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THE EARTH AND MAN.

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GREAT, wonderful, and manifold have been the triumphs of man over nature. In all ages, and in none more than in the present, the God-given inheritance of reason and will has obtained for our race the sway over the world of matter. No lands have been too remote for man to penetrate, no seas too broad for him to cross, no powers of nature too vast or terrible for him to bend them to his will, and make servants and handmaidens of his all-pervading genius. And since we, as a race, have a very exalted opinion of our own powers and importance, these victories of ours over the outside world have been very largely and plentifully dilated on. Poets have made them the subjects of their most stirring measures; philosophers have moralized on them with self-satisfied complacency; they have kindled the tongue of the orator, and caused it to glow with all the fire of eloquence; and even the painter has not scorned to immortalize them on the canvas.

The prominence thus given to the influence of *man* upon *matter*, makes us, I think, a little too apt to forget that there is quite another side to the picture. Looking as we do on the long and glorious panorama unfolded to our view by the annals of our

race—a panorama representing with more or less faithfulness and truth the victories achieved and the influence exerted by the human will over the so-called dead world of matter—we are very prone to turn our backs upon another and no less interesting picture, that of the influence for good or evil wielