of sin, prayers for forgiveness as well for the remittal of the mere penalty, a longing for a new heart with the law written in it. So that, from Israel's great King, the step by which the next great spirit should come to consider God as a Father, was not a long one. And to present the movement all together, it is well to make here the parenthetical remark that, in like manner, it was certain, after Jesus, that the next great spirit would identify the Infinite Father with the Source of all life, the Ground of all being, and show that all men are indeed his children, literally born of him, fed, sustained, redeemed, disciplined, and exalted by him, living in his life, and enriched forever by his love. But to resume, after David, by a continuation of the process of softening and increase of spirit, which was a cosmical one, deeper consciousness of guilt came, and an importunate and irresistible craving for pardon, love, and a truly spiritual life. The dark but glorious and essential conflict with the "man of sin," which has marked the Christian ages, and is ending now in eternal victory, had fully begun. The human soul, conscious of its guilt and weakness, burdened with new and unprovided wants, advanced far beyond the old systems and old rest, yearned and waited for a deliverer, and then Jesus of Nazareth, son of God, was born into the world.

The opening words of the fourth Gospel have been criticised as high-flown nonsense, and indeed, so far

as they assert the eternity and creative function of Jesus, the criticism is sound ; but in so far as they assert that Jesus was a word of God, an expression of God, they tell what he was as no other words have ever done. He brought life and immortality to light, because he was a truth incarnate, a revelation from and of God. It is easy for rationalism to see attempts parallel with those of Jesus, just as in modern times there have been attempts parallel with that of him whom we are portraying ; but in either case, it is only in regard to the most superficial appearances that any parallelism existed or exists. Other men equalled the mere teachings of Jesus, but none of them lived his life or died his death ; therefore, none of them came within an infinite distance of his mission. When Jesus of Nazareth stood up and said : " I am the son of God, and I know that I shall die for the sins of the people," he rose to a height such as no man in that age even approaches. The teachings of Jesus in themselves are nothing. It was the manifestation of Jesus himself, his consciousness, his claims, his life, his death, that gave life to the world.

The evangelists were quite incapable of tracing the progress of their master's thought. They give us his life as it appeared to them thirty years after his death. His early opinions and plans are naturally left out of sight ; but a passage here and there throws a flood of light on the first stages of his thought. It is certain that he long hesitated and forbore to claim the Messiahship, and was finally driven to that sublime assumption by forces which he could not resist. His

first preaching was the simple prompting of his nature, the outgush of his life. He designed, at first, only to enlarge the Jewish faith and add to it a spiritual life. He was mistaken in many things and made many predictions that were never fulfilled. He thought the reign of God on earth was about to begin, and even to the last said, that generation should not pass away till he should come again. He was constantly compelled to modify his expectations and predictions, as his life went on, and disappointment destroyed, one by one, his beautiful early hopes. At last, nothing remained but to claim that he was a sin-offering, and it is clear that from the time he assumed this ground he courted death. What shall we say then? That he was a pretender because his views of himself and of his mission changed? No; but that God his Father, laying hold of his indestructible consciousness, developed it by successive steps into a knowledge and acceptance of his true mission.

It is one of the most striking peculiarities of the life of Jesus, and one of the clearest proofs of the authenticity of his mission, that he was as ignorant of politics as a babe. He knew nothing of the relation between the spiritual life of man and the life of nations. His mission had nothing to do with that question, and it necessarily lay entirely beyond his perception and his consciousness. He came to seek and to save sinners. His mission was to individual man. Every atom of his consciousness, every word and act of his life, was occupied with this and this alone.

Jesus was not without the faults of the highest order of finite spirits. How any one can read the gospel

record and claim that he was faultless is a mystery. His constant stickling for his own personal importance, his intemperate denunciations of his enemies, his later relations towards the hopelessly hardened and enslaved children of an obsolete system, are blemishes indeed; yet they were as important to his mission as his noblest virtues. It remains to be said — not sadly, for that would be a ridiculous display of weak sentiment — that as the Christian, in his sacrifices, has not always first cared to make them pure, nor considered the duty of freedom and self-development, so, most naturally, neither did Jesus offer his great sacrifice in perfect purity, nor did he have any clear idea or appreciation of the vital importance of freedom. He loved authority and relied on it, and even when he left the world, established a hierarchy which was to be supreme over the soul. But it is evident, at a glance, that in and for his age, he was right, and that no other policy would have answered; and neither would his sacrifice have produced any effect if he had offered it in perfect purity. There is no reason to doubt that he who came to heal the soul, possessed a wonderful faculty of healing bodily disease. This fact was enough of itself for superstition and love to make the bulk of the miracles out of, when the great sweet soul was gone. Likely, too, there was in that age, one of the periodic outbursts of force which necessarily attend the movement of the universe, and which, undergoing a gradual spiritualization, has reappeared in our own times, at a similar but more advanced crisis, in the delusions of spiritualism. But if Jesus, yielding to the impatience of a great and tender spirit,

and to the exaggerating simplicity of his followers, used the superstitions of the age to promote his saving work, the fault was in the hardness and beastliness of the world, more than in him; and the Father, to-day, as he folds that scarred and broken form to his Infinite heart and kisses its wounds, has no condemnation for his son who died to reconcile the world to him.

Again, be not disturbed, trusting and noble hearts, if duty compels us barely to mention just one further mistake of this sublime spirit, this son of God. His solution of the conflict between the active and the passive faculties of our nature was erroneous, and we shall have something to say of this hereafter; but it should never be forgotten that, in that age, there was no road to inspiration but by the excision of the active faculties.

At last, Jesus went openly to war with his age, and the conflict, as might have been foreseen, was fatal to both combatants. The age had refused to receive his truth, and he knew that fact made its destruction certain, but he did not know how. As he knew nothing of the world beyond Judea, and nothing of the history and movement of mankind, he could not have looked into the actual condition of the world and have proved that civilization must perish. But the reception he had met with told him that great calamities were coming, and he incorrectly predicted them; but they came none the less certainly for his misapprehensions in regard to them. Thus, Jesus of Nazareth, in his spirit, in his life, in his work, in his death, was the incarnate product of the same forces which found partial expression in ancient philosophy. He was the living, con-

crete fact which those forces created, and which the whole movement of the race required. The forces of this universe do not find full expression in abstractions. They create expressions in flesh and blood, and if they did not do so, there would be and could be no God. Jesus was such an expression, the offspring of God's redemption of mankind, and reconciliation with them. The life and death of Jesus revealed that redemption and reconciliation, and embodied them. It will not do to regard the death of Jesus as accidental or unimportant. His sacrifice is the supreme fact in the case. Yet it was not the blood of Jesus that redeemed the race, nor his atonement as an efficacious fact that reconciled God and man. To hold this is to confound the Father's revelation with the Father, — the word with the speaker. The sacrifice that atoned for sin was a pain of our Eternal Father which found expression in Jesus, and the effective reconciliation takes place in each heart as part of the same great movement out of which Jesus came.

Even Jesus' opinion of himself and that which his first simple followers had of him, was narrow compared with the proportions which the necessities of human thought soon compelled him to assume. The great Paul was the first to begin this expanding movement and to show the world all that it had found in Jesus, its Saviour. A series of profound and zealous minds followed and labored, until Jesus became that perfect mediator whom the world and human thought needed. It is easy now to sneer at these men, to call them bigots, fanatics, dreamers, and depreciate their work ; it is easy, when necessities no longer exist, to

undervalue those who met them ; it is easy, when the battle is won, to charge cowardice and incapacity on the heroes who bought the victory with their blood. But the world will never forget these men, nor cease to be grateful for what they gave it. They were the greatest and purest spirits of that dark, sad age ; and the greatest thinkers to the end of time, will see, in their wildest delusions, a glory and a truth unapproachable in that day, and giving life to the world. In the life of that peasant boy of Galilee, resided the elements of all their opinions ; and the extent and character of their labors, the extent and character of the future life of the world, the spirit and boundaries of all the Christian ages, were as fixed as they are now, at the hour when the sublime soul of Jesus was breathed from his cross, amid the tears and groans of his devoted and simple-hearted followers. Demoniac politicians, ye, who, in your arrogance and selfishness, are destroying the life of the world, your freedom, your power, your privileges are not your own achievement, but the gift of Jesus of Galilee, a peasant boy ; and you, instead of standing on that proud eminence where you think the Ages will crook the knee to you to the end of time, are only a repetition of the Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, and Publicans, whom he scorned and at whose hands he died.

It is the crowning glory of the great Church that her faith is not an abstraction, not a philosophy of regeneration, but an actual, tangible, and substantial fact. Her doctrine of transubstantiation alone, degrading superstition as it is, overlies and covers up a greater truth than any which the diminished creeds of

Protestantism contain. She comes nearer, too, than any of her rivals, to understanding the atonement of Jesus. In making him the king of martyrs, whose sacrifice is to be imitated and assisted by the crosses of his followers, she draws near to an infinite truth, yet ends by distorting and degrading it. In her entire theology, as contrasted with what came after it, are seen at once the diffusiveness and the lenity of the homogeneous. It is customary, since Calvin, to claim that Paul taught the doctrine of an atonement as the reformer held it. The opinion will not bear examination. Paul's doctrine of justification through faith by grace prepared the way for Calvin's doctrine, but was far from being identical with it. Calvin's was a far deeper and darker doctrine, and to be perfectly consistent, should deny the resurrection of Christ. It was in an achieving as well as a suffering Christ that the first Christians believed, and if we would understand primitive Christianity as it really was, we must restore the old ground-work of exploded and long-forgotten fables on which it rested, — the demons, the underworld, the souls in prison, and the rending arm of the conquering Christ.

Yet let us understand this instinct of the human soul which gives the great inspired leaders imaginary destinies of sublime and beneficent action. We feel, we cannot but feel, that these men ought to be great actors. Suppress that fact, take away its fruits, and human history becomes a heap of ashes with only here and there a burnt penny in it. And when Fate has denied destinies of action to these men, when they have not really exercised a mastery over nature and

man, imagination has bid cold law defiance, and pulled down the pillars of the universe, rather than that the importunate, prophetic, at last infallible soul shall be disappointed. The feeling is prophetic, and points to a time when the human soul shall be supreme over nature in accordance with law. And this feeling has worked in the inspired leaders, too, and made them jugglers, when Fate has been relentless. But henceforth the mastery of the soul will be an actual, not a merely ideal, fact; inspiration will be power and dominion, and the greatest spirits, not the smallest, will rule the actual world.

