which Philosophy distinguishes as the NOT ME, that is, both nature and art, all other men and my own body, must be ranked under this name. NATURE. In enumerating values of nature and casting up their sum, I shall use the word in both senses—in its common and in its philosophical import. In inquiries so general as our present one, the inaccuracy is not material; no confusion of thought will occur. Nature, in the common sense, refers to essences unchanged by man; space, the air, the river, the leaf. Art is applied to the mixture of his will with the same things, as in a house, a canal, a statue, a picture. But his operations taken together are so insignificant, a little chipping, baking, patching, and washing, that in an impression so grand as that of the world on the human mind, they do not vary the result.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

NATURE

1

To go into solitude, a man needs to retire as much from his chamber as from society. I am not solitary whilst I read and write, though nobody is with me. But if a man would be alone, let him look at the stars. The rays that come from those heavenly worlds will separate between him and what he touches. One might think the atmosphere was made transparent with this design, to give man, in the heavenly bodies, the perpetual presence of the sublime. Seen in the streets of cities, how great they are! If the stars should appear one night in a thousand years, how would men believe and adore, and preserve for many generations the remembrance of the city of God which had been shown! But every night come out these envoys of beauty, and light the universe with their admonishing smile.

The stars awaken a certain reverence, because though always present, they are inaccessible; but all natural objects make a kindred impression, when the mind is open to their influence. Nature never wears a mean appearance. Neither does the wisest man exert her secret, and lose his curiosity by finding out all her perfection. Nature never became a toy to a wise spirit. The flowers, the animals, the mountains, reflected the wisdom of his best hour, as much as they had delighted the simplicity of his childhood.

When we speak of nature in this manner, we have a distinct but most poetical sense in the mind. We mean the integrity of impression made by manifold natural objects. It is this which distinguishes the stick of timber of the wood-cutter from the tree of the poet. The charming landscape which I saw this morning is indubitably made up of some twenty or thirty farms. Miller owns this field, Locke that, and Manning the woodland beyond. But none of them owns the landscape. There is a property in the horizon which no man has but he whose eye can integrate all the parts, that is, the poet. This is the best part of these men's farms, yet to this their warranty-deeds give no title.

To speak truly, few adult persons can see nature. Most persons do
surprise, and yet is not unknown. Its effect is like that of a higher thought or a better emotion coming over me, when I deemed I was thinking justly or doing right.

Yet it is certain that the power to produce this delight does not reside in nature, but in man, or in a harmony of both. It is necessary to use these pleasures with great temperance. For nature is not always tricked in holiday attire, but the same scene which yesterday breathed perfume and glittered as for the frolic of the nymphs is overspread with melancholy today. Nature always wears the colors of the spirit. To a man laboring under calamity, the heat of his own fire hath sadness in it. Then there is a kind of contempt of the landscape felt by him who has just lost by death a dear friend. The sky is less grand as it shuts down over less worth in the population.

II

COMMODITY

Whoever considers the final cause of the world will discern a multitude of uses that enter as parts into that result. They all admit of being thrown into one of the following classes: Commodity, Beauty, Language, and Discipline.

Under the general name of commodity, I rank all those advantages which our senses owe to nature. This, of course, is a benefit which is temporary and mediate, not ultimate, like its service to the soul. Yet although it is perfect in its kind, and is the only use of nature which all men apprehend. The misery of man appears like childish petulance, when we explore the steady and prodigal provision that has been made for his support and delight on this green ball which floats him through the heavens. What angels invented these splendid ornaments, these rich conveniences, this ocean of air above, this ocean of water beneath, this firmament of earth between? This zodiac of lights, this tent of dropping clouds, this striped coat of climates, this fourfold year? Beasts, fire, water, stones, and corn serve him. The field is at once his floor, his work-yard, his play-ground, his garden, and his bed.

"More servants wait on man

Than he'll take notice of."

Nature, in its ministry to man, is not only the material, but is also
the process and the result. All the parts incessantly work into each
other's hands for the profit of man. The wind sows the seed; the sun
evaporates the sea; the wind blows the vapor to the field; the ice, on
the other side of the planet, condenses rain on this; the rain feeds the
plant; the plant feeds the animal; and thus the endless circulations of
the divine charity nourish man.

The useful arts are reproductions or new combinations by the wit
of man, of the same natural benefactors. He no longer waits for favor-
ing gales, but by means of steam, he realizes the fable of Aeolus's bag,
and carries the two and thirty winds in the boiler of his boat. To
diminish friction, he paves the road with iron bars, and, mounting a
car with a ship-load of men, animals, and merchandise behind him,
he darts through the country, from town to town, like an eagle or a
swallow through the air. By the aggregate of these aids, how is the face
of the world changed, from the era of Noah to that of Napoleon! The
private poor man hath cities, ships, canals, bridges, built for him. He
goes to the post-office, and the human race run on his errands; to the
book-shop, and the human race read and write of all that happens for
him; to the court-house, and nations repair his wrongs. He sets his
house upon the road, and the human race go forth every morning, and
shovel out the snow, and cut a path for him.

But there is no need of specifying particulars in this class of uses.
The catalogue is endless, and the examples so obvious, that I shall leave
them to the reader's reflection, with the general remark, that this mer-
cenary benefit is one which has respect to a farther good. A man is fed.
not that he may be fed, but that he may work.

III
BEAUTY

A nobler want of man is served by nature, namely, the love of
Beauty.

The ancient Greeks called the world κόσμος, beauty. Such is the
constitution of all things, or such the plastic power of the human eye,
that the primary forms, as the sky, the mountain, the tree, the animal,
give us a delight in and for themselves; a pleasure arising from outline,
color, motion, and grouping. This seems partly owing to the eye itself.
The eye is the best of artists. By the mutual action of its structure and
of the laws of light, perspective is produced, which integrates every
mass of objects, of what character soever, into a well colored and
shaded globe, so that where the particular objects are mean and unaffect-
ing, the landscape which they compose is round and symmetrical.
And as the eye is the best composer, so light is the first of painters.
There is no object so foul that intense light will not make beautiful.
And the stimulus it affords to the sense, and a sort of infinitude which
it hath, like space and time, make all matter gay. Even the corpse has
its own beauty. But besides this general grace diffused over nature,
almost all the individual forms are agreeable to the eye, as is proved
by our endless imitations of some of them, as the acorn, the grape, the
pine-cone, the wheat-ear, the egg, the wings and forms of most birds,
the lion's claw, the serpent, the butterfly, sea-shells, flames, clouds,
buds, leaves, and the forms of many trees, as the palm.

For better consideration, we may distribute the aspects of Beauty in
a threefold manner.

I. First, the simple perception of natural forms is a delight. The
influence of the forms and actions in nature is so needful to man, that,
in its lowest functions, it seems to lie on the confines of commodity and
beauty. To the body and mind which have been cramped by noxious
work or company, nature is medicinal and restores their tone. The
tradesman, the attorney comes out of the din and craft of the street and
sees the sky and the woods, and is a man again. In their eternal calm,
he finds himself. The health of the eye seems to demand a horizon. We
are never tired, so long as we can see far enough.

But in other hours, Nature satisfies by its loveliness, and without
any mixture of corporeal benefit. I see the spectacle of morning from
the hill-top over against my house, from daybreak to sunrise, with emo-
tions which an angel might share. The long slender bars of cloud float
like fishes in the sea of crimson light. From the earth, as a shore, I look
out into that silent sea. I seem to partake its rapid transformations; the
active enchantment reaches my dust, and I dilate and conspire with the
morning wind. How does Nature defy us with a few and cheap ele-
ments! Give me health and a
day,
and I will make the pomp of
emperors ridiculous. The dawn is my Assyria, the sunset and moon-
rise my Paphos, and unimaginable realms of faerie; broad noon shall be
my England of the senses and the understanding; the night shall be my
Germany of mystic philosophy and dreams.

