

is improved, where another is corrupted; how one man elevates himself to all that makes devotion great, where another finds nothing to attract him, but that which should repel him. Thus, whatever, the visible appearances within them, there is a central self, in which the essence of the man abides. Your life is yours, it is not mine. My life is mine, and not another's. It is not alone specific, it is individual. Human faculties are common, but that which consigns these faculties into my identity, separates me from every other man. That other man cannot think my thoughts, he cannot speak my words, he cannot do my works. He cannot have my sins, I cannot have his virtues. I am as incapable of taking his place, as he is of taking mine. Each must feel, therefore, that his life must be his own. It has a training, and an impulse, and a power, and a purpose, which give him an independent personality; and in the unfolding of that personality, consist the destiny of his life and its uses.

Life is first unfolded through outward nature. In that rudest state of humanity, which seems almost instinctive, we might imagine individuality as nearly impossible, but so it is not; and monotonous as the ideas and experience may appear, they become incorporated with a distinct life, in the personality of each soul. But, does not outward nature afford manifest evidence, that it intended to unfold life through higher feelings than sensation; sensation of that kind, I mean, which is merely necessary to animate existence? Is there not other purpose for sight than discernment of our position, and our way? Is there not other purpose for hearing, than the simple perception of sound? Why are there flowers in the field? Why are blossoms on the trees? Why, in summer, is such bloom upon the woods; and why is autumn so clad with glory? Why is the rainbow painted with hues so inimitable? Why, indeed, is every natural object so shaped and colored, that the very sun seems but a great light, kindled in the midst of immensity, to illuminate and display the riches of its beauty? Or, why, also, do the waves make music with the shore? Why do the airs make music in the groves? These are not necessary to feed, or lodge, or clothe us; they are not necessary to mere labor, or mere intercourse. Did God lavish out this infinite wealth of adornment, which ministers nothing to bare bodily wants, which is not needed for bodily subsistence, not even for bodily comfort, that it should be as idle gaud and empty song in his inanimate creation, but afford no nutriment to the inherent life of his rational creatures? This cannot be, since we know, that the most imperfect life has a

sense of beauty, and that in some lives, it has the depth of an inspiration, and the force of passion.

The life is indeed but narrowly unfolded, in which the sense of beauty in outward nature is dull or wanting. To walk over this goodly earth through the changing path of three score years and ten; to take no note of time but by the almanac; not to mark the seasons, except by the profit or the loss they bring; to think of days and nights as mere alternations of toil and sleep; to discern in the river only its adaptation for factories; to associate the ocean only with facilities of traffic; to care not for the solemn revolutions of the earth through its circle in the stars; to have no eye for the infinity of sight; no hearing for the endless succession of sounds—sights and sounds that vary ever as the earth rolls on; to be blind and deaf and callous, to all but the hardest uses of creation—is to leave out of conscious being whatever gives the universe its most vital reality.

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But it is not in mere sensibility alone to beauty, that life is unfolded by means of outward nature. Outward nature also unfolds life by exercising thought; not thought which is busied only about wants, but thought which delights to see the end of Creation's laws and mysteries. But life is unfolded in its loftiest capacities, when everywhere in outward nature, the soul is conscious of God's pervading presence; when it sees the goodness of God in all that is lovely, and the wisdom of God in all that is true. "A thing of beauty it has been seeing, is a joy forever." But it is not a joy at all, until it becomes mingled with a human life. A child wanders by a stream. The stream would babble onward, whether the child were there or not; but when the child mingles his laughter with its babbling, it is then a thing of beauty and a thing of joy. Every man, whether he knows it or not, is an incarnation of the immortal; and through his immortality all things that connect themselves with his soul are immortal. In every loving soul, therefore, according to the measure and extent of its power, God reconstructs the heavens and the earth.

The individual being of man is also unfolded by society. It is born into society, and by society it lives. Existing at first in passion and unconscious instincts, it finds protection in the care of intelligent affections. The home, therefore, is the first circle within which personality opens, and it is always the nearest. Beyond this, the individual is surrounded with circumstances more complex. He is cast among persons whose wills are not only different from his own, but constantly antagonistic to it. And thus in society, as in