Such, then, briefly, were the origin and some of the relations of Christianity. It came at the aphelion of the finite and planetary soul, and the task set before it was the reconciliation and subordination of organisms; and this it accomplished, not by descending into the nature of each to the point where they become one in the absolute, but by throwing a bridge from one to the other, from the top of the consciousness. It did not teach a perfect and absolute truth; it was impossible that it should do so. In all past time, it has been necessary that the highest truth should be symbolized in order to be made practical and comprehensible. Christianity looked down into the darkness under the world, and saw, not the whole of the mighty process going on there, — that was reserved for later and more powerful insight, — but the facts and characteristics which most concerned the soul, and lifted them in organized form into the sight of men. Had the Apostles gone about proclaiming the truth as it existed in nature, the world would only have called

them mystics and dreamers ; but when Jesus lived the essential part of this truth, the world could comprehend it then. Yet Paul's deep words about the Spirit whose groanings cannot be uttered, show that there was something vast and shadowy beneath the clear, uplifted organism of Christian truth. With what mighty anguish and mighty trust, with what all-whelming feeling, which could not be resisted, did the human soul rise up and give itself to that truth, knowing it to be imperfect. What was working deep down in the chief Apostle's acute and powerful mind when he used that much-revealing expression about "the foolishness of God"? Thousands and tens of thousands of beautiful and simple hearts flocked to Christianity, and found in it at once all that they needed. But there were others, of reflecting and analytic turn, who had their struggles, and some of these were bitter and bloody. The feeling in such cases was : "I cannot understand this ; it is foolishness to the understanding ; yet I *must* give myself to it. I cannot but do so. The prompting is irresistible. I know that there is truth in it, the highest yet revealed to man, and in it is eternal life." And the impulse of the yearning, sorrowing soul was wiser than all the philosophy and worldly wisdom of that death-struck age. Christianity bound up and healed the broken heart of the world, and gave it peace and joy in victory. It stemmed the tide of darkness which swept over the next ages, and gave birth at length to a purer and grander civilization. It has been a perfect schoolmaster to lead us to that perfect and final truth which is now dawning on the

world. Jesus, man of sorrows, son of God, another sorrowing and broken heart rejected by the world, finds solace in its love for thee, and longs for the day when the pain-wrung body shall be laid down, and the weary spirit follow thine.

CHAPTER XXII.

SOME PROPHETIC POINTS IN MODERN HISTORY.

THE change of religion unquestionably contributed largely to the fall of Rome, as a similar change now will have a like effect; but who above a Sophomore regrets that it did so? A summary of the causes which destroyed Rome would contain the following points. First and chiefly, the utter exhaustion of the popular religion. Secondly, the impossibility, under heterogeneous polytheism, of consolidating and assimilating the Roman conquests into one nation. The social war was the prelude to civil wars, just as our secession war will be with us. The admission of the allies to citizenship, and its consequences, will probably find a parallel in negro suffrage and its consequences. Thirdly, the struggle to convert the quasi-democracy of polytheism into a veritable and essential freedom. The patricians were right in saying the attempt would be fatal. Under polytheism, it could not succeed. Fourthly, the inability of polytheistic society to use the wealth it had acquired, for any other purpose than pleasure and luxury. Fifthly, the incompetency of Pagan civilization to embrace and assimilate the northern barbarians, whose hour had struck.

The experiment was anxiously made, but it failed. Sixthly, the brutalizing effect of constant war, and especially of civil war, on the people. Seventhly, the introduction of Christianity with its peculiar doctrines, aspirations, and dispositions. In one word, the old Pagan life of the world was exhausted and ended, society would not and could not rise to the higher life which had been provided for it, and so it was compelled to die. But it deserves attention, as pertinent to our own case, that Rome went on conquering, extending her boundaries, and increasing her magnificence, for a hundred and fifty years after she had received her death-blow. The mere external growth of a nation, the continued expansion of its particular mode of active energy, is no indication that it will long continue to live. At last the cup of iniquity was full; luxury, butchery, and license showed themselves in all their horrible and revolting shapes; and Rome's beastly and cruel heart, stuffed with deluges of rottenness, burst under its gangrenous burden. The warlike barbarians of the north, crowded into Europe like eagles to a carcass, and without remorse or hesitation completed the catastrophe. Then, there in the closing twilight of man's first great cycle, lay a dead Civilization, swollen and gangrened in its purple robes, rotting with the poison of its own licentiousness, with the rim of its golden crown buried in its putrid brow. The rude children of the north, strangely impressed by its solemn majesty, eagerly plundered the corpse even while they stood in superstitious awe of it. Then, later in the night, Nature let down from the starless dome a pall of stillness on her child, and with slow

and melancholy obsequies, on which the angels looked, bore her imperial clay away, and buried it, by dim torchlight, on the bank of the dark and voiceless river, which rises from no source and flows on forever, but empties into no sea. And, in the lonely watches of that night, in the midst of her anguish for her first-born, Nature felt anew the pangs of travail, and gave birth to a second child, whom she endowed with all her sister's wealth, and bade to reign, the last of perishable civilizations.

When the darkness began to lift, society was seen looming heavenward, in the gray and misty dawn, in the adamantine and castellated fabric of the feudal system. A great deal of research has been needlessly expended in attempts to discover whence the feudal system was derived. Institutions similar to it have been detected among the northern nations, in India, and elsewhere. But all these speculations and inquiries are very absurd. Christianity constructed the feudal system; but for Christianity it never would or could have existed. It is the Christian beginning of civilized society. It stands in the place of the system of castes, yet is as different from it as Christianity from pantheism, and Europe from India. It spread gradually over Europe, obliterating the ancient liberties of the people. All the charters of municipal government which Rome had granted, were crushed out. The process going on throughout Christendom, was the thrusting down of the finite from its old Pagan supremacy, and its incorporation with the Infinite in the same organization on the principle of reciprocity. The first samples of feudal organism were loosely-

jointed and incompact. The development was ganglionic; the great feudatories possessed an undue degree of power; and when we consider the direction of the movement, we see that this was inevitable and beneficial. But presently a great monarchical wave rolled over Europe; the old order of things passed away and a new order emerged; the power of the barons sank, and that of the king rose into clear supremacy. France, Spain, and Great Britain, by conquest and Christian marriage, — the latter means deserves special recollection, — put off their fragmentary condition, and knitted into symmetrical wholes. In Germany and Italy, the unifying movement was postponed to our own day, but is as certain to be consummated as time shall last.

Minds of the class that explain the fortunes of states by their political institutions, instead of rising to the general causes which govern at once their fortunes and their institutions, have found a rich mine in the career of the Italian republics. But when this age, with its frothy passions and small debates, shall have given place to a better day, in which higher feeling and profounder speculations shall occupy mankind, the lesson which will be drawn from the Italian republics will be one far deeper and more valuable to man than the platitudes and homilies in which the shallow partisans of aristocracy and democracy, faith and skepticism, popery and schism, are prone to indulge on opening the history of Italy. With the throne of the papacy erected at Rome, and the feudal system projecting across the northern border, how could the history of Italy be other than it has been? And how could the

throne of the papacy but be erected at Rome, and how could the feudal system but project across the northern border? In all Greek and Roman history, there is nowhere seen anything like what we understand in modern times by the word nation. The enfranchisement of the allies, the conferring of municipal charters, do not alter the case. The dominion of Rome was the ascendancy of the world-crushing finite. Therefore, in the old land of the supremacy of the finite, where the feudal system never had been fully established, where the church, for reasons of her own, opposed its establishment, where the old republican idea was still strong from association, and where the light from the east first began to dispel the darkness, the revival in modern times began before the cities were thrust down under either feudal ganglia or nationalities. The consequence was that little republics came forth in clusters, and inaugurated the brilliant but rapid march of the Christian civilization. Their freedom quickly gave birth to literature and art; and if their freedom was only such as the Romish faith could confer, still precisely that faith was needed to stimulate and carry to heights forever unapproachable again, the proper Christian art of painting. Without both liberty and Roman Catholicism, the pictorial creations, which, till the last syllable of time, will shed unfading lustre on the Christian name, could not have been achieved. Then the work of the little republics was done, and they were thrust under and extinguished.

The first transition of the modern civilization was from Southern to Northern Europe. In Germany, by

a process easily traced, but which our limits forbid our tracing, the feudal ganglia were strong enough to check the nationalizing process for hundreds of years, and to make the country assume the similitude of the lowest type of animal life, instead of the highest; but in doing so, they prepared precisely those conditions which were most favorable to the Reformation. The Reformation was the breaking up of the homogeneous; it was also a diminution of the bulk of religion. In so far, it was like the corresponding movement of the ancestral Greek mind; but in other respects it was widely different. That was a spontaneous movement put forth unconsciously and without either effort or motive; this was a revolution, at once economical, democratic, scientific, and theological. That was a descending movement from the infinite; this was an ascending movement towards the infinite; but let us never forget that both alike were refining and spiritualizing movements. The sturdy North had never rested meekly under the yoke of Rome. In the most brutal ages, indeed, its superstition had been intenser than that of Italy, as was but natural; but the moment light began to dawn, the difference between mere blindness and heartfelt conviction was seen. With the growth of manufactures and commerce, and the increase of intelligence, the stalwart people of the North began to press heavily against the barriers of privilege. In the development of civilization and human freedom, the life of the soul is always the first fact. No language can exaggerate the beneficence of Rome in the dark age; but she would have held the soul not only in eternal slavery, but even in eternal

infancy. This all-whelming ecclesiastical system, with its priests and hierarchy, its fathers, councils, saints, and miracles, its pomps and protection, its infallibility and grossness, was to be got rid of. The Reformation began with indulgences and other schemes which plundered the people, and ended with the assertion, by Calvin, of the theology which securely established Christian freedom.

The fundamental ground of Christian freedom is not an absolute in human nature, but responsibility. As the Christian's God is in His essence and of necessity a tyrant, the only way in which he can have scope for free action is by removing Him from sight and contemplation, — sending Him away, in short, out of the visible sphere. But as the Christian is by nature fallen, lost, and utterly undone, possessed of no right or merit, deserving instant and eternal wrath, the only way in which he can acquire the strength necessary to freedom is by some sort of awful exception which shall lift him out of his nature. Exactly proportioned, therefore, to the degree of the removal of God and of the awful concerns of salvation, would be the sense of responsibility and the scope for freedom; and the degree of strength would be determined by the dignity and terror of the individual exception. Calvin, therefore, or rather the forces which made that wonderful and immortal thinker, withdrew the question of salvation from all earthly courts and referred it to the court of heaven. Nay, to exclude the more perfectly all intervention of priest, pope, and church, the decision of that momentous question was removed from the present into the eternal past, and placed

among the primary decrees of uncreated will. This was making clean work of Rome. At the same time, the mission and work of Christ were carried to their last and highest possible spiritualization. The old physical ground-work was entirely dropped out; the resurrection is no longer the first fact, but the crucifixion; the Jewish and Greek underworld, with its imprisoned shades, is quietly laid aside as a ridiculous myth, and an atonement of a kind undreamed of by the first simple-hearted Apostles, and a long advance on their wonderfully concrete theology, was the supreme article of faith. The agency of the Spirit is the only present interference, and the object of this, be it remembered, is not to enslave the will, but to set it free. Calvinism is the darkest and most awful superstition in human history; yet the surprising depth and grandeur of this faith, cramped as it is by technicalities, distorted by fictions, inverting as it does the order of events, marring the beauty, naturalness, sweetness, and sublimity of the spiritual life by its crotchets and horrors, will nevertheless attract the earnest and reverential attention of all true thinkers while the world shall stand. But while its importance as a matter of precession, spiritualization, and stimulus can scarcely be over-estimated, in still another respect it gave incalculable aid to freedom. By making spiritual wealth and the graces of character quite independent of individual effort and unattainable to striving, it turned all the energies of human nature at once out of the sphere of contemplation into that of external action. By coercing the whole energy of man into the external sphere, while it regulated action by the purest and

most virtuous principles then apprehensible, it powerfully stimulated manufactures, commerce, and blameless industry of every kind. Thus, while professing utmost horror of the world, it provided the means which led directly and infallibly to the appropriation and conversion of the world. The theology which furnished scope for freedom and stimulated men to be free, coerced them into those pursuits which resulted in such a mastery over nature as to render that freedom a fact in the world. And this is one of the most important and luminous facts in history. The effect has been indeed amazing. Behold it in the endless inventions and discoveries, the physical triumphs, comforts, wealth, and industry of the modern age. Behold it also in the crash and demolition which are resulting in our own country from hurling Civilization, with the rapidity of lightning, fully and squarely against the beetling black rocks which now obstruct her way, but which Christianity does not see and never can see. The modern civilization, entering partially within the sphere of mastery and peace, by the expedient of cutting off inspiration with the doctrine of a mediator who procures spiritual riches for us instead of their being produced within us by native forces, is perishing now under the coercion of the very doctrine which first lifted it within the magic scene. True, the world has begun to hear, of late, of a desperate scheme which stultifies itself with every breath it draws, by representing a *Creator* as a *Father*, and Jesus as the divinely-appointed lawgiver, king, and legislator of this world, who lived and died in it only that a cold, formal, cut-and-dried system of laws might

be enforced. But this insipidity is not Christianity, and will be regarded hereafter with the same smile and sigh that we now give to those efforts which sought to patch up Paganism in its later ages.