Not less excellent, except for our less susceptibility in the after-
noon, was the charm, last evening, of a January sunset. The western
clouds divided and subdivided themselves into pink flakes modulated
with tints of unspeakable softness, and the air had so much life and
sweetness that it was a pain to come within doors. What was it that
nature would say? Was there no meaning in the live repose of the val-
ley behind the mill, for me in words? The leafless trees become spires of flame in the sun-
set, with the blue east for their background, and the stars of the dead
calices of flowers, and every withered stem and stubble rimed with
frost, contribute something to the mute music.

The inhabitants of cities suppose that the country landscape is
pleasant only half the year. I please myself with the graces of the win-
ter scenery, and believe that we are as much touched by it as by the
genial influences of summer. To the attentive eye, each moment of the
year has its own beauty, and in the same field, it beholds, every hour,
a picture which was never seen before and which shall never be seen
again. The heavens change every moment, and reflect their glory or
gloom on the plains beneath. The state of the crop in the surrounding
farms alters the expression of the earth from week to week. The
cessation of native plants in the pastures and roadsides, which make the
silent clock by which time tells the summer hours, will make even the
divisions of the day sensible to a keen observer. The tribes of birds and
insects, like the plants punctual to their time, follow each other, and
July, the blue
the year has room for all. By watercourses, the variety is greater. In
shallow parts of our pleasant river, and swarms with yellow butterflies
Indeed the river is a perpetual gala, and boasts each month a new orna-
ment. The shows of
mists, orchards in blossom, stars,
their unreality. Go out of the house to see the moon, and 't is only a
mirage as you look from the windows of diligence.

2. The presence of a higher, namely, of the spiritual element is
essential to its perfection. The high and divine beauty which can be
loved without effeminacy, is that which is found in combination with
the human will. Beauty is the mark God sets upon virtue. Every natu-
ral action is graceful. Every heroic act is also decent, and causes the
place and the bystanders to shine. We are taught by great actions
that the universe is the property of every individual in it. Every rational
creature has all nature for his dowry and estate. It is his, if he will. He
may divest himself of it; he may creep into a corner, and abdicate his
kingdom, as most men do, but he is entitled to the world by his con-
stitution. In proportion to the energy of his thought and will, he takes
up the world into himself. "All those things for which men plough,
built, or sail, obey virtue," said Sallust. "The winds and waves," said
Gibbon, "are always on the side of the ablest navigators." So are the
sun and moon and all the stars of heaven. When a noble act is done-
departance in a scene of great natural beauty; when Leonidas and his
three hundred martyrs consumed one day in dying, and the sun and
moon come each and look at them once in the steep defile of
Thermopylae; when Arnold Winkelried, in the high Alps, under the
shadow of the avalanche, gathers in his side a sheaf of Austrian spears
to break the line for his comrades; are not these heroes entitled to add
the beauty of the scene to the beauty of the deed? When the bark of
Columbus nears the shore of America; before it the beach lined with
savages, fleeing out of all their huts of cane; the sea behind; and the
purple mountains of the Indian Archipelago around, can we separate
the man from the living picture? Does not the New World clothe his
form with her palm-groves and savannahs as fit drapery? Ever does
natural beauty steal in like air, and envelop great actions. When Sir
Harry Vane was dragged up the Tower-hill, sitting on a sled, to suffer
death as the champion of the English laws, one of the multitude cried
out to him, "You never sate on so glorious a seat!" Charles II, to intimi-
date the citizens of London, caused the patriot Lord Russell to be
drawn in an open coach through the principal streets of the city on his
way to the scaffold. "But," his biographer says, "the multitude imag-
ined they saw liberty and virtue sitting by his side." In private places, among sordid objects, an act of truth or heroism seems at once to draw to itself the sky as its temple, the sun as its candle. Nature stretches out her arms to embrace man, only let his thoughts be of equal greatness. Willingly does she follow his steps with the rose and the violet, and bend her lines of grandeur and grace; to the decoration of her darling child. Only let his thoughts be of equal scope, and the frame will suit the picture. A virtuous man is in union with her works, and makes the central figure of the visible sphere. Homer, Pindar, Socrates, Phocion, associate themselves listlessly in our memory with the geography and climate of Greece. The visible heavens and earth sympathize with Jesus. And in common life whosoever has seen a person of powerful character and happy genius, will have remarked how easily he took all things along with him—the persons, the opinions, and the day, and nature became ancillary to a man.

3. There is still another aspect under which the beauty of the world may be viewed, namely, as it becomes an object of the intellect. Beside the relation of things to virtue, they have a relation to thought. The intellect searches out the absolute order of things as they stand in the mind of God, and without the colors of affection. The intellectual and the active powers seem to succeed each other, and the exclusive activity of the one generates the exclusive activity of the other. There is something unfriendly in each to the other, but they are like the alternate periods of feeding and working in animals; each prepares and will be followed by the other. Therefore does beauty, which, in relation to actions, as we have seen, comes unsought, and comes because it is unsought, remain for the apprehension and pursuit of the intellect; and then again, in its turn, of the active power. Nothing divine dies. All good is eternally reproductive. The beauty of nature re-forms itself in the mind, and not for barren contemplation, but for new creation.

All men are in some degree impressed by the face of the world; some men even to delight; others have the same love in such excess, that, not content with admiring, they seek to embody it in new forms. The creation of beauty is Art. The production of a work of art throws a light upon the mystery of humanity. A work of art is an abstract or epitome of the world. It is the result or expression of nature, in miniature. For although the works of nature are innumerable and all different, the result or the expression of them all is similar and single. Nature is a sea of forms radically alike and even unique. A leaf, a sunbeam, a landscape, the ocean, make an analogous impression on the mind. What is common to them all—that perfectness and harmony, is beauty. The standard of beauty is the entire circuit of natural forms—the totality of nature; which the Italians expressed by defining beauty "il più nell' uno." Nothing is quite beautiful alone; nothing but is beautiful in the whole. A single object is only so far beautiful as it suggests this universal grace. The poet, the painter, the sculptor, the musician, the architect, seek each to concentrate this radiance of the world on one point, and each in his several work to satisfy the love of beauty which stimulates him to produce. Thus is Art a nature passed through the alembic of man. Thus in art does Nature work through the will of a man filled with the beauty of her first works.

The world thus exists to the soul to satisfy the desire of beauty. This element I call an ultimate end. No reason can be asked or given why the soul seeks beauty. Beauty, in its largest and profoundest sense, is one expression for the universe. God is the all-fair. Truth, and goodness, and beauty, are but different faces of the same All. But beauty in nature is not ultimate. It is the herald of inward and eternal beauty, and is not alone a solid and satisfactory good. It must stand as a part, and not as the last or highest expression of the final cause of Nature.

**IV**

**LANGUAGE**

Language is a third use which Nature subserves to man. Nature is the vehicle of thought, and in a simple, double, and three-fold degree.

1. Words are signs of natural facts.
2. Particular natural facts are symbols of particular spiritual facts.
3. Nature is the symbol of spirit.

1. Words are signs of natural facts. The use of natural history is to give us aid in supernatural history; the use of the outer creation, to give us language for the beings and changes of the inward creation. Every word which is used to express a moral or intellectual fact, if traced to its root, is found to be borrowed from some material appearance. Right means straight; wrong means twisted. Spirit primarily means
wind, transgression, the crossing of a line; supercilious, the raising of the eyebrow. We say the heart to express emotion, the head to denote thought; and thought and emotion are words borrowed from sensible things, and now appropriated to spiritual nature. Most of the process by which this transformation is made, is hidden from us in the remote time when language was framed; but the same tendency may be daily observed in children. Children and savages use only nouns or names of things, which they convert into verbs, and apply to analogous mental acts.

2. But this origin of all words that convey a spiritual import—so conspicuous a fact in the history of language—is our least debt to nature. It is not words only that are emblematic; it is things which are emblematic. Every natural fact is a symbol of some spiritual fact. Every appearance in nature corresponds to some state of the mind, and that state of the mind can only be described by presenting that natural appearance as its picture. An enraged man is a lion, a cunning man is a fox, a firm man is a rock, a learned man is a torch. A lamb is innocence; a snake is subtle spite; flowers express to us the delicate affections. Light and darkness are our familiar expression for knowledge and ignorance; and heat for love. Visible distance behind and before us, is respectively our image of memory and hope.

Who looks upon a river in a meditative hour and is not reminded of the flux of all things? Throw a stone into the stream, and the circles that propagate themselves are the beautiful type of all influence. Man is conscious of a universal soul within or behind his individual life, wherein, as in a firmament, the natures of Justice, Truth, Love, Freedom, arise and shine. This universal soul he calls Reason: it is not mine, or thine, or his, but we are its; we are its property and men. And the blue sky in which the private earth is buried, the sky with its eternal calm, and full of everlasting orbs, is the type of Reason. That which intellectually considered we call Reason, considered in relation to nature, we call Spirit. Spirit is the Creator. Spirit hath life in itself. And man in all ages and countries embodies it in his language as the Father.

It is easily seen that there is nothing lucky or capricious in these analogies, but that they are constant, and pervade nature. These are not the dreams of a few poets, here and there, but man is an analogist, and studies relations in all objects. He is placed in the centre of beings, and a ray of relation passes from every other being to him. And neither can man be understood without these objects, nor these objects without man. All the facts in natural history taken by themselves, have no value, but are barren, like a single sex. But marry it to human history, and it is full of life. Whole floras, all Linnaeus’, and Buffon’s volumes, are dry catalogues of facts; but the most trivial of these facts, the habit of a plant, the organs, or work, or noise of an insect, applied to the illustration of a fact in intellectual philosophy, or in any way associated to human nature, affects us in the most lively and agreeable manner. The seed of a plant—what affecting analogies in the nature of man is that little fruit made use of, in all discourse, up to the voice of Paul, who calls the human corpse a seed—“It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.” The motion of the earth round its axis and round the sun, makes the day and the year. These are certain amounts of brute light and heat. But is there no intent of an analogy between man’s life and the seasons? And do the seasons gain no grandeur or pathos from that analogy? The instincts of the ant are very unimportant considered as the ant’s; but the moment a ray of relation is seen to extend from it to man, and the little drudge is seen to be a monitor, a little body with a mighty heart, then all its habits, even that said to be recently observed, that it never sleeps, become sublime.

Because of this radical correspondence between visible things and human thoughts, savages, who have only what is necessary, converse in figures. As we go back in history, language becomes more picturesque, until its infancy, when it is all poetry; or all spiritual facts are represented by natural symbols. The same symbols are found to make the original elements of all languages. It has moreover been observed, that the idioms of all languages approach each other in passages of the greatest eloquence and power. And as this is the first language, so is it the last. This immediate dependence of language upon nature, this conversion of an outward phenomenon into a type of somewhat in human life, never loses its power to affect us. It is this which gives that piquancy to the conversation of a strong-natured farmer or backwoodsman, which all men relish.

A man’s power to connect his thought with its proper symbol, and so to utter it, depends on the simplicity of his character, that is, upon his love of truth and his desire to communicate it without loss. The corruption of man is followed by the corruption of language. When
the woods wave, the pines murmur, the river rolls and shines, and the
cattle low upon the mountains, as he saw and heard them in his infancy.
And with these forms, the spells of persuasion, the keys of power are
put into his hands.

3. We are thus assisted by natural objects in the expression of par-
ticular meanings. But how great a language to convey such pepper-
corn informations! Did it need such noble races of creatures, this profu-
sion of forms, this host of orbs in heaven, to furnish man with the diction
and grammar of his municipal speech? Whilst we use this grand cipher
to expedite the affairs of our pot and kettle, we feel that we have not yet
put it to its use, neither are able. We are like travellers using the cin-
ders of a volcano to roast their eggs. Whilst we see that it always stands
ready to clothe what we would say, we cannot avoid the question
whether the characters are not significant of themselves. Have moun-
tains, and waves, and skies, no significance but what we consciously
give them when we employ them as emblems of our thoughts? The
world is emblematic. Parts of speech are metaphors, because the whole
of nature is a metaphor of the human mind. The laws of moral nature
answer to those of matter as face to face in a glass. "The visible world
and the relation of its parts, is the dial plate of the invisible." The
axioms of physics translate the laws of ethics. Thus, "the whole is
greater than its part;" "reaction is equal to action;" "the smallest weight
may be made to lift the greatest, the difference of weight being com-
penated by time;" and many the like propositions, which have an
ethical as well as physical sense. These propositions have a much more
extensive and universal sense when applied to human life, than when
confined to technical use.

In like manner, the memorable words of history and the proverbs
of nations consist usually of a natural fact, selected as a picture or par-
able of a moral truth. Thus: A rolling stone gathers no moss; A bird in
the hand is worth two in the bush; A cripple in the right way will beat
a racer in the wrong. Make hay while the sun shines; 'T is hard to carry
a full cup even; Vinegar is the son of wine; The last ounce broke the
camel's back; Long-lived trees make roots first—and the like. In their
primary sense these are trivial facts, but we repeat them for the value
of their analogical import. What is true of proverbs, is true of all fables,
parables, and allegories.

This relation between the mind and matter is not fancied by some
poet, but stands in the will of God, and so is free to be known by all men. It appears to men, or it does not appear. When in fortunate hours we ponder this miracle, the wise man doubts if at all other times he is not blind and deaf.

"Can such things be,
And overcome us like a summer's cloud,
Without our special wonder?"

for the universe becomes transparent, and the light of higher laws than its own shines through it. It is the standing problem which has exercised the wonder and the study of every fine genius since the world began; from the era of the Egyptians and the Brahmins to that of Pythagoras, of Plato, of Bacon, of Leibnitz, of Swedenborg. There sits the Sphinx at the road-side, as from age to age, as each prophet comes by, he tries his fortune at reading her riddle. There seems to be a necessity in spirit to manifest itself in material forms; and day and night, river and storm, beast and bird, acid and alkali, preexist in necessary ideas in the mind of God, and are what they are by virtue of preceding affections in the world of spirit. A Fact is the end or last issue of spirit. The visible creation is the terminus or the circumference of the invisible world. "Material objects," said a French philosopher, "are necessarily kinds of scoria of the substantial thoughts of the Creator, which must always preserve an exact relation to their first origin; in other words, visible nature must have a spiritual and moral side.

This doctrine is abstruse, and though the images of "garment," "scoria," "mirror," etc., may stimulate the fancy, we must summon the aid of subtler and more vital expositors to make it plain. "Every scripture is to be interpreted by the same spirit which gave it forth," is the fundamental law of criticism. A life in harmony with Nature, the love of truth and of virtue, will purge the eyes to understand her text. By degrees we may come to know the primitive sense of the permanent objects of nature, so that the world shall be to us an open book, and every form significant of its hidden life and final cause.

