

ently confine itself to the founding of cities. Gods walk with men, nymphs spring from the foam of ocean, cities rise full-fledged from the waves, Satyrs gambol in the forest glades, mortals are translated to Elysium or to Hades, in short, there is nothing too wonderful, too horrible, or too grotesque to find its place in the evolving historic page. And why are these fables recorded and treasured? For the same reason that the fairy tales of the child are conned and treasured. They are not deemed incredible. The little child has no more perception of the incongruous in narration, than the infant in arms has of dimensions and distances in space. One will swear by the two-headed ogre, the other will stretch out its hands for the moon, and cry because the deceptive orb eludes its grasp. So with the infant people, the tribal germ. There is nothing with it that is not possible and probable, for as yet it has not learnt to differentiate the known from the unknown, the probable from the improbable, the possible from the impossible. All this is the product of growth, progress, evolution, the scientific and rationalistic habit of the adult intellect. Indeed their superstitions are the last rags of mental indigence which even the evolved find it so difficult to shuffle off. Yet not till they do so can they be truly said to be properly clothed and in their right mind. But we must be patient. Exact science is slow and methodical in its processes. Fancy is exuberant, impetuous, and ever impatient of bonds. It leaps at conclusions. Because the Greek desires bliss, his imagination revels in Elysian fields, and possibly because he wishes to be revenged on his enemies, he dreams into existence the inky Styx, the dread Plutonian shades, cloud-enveloped Tartarus, and the fiery flood of most awful Phlegethon. But we are yet on the earth,

and we must learn of earth, and let earth tell her own tale, in her own common-place, unsensational fashion, all the more so because we, heirs of centuries the Greek never knew, have learned the hollowness, the mockery of endless, labourless, monotonous bliss and the futility, nay, the unchristian absurdity and impiety of infinite revenge.

We may, then, I think, deduce this conclusion from the comparison of the child individual with the child national, that what the oldest historians recorded they believed to be fact; but much that they have recorded cannot, so far as we can conceive, have been fact. They believed themselves to be recording truth. We know that they could not have been recording truth. Of course I do not here take into account palpable mistakes and misunderstandings, or wilful perversions of truth, interpolations of design, whether political, social or credal, which must of necessity have been frequent during the Dark Ages, and which owed their existence either to crass and indefensible ignorance or carelessness, or to political cunning or sectarian guile. The deduction then seems reasonable, that we are, in one sense at least, different from these old mythologists. We do not see with the same national eyes. Our faculties have evolved. We see more clearly. As a matter of course, our history has evolved. We record events more clearly; and but one question remains—how much of so-called historical evidence is credible? How much utterly worthless? It is a wide field for discussion. I do not intend to enter it. My paper is merely one of suggestion, not of dogmatism. Thirty minutes is barely time for the statement of the theme. A lifetime might well be spent in following it from its misty source, through all its sinuous windings, to the precincts of the presumably established "Now."