The last transition of the Christian civilization, by a strange repetition of the old trinitarianism, its third, was from Northern Europe to America. The physical geography of the new continent, the date of its discovery, and the manner of its colonization, are alike remarkable. The great southern deflection of the isothermal lines as they approach our coast, the erosion of the centre of the continent by the Gulf, the direction of the axis of the continent and of its mountain-ranges and water-sheds, the great central network of rivers, the overlapping and almost obliterating encroachment of the temperate region on the tropics, and indissoluble union with them, — madness itself ought to feel its vision clear, and the fumes of its frenzy disperse at the sight of this wonderful arrangement. The new continent was discovered in the age of ocean chivalry, just as the great divergence of modern thought from the old despotic influences began, and its colonization was contemporaneous with the continuance of this movement. In consequence, the most remarkable spectacle this world ever looked upon now ensued. The Italians, without a nationality, could only place their genius, enthusiasm, light, and inspiration at the service of other nations. The Spaniards and Portuguese, entirely dominated by the old despotic influences, selected as the seat of their colonies, either the southern half of the new hemisphere, where nature appears in the wildest and most

extravagant luxuriance, and where the Amazon, instead of connecting the tropics with the temperate lands, flows eastward to the sea, or else the southern prolongation of the northern continent, far from the uniting influence of the Father of Waters. These settlements, from the very fact of being colonies, could not but attempt democratic government; but what their success would be might easily have been predicted. The French effected lodgements in various places; but the Gulf of Mexico covered the only portion of the western hemisphere where a French empire could have been established without absurdity, and no logician reasons so keenly and consistently as nature. The English quickly dispossessed all rivals in the North, and when the Federal Government came into existence, France made haste to cede to it Louisiana and the mouths of the Mississippi. Looking into the English colonies, we behold phenomena not less remarkable. The different forces which were in a state of compromise in modal, Egypt-like England selected, when they became emigrant, localities precisely corresponding to their various characters. The Puritan, with his bleak faith, the emancipating power of the temperate regions, the outgrowth of a movement which had begun with questions of economy, and exactly adapted to a manufacturing and commercial community by its tendency to emancipate the laborer, landed on the rock-bound coast of New England, where Nature frowned at agriculture, but bestowed manufacturing facilities with a lavish hand, and where deep and innumerable harbors invited commerce. Nor do the correspondences stop at the

points that have been mentioned. Christian freedom, throughout its whole extent, has been purely a matter of organism. It began with the narrow commercial guilds and associations of the middle age. These were the vesicles of modern freedom. Precisely the same excessive organism is seen in the quaint and formal speech and manners of the early Christian ages. One would suppose that the natural movement in literary and social style would be towards a cramping mannerism, rather than away from it, but such has not been the case in the Christian civilization. Organism was in excess when the modern movement began, and we see this fact as fully exemplified in the development of freedom as elsewhere. It has not been accidental, therefore, that unagricultural, manufacturing, trading New England, small in extent, mountainous, split up by natural and political fissure, divided into petty States and over-represented, has taken the lead in the war against slavery. Nor has it been accidental, if in this crusade she has displayed an uncatholic and narrow spirit. And if in the final ruin of this country and of the Christian civilization, a struggle to reduce New England's excessive representation in the national Senate, should figure prominently, the course of the modern movement and the character of its forces would receive another striking illustration. The cavalier, gay, careless, and graceful, partial to agricultural pursuits and large estates, averse to traffic, undemocratic in all his tastes and sympathies, proud of his ancestry and of blood that had been spilt for the king in the civil war, colonized the semi-tropical South, whose long, low line of coast possessed

but few good harbors, whose sluggish streams could scarcely be induced to turn the wheel that ground the ordinary food of the settlers, but whose level lands, adapted to the growth of the most valuable products known to the world, stretched in their boundlessness to the sinking sun. It is just as silly to speculate as to what the history of this country would have been if slavery had not been introduced, as it is to inquire what an acid and a base would make if they did not make a salt. The introduction of slavery was perfectly inevitable; the factors, mission, and stand-point of the Christian civilization made it so. Papist and Protestant, Monarchist and Republican, Dutchman, Spaniard, Portugese, Puritan, Cavalier, were equally eager in the introduction. But as physical causes rendered slavery unprofitable in New England, the Puritan devoted himself principally to cutting up the Indians and transporting slaves from Africa for other people. The subsequent introduction of cotton and the overshadowing importance it soon acquired in our industrial and materializing civilization, were necessary to strengthen slavery for the conflict which quickly put an end to it, and drew the curtain on the fifth act of the Christian civilization.

In order to discern more clearly where we stand today, let us glance at some relations of that conflict, which, so far as the writer has observed, have not, as yet, been at all brought forward. Political freedom is the outgrowth of that strength of the human spirit which results from the conquest and application of physical nature. It is always measured in its extent by the extent of this conquest, and is determined in

its character and spirit by those of the antecedent force which confers the ability to make the conquest. The forces which elevate the laboring classes are only a prolongation and later mode of those which have already, somewhat earlier, enfranchised the superior classes or races. The sunlight falls first on the hill-tops, but presently it creeps down into the valley, and pours its splendor across the cotter's threshold. Bearing this in mind, we come now to notice one of the most singular, but most indisputable characteristics of the movement of the race, viz: that, within any perishable civilization, the later ages in their mission of demolition repeat the same political forms which in the formative ages were constructive and conservative. It could not be difficult to show why this must necessarily be so; but it is sufficient here to state the simple fact. In the intermediate ages, the political forces of the civilization enjoy a freedom which gives them variety of expression without, however, at all departing from the peculiarities of the cyclic character. It deserves attention, too, that the fate of the primitive political types is prophetic of that of the latest ones. For example, Hindu society set out with the predominance of race over race, in the system of castes; and without that system, civilized society never would have begun at all. In process of time, however, the castes were greatly confused and broken in upon, even in India, as we might expect. By the time the movement of the race reached Greece and Rome, it became possible to organize civilized society without the broad distinction of races to assist the matter, and for the first time society was organized on distinctions of class within the

same race. Yet,—and here is the important point,—Rome with her iron Senate, and her intricate arrangement of tribes and centuries, was nothing more nor less than a modified reproduction of Hindu castes. The point has never been made, so far as the writer is aware, but it is demonstrable from an analysis of her government, and it was precisely from this fact that she derived the wonderful strength of her system. And precisely the same disintegration that the system of castes underwent in India, Roman society suffered. In like manner, the Federal Union was the last possible political product of the Christian forces. The empire of Charlemagne represents the homogeneous stage of modern society.

The first movement of the Christian forces, as we have already explained, was to create what may be called, ganglia of sovereignty, by which, throughout the Middle Age, the chain of feudal dependence was interrupted, and the nationalizing process long obstructed; but by much the same process as that observed in the evolution of animals, these ganglia were united and developed into nations. Christianity, out of whose doctrines of subordination and reciprocity the feudal system came, had only the bulwarks of organism to oppose to the consolidation of society; and in every country in continental Europe, the moment the returning and consolidating movement which began from Jesus had crushed in the ribs of feudalism, governments necessarily become absolute. England is the representative of the intermediate ages of our cycle, and in her the Christian political forces found an expression different from either the Continental or

the American type, and of which we shall speak more fully in a moment.

In America, Civilization, after having been born in the tropics, and having journeyed into the temperate regions to free their people, began, for the first time, to return into the tropics, to subdue nature there also, and to free their people. It is curious now to observe, by the light of the whole movement of the race, the sort of polity which she established in the Southern States of this Union, as the prelude to her conquest of the tropics, and the emancipation of the tropical races. The democratic movement in modern times, had put an end to the domination of class over class, in the same race; but the world-long, and as yet inevitable degradation of the tropical laborer remained. Christianity, permitting slavery, organized Southern society on the basis of a domination of race over race, with the addition of the fundamental Christian idea of obligation and reciprocity. Thus, Civilization returned to precisely the same expedient first employed thousands of years ago in India; but instead of using the races to make a system of castes, she used them as nearly as possible in her feudal spirit. The entire truth is, that there is in our age, a double return, a cyclic and a cosmical one; and both these were signified by American slavery and its overthrow. The impassable barrier between the races, represented the return to the point of Hindu departure; the reciprocity between the races, — and it is a pitiful political trick to say that it was either scanty or ungenerous, — represented the return to feudalism. It is clear, then, why we have called Southern society the last possible expression of

the Christian forces. Reciprocity between class and class, in the same race, having been rendered obsolete by the progress of democracy, a reciprocity which included the lowest race, was manifestly the application of the Christian idea to the last material it could ever have. But this is not the whole fact yet. The peculiar Southern school of politics furnishes one of the most interesting studies to be found in human history, and the names of Jefferson and Calhoun will be representative words while time shall last. While slavery was the last possible form of Christian society, the State was the last possible example of the feudal ganglion. The aristocratic ganglion having been forever eliminated, a democratic ganglion was the only remaining resource; and the highest and last possible sample of this was a quasi-sovereign State standing next below the nationality. The Southern States, taking their stand on precisely that idea, struggled powerfully against the advancing unity of the nation, while the Northern States, dominated by the idea of an absolute in man, repudiated the doctrine of State sovereignty, and zealously promoted the consolidation of the nation. The democratic ganglia were crushed and absorbed as the mediæval aristocratic ganglia were, and the same result cannot but follow now as then. It is almost certain, however, for reasons which it would be interesting to give if we had space, that New England will soon begin to oppose further consolidation with all of her accustomed energy and skill; but her opposition will hardly be effectual, and the probabilities are that she will be crushed on account of it.

One further point, to avoid misconceptions should

be made clearer. Our governmental organism is something more than the last expression of the Christian forces, just as Rome was something more than the last expression of the Pagan forces. As Rome never became a nation, yet in granting municipal charters and enfranchising the allies, struggled toward nationality, and perished in the struggle, so the form of our government is tentative and prophetic. * The States differ from municipalities in this, that they are not prescriptive, and that the Federal Government, instead of acting on them as corporations, acts on the people within them. There are thus two organisms over the same materials, yet both acting primarily on it; and this is the fundamental characteristic of the religion and philosophy of the Absolute. The difficulty is, however, that the Christian civilization has no means of adjusting these two organisms to each other, so that their correspondence shall be perfect, the action of their forces harmonious, and their individuality unimpaired. The moment the Southern States refused to purge themselves of crime by their own action, and the Federal Government crushed them in removing it, at that moment the fate of this nation was sealed. The fatal defects of our scheme are: 1, reaching the General Government by ascent from the States, instead of arriving at the States by descent from the General Government; 2, ill notions of the sphere and duty of governments, and of the proper relation of the governed to them; 3, the improper constitution of the court of last resort, leaving it wholly in the hands of the supreme power, instead of making its creation a concurrent act; the supreme power alone has the

right to the sword, but an absolute reason dwells in the finite as well as in it; 4, the ascendancy of brute majorities, rather than of intelligence; 5, the practical disfranchisement of minorities; 6, the materialistic, over-organic and false manner in which the House, (national desires,) Senate, (national understanding,) and Executive (national will,) are constituted. These defects and others allied to them, or consequent upon them, will destroy the government. But when the country is so full of "statesmen," — God help us, — the hand which writes these lines declines to add another word on these subjects. Therefore, sweet politicians, lovely politics, adieu.

It would be futile to attempt, within our limits, even the most meagre analysis of modern philosophic and scientific thought. On the progress of moral science, however, a word may properly be spoken, for the purpose of showing more fully the relations of the anti-slavery movement at once to the progress of moral sentiment and to the triumphs of utilitarianism. We have already called attention to the fact that the quality of actions which gratifies the particular set of emotions from which the actions themselves spring, is always fixed upon as the criterion of morality. But Christianity developed a higher class of emotions than Paganism did, and called attention to a higher point of contact between man and the external world. It is one of those curious correspondences which astonish the student of human thought, that this new class of emotions was first analyzed and elucidated by the same hand that wrote the great economical treatise of modern times. When sympathy is the sentiment from

which our actions spring, the happiness and advantage of others will naturally be regarded as the test of morality. In an economical and industrial civilization, which, in the science of political economy, has added a new chapter to the department of practical philosophy, this criterion would naturally soon take a materialistic turn, and ethics be converted into jurisprudence; yet, notwithstanding the protestations of modern writers, it is difficult to see any real opposition in the different proper ethical schools of a civilization which has at once overthrown slavery and developed the science of wealth. True, we have had one school of different genius, tentative, reaching for the absolute, but it has not been able to construct a logical and complete system; and if it had done so, this would have been no part of Christian ethics. Hobbism, the pioneer system of modern times, is really a Pagan system; in ethics, as elsewhere, modern thought began where ancient thought left off.

It remains to be observed, as pertinent to the course of future events, that England, the land of compromises, represents the idea of mode in modern times, as Egypt did of old. It would take long to state all the correspondences which this fact has imposed. They may be seen in the physical geography of Great Britain, in her church, her government, her thought, everywhere. The central fact of the Christian mode is the middle-term. England is the middle-term of the modern civilization, and still the thoroughly Christian land. In the catastrophe of the Christian civilization, therefore, what may we expect to be the fate of England? The end of the Christian civilization will

be the consumption of the metaphysical middle-term, the performance of its office, and the leaving of it exhausted and defunct. So long as an intimate commercial intercourse and dependence should subsist between the two hemispheres, it would be almost or quite impossible for one of them to relapse into barbarism. We may naturally expect, therefore, that this intercourse will in a great measure cease, that the two hemispheres will gape apart in a great measure, and the western produce, manufacture, and consume for itself. It is not at all probable that America will ever again be dependent on Europe as she has been in the past. England, therefore, the middle land, may be expected to disappear from her once commanding position, through the action of natural and political causes.

As for ourselves, ye hearts that are strong, it is foolish to wish to fly from the situation in which the general movement of mankind has placed us. Let us rather endure with courage the throes of transformation, and crown the skull of death with flowers, displaying a sublime example which the limited perception of the ancient world denied to it. Ours may be the sublimest, even if it be the saddest destiny as yet allotted to any nation, — that of generating in the womb of Time an all-beneficent and undying civilization. Ours is the duty and ours may be the glory of planting here, as our civilization's sun is sinking low, seeds which, germinating in the night and blossoming in the dawn, shall bear Hesperian fruit in the noon of a new cycle. What degree of darkness must necessarily succeed our catastrophe does not yet appear, but

reason no less than hope bids us rest satisfied that it will be neither so long nor so intense as that which succeeded the extinction of the Pagan day. The Father above Nature, her Lord and the Ground of her energy, the living, conscious, infinite Fountain of all that is beautiful and good and pure, will regenerate the world with the baptism of sorrow and of his holy spirit, and hasten its reconstruction with his all-powerful arm. He has already granted to man, his child, all things that are good, and is rapidly achieving them; what, then, remains to be asked for? There is nothing in Fate or in all the universe to fear. What befalls is best for each and for all; what we need is not that it should not be, but wisdom and love to draw out its blessedness. Standing in the domain of light and freedom, let us leave it to Christians to pray for profit and the violation of law, for that the very asking of which is crime, insult, and beastly folly, while we desire only that *all* which the Father grants infinitely, even ere we can lift up our little palms to receive it. Then, we pray thee, beloved Father, out of thy victory grant us peace; out of thy purity grant us purification; out of thy love grant us forgiveness, and our sins shall be but as scars to show the wounds which thou hast healed. Make us what thou lovest, dear Father, and then love us. In thine own good time do thy holy will with us and all the world. Only be what thou art, dear Father, and do what thou wilt. This is all that we can ask. And to thee, Author, Ground, and Father of all, be glory, honor, and love forevermore!

In the fertilizing syntheses with which civilizations

end, it is always the mobile and plastic term which goes to the sterile and immobile one, and unites itself with it in a new life. In ancient times, inflexible Jehovah stood in Judea, and the plastic term crossed over from Greece and was united to him by Jesus. In modern times, it is the all-loving, living, moving Father who comes to his children to lift them up into a grander life. The finite absolute by itself is but a patch of desert. But the Father finds it in America, and he will convert it into a garden more beautiful than fabled Eden. Error, bigotry, meanness, and crime have long reigned over this world, but henceforth they shall reign no more forever. The yearning soul of man, with an impulse too mighty to be resisted, has bowed down in its weakness to wood and stone, to noisome reptiles and filthy beasts, to sun and stars and powers of nature, to dreams and abstractions. The purple flag of sacrifice, dipped in the blood of the heroes who have fought the battles of the soul, has rippled darkly through storm and fetid smoke. Civilizations have died and the world gone back to darkness, that higher life and nobler truth might reign. Creeds, bigotry, persecution, murder, the war of sects, the bloody zeal of the elect, the woes of the damned, the unpitied pangs of infidels and reprobates, religious carnage broadening from Calvary to Mexico, and all the tragic scenes which Superstition has written in history, have served their melancholy end, and passed away like the sloughed material forms which also were preparatory. The Newton of the soul has come to teach the laws of the spiritual universe. The spirit of man has at last reached the hour

of its triumph, but it is a mournful hour despite its glories. Beneath the fitting banner of the cross, dripping with the blood of God's son, of Galilee, has been fought the last day's battle which has won the sad, sad victory. Ye flippant, flinty, purse-proud, whom accident has placed in the genial light, knowing little and caring nothing about the revolting scenes in the dark abysses where no sunlight falls, the day of your supremacy is ending. Creative spirit is still abroad in this universe, and a new resplendent earth, and a firmament glittering with new worlds, is bursting from the womb of chaos. Bondman of the flesh or of the spirit, drag thy chain yet a while in patience. Captive, watch hopefully through the waning night at thy prison window for the sure splendors of the dawn. And you, ye naked, starving, chilled, and heart-sick legion who shiver in the mouldy winds of degradation and despair, warm and feed and clothe yourselves with the great hope which God, your Father, now reveals. A civilization will now be built in your interest, and by virtue of the wonderful triplicity of the movement of the race, the third civilization, founded on the three categories of being, will be the final and imperishable one.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE CROWN SECURED.

IN repeated instances, of late, famous thinkers and poets, who earned in their earlier years the applause of the world as champions of humanity, have been reproached for turning in grim despair to brute force as the only hope for the regeneration of society. Poor spittle-licking human nature never becomes entirely contemptible till it begins to criticise, lampoon, and slander its fallen gods. Then the various fortune of the idol furnishes a rare commentary on the beastliness, ignorance, and detestableness of the worshipper. Our pen rather prefers to stand clear of that sort of a quarrel, and only to seek to understand why these once belauded writers have taken the step for which they are now so roundly abused. The reason is to be found in the peculiarity of their relation to the evolution of the absolute. Their course was a sign that the cosmical forces were at last constructing, in another land, a strong and stainless child of God, who, in living the truth which was to build the future, would solve forever for the race the problem of the relation of our active and our passive faculties, and

predict the eternal supremacy of spiritual over physical force.

Understand now this man's position clearly. He would not for the universe have spoken a word or done an act which could have been construed as conflicting with Jesus' teachings in regard to the forgiveness of injuries and the sinfulness of hatred. But there lies beyond all this a domain to which the vision of Jesus did not and could not penetrate, or penetrated only confusedly. It is opened up by the question what we may do in resisting the aggressions of evil; and there came at last a man who had strength to answer that question without shrinking from the terrible pains it inflicted. There was in him no trace of the misdirected and mawkish sentimentalism which shrinks from the inevitable and God-appointed order of the world. He accepted facts as they existed, and duty as the Father laid it before him. No language can express his horror of war, but he had strength to accept the awful ordeal in perfect submission when God and duty sent it. As the world now is, it is sometimes necessary to draw the sword to save the right from destruction, and the way to remove the necessity is neither by tame submission to wrong, nor by sentimental whining over it, but by rising in sturdy manhood and smiting it so terribly that it shall cease to make war upon the right. To say that this is dangerous doctrine, — however, what is manly and true is never dangerous, — and that we cannot trust ourselves to decide the terrible question as to when it is right to make war, is to skulk like cowards from responsibilities which God has laid on us.

So, when the wild storm of blood and fire broke over the land, considering no personal pain, but only his relation to the future truth, he obtained a place where he could be only an observer and student of military affairs until the day which he saw near at hand should come. In the decision of the first or political question, he had no part; but in the debate which was to decide the freedom of a race, and the possibility of the future, he intended to be an actor. You may say that the one involved the other and that they could not be divided; but this is not so. A drop of blood on his hand in the first stage of the contest would have been to him ruin, forfeiture, and eternal woe; his part in the second stage of the contest was a portion, but not the whole, of the active mission which God, his Father, appointed for him in this world.

The actual bursting of the storm removed from his mind the burden of anxiety and care which had so nearly crushed out his life, and his health began slowly to improve; yet the extent and poignancy of both his physical and his mental sufferings no language can describe. Never complaining, never breathing a word of his suffering, he took his place among the well and strong, to share their hardships and privations. Time and time again, terrible attacks of disease brought him to the very door of death, and it would seem that he must surely die, but he did not. It was wonderful how strong even in their ruin were the shattered forces of his physical life, and how powerfully they struggled to reconstitute themselves. After each terrible and almost mortal illness, he would struggle back slowly into life and return to his place.

And so bearing up under what would have crushed a weaker will and forever incapacitated a smaller spirit, he bore his humble but enlarging part in that great conflict.

The dark and lowering morning on which, being as yet only a spectator, he looked on men arrayed to kill their brethren, was one which will never be forgotten while history endures. The scenes which met his eyes on approaching that terrible field beggar description. On the bank of the river dead men lay trampled down deep in the mire or protruding in every conceivable form of ghastly mutilation from among broken bales of hay. On the crest of the hill above the river stood some heavy guns which had done terrible work in the desperate struggle of the previous afternoon; and just in front of them lay melancholy heaps of Southern dead. At one spot particularly, a shell from one of the large guns had torn the hostile line to fragments, and apparently a score of files had been reduced at once to a shapeless mass of splintered bones, blackened flesh, and rags of clothing. Beyond this the dead of both armies were scattered less thickly through the woods or abandoned camps, blue and gray lying side by side; for some of the ground had already been fought over twice. The battle was renewed about sunrise, and continued till the middle of the afternoon. This man was not there to lift his hand against another's life, but to die, if necessary, in acquiring knowledge which he needed. Being free to go whithersoever he would, he walked forward through the woods towards the point whence the heaviest roll of musketry and the loudest roar of artillery pro-

ceeded. He sat down there upon a stump and watched the awful work that was going on. Bullets whistled around him, some passing with the quick, indescribable *thud* almost through his hair; shells coming on with demoniac screeches were bursting all around him, tearing the trees to pieces and sending their fragments rattling through the boughs. One buried itself in a little spring which bubbled up at the root of the stump on which he sat, and covered him with mud and water; it must have killed him if it had exploded, but it did not. He sat there in the same place hour after hour, in anguish such as was never before experienced in this world. As the Confederates retired across an open field, in full view of the place where he sat, he saw them cut down in swaths by shells and rifle-balls. In one part of the field there was a cluster of peach-trees in full bloom. A single shell killed several men there at the same instant, and tearing off the boughs and bloom of the trees, spread these over them as a pall. The Confederates made their last stand in the edge of the woods, beyond this field, and the position of their line throughout its whole extent, was traceable afterwards by a long, long swath of their dead. Tender boys lay there rigid and white, and one poor lad who had died sitting propped against a tree, still held a picture, apparently his mother's, in his waxen hand. At last the firing drifted away and ceased, and the battle was over. Others may have seen in it glory, duty, and honor; others may have thrilled with the joy of the strife; but this man saw only murder, blindness, and crime; saw only a carnival of death needlessly

wrought by the ignorance, meanness, and incompetency of the age and its masters. And through all those hours, as he looked upon this awful work, his lips moved in agonizing prayer to the Father in behalf of all the sons of men. On that bloody field was made many a reputation, many a brilliant fame; many came thence hailed immortal and secure of lasting power and honor; but among all who struggled there in death-locks that day, who equalled in heroism the pale, sick boy, the child of God, the friend and lover of his unhappy race, who, rejoicing that he was not called upon to dip his hand in blood, calmly faced death that he might learn what he must know? And of all who afterwards boasted loudly of their deeds that day, who had really passed through such peril as he?

The Confederate Commander, the closest and most authentic representative of the Christian ideas and forces which made that slaughter, called that bloody field by a name more fitted to start mournful reflections than any other word in human history.

Then the martyr's great word was spoken, and this man, changing his position, began to be an actor. On another morning, as dark and lowering as that previous one, he again stood face to face with death, in battle; but this time with the privilege of tasting the joy of danger, and thrilling with the most enrapturing sense that human nature can ever know. He had been entrusted with the duty of posting a line of infantry in a dense thicket, in a difficult position, and he did it well. But before other troops could be brought to support the line, the ardent Southerners,

having gained great advantages in another part of the field, came driving like a storm, full on the position, and their fire began to envelop both its flanks. Then this man was sent to withdraw the line which he had posted. As he made his way back through the thicket, shells dropped around him like hail, tearing the tops of the trees to pieces. Just as he reached the right of the position and delivered the order, the driving storm of fire struck that spot, and brave men fell like leaves in autumn. In another instant, the line at the command had ebbed back from around him and left him on the outside towards the enemy. The next moment, he found himself not five paces in front of the flank of a regiment, faced in the direction in which the line was retiring. In the first flash, he thought it was a Federal regiment faced to the rear and falling back with the rest. No colors were or could be displayed; the dense thicket even hid the uniforms of the men; only a bright line of steel could be seen, and the regiment was not firing. But the second glance told him they were Confederates, and at the same instant the command, "Fire!" rang out, and the flanking company poured a volley directly at him. He felt a burning sensation in his side, and knew that he was hit; but he had no time to inquire whether he was hurt. The volley had cut in two the forward strap of his sword, and the weapon, after balancing back and forth for a moment by the remaining strap, as his horse, recoiling from the fire, plunged madly back into the thicket, capsized, and the blade dropped out upon the ground. He could not leave his sword there. He would far rather have been torn into shreds by the en-

emy's fire than to have left it there. Throwing himself from his horse he recovered it, remounted, and after he had gone twenty or thirty yards from the hostile line, the thick woods formed a complete protection from their fire. All this had taken place almost in the twinkling of an eye. As he rode towards the retreating line, he saw that his coat was riddled with bullets; he therefore took it off and threw it away in the cedars. He was riding on his overcoat, having taken it off half an hour before in order to ride through the thicket better. He now put it on, gained one of the paths that led out of the thicket, rode down this, and gained the open ground at the same moment with the troops. He then took the throat-latch of his bridle to do duty as a sword-strap, and an instant afterwards the weapon was swinging at his side, in its scabbard, as usual, and no one could have guessed, from anything in his appearance or manner, that he had ever known danger in all his life.

History has probably furnished but few spectacles surpassing that of the next five minutes in that part of the field. Three batteries were massed on the crest of a little slope opposite the centre of the thicket. The infantry were ordered to lie down behind the embankment of a turnpike road which lay at the foot of the little hill in front of the batteries. Scarcely were these dispositions made, when the ardent Confederates came pressing up to the edge of the thicket and swarmed out into the open field. This man, sitting on his horse among the guns on the slope, saw the first few gray suits that dotted the dark green line of the cedars with their contrasted color, thicken into a line of battle, and

the bright glitter of their steel flash out of the heavy green of the thicket. This he saw before the Federal fire, opening on them around the whole extent of the line, engirdled them in flame and smoke, and then he saw them no more, nor will mortal eye ever again behold them. The batteries, with peal after peal too rapid to be counted, mowed them down with double-shotted canister, while the Federal infantry poured unbroken sheets of flame into their front and left flank. The rim of the hill on which the batteries stood, was a wall of living fire; the line of the turnpike road was wrapped in an unbroken blaze; flames seemed to leap up out of the earth and dance through the air; and the lately unmanageable horse, thoroughly subdued by the awful cannonade, stood quiet as a lamb among the muzzles of the murderous Napoleons, enveloped in the flame and smoke they vomited. One Southern regiment charged to within a few yards of the Federal position, and there was blown out of existence; and then the fragments of the broken line took refuge in the woods. The terrific firing ceased, and as the smoke rolled away, the sun broke through the clouds and shone out clear and bright, and in the sudden lull of the strife, the whole world seemed to be holding its breath. Within a few paces of the Federal position lay hundreds of still or writhing forms of human clay. It seemed so strange to see them there, where, but a moment before, the ground had been clear. From the mortal wounds of some the life-blood was still flowing; some, propped on their elbows, were gasping their last; and there the flag of the bold regiment lay on the ground beside its dead bearer.

The brunt of the battle was over for that day. The first thing this man did, when he had leisure, was to go secretly and replace every article of clothing which the enemy's bullets had cut. The one which had touched his side had burnt a blister, but had done no other harm. The next day, in the continuance of the action, he was again hit by a spent ball, and this occurrence was talked of; but never, till the hour of his death, did any who were there, hear from his lips a word about what he had passed through in the thicket.

It was now that his active life and work in the world really began, copying the Father's present labor of lifting up and strengthening down-trodden man. It is not the object of this volume to speak of them with any degree of fulness, for, already too large, it must hasten to its close. The proclamation of freedom was quickly followed, as he had seen it must be, by the enlistment of the freedmen. A work which he could do had thus come to his hand, and leaving all things else, he devoted himself to it. The negro was free and could never again be reënslaved. God and Fate would crush any people who should ever attempt to reënslave him; the clear, the plain, the only duty was to employ every means of strengthening and disciplining him, and making him able to protect himself. This man considered it a matter compared with which all other practical questions at that time were trifles, that the black man should win respect as a soldier in the war.

It is unnecessary to speak of what he had to endure in his work. The world turned and spit on him.

Every pretended friend he had on earth became his foe, and only thought how former intimacy might guide the hand of malice to stab the better. Calumny belched its feter at him in gales. Persecution of every kind assailed him. But he cared as little for all this as he did for the price of rat-pies in China. His sufferings arose from a far different source. The Christian civilization butchered and exterminated the Indian. For ages it wrung wealth out of the negro's beaded brow. Compelled at last to adopt an opposite course, its incompetency and meanness were not less conspicuous in its pretended generosity than its violence and malevolence had previously been. The man of whom we speak thought he had never known either scorn or sorrow till he entered on that business. We have no wish to enlarge on the subject, for we want no debate of the kind which we should get into by telling the truth in regard to these matters. It is enough to say that the same traits of character and the same manner of proceeding which had already sealed the ruin of the nation, laid up disgrace and woe for both races, which even swine could scarcely have been expected to inflict. Patient, silent, making no needless exhibition of sagacity, letting others scramble for place in a duty where to remember self was dishonor, one man toiled on faithfully to the last, lavishing his money, his time, his powers, accomplishing much for his lowly brethren, winning triumphs which he never wore, more than content that greedy beasts should reap the harvest if he might only sow the seed.

Thus, at last, that conflict drew to its close, and then came days of peace, in which his nature grew

into fulness and its last sublime maturity. Physical wholeness returned, and his body became the perfect minister of his peaceful, majestic, and sovereign spirit. On his countenance now always rested a settled melancholy which no language can describe; and ah! it is not strange that it was there; but in the touching sadness of his expression, no snarling fretfulness or sullen gloom ever mingled. He was no grumbler; there was in him no crustiness, no spleen, no fussy and captious egotism thinly disguised behind the knit brow and bushy front of cheap austerity. He passed out of the sphere of personal aims, not into inactivity, but into a serene and peaceful activity in perfect harmony with that of the Father. It was no straining of the will, no stretching of personal effort, but a living out of his life as a part of the divine movement. He had inherited the universe, and now he entered into full and secure possession; there was for him no anxiety, no doubt, no strain, no fear, no misfortune any more forever. Yet there was in him neither sterile individualism, nor any diminution of the self. His experience was the union of the finite with the Infinite in the perfect life of the whole being. His spirit, unobliterated, unquenched, retained all its quickness, clearness, vigor, all the beauty of its power. He made no parade of public teaching; as he would not stoop to be the leader of a party, neither would he be the founder of a sect. He only lived out his truth like the shining and incorruptible stars, sowing the universe with light, and never asking for any return. One hair of his head, nay, even the shadow of a hair of his head, was more valuable and more powerful to

save than all whom the age adored and followed. Avoiding these as he would basilisks, he said of them, "The world needs them to lead it to beneficent death, and after that it will rise again and live forever in my truth." Yet to all who were ready for his truth, he gladly imparted it, and many hailed him deliverer, and looking into their consciousness cleared and instructed by him, knew that they too were growing up into the congregation of the children. For it is only in this truth that men become the children of God, and the Christian and all below him, only creatures of God in this life, will grow to the stature of childhood in the world beyond the grave.