A new interest surprises us, while, under the view now suggested, we contemplate the fearful extent and multitude of objects; since "every object rightly seen, unlocks a new faculty of the soul." That which was unconscious truth, becomes, when interpreted and defined in an object, a part of the domain of knowledge—a new weapon in the magazine of power.

v

DISCIPLINE

IN VIEW of the significance of nature, we arrive at once at a new fact, that nature is a discipline. This use of the world includes the preceding uses, as parts of itself.

Space, time, society, labor, climate, food, locomotion, the animals, the mechanical forces, give us sincerest lessons, day by day, whose meaning is unlimited. They educate both the Understanding and the Reason. Every property of matter is a school for the understanding—its solidity or resistance, its inertia, its extension, its figure, its divisibility. The understanding adds, divides, combines, measures, and finds reason and room for its activity in this worthy scene. Meantime, Reason transfers all these lessons into its own world of thought, by perceiving the analogy that marries Matter and Mind.

1. Nature is a discipline of the understanding in intellectual truths. Our dealing with sensible objects is a constant exercise in the necessary lessons of difference, of likeness, of order, of being and seeming, of progressive arrangement; of ascent from particular to general; of combination to one end of manifold forces. Proportioned to the importance of the organ to be formed, is the extreme care with which its tuition is provided—a care pretermitted in no single case. What tedious training, day after day, year after year, never ending, to form the common sense; what continual reproduction of annoyances, inconveniences, dilemmas; what rejoicing over us of little men; what disputing of prices, what reckonings of interest—and all to form the Hand of the mind—to instruct us that "good thoughts are no better than good dreams, unless they be executed!"

The same good office is performed by Property and its filial systems of debt and credit. Debt, grinding debt, whose iron face the widow, the orphan, and the sons of genius fear and hate—debt, which consumes so much time, which so cripples and disheartens a great spirit with cares that seem so base, is a preceptor whose lessons cannot be foregone, and is needed most by those who suffer from it most.
Moreover, property, which has been well compared to snow—"if it fall level to-day, it will be blown into drifts to-morrow," is the surface action of internal machinery, like the index on the face of a clock. Whilst now it is the gymnastics of the understanding, it is hiving, in the foresight of the spirit, experience in profound laws.

The whole character and fortune of the individual are affected by the least inequalities in the culture of the understanding; for example, in the perception of differences. Therefore is Space, and therefore Time, that man may know that things are not huddled and lumped, but differed and individual. A bell and a plough have each their use, and neither can do the office of the other. Water is good to drink, coal to burn, wool to wear; but wool cannot be drunk, nor water spun, nor coal eaten. The wise man shows his wisdom in separation, in gradation, and his scale of creatures and of merits is as wide as nature. The foolish have no range in their scale, but suppose every man is as every other man. What is not good they call the worst, and what is not hateful, they call the best.

In like manner, what good heed Nature forms in us! She pardons no mistakes. Her yea is yea, and her nay, nay.

The first steps in Agriculture, Astronomy, Zoology (those first steps which the farmer, the hunter, and the sailor take), teach that Nature's dice are always loaded; that in her heaps and rubbish are concealed sure and useful results.

How calmly and genially the mind apprehends one after another the laws of physics! What noble emotions dilate the mortal as he enters into the councils of the creation, and feels by knowledge the privilege to be! His insight refines him. The beauty of nature shines in his own breast. Man is greater than he can see this, and the universe less, because Time and Space relations vanish as laws are known.

Here again we are impressed and even daunted by the immense Universe to be explored. "What we know is a point to what we do not know." Open any recent journal of science, and weigh the problems suggested concerning Light, Heat, Electricity, Magnetism, Physiology, Geology, and judge whether the interest of natural science is likely to be soon exhausted.

Passing by many particulars of the discipline of nature, we must not omit to specify two.

The exercise of the Will, or the lesson of power, is taught in every event. From the child's successive possession of his several senses up to the hour when he saith, "Thy will be done!" he is learning the secret that he can reduce under his will not only particular events but great classes, nay, the whole series of events, and so conform all facts to his character. Nature is thoroughly mediate. It is made to serve. It receives the dominion of man as meekly as the ass on which the Saviour rode. It offers all its kingdoms to man as the raw material which he may mould into what is useful. Man is never weary of working it up. He forgets the subtle and delicate air into wise and melodious words, and gives them wing as angels of persuasion and command. One after another his victorious thought comes up with and reduces all things, until the world becomes at last only a realized will—the double of the man.

2. Sensible objects conform to the requirements of Reason and reflect the conscience. All things are moral, and in their boundless changes have an unceasing reference to spiritual nature. Therefore is nature glorious with form, color, and motion; that every globe in the remotest heaven, every chemical change from the rudest crystal up to the laws of life, every change of vegetation from the first principle of growth in the eye of a leaf, to the tropical forest and antediluvian coalmine, every animal function from the sponge up to Hercules, shall hint or thunder to man the laws of right and wrong, and echo the Ten Commandments. Therefore is Nature ever the ally of Religion: lends all her pomp and riches to the religious sentiment. Prophet and priest, David, Isaiah, Jesus, have drawn deeply from this source. This ethical character so penetrates the bone and marrow of nature, as to seem the end for which it was made. Whatever private purpose is answered by any member or part, this is its public and universal function, and is never omitted: Nothing in nature is exhausted in its first use. When a thing has served an end to the uttermost, it is wholly new for an ulterior service. In God, every end is converted into a new means. Thus the use of commodity, regarded by itself, is mean and squalid. But it is to the mind an education in the doctrine of Use, namely, that a thing is good only so far as it serves; that a conspiring of parts and efforts to the production of an end is essential to any being. The first and gross manifestation of this truth is our inevitable and hated training in values and wants, in corn and meat.

It has already been illustrated, that every natural process is a version of a moral sentence. The moral law lies at the centre of nature and
radiates to the circumference. It is the pith and marrow of every sub-
stance, every relation, and every process. All things with which we deal,
preach to us. What is a farm but a mute gospel? The chaff and the
wheat, weeds and plants, blight, rain, insects, sun—it is a sacred
emblem from the first furrow of spring to the last stack which the snow
of winter overtakes in the fields. But the sailor, the shepherd, the miner,
the merchant, in their several resorts, have each an experience precisely
parallel, and leading to the same conclusion: because all organizations
are radically alike. Nor can it be doubted that this moral sentiment
which thus scents the air, grows in the grain, and impregnates the
waters of the world, is caught by man and sinks into his soul. The
moral influence of nature upon every individual is that amount of truth
which it illustrates to him. Who can estimate this? Who can guess how
much firmness the sea-beaten rock has taught the fisherman? How
much tranquillity has been reflected to man from the azure sky, over
whose unspotted deeps the winds forevermore drive flocks of stormy
clouds, and leave no wrinkle or stain? How much industry and provi-
dence and affection we have caught from the pantomime of brutes?
What a searching preacher of self-command is the varying phenomenon
of Health!

Herein is especially apprehended the unity of Nature—the unity
in variety—which meets us everywhere. All the endless variety of
things make an identical impression. Xenophanes complained in his old
age, that, look where he would, all things hastened back to Unity. He
was weary of seeing the same entity in the tedious variety of forms. The
fable of Proteus has a cordial truth. A leaf, a drop, a crystal, a moment
of time, is related to the whole, and partakes of the perfection of the
whole. Each particle is a microcosm, and faithfully renders the likeness
of the world.

Not only resemblances exist in things whose analogy is obvious, as
when we detect the type of the human hand in the flipper of the fossil
saurus, but also in objects wherein there is great superficial unlikeness.
Thus architecture is called "frozen music," be De Stael and Goethe.
Vitruvius thought an architect should be a musician. "A Gothic
church," said Coleridge, "is a petrified religion." Michael Angelo main-
tained, that, to an architect, a knowledge of anatomy is essential. In
Haydn's oratorios, the notes present to the imagination not only
motions, as of the snake, the stag, and the elephant, but colors also; as
the green grass. The law of harmonic sounds reappears in the harmonic
colors. The granite is differentiated in its laws only by the more or less
of heat from the river that wears it away. The river, as it flows, resem-
bles the air that flows over it; the air resembles the light which traverses
it with more subtle currents; the light resembles the heat which rides
with it through Space. Each creature is only a modification of the other;
the likeness in them is more than the difference, and their radical law is
one and the same. A rule of one art, or a law of one organization, holds
true throughout nature. So intimate is this Unity, that, it is easily seen,
it lies under the undermost garment of Nature, and betrays its source in
Universal Spirit. For it pervades Thought also. Every universal truth
which we express in words, implies or supposes every other truth. Omne
verum tenor omnium. It is like a great circle on a sphere, compris-
ing all possible circles; which, however, may be drawn and comprise it
in like manner. Every such truth is the absolute Ens seen from one side.
But it has innumerable sides.

The central Unity is still more conspicuous in actions. Words are
finite organs of the infinite mind. They cannot cover the dimensions
of what is in truth. They break, chop, and impoverish it. An action is
the perfection and publication of thought. A right action seems to fill
the eye, and to be related to all nature. "The wise man, in doing one
thing, does all or, in the one thing he does rightly, he sees the likeness
of all which is done rightly."

Words and actions are not the attributes of brute nature. They
introduce us to the human form, of which all other organizations appear
to be degradations. When this appears among so many that surround
it, the spirit prefers it to all others. It says, "From such as this have I
drawn joy and knowledge; in such as this have I found and beheld
myself; I will speak to it; it can speak again; it can yield me thought
already formed and alive." In fact, the eye—the mind—is always
accompanied by these forms, male and female; and these are incompa-
nably the richest informations of the power and order that lie at the
heart of things. Unfortunately every one of them bears the marks as of
some injury; is marred and superficially defective. Nevertheless, far dif-
ferent from the deaf and dumb nature around them, these rest like
fountain-pipes on the unfathomed sea of thought and virtue whereto
they alone, of all organizations, are the entrances.

It were a pleasant inquiry to follow into detail their ministry to our
education, but where would it stop? We are associated in adolescent and adult life with some friends, who, like skies and waters, are coextensive with our idea; who, answering each to a certain affection of the soul, satisfy our desire on that side, whom we lack power to put at such focal distance from us, that we can mend or even analyze them. We cannot choose but love them. When much intercourse with a friend has supplied us with a standard of excellence, and has increased our respect for the resources of God who thus sends a real person to outgo our ideal; when he has, moreover, become an object of thought, and, whilst his character retains all its unconscious effect, is converted in the mind into solid and sweet wisdom—it is a sign to us that his office is closing, and he is commonly withdrawn from our sight in a short time.

VI

IDEALISM

Thus is the unspeakable but intelligible and practicable meaning of the world conveyed to man, the immortal pupil, in every object of sense. To this one end of Discipline, all parts of nature conspire.

A noble doubt perpetually suggests itself—whether this end be not the Final Cause of the Universe; and whether nature outwardly exists. It is a sufficient account of that Appearance we call the World, that God will teach a human mind, and so makes it the receiver of a certain number of congruent sensations, which we call sun and moon, man and woman, house and trade. In my utter impotence to test the authenticity of the report of my senses, to know whether the impressions they make on me correspond with outlying objects, what difference does it make, whether Orion is up there in heaven, or some god paints the image in the firmament of the soul? The relations of parts and the end of the whole remaining the same, what is the difference, whether land and sea interact, and worlds revolve and intermingle without number or end—deep yawning under deep, and galaxy balancing galaxy, throughout absolute space—or whether, without relations of time and space, the same appearances are inscribed in the constant faith of man? Whether nature enjoy a substantial existence without, or is only in the apocalypse of the mind, it is alike useful and alike venerable to me. It what it may, it is ideal to me so long as I cannot try the accuracy of my senses.

The frivolous make themselves merry with the Ideal theory, as if its consequences were burlesque; as if it affected the stability of nature. It surely does not. God never jests with us, and will not compromise the end of nature by permitting any inconsequence in its procession. Any distrust of the permanence of laws would paralyze the faculties of man. Their permanence is sacredly respected, and his faith therein is perfect. The wheels and springs of man are all set to the hypothesis of the permanence of nature. We are not built like a ship to be tossed, but like a house to stand. It is a natural consequence of this structure, that so long as the active powers predominate over the reflective, we resist with indignation any hint that nature is more short-lived or mutable than spirit. The broker, the wheelwright, the carpenter, the tollman, are much displeased at the intimation.

But whilst we acquiesce entirely in the permanence of natural laws, the question of the absolute existence of nature still remains open. It is the uniform effect of culture on the human mind, not to shake our faith in the stability of particular phenomena, as of heat, water, azote, but to lead us to regard nature as phenomenon, not a substance; to attribute necessary existence to spirit; to esteem nature as an accident and an effect.

To the senses and the unrenewed understanding, belongs a sort of instinctive belief in the absolute existence of nature. In their view man and nature are indissolubly joined. Things are ultimates, and they never look beyond their sphere. The presence of Reason mars this faith. The first effort of thought tends to relax this despotism of the senses which binds us to nature as if we were a part of it, and shows us nature aloof, and, as it were, afloat. Until this higher agency intervened, the animal eye sees, with wonderful accuracy, sharp outlines and colored surfaces. When the eye of Reason opens, to outline and surface are at once added grace and expression. These proceed from imagination and affection, and abate somewhat of the angular distinctness of objects. If the Reason be stimulated to more earnest vision, outlines and surfaces become transparent, and are no longer seen; causes and spirits are seen through them. The best moments of life are these delicious awakenings of the higher powers, and the reverential withdrawing of nature before its God.
Let us proceed to indicate the effects of culture.

1. Our first institution in the Ideal philosophy is a hint from Nature herself.

Nature is made to conspire with spirit to emancipate us. Certain mechanical changes, a small alteration in our local position, apprizes us of a dualism. We are strangely affected by seeing the shore from a moving ship, from a balloon, or through the tints of an unusual sky. The least change in our point of view gives the whole world a pictorial air. A man who seldom rides, needs only to get into a coach and traverse his own town, to turn the street into a puppet-show. The men, the women—talking, running, bartering, fighting—the earnest mechanic, the loungers, the beggars, the boys, the dogs, are unrealized at once, or, at least, wholly detached from all relation to the observer, and seen as apparent, not substantial beings. What new thoughts are suggested by seeing a face of country quite familiar, in the rapid movement of the railroad car? Nay, the most wonted objects (make a very slight change in the point of vision), please us most. In a camera obscura, the butcher's cart, and the figure of one of our own family amuse us. So a portrait of a well-known face gratifies us. Turn the eyes upside down, by looking at the landscape through your legs, and how agreeable is the picture, though you have seen it any time these twenty years!

In these cases, by mechanical means, is suggested the difference between the observer and the spectacle—between man and nature. Hence arises a pleasure mixed with awe; I may say, a low degree of the sublime is felt, from the fact, probably, that man is hereby apprized that whilst the world is a spectacle, something in himself is stable.

