

SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY.

LET us inquire to what end is Nature. All science has an aim, namely, to find a theory of the universe. While religious teachers dispute and hate each other and speculative men are esteemed unsound, yet the most abstract truth is most practical. "Whenever a true theory appears, it will be its own evidence. Its test is that it will explain all phenomena. Philosophically considered, the universe is composed of nature and the soul," (II., p. 141). Hence he concludes that art and nature, all that is distinguished as not me—"all must be ranked under this name nature." The same law is applicable to mental and moral life as to suns, stars, plants, and animals, and he recognizes its unity with will and thought. "Against all appearances" he sees "the nature of things works for truth and right for ever" (II., p. 401). There is a remarkable passage written and published before the "Origin of Species," in which he recognizes the discoveries of astronomy and geology, as giving the two necessary cardinal points, "boundless space and boundless time." These dispose of the teachings of Moses, Ptolemy, and the dame school of our youth.

Of man and his modifications, the difficulty to-day is to find causes powerful enough and time long enough to render them possible, to say nothing of man's origin. To express the time in years, like the distances of astronomers, would not enable us to comprehend it. To-day we have traced the early forms of animals that still survive, facts unknown when Emerson wrote: "Now we learn what patient periods must have rounded themselves before the rock is formed, then before the rock is broken, and the first lichen race had disintegrated the thinnest external plate into soil, and opened the door for the remote Flora, Fauna, Ceres, and Pomona to come in. How far off yet is the trilobite! how far the quadruped! how inconceivably remote is man! All duly arrive, and then race after race of men. It is a long way from granite to the oyster farther yet to Plato and the preaching of the immortality of the soul. Yet all must come, as surely as the first atom has two sides" (I., p. 228). While this was being written, Darwin and Wallace were collecting facts to establish the theory. But to-day even divines use the word Evolution—the meaning and bearing of which they do not yet appear to have mastered.

In his latest essay, Emerson finds that "The fossil strata show that nature began with rudimental forms, and rose to the more complex, a

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