We have neither wish nor need to enter into the questions of those days. This man seeing in them the sure preparation of the triumph of his truth, and the confirmation of the dark predictions of his days of pain, tried to remember only that the lives of the mass of men cannot be higher than the life and mission of their age. But because the sword of retribution proceeds seriatim, let us not weakly believe that all who are still unexecuted are safe. Neither let us hate one set of wicked self-seekers because they failed, and laud others because, no thanks to them, the purposes of God and the movement of the race chose them as ministers and crowned their partisan schemes for a time with honor. Wisdom teaches a larger and a purer lesson. Knowing that it was fate, not motive, that made any of these politicians champions of the right; knowing that any lower issue would have served them just as well to quarrel over as the one which the now advanced movement of the race presented;

knowing that it was no difference of spirit but different reckonings of selfish policy that made one party rebel and the other adhere; knowing that if the tropical influences in this land had been stronger than the temperate forces, the latter and not the former would have recoiled; we should look at both herds of political beasts with the same just eye, judge them intrinsically, acquit the noble of crime and the ignoble of merit, forgive the misguided, and condemn the filthy all alike. We see to what end the feeblers demons of secession, the first permitted to destroy themselves, have come. The world beholds, in amazement at its folly, where the wild dream of restoring Pagan inhumanity, perfected by the addition of feudalism and monarchy, has ended. But shall we let the splendor of recent events mislead our eyes, or the pæans that fill the jubilant air impose upon our ears? Shall we pause here and blind ourselves to the later and completer ruin which stronger Apollyons are working? They have already cut all the valves in the heart of Christian freedom, in their attempt to enlarge the circulation, and presently they will have destroyed civilization also. All that they have done, indispensable as it was, supremely beneficent as God will make it at last, has been rendered, by their manner of doing it, only the beginning of the march back to barbarism. "Ridiculous!" exclaims a Pharisee; "these questions which we have solved are the very highest that have arisen in the course of our civilization." Gentle Pharisee, what ruined Rome? And so, to the end of time, every civilization that is overthrown, if, when the general movement shall become perennial, there may still

be eddies in it, will be destroyed by reaching questions which it is incompetent to manage. The solution which you have given the question God gave you to solve, is, that you have turned the bull out of his pen, and impaled the nation on his horns. "But at the very worst, cannot the beginning of the backward movement be checked, and the needed spiritual forces be supplied?" As reasonably could you expect the earth to put on a new crust without the breaking up of the old. Death is needed to convince this land that it is sick, and to reveal to it the truth on which its life depends. Hint to your Christian neighbor the bare possibility of a higher, freer, and purer life for the world than Christianity with its atonements, priests, kings, and hierarchies can supply, and see what reception your suggestion will meet. Shall we be heeded by you, occidental Romans, in our indirect and partial attempt to arrest you in the way of death, — to tear the scales from your eyes, — to mitigate the horrors of your suicide, — to hurl from power the pigmy-demons who have deluged you in blood, and sunk you in the pit of hell? No; but we shall only be considered some particularly incomprehensible and ridiculous sort of fool, and even if one were to rise from the dead to warn you, neither would you heed him. The caution of war has crisped over the abscess of slavery, but its roots reached into the very vitals of the Christian civilization, and presently it and others, reeking with its virus, will burst forth again in tenfold greater fury. What we have as yet seen, was but the beginning of the end; the end of the end will come, too, in due time. The brutal, wicked, and unnecessary squabble

over slavery, was naturally the first one ; the treatment it has received shows what the second debate will be, and how it will end.

The preliminary assertion of an absolute in man, has fatally deranged the balance of the governmental system, and prepared the way for a more open and relentless conflict of the whole with its parts, than we have yet witnessed. And the conflict, once begun, cannot but at last, in spite of all the devilish engineering that may seek to guide it, oscillate from point to point of the compass, till all shall be visited ; and thus, what has befallen the South, will, sooner or later, befall every section. Occasions cannot be nicely predicted, because they lie largely within the sphere of human freedom ; but the general result of the action of known forces, wisdom can foretell with unerring accuracy. To what then, is this Christian land now drifting ? To reeking corruption spurting through the groaning and incapable gates of Christian conservatism, and mocking the dropping rottenness of Rome ; to saturnalia of blood and crime, eclipsing the clotted pages which Sylla and the triumvirs washed in gore ; to the collar of needed despotism tightening around the necks of a wolfish and insatiable mob ; to a substantial dissolution of society from the equator to the pole ; to rapine desolating every plain, murder reddening every streamlet, death grinning from every milestone, license and pollution sweltering on every hearthstone ; to new Cæsars, Alarics, and Attilas deluging the world in woe, and burdening every wind beneath the dome of heaven with sighs and groans. But will not the higher morality of Christianity prevent a rep-

etition of the horrible corruption which shocked the universe, and took the color out of the cheeks of Hell, when the putrid heart of Rome broke? Certainly, the fruits of eighteen hundred years will not be altogether unavailing. The Christian civilization will die a nobler death than the Pagan; but let us not expect too much from a faith which made the Reformation a feast of blood. Read the history of the wars which the bitter fanaticism of Christianity has kindled, and draw apposite prognostication thence. To say that slavery could not be destroyed, or that municipal freedom could not be preserved, by any other means than those which the opposite political factions of this land tried, only adds depth and darkness to their condemnation. What will posterity think of an age and a people for whom this damning apology is made with truth, knowing too, as they will, that the demagogues who have wrought this ruin, and the unthinking fools who have followed them, knew nothing, and cared less about either slavery or municipal freedom? What sort of municipal freedom is this which cannot live without slavery? and what sort of imbecile philanthropy is this which could not remove a weak and despicable crime without pulling down the pillars of society? The gist of the matter is, that this land has shown that it cannot pass to a higher civilization except through the gates of death; and the sooner this is perceived the better. The madmen who are precipitating themselves into this gulf, have not the remotest idea what they are doing; and the sincere and virtuous few, sold into eternal slavery under a book and a light-excluding dogmatism, see no danger ahead.

What hope is there for such an age and such a land? The hope of death alone. Are they worth saving? — who would dare to try? — what reward will they have who do try? Men of this age, soulless, sordid, gold-adoring, God-scorning set, you are hopelessly incapable of receiving the only truth that could, by any possibility, save you, — the truth on which the future world will be built. Your very modes of thought condemn you to death, and die you will by your own hands. You will go straight on by the shortest route as nearly to complete barbarism as it is possible to go in this age of the world. And may that Father, who, in the heaven above us, mourns over our blindness and unworthiness, and our dark and awful crimes, save all the real interests of mankind from our madness and folly, and lead forth new splendors out of the eclipse — as He will.

Wherefore, after those days of peace, there came another conflict, — no matter when or where, — still more nearly related to this man's life and mission. Then the experience which he had bought with his blood, stood him in good stead. Passing through the baptism of blood and fire, in behalf of that which could be secured by no smaller sacrifice, he won for himself a place and a fame among men, and his greatness and goodness began to be the theme of every tongue. And in that war he fell, his soul mounting to the skies from the red field where he poured out his life in the service of his truth. In accordance with his own last injunctions, his body was taken back to the little valley where he was born, and there the sods were heaped above him. His monument rises there

to-day, reader, a shaft as simple as his story, and bearing only his name, and the words, "Born of God — killed in action." There he at last reposes, and there near Nature weeps over him, mourning that he fell so young. And as we have stood there by his grave, knowing what he was, knowing what the triumph of his life and principles would have saved this land and the world, it has seemed that in the sobbing winds there was an infinite voice lamenting his untimely end with groanings that could not be uttered.

**"And peradventure in the after years,
When thoughtful men shall bend their spacious brows
Upon the storm and strife seen everywhere,
To ruffle their smooth manhood, and break up,
With lurid lights of intermittent hope,
Their human fear and wrong, — they may discern
The heart of a lost angel in the earth."**

CHAPTER XXIV.

SYNOPTICAL AND ILLATIVE.

THUS, out of the progressive forces whence, at every crisis in the history of the race, expressions of the movement of the universe in flesh and blood come forth, in order that, through them, the future and attainable may pass into fact, there has again arisen, in this late large age, a first-born among many brethren. Like the Indian sages, who brought the shapeless race out of nebulous yearnings into the paste of an all-whelming One-Many; like their heirs, the patriarchs, and bronze and rigid Moses, who reduced and simplified this dizzying Infinite for the perplexed impulses of the bewildered soul; like bold and tender Jesus, who first of men felt a Father in the Infinite, and united his pure soul with Him in conscious and actual sonship;—this man was part of a movement which extends beyond this life of conflict, and this present evil world, and connects us and them, in fortune, origin, and destiny, with all material and immaterial things, finite and infinite, that have had or shall have being.

Wince not, pricked bigot; the fault is not that we are irreverent, but that you, the work of Jesus' hands,

know nothing of your Master. The world has never yet comprehended one of its prophets. It has murdered many, has worshipped a few, and still maligns and hatèd some of the grandest of the godlike train. The relations of these men are above the sphere of ordinary thought and experience, so that they are hard to understand; and when the world attempts to appreciate them, it only misconceives, distorts, and maims them. Even the latest of them, him whom we have outlined, in an age when the human understanding was larger and fuller than ever before, not many ever approached and saw him as he was, — nor ever went away and spoke of him without misrepresenting and degrading him. The movement which heaves beneath the ages, ripples out also through the lives of men, and, at each new era, a diviner Aphrodite, rising through the broken edges of the waves, with a name no longer Pagan written on her brow of light, gives herself to the world through those whose lives embrace the pregnant foam. Thus, the prophet is he in whose experience and teachings are revealed the truths and forces which hold, and are to mould, the substance of the future. He is their first fruit, the conscious type, and thus the agent, of that which is to be. His mind, soul, and earthly destiny, his perceptions and the spirit of his teachings, all that he is, has, and does, are the product of the central and essential forces which propel the race of men and all created and uncreated things, in their changes from lower to loftier modes. Child of the universe and of the Father of souls, begotten of His will and nature, and of the movements of His life, the rudiments of the prophet's

nature and the germs of his sublime unconsciousness are developed into eternal, embodied, spiritual truth, by conscious union with the Father and the influx of His holy spirit. His insight is not a matter of the understanding, nor the end of an induction of his own, nor inductive in its process, but is an unconscious and soulful outlook and deduction—in the nature of a conversion, and, at this time, of an enlargement—from the high-piled inductions and progresses of many ages. The truths he teaches are immediate revelations to his spiritual sense, and are of the substance of his own being. They are intuitions of his inspired and qualified soul as he looks onward from his age and the promontory where the movement of the race has placed him. They are the projection and upheaval into consciousness, experience, and later understanding, of an increase of truth and spirit. He knows that their verity does not depend on an explanation of their origin any more than the reality of his optical perceptions is so dependent. They do not reach him through the processes of logic, and may be true though every reason he assigns for them be trash and ashes. Hence, the prophet in his teaching asserts, soliciting the yea of no man, or reasons like a suckling who knows only the nutrition of his mother's breast and the near pulsations of her heart. He possesses not his life; it possesses him. It is something larger than himself, in which he dwells. Nevertheless, there is an analysis of the prophet's life, though he may not make it; there is an understanding of his truths, though he may organize them faultily. The proof of the reality of spiritual truths must be afforded at last, when the hour

shall strike, as it is striking now, precisely as the proof of the reality of all other knowledge is afforded, by correlating them with the rest of the ultimate where they are ultimate, by sinking them in larger causes where they are derivative. And it has been one of the objects of this book to show you that, in the impending enlargement of spiritual organism, substance, and force, the highest intuitions meet with and pass in under the forms of the understanding, resting on its contents, on the conquests of induction, and on the whole of the Actual; and that these and they, at last reconciled and harmonized forever, make up the immortal soul and now imperishable body of all truth.