2. In a higher manner the poet communicates the same pleasure. By a few strokes he delineates, as on air, the sun, the mountain, the camp, the city, the hero, the maiden, not different from what we know them, but only lifted from the ground and afloat before the eye. He unfixes the land and the sea, makes them revolve around the axis of his primary thought, and disposés them anew. Possessed himself by a heroic passion, he uses matter as symbols of it. The sensual man conforms thoughts to things; the poet conforms things to his thoughts. The one esteems nature as rooted and fast; the other, as fluid, and impresses his being thereon. To him, the refractory world is ductile and flexible; he invests dust and stones with humanity, and makes them the words of the Reason. The Imagination may be defined to be the use which the Reason makes of the material world. Shakespeare possesses the power of subordinating nature for the purposes of expression, beyond all poets. His imperial muse tosses the creation like a bauble from hand to hand, and uses it to embody any caprice of thought that is uppermost in his mind. The remotest spaces of nature are visited, and the farthest sundered things are brought together, by a subtle spiritual connection. We are made aware that magnitude of material things is relative, and all objects shrink and expand to serve the passion of the poet. Thus in his sonnets, the lays of birds, the scents and dyes of flowers he finds to be the shadow of his beloved; time, which keeps her from him, is his chest; the suspicion she has awakened, is her ornament;

The ornament of beauty is Suspect
A crow which flies in heaven's sweetest air.

His passion is not the fruit of chance; it swells, as he speaks, to a city, or a state.

No, it was builded far from accident;
It suffers not in smiling pomp, nor falls
Under the brow of thralling discontent;
It fears not policy, that heretic,
That works on leases of short numbered hours,
But all alone stands hugely politic.

In the strength of his constancy, the Pyramids seem to him recent and transitory. The freshness of youth and love dazzles him with its resemblance to morning;

Take those lips away
Which so sweetly were forsworn;
And those eyes,—the break of day,
Lights that do mislead the morn.

The wild beauty of this hyperbole, I may say in passing, it would not be easy to match in literature.

This transfiguration which all material objects undergo through the passion of the poet—this power which he exerts to dwarf the great, to
magnify the small—might be illustrated by a thousand examples from his Plays. I have before me the Tempest, and will cite only these few lines.

ARIEL. The strong based promontory
Have I made shake, and by the spurs plucked up
The pine and cedar.

Prospero calls for music to soothe the frantic Alonzo, and his companions;

A solemn air, and the best comforter
To an unsettled fancy, cure thy brains
Now useless, boiled within thy skull.

Again;

The charm dissolves apace,
And, as the morning steals upon the night,
Melting the darkness, so their rising senses
Begin to chase the ignorant fumes that mantle
Their clearer reason.

Their understanding
Begins to swell: and the approaching tide
Will shortly fill the reasonable shores
That now lie foul and muddy.

The perception of real affinities between events (that is to say, of ideal affinities, for those only are real), enables the poet thus to make free with the most imposing forms and phenomena of the world, and to assert the predominance of the soul.

3. Whilst thus the poet animates nature with his own thoughts, he differs from the philosopher only herein, that the one proposes Beauty as his main end; the other Truth. But the philosopher, not less than the poet, postpones the apparent order and relations of things to the empire of thought. "The problem of philosophy," according to Plato, "is, for all that exists conditionally, to find a ground unconditioned and absolute." It proceeds on the faith that a law determines all phenomena, which being known, the phenomena can be predicted. That law, when

in the mind, is an idea. Its beauty is infinite. The true philosopher and the true poet are one, and a beauty, which is truth, and a truth, which is beauty, is the aim of both. Is not the charm of one of Plato's or Aristotle's definitions strictly like that of the Antigone of Sophocles? It is, in both cases, that a spiritual life has been imparted to nature; that the solid seeming block of matter has been pervaded and dissolved by a thought; that this feeble human being has penetrated the vast masses of nature with an informing soul, and recognized itself in their harmony, that is, seized their law. In physics, when this is attained, the memory disburthens itself of its cumbersome catalogues of particulars, and carries centuries of observation in a single formula.

Thus even in physics, the material is degraded before the spiritual. The astronomer, the geometer, rely on their irrefragable analysis, and disdain the results of observation. The sublime remark of Euler on his law of arches, "This will be found contrary to all experience, yet is true," had already transferred nature into the mind, and left matter like an outcast corpse.

4. Intellectual science has been observed to beget invariably a doubt of the existence of matter. Turgot said, "He that has never doubted the existence of matter, may be assured he has no aptitude for metaphysical inquiries." It fastens the attention upon immortal necessary uncreated natures, that is, upon Ideas; and in their presence we feel that the outward circumstance is a dream and a shade. Whilst we wait in this Olympus of gods, we think of nature as an appendix to the soul. We ascend into their region, and know that these are the thoughts of the Supreme Being. "These are they who were set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When he prepared the heavens, they were there; when he established the clouds above, when he strengthened the fountains of the deep. Then they were by him, as one brought up with him. Of them took he counsel."

Their influence is proportionate. As objects of science they are accessible only to a few men. Yet all men are capable of being raised by piety or by passion, into their region. And no man touches these divine natures, without becoming, in some degree, himself divine. Like a new soul, they renew the body. We become physically nimble and light-some; we tread on air; life is no longer irksome, and we think it will never be so. No man fears age or misfortune or death in their serene company, for he is transported out of the district of change. Whilst we
behind unveiled the nature of Justice and Truth, we learn the difference between the absolute and the conditional or relative. We apprehend the absolute. As it were, for the first time, we exist. We become immortal, for we learn that time and space are relations of matter; that with a perception of truth or a virtuous will they have no affinity.

5. Finally, religion and ethics, which may be fitly called the practice of ideas, or the introduction of ideas into life, have an analogous effect with all lower culture, in degrading nature and suggesting its dependence on spirit. Ethics and religion differ herein; that the one is the system of human duties commencing from man; the other, from God. Religion includes the personality of God; Ethics does not. They are one to our present design. They both put nature under foot. The first and last lesson of religion is, "The things that are seen, are temporal; the things that are unseen, are eternal." It puts an affront upon nature. It does that for the unschooled, which philosophy does for Berkeley and Viasa. The uniform language that may be heard in the churches of the most ignorant sects is—"Contemn the unsubstantial shows of the world; they are vanities, dreams, shadows, unrealities; seek the realities of religion." The devotee flouts nature. Some theosophists have arrived at a certain hostility and indignation towards matter, as the Manichean and Plotinus. They distrusted in themselves any looking back to those flesh-pots of Egypt. Plotinus was ashamed of his body. In short, they might all say of matter, what Michael Angelo said of external beauty, "It is the frail and weary weed, in which God dresses the soul which he has called into time."

It appears that motion, poetry, physical and intellectual science, and religion, all tend to affect our convictions of the reality of the external world. But I own there is something ungrateful in expanding too curiously the particulars of the general proposition, that all culture tends to imbue us with idealism. I have no hostility to nature, but a child's love to it. I expand and live in the warm day like corn and melons. Let us speak her fair. I do not wish to fling stones at my beautiful mother, nor soil my gentle nest. I only wish to indicate the true position of nature in regard to man, wherein to establish man all right education tends; as the ground which to attain is the object of human life, that is, of man's connection with nature. Culture inverts the vulgar view of nature, and brings the mind to call that apparent which it uses to call real, and that real which it uses to call visionary. Children, it is true, believe in the external world. The belief that it appears only, is an afterthought, but with culture this faith will as surely arise on the mind as did the first.