The construction of the prophet also must be traced just as any other instance of origination in natural history is traced. The production of the germ, with its particular capacities and susceptibilities, must be referred to that force which, working slowly up for ages, has climbed at last to it, and its differentiation must be accounted for by its surroundings and the influences to which it has been subjected. Then, student of the race and of the things of God, heed this attempt to show you something of the conversion of the natural into the spiritual, and to set before you one in whom vehement spirit carried reason and understanding to their last largeness, clearness, peacefulness, and power, and who represented thus the trinity of being made one and triumphant.

The prophetic soul of man has foretold in every age, with strange perversions, the coming of its deliverers and leaders. When the polity which established

monotheism in the world had accomplished all the good it could do for mankind, when its time was full, its mission ended, he appeared to whom its shadows pointed, who came not to destroy but to fulfil the law. Him the prophets saw, and of him they darkly and unintelligently spoke. Yet mankind, blind and stubborn, knowing nothing of the life and movement of the Father and of their manifestation in human flesh, expecting something far other than the meek and lowly being who came to teach and be sacrificed, rejected and scoffed him, derided and spit upon him, and led him away to be crucified. Yet he came at the time he was expected, and accomplished the work which was then needed by the soul; and when his maimed form was laid away in the grave, and his great spirit went up to the Father, the believing heart of man, crushed with sorrow and despondency, exalting the manifestation into the larger fact behind it, perceiving, too, all that yet remained to be done, thought—how *could* it *but* think?—that he would come again to establish the dominion of righteousness in the world, and to achieve as he had suffered. Even till now, with unshaken constancy, has the trusting soul of man, full of love, simplicity, and sweetness, looked for his second coming; and in these later ages it has felt, even as it felt of old, that the time was almost come. But the bones of that suffering son of God are still mouldering to-day beneath the sod of Judea where two thousand years ago they were laid away to rest at last. Loving and beautiful soul of man, he can come no more to aid and lead you and receive the tributes of your love. His earthly

work is done, his life has now borne all its fruit, and he is gone forever to the Father. But in like disparity between the wild expectation and the sublimer, simpler fact as he came to fulfil the law, now that the mission of Christianity is likewise done, and dominion is about to succeed redemption, hath come another, who was to fulfil Christianity, the lowliest of created beings, a man of many sorrows and acquainted with grief, the manifestation of a new mode of the Father's life and labor, prefiguring to the soul its future of mastery and peace. Father, blessed be thy holy name that thou hast kept these things from the wise and great, and hast revealed them unto babes.

Casting his lot, by preference, among the lowliest of his species, with bruised lips laid in the dust, and the hemorrhage of his boundless heart staining the sackcloth and ashes which he had chosen, he lived these truths rather than taught them; and the transient halo which settled on his later days, was too ethereal and brief for earthly fame. Even this sunset gleam was wrung from Fate only by that necessity of his destiny which, linking him inseparably with the progress of the race, made him a symptom and a promise. What more the Father made him than the perception and revelation of the truth required, He made him not as a benefaction to him, but only that his consciousness might better embrace the future.

The Divine, till now oppressed and sacrificial, is yet forever true to itself, forever self-correspondent even in the minutest shade wherein it manifests itself. It never yet was anything within the inspired soul, or in an inspired life, which it was not also, at that mo-

ment, essentially out of and beyond it; for inspired souls are the product of its modes. Believe, if you prefer, that the Divine was self-conscious from the first, and that with fond, paternal purpose he assumed the burden of matter and the pains of progress for the good of his children yet to be; or, accept, if you are strong enough, the sublimest and most fruitful of all truths, that, with divine and sacrificial pains, in obedience to the spontaneous laws of his being, which seem to us, and are, necessity, he is moving from lower modes to pure spiritual and self-conscious being. But believe always, and in any event, this, that the mediations of God's prophets are the mediations of God. For, in his acts of mediation, God, their Father and the Father of all, begets them and manifests them to the world, revealing thus in human flesh the progressive pulsations of the tide which throbs the war-songs and the pæans of all the Ages. The sense of union with the Father, and of production out of him, made Jesus, in the eyes of men, and, possibly, at last, in his own unanalytic conception also, in moments of exaltation, brotherless in the divine sonship. It has caused him to be worshipped for eighteen centuries. Yet mark the peculiar idea which this consciousness assumed both in him and in relation to him, and then mark how it bore him to Calvary a ruin and a sacrifice, after the apparent failure of his life. The visible sacrifice for sin — the price and token of the full beginning of the spiritual life on earth — was offered on Calvary, in the sight of a sympathetic universe, once for all time, leading us at last to understand how God, our Father and Redeemer, in the holy mass which his mov-

ing spheres sing, is a constant sacrifice for us. But this atonement, applying of necessity to but one point in the relations of God and man, and comprehending but a special portion of the nature of each, possessed another characteristic still more disastrous to civilization and the whole of human thought, relation, and action. By its own terms, it eternized the gulf between the Ideal and the Actual, by misconceiving both; it placed one upon the right hand and the other upon the left, and poured a sea of darkness and eternal fire between. Yet, on account of this very partialness and error, which enabled it, by metaphor and exclusion, to lay more stress on the one essential point, and to accomplish the better its purifying mission, it prepared the way for a grander and more potent spirituality later than redemption, wherein strength, through the possession of all the categories of being, through the correlation of spirit with matter and of the whole finite with the whole infinite, and through the conquest and conversion of the Actual, should close the gulf between the Ideal and the Actual, God and man become indeed Father and child, and civilization and the human soul enter upon a final and imperishable life. This was the work of mediation and union which remained after Calvary, and for which the mediation and atonement of Jesus prepared the way; and this the Father accomplished by the life of another of His children. Jesus led the human soul into its kingdom; this man established, confirmed, and gave laws to its empire forever; in him God enthroned it on the Mount of Victory, which ever rises beyond the Mount of Sacrifice. Does "this man blaspheme" more and more?

Well, the charge cannot overturn a fact of consciousness, nor has pandemonium, in all the millions of its ages, ever yet succeeded in howling off even the smallest and sharpest corner of the pillars that lift up heaven above it. This man's mediation was the final mediation of strength, and its end was peace through victory. He conquered a final truth, subdued the antagonism between the Ideal and the Actual, and united to be divorced no more all the elements and forms of being, beginning thus for human nature a movement which, like that begun by Jesus, must continue in progress for ages, changing through a myriad modes, and lead to grander spheres of prophecy and sacrifice. But this mediation, though it was conquest, was effected or manifested in him, as we have seen, by the sacrifice of him; and he fell, pierced through with many wounds, in the hour of victory. No proprieties are like the proprieties of the drama of the divine. Wicked men tortured and slew him who atoned for sin; and in the chasm which gaped between the Ideal and the Actual, welding the closing walls with his own blood, this man perished. Nature made him a martyr by her own laws and the necessity of things. Being what he was and must have been in order to predict and prepare the future, the age in which he lived could not but lay him, a glad and eagerly-consenting victim, on a bloody altar, and dip in his own blood the seals which stamped upon his life and labors the signature of God.

Being thus the especial and latest earthly offspring of the movement of the Father and of us his children, he came forth from the womb of Nature in the simplicity

and strength of law, and built his life on these and clothed his system in them. No wild shadow of the impossible ever clouded his lucid consciousness or disqualified his clear perception; no vulgar wonder diminished and degraded the stature of his spotless and manly spirit. Thus, the more, did Nature, who had prepared his place from the foundation of the world, attest her son, displaying by innumerable signs that need of him which, with her, means yearning love and quick creation. Demanded by the movement of the race, and indicated by every storm and every beam that crossed the earth, he was also preceded by many in whose footprints nature set a mark prophetic of his advent. Men of flinty intellect and empty, hollow, cold, hard hearts, had taught every preliminary truth, and then appeared successive embryos rising slowly through failure and incompleteness to the culmination in him. Many had an intellectual perception of these truths, but this man alone lived them; they were the substance of his life and being; in him they were made flesh and dwelt among us. Detached, fragmentary and lifeless truths awaited the quickening and soul-building touch of the perfect messenger of God. Stones hewn out of the mountain by mercenary and callous hands lay on the plain waiting for the master, with those which gentlest and purest tears had bleached to Parian whiteness. Many rushing from the bondage of effete faiths, had rushed also far from the embrace and knowledge of the Father; and many sweet and beautiful spirits, torn with the anguish of imperfect emancipation from servitude to a book and a sloughed organism, lifted up their eyes and wept; and

still others as sweet and amiable sank in their weakness into pits of rayless and demoniac despair; and others, weaker still, withered under the exhausted glass which they dared not break. The human soul was left without a faith; old things had passed away, and bad men said, "Lo, Christianity has perished, and so there is now no longer a God or any soul." The entire organism which Christianity had set on the universe and the pulsing mass of being, no longer large enough and fit for the increased and throbbing absolute within, but become an iron shell around the out-swelling and bond-bursting soul, was breaking down. Twice in the eternal conflict of force with the finite organism, out of which higher forms and forces and the slow-born harmonies of progress ever come, had organism been destroyed — once from becoming specific and lifting the human spirit too far out of the tides of life, and once from being incompetent to assimilate the fruits and conquests of the understanding with the substance of reason and breaking down under the task — when nature sent him to inaugurate an organism which should forever appropriate new supplies of vital force and never perish. In Pagan and again in Christian times, by the opposite methods of upheaval and drainage and of submergence and overflow, had human thought and society and the relations of the soul been disorganized. When the Christian organism, expanded and attenuated to its widest and thinnest limit in favor of growth and freedom, at last began to give way, as the first decisive and unmistakable crash of demolition rolled away on moaning winds into God's germinative night to warm thence

the detailed forces of the future, — this man heard the signal and knew it was the minute-gun of God, and arose and girded himself and came forth at their head. The Christian mode of the doctrine of reconciliation with the newly-found Father, due to perspective and the psychological relations of a new truth and to the distortions of an impure conscience, had done its work, as the doctrine of modes of the Divine had done its work before in diverse Indian, Greek and Hebrew thought. First assailed in the more or less useful accessories by which it was enforced on the uneducated, its logical outworks were all prostrated one by one before the central dogma of separation was dissolved in the consciousness of literal childhood and inseparable union. Protestantism in destroying Christianity by its rule of faith, had opened the way to that criterion of the one absolute reason by which all schisms shall at last be healed. Then the soul no longer needed to be weak in order to be full of faith and love and sweetness. Its conquests had made it strong, and the law and possession of light had purged away its impurities. Vassalage, probation and protection were ended, and with them the entire early polity of nature. The hour had struck when, in strength and purity, grounded on the absolute and vitalized by full union with the living God, the source of all life, the human spirit was to begin its perfect life. Then came he, the fruit of all the early and preparatory ages, whom the Infinite had begotten in the depths of nature in the self-same hour that began her existence. A part of the universe, all that preceded him predicted and prepared his coming, and all the future hung on him.

In the days of the old prophets, the movement was separative and constructive, was towards freedom, individuality, and the beginning of conquest through diminution and the ascendancy of the organic. Then there followed ages in which the soul of man was too far off from the Father, too distinctly divided from Him, for inspiration to be possible. When that separative movement was at its zenith height, and the finite had been reached and ascertained and had become a definite, independent, individual fact, the human soul, strong enough now in consciousness to feel its guilty state, and seeing that it was at the opposite pole of the universe from God, called aloud to Jesus, in its anguish, to mediate between it and the Father, and restore it to His bosom. But the movements which first in the ascertainment and then in the restoration of the finite, cut off and left behind the experience of inspiration in order that man might first become a completed, detached, individual self, and then might grapple with and master the material world, ended with the accomplishment of their missions; and this man was at once the product and the termination of the returning movement which began from and after Jesus, and which, carrying enlightened and purified man back to his Father, has opened afresh the gates of inspiration in the human soul. He was the prophet and first-fruits of the continuance of man as a distinct and perfect self, a free and clear-cut fact, without loss of individuality, freedom and self-government, in the bosom of the Infinite; and, consequently, with Him as with the present general process of enlargement and return, the movement of the understanding or organ-

ized consciousness was towards and constantly deeper and deeper into inspiration. This was its direction because it was culminative and final, because it completes the movement of the cosmos. And thus he bore the organic, with flexible and ever-expanding limit, back into the shoreless Force, out of whose waves of fire he had emerged, and reorganized human thought and the relations of the soul on a basis wide as the universe and all the facts of nature.

Those who, coming centuries after us, shall comprehend more clearly than is possible to us now, the relation of spirit to nature, and of Hindu, Greek and Christian faith as stages of the human soul to the whole of truth and being, will understand better than we can do the meaning and bearing of experiences and convictions which summed up and ended forever the struggle by which the human soul emerged out of nature into the knowledge of one personal spiritual God and Father. Knowing that the word Will no more sums up the entire personality of the Father than of His children, and that the faculty in Him bears essentially the same relation to the whole being as in us, they will have a different appreciation from any which this narrow age can have for one who differed, primarily, from all who preceded him, in this, that, at the last, the aspect of the Father's love for him was not the scanty and special patchwork of final causes, but the steady and eternal flow onward of a shoreless wave on whose changing crest diviner sunlight falls from age to age. But, in making our way up to the Father, such abstractions as the Jewish Jehovah and the Christian God were inevitable; as was also, at the

first step thence, the inconceivable cosmogony which justly, whether actually taught by him or interpolated by a later hand, passes under the name of Moses ; and equally inevitable, at the next step, were the later Christian dogmas which reduce both nature and grace to a mess of absurdities that no man can understand. The movement which takes place in the human soul is the reflection, hitherto partial and fragmentary but now at last complete and catholic, of a larger movement which is going on outside of it, and beneath it, and every section of the movement has cast upon the glass of human consciousness the images of its appropriate faith. Never yet has the human soul made its way to God except through nature, and ever bearing up with it the impression and the odor contracted in the ascent, it has, whether intending to do so or not, moulded them into him and embodied them into his personality. From the Polynesian who bows down to his fetish, to the Christian who rewelds, under the form of the Trinity, the substance, force, and organism of the one abstraction-mangled, living God, this law has ever reigned.

In the first civilization, characterized as it was by abject weakness of the spirit of man and by the impure tyranny of matter, material nature was conceived as the enemy of the soul and regarded with disgust and horror which we now can scarcely realize. The physical world overshadowed and oppressed the soul, was not mastered and converted by it. Grossness and matter were despotic and omnipotent, and were relieved by no suspicion of the conversion of forces. Both the Divine and the human soul were buried and

lost in feculum ; the unity of pasty substance was the one controlling and unqualified truth ; the crude and heavy organism of both society and thought crushed the evolving individual into jelly with the homogeneous all ; the separating or centrifugal force, the self-power, was not strong enough to cause the appearance of the individual to be conceived as a definite and clear-cut fact, but it was regarded only as an emanation which produced no real separation from the as yet plastic Infinite. Hope and the instinct of immortality were severed ; the latter looking to nothing better than a weary transmigration through organisms already existing, the former promising as the richest of all boons, eternal release at last in Nirwana. Throughout this civilization, the centripetal force was greater than its opposite ; the homogeneous was not yet broken into free forms ; the sense of identity was stronger than that of individuality ; and the Hindu, in his weakness, both misunderstood and hated nature out of whose slime he was emerging, and which held him out from, and prevented his absorption in, the central force, and compelled his feeble, reluctant spirit to act and struggle and be developed. And of this vice, resulting as it afterwards did in the organization of the finite becoming first sovereign in Greece, and then world-crushing in all-devouring Rome, the ancient civilization perished. For, as civilization moved westward, the progress of breaking the homogeneous into fragments and moulding these into organized forms went on, until, at last, when the Greek had worshipped Jove, Apollo, Pluto, Neptune, nature no longer remained for him to admire, to hate or to despise ; hence, the

shallowness of the criticism which carps at the absence of the love of nature from Greek literature. The finite, the heterogeneous, the organic, now become supreme, exhausted its shallow life and destroyed the world. Alexander's and Roman conquests brought the two extremes of the Pagan civilization together, and out of the concussion Jesus of Galilee and his apostles led forth new life and glory. Christianity was the projection of the human soul out of the synthesis and spiritualization of all previous thought and worship. After a long preparation and many throes, the strengthened soul now broke loose from the prison-shell of matter like a new-born bird, and, with its wings still glued and plastered, and sick of its conscious impurity, soared away from its abhorred matrix. The Christian borrowing from the Greek precisely the idea which Moses had left out of his abstraction of Jehovah, but lifting it infinitely above the Greek level, unconsciously personified it under the name of the Word, the Source of Forms, the Son of God, the Purifying Sacrifice. All that now remained was recrement and dross, and the soul of the Christian, rejoicing in the liberty wherewith its Saviour had set free from earth and matter, justly despised and detested this sloughed shell of nature. But in the second civilization at its rise, organism was excessive as a matter of antecedents, so much so that even the one God could not be made a unit, but his functions were distributed among three persons. The hope of immortality wedded itself to the cast-off organism and staked all upon its resurrection. The saints, purified but not enlarged, were to return and reign upon the earth. In all things, the

Christian clung tenaciously to the already separated and existent, which had been redeemed, sharply defined and limited production to the past, and despised that by which alone his being could be enlarged. And of this vice, by a movement like the ancient one, but in the opposite direction, the Christian civilization is perishing. From the hour the Christian civilization began, till now, the work of crushing out organisms and consolidating both masses and forces has gone on, until the human mind, returning from the circumference towards the centre, has passed out of the segment of Christian thought, and left the municipality, subordination of organisms, and that whole set of ideas behind.

This man, on the other hand, inaugurated an era in which the increased and enlightened soul shall be united with the Father by the same medium which holds us out from Him, and, borne on by the movement which He imparts to us through it, shall climb to perfect spirituality in a new and spiritual universe, and to eternal repose in the peacefulness of power and action. Not the essential thought, but the form and deduction, is false in that sublime Hindu illustration which represents that the universe shall be absorbed as a cloud is sucked back into the air. The prophetic soul in all ages has predicted the destruction of the material world. This man, too, founder of the catholic and final, beheld, with gleaming eye and thrilled, exultant soul, the passing away of the physical universe as an old garment is laid aside, and the emerging of a higher and purer form in which the beloved and adoring children of the Infinite Father

shall enjoy His presence and communion forever. And he knew and taught that by us now this new movement is to be conceived as the progress of the Divine, in which He bears us on with Him, by means of that nature through which, by the laws of His being and the action of His life, He created us, and through which alone we partake of Him and communicate with Him.

Throe-wrung and travailing Nature pronounced with fitting rites her permission to him whom she had nurtured and endowed. In this late conflict, but for whose disclosures and commands a sense of untimeliness might have forever restrained his speech-disliking tongue, her permissive Now was spoken. By the death-knell of the second dynasty of historic ages ; by the second bloody sinking of the sun low down the sky ; by raining leaves and swelling winds, and all the signs of an autumnal and decaying age ; by dearth, exhaustion, and the dual approach of dissolution and rigid constriction ; by the meanness of a soulless and uninspired age ; by the gushing forth of unrestrained wickedness and crime ; by the agony of the discrowned and orphaned soul ; he was called to renew the life of Civilization and the soul, and to bring truth and peace to the aching hearts of the children of men, — was called to be a strong deliverer of the soul, and a new revelation and joy to the pure and faithful, the people of God. By the hot breath of that premonitory tempest, the seal was melted from his lips, and a few were found to listen. The Nay of the Infinite was unsaid in that convulsion ; the word Impossible sank down out of the way, and in its place a new and thrilling word was written ; “ the coldness of wise

men" no longer delivered from the throne of judgment with tongue of ice, oracles of policy and duty to dis-crown, unplume, and crucify; the age of Ice released its clasp from around the earth, and passed away forever. But all processes like this are gradual; one throe does not constitute parturition; revolutions are but a small part of the economy of development; even the accomplished birth is only one antecedent to the life and growth which are all.

Occasion is measured by the the slow-evolving purpose of God, and the unfolding of His will. Ages will roll away before the seed which this man sowed will germinate and grow and bear its appointed fruit. From age to age, till time shall pass away, the world will learn more fully and never forget the relation which his insight and the movement which he initiated bear to the whole of human knowledge and emotion. It will see that they are the elevation of the soul of man into a majestic and imperishable sphere of spirituality, truth, and freedom, where in strength, humility, purity, and sweetness it meets the true and loving Father, and is united with Him forever. To promote this consummation all the ages have labored, all prophets have taught, all poets have sung, all the blood-bought splendors of the past have been achieved, and now, before the rising beams of this final truth, revealed by a lowly babe of God, all former and subsidiary systems are waning away.

Infinite Father, the task laid on our weakness is done. We lay it at thy feet, dear Father, and pray thee to do thy own holy will with it. Its solecisms,

be they many or few, far from being matter for deep concern, are not even to be regretted. The soundness of the ratiocination, the quality of the pencilling, are nothing. Let scholars and critics tear both the reasoning and the canvas into shreds, if they can; nothing will have been lost or even imperilled. For the substance of the things here written, the vindication is with God and His eternal years. To them is my appeal, and to them flows the tranquil river of my hope.

Then, beflattered, befooled, and dying land, take this book, written on the brink of the grave and in such leisure as could be wrung in shreds out of the iron teeth of penury, and do what you will with it. That you will manifest toward it some one or other utterly contemptible spirit, the selection being determined by the caprice of the moment, is not doubtful. Nor do I care personally how you treat it. That is your concern, not mine. Howl at it, if you choose, till you are called to howl in your own perdition; grin at it till the burning tongs of hell shall pull your foolish faces straight; laugh at it till the jeers of demons in the pit to which you are sinking shall rouse you to know that you can be laughed at too. If it is to be a question between me and the "statesmen," and "thinkers," and other commonplace fools of the age, which is insane — then, know that I would rather be God's feeblest fool than the mightiest of your vulgar demigods, base Age; and for the grave where I soon shall sleep I ask no prouder or holier epitaph than this: "Here lies one who with a higher truth promoted the extinction of the Christian Civilization."



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