The advantage of the ideal theory over the popular faith is this, that it presents the world in precisely that view which is most desirable to the mind. It is, in fact, the view which Reason, both speculative and practical, that is, philosophy and virtue, take. For seen in the light of thought, the world always is phenomenal; and virtue subordinates it to the mind. Idealism sees the whole circle of persons and things, of actions and events, of country and religion, not as painfully accumulated, atom after atom, act after act, in an aged creeping Past, but as one vast picture which God paints on the instant eternity for the contemplation of the soul. Therefore the soul holds itself off from a too trivial and microscopic study of the universal tablet. It respects the end too much to immerse itself in the means. It sees something more important in Christianity than the scandals of ecclesiastical history or the niceties of criticism; and, very incurious concerning persons or miracles, and not at all disturbed by chains of historical evidence, it accepts from God the phenomenon, as it finds it, as the pure and awful form of religion in the world. It is not hot and passionate at the appearance of what it calls its own good or bad fortune, at the union or opposition of other persons. No man is its enemy. It accepts whatsoever befalls, as part of its lesson. It is a watcher more than a doer, and it is a doer, only that it may the better watch.

VII

SPIRIT

IT is essential to a true theory of nature and of man, that it should contain somewhat progressive. Uses that are exhausted or that may be, and facts that end in the statement, cannot be all that is true of this brave lodging wherein man is harbored, and wherein all his faculties find appropriate and endless exercise. And all the uses of nature admit of being summed in one, which yields the activity of man an infinite scope. Through all its kingdoms, to the suburbs and outskirts of things,
it is faithful to the cause whence it had its origin. It always speaks of Spirit. It suggests the absolute. It is a perpetual effect. It is a great shadow pointing always to the sun behind us.

The aspect of Nature is devout. Like the figure of Jesus, she stands with bended head, and hands folded upon the breast. The happiest man is he who learns from nature the lesson of worship.

Of that ineffable essence which we call Spirit, be that thinks most, will say least. We can foresee God in the coarse, and, as it were, distant phenomena of matter; but when we try to define and describe himself, both language and thought desert us, and we are as helpless as fools and savages. That essence refuses to be recorded in propositions, but when man has worshipped him intellectually, the noblest ministry of nature is to stand as the apparition of God. It is the organ through which the universal spirit speaks to the individual, and strives to lead back the individual to it.

When we consider Spirit, we see that the views already presented do not include the whole circumference of man. We must add some related thoughts.

Three problems are put by nature to the mind: What is matter? Whence is it? and Whereto? The first of these questions only, the ideal theory answers. Idealism saith: matter is a phenomenon, not a substance. Idealism acquaints us with the total disparity between the evidence of our own being and the evidence of the world’s being. The one is perfect; the other, incapable of any assurance; the mind is a part of the nature of things; the world is a divine dream, from which we may presently awake to the glories and certainties of day. Idealism is a hypothesis to account for nature by other principles than those of carpentry and chemistry. Yet, if it only deny the existence of matter, it does not satisfy the demands of the spirit. It leaves God out of me. It leaves me in the splendid labyrinth of my perceptions, to wander without end. Then the heart resists it, because it balks the affections in denying substantive being to men and women. Nature is so pervaded with human life that there is something of humanity in all and in every particular. But this theory makes nature foreign to me, and does not account for that consanguinity which we acknowledge to it.

Let it stand then, in the present state of our knowledge, merely as a useful introductory hypothesis, serving to apprise us of the eternal distinction between the soul and the world.

But when, following the invisible steps of thoughts, we come to inquire, Whence is matter? and Whereto? many truths arise to us out of the recesses of consciousness. We learn that the highest is present to the soul of man; that the dread universal essence, which is not wisdom, or love, or beauty, or power, but all in one, and each entirely, is that for which all things exist, and that by which they are; that spirit creates; that behind nature, throughout nature, spirit is present; one and not compound it does not act upon us from without, that is, in space and time, but spiritually, or through ourselves: therefore, that spirit, that is, the Supreme Being, does not build up nature around us, but puts it forth through us, as the life of the tree puts forth new branches and leaves through the pores of the old. As a plant upon the earth, so a man rests upon the bosom of God; he is nourished by unfailing fountains, and draws at his need inexhaustible power. Who can set bounds to the possibilities of man? Once inhale the upper air, being admitted to behold the absolute natures of justice and truth, and we learn that man has access to the entire mind of the Creator, is himself the creator in the finite. This view, which adorns me where the sources of wisdom and power lie, and points to virtue as to

"The golden key
Which opens the palace of eternity,"

carries upon its face the highest certificate of truth, because it animates me to create my own world through the purification of my soul.

The world proceeds from the same spirit as the body of man. It is a remoter and inferior incarnation of God, a projection of God in the unconscious. But it differs from the body in one important respect. It is not, like that, now subjected to the human will. Its serene order is inviolate by us. It is, therefore, to us, the present expositor of the divine mind. It is a fixed point whereby we may measure our departure. As we degenerate, the contrast between us and our house is more evident. We are as much strangers in nature as we are aliens from God. We do not understand the notes of birds. The fox and the deer run away from us; the bear and tiger rend us. We do not know the uses of more than a few plants, as corn and the apple, the potato and the vine. Is not the landscape, every glimpse of which hath a grandeur, a face of him? Yet this may show us what discord is between man and nature, for you can-
not freely admire a noble landscape if laborers are digging in the field hard by. The poet finds something ridiculous in his delight until he is out of the sight of men.

VIII
PROSPECTS

In inquiries respecting the laws of the world and the frame of things, the highest reason is always the truest. That which seems faintly possible, it is so refined, is often faint and dim because it is deepest seated in the mind among the eternal verities. Empirical science is apt to cloud the sight, and by the very knowledge of functions and processes to bereave the student of the manly contemplation of the whole. The savant becomes unpoetic. But the best read naturalist who lends an entire and devout attention to truth, will see that there remains much to learn of his relation to the world, and that it is not to be learnt by any addition or subtraction or other comparison of known quantities, but is arrived at by untaught saliés of the spirit, by a continuă recovery, and by entire humility. He will perceive that there are far more excellent qualities in the student than preciseness and infallibility; that a guess is often more fruitful than an indisputable affirmation, and that a dream may let us deeper into the secret of nature than a hundred concerted experiments.

For the problems to be solved are precisely those which the physiologist and the naturalist omit to state. It is not so pertinent to man to know all the individuals of the animal kingdom, as it is to know whence and whereto is this tyrannizing unity in his constitution, which evermore separates and classifies things, endeavoring to reduce the most diverse to one form. When I behold a rich landscape, it is less to my purpose to recite correctly the order and superposition of the strata, than to know why all thought of multitude is lost in a tranquil sense of unity. I cannot greatly honor minuteness in details, so long as there is no hint to explain the relation between things and thoughts; no ray upon the metaphysics of conchology, of botany, of the arts, to show the relation of the forms of flowers, shells, animals, architecture, to the mind, and build science upon ideas. In a cabinet of natural history, we become sensible of a certain occult recognition and sympathy in regular

to the most unwieldy and eccentric form of beast, fish, and insect. The American who has been confined in his own country, to the sight of buildings designed after foreign models, is surprised on entering York Minster or St. Peter's at Rome, by the feeling that these structures are imitations also—faint copies of an invisible archetype. Nor has science sufficient humanity, so long as the naturalist overlooks that wonderful congruity which subsists between man and the world; of which he is lord, not because he is the most subtle inhabitant, but because he is its head and heart, and finds something of himself in every great and small thing, in every mountain stratum, in every new law of color, fact of astronomy, or atmospheric influence which observation or analysis lays open. A perception of this mystery inspires the muse of George Herbert, the beautiful psalmist of the seventeenth century. The following lines are part of his little poem on Man.

Man is all symmetry,
Full of proportions, one limb to another,
And all to all the world besides.
Each part may call the farthest, brother;
For head with feet hath private unity,
And both with moons and tides.

Nothing hath got so far
But man hath caught and kept it as his prey;
His eyes dismount the highest star:
He is in little all the sphere.
Herbs gladly cure our flesh, because that they
Find their acquaintance there.

For us, the winds do blow,
The earth doth rest, heaven move, and fountains flow;
Nothing we see, but means our good,
As our delight, or as our treasure.
The whole is either our cupboard of food,
Or cabinet of pleasure.

The stars have us as bed;
Night draws the curtain, which the sun withdraws.
Music and light attend our head.
All things unto our flesh are kind,
In their descent and being, to our mind,
In their ascent and cause.

More servants wait on man
Than he’ll take notice of. In every path,
He treads down that which doth befriended him
When sickness makes him pale and wan.
Oh mighty love! Man is one world, and hath
Another to attend him.

The perception of this class of truths makes the attraction which
d raws men to science, but the end is lost sight of in attention to the
means. In view of this half-sight of science, we accept the sentence of
Plato, that "poetry comes nearer to vital truth than history." Every sur-
prise and vaticination of the mind is entitled to a certain respect, and we
learn to prefer imperfect theories, and sentences which contain glimpses
of truth, to digested systems which have no one valuable suggestion.
A wise writer will feel that the ends of study and composition are best
answered by announcing undiscovered regions of thought, and so com-
unicating, through hope, new activity to the torpid spirit.
I shall therefore conclude this essay with some traditions of man
and nature, which a certain poet sang to me; and which, as they have
always been in the world, and perhaps reappear to every bard, may be
both history and prophecy.

The foundations of man are not in matter, but in spirit. But the
element of spirit is eternity. To it, therefore, the longest series of
events, the oldest chronologies are young and recent. In the cycle of
the universal man, from whom the known individuals proceed, cen-
turies are points, and all history is but the epoch of one degradation.

We distrust and deny inwardly our sympathy with nature. We
own and disown our relation to it, by turns. We are like
Nebuchadnezzar, dethroned, bereft of reason, and eating grass like an
ox. But who can set limits to the remedial force of spirit?
A man is a god in ruin. When men are innocent, life shall be
longer, and shall pass into the immortal as gently as we awake from
dreams. Now, the world would be insane and rabid, if these disorgan-
izations should last for hundreds of years. It is kept in check by death
and infancy. Infancy is the perpetual Messiah, which comes into the
arms of fallen men, and pleads with them to return to paradise.

Man is the dwarf of himself. Once he was permeated and dis-
solved by spirit. He filled nature with his overflowing currents. Out
from him sprang the sun and moon; from man the sun, from woman
the moon. The laws of his mind, the periods of his actions externalized
themselves into day and night, into the year and the seasons. But, hav-
ing made for himself this huge shell, his waters retired; he no longer
fills the veins and veilets; he is shrunk to a drop. He sees that the
structure still fits him, but fits him colossally. Say, rather, once it fit-
ted him, now it corresponds to him from far and on high. He adores
himself. Now is man the follower of the sun, and woman the follower of the moon. Yet sometimes he starts in his slumber, and
wonders at himself and his house, and muses strangely at the resem-
bance betwixt him and it. He perceives that if his law is still
paramount, if still he have elemental power, if his word is sterling yet in
nature, it is not conscious power, it is not inferior but superior to his
will. It is instinct." Thus my Orphic poet sang.

At present, man applies to nature but half his force. He works on
the world with his understanding alone. He lives in it and masters it by
a penny-wisdom; and he that works most in it is but a half-man, and
whilst his arms are strong and his digestion good, his mind is imburzed,
and he is a selfish savage. His relation to nature, his power over it, is
through the understanding, as by manure; the economic use of fire,
wind, water, and the mariner's needle; steam, coal, chemical agriculture;
the repairs of the human body by the dentist and the surgeon. This is
such a resurrection of power as if a banished king should buy his terri-
tories inch by inch, instead of vaulting at once into his throne.
Meantime, in the thick darkness, there are not wanting gleams of a bet-
ter light—occasional examples of the action of man upon nature with
his entire force—with reason as well as understanding. Such examples
are, the traditions of miracles in the earliest antiquity of all nations; the
history of Jesus Christ; the achievements of a prince, as in religious
and political revolutions, and in the abolition of the slave-trade; the
miracles of enthusiasm, as those reported of Swedenborg, Hohenlohe,
and the Shakers; many obscure and yet contested facts, now arranged
under the name of Animal Magnetism, prayer; eloquence, self-healing;

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and the wisdom of children. These are examples of Reason's momentary grasp of the sceptre; the exertions of a power which exists not in time or space, but an instantaneous stream causing power. The difference between the actual and the ideal force of man is happily figured by the schoolmen, in saying, that the knowledge of man is an evening knowledge, neuropoda cognito, but that of God is a morning knowledge, matutina cognito.

The problem of restoring to the world original and eternal beauty is solved by the redemption of the soul. The ruin or the blank that we see when we look at nature, is in our own eye. The axis of vision is not coincident with the axis of things, and the opaque reason why the world lacks unity, and lies broken and in heaps, is because man is disunited with himself. He cannot be a naturalist until he satisfies all the demands of the spirit. Love is as much its demand as perception. Indeed, neither can any thing, unless the mind is prepared for study, to search for objects. The invisible mark of wisdom is to see the miraculous in the common. What is a day? What is a year? What is summer? What is woman? What is a child? What is sleep? To our blindness, these things seem unafflicting. We make fables to hide the baldness of the fact and conform it, as we say, to the higher law of the mind. But when the fact is seen under the light of an idea, the gaudy fable fades and shrivels. We behold the real higher law. To the wise, therefore, a fact is true poetry, and the most beautiful of fables. These wonders are brought to our own door. You also are a man. Man and woman and their social life, poverty, labor, sleep, fear, fortune, are known to you.

Learn that none of these things is superficial, but that each phenomenon has its roots in the faculties and affections of the mind. Whilst the abstract question occupies your intellect, nature brings it in the concrete to be solved by your hands. It were a wise inquiry for the closet, to compare, point by point, especially at remarkable crises in life, our daily history with the rise and progress of ideas in the mind.

So shall we come to look at the world with new eyes. It shall answer the endless inquiry of the intellect—What is truth? and of the affections—What is good? by yielding itself passive to the educated Will. Then shall come to pass what my poet said: 'Nature is not fixed but fluid. Spirit alters, moulds, makes it. The impossibility or brutishness of nature is the absence of spirit; to pure spirit it is fluid, it is volatile, it is obedient. Every spirit builds itself a house, and beyond its house a world, and beyond its world a heaven. Know then that the world exists for you. For you is the phenomenon perfect. What we are, that only can we see. All that Adam had, all that Caesar could, you have and can do. Adam called his house, heaven and earth; Caesar called his house, Rome; you perhaps call yours, a cobbler's trade; a hundred acres of ploughed land; or a scholar's garret. Yet line for line and point for point your dominion is as great as theirs, though without fine names.

Build therefore your own world. As fast as you conform your life to the pure idea on your mind, that will unfold its great proportions. A correspondent revolution in things will attend the influx of the spirit. So fast will disagreeable appearances, swine, spiders, snakes, pests, mad-houses, prisons, enemies, vanish; they are temporary and shall be no more. The sorrows and filth of nature, the sun shall dry up and the wind exhale. As when the summer comes from the south the snow-banks melt and the face of the earth becomes green before it, so shall the advancing spirit create its ornaments along its path, and carry with it the beauty it visits and the song which enchants it; shall draw beautiful faces, warm hearts, wise discourse, and heroic acts, around its way, until evil is no more seen. The kingdom of man over nature, which cometh not with observation—a dominion such as now is beyond his dream of God—he shall enter without more wonder than the blind man feels who is gradually restored to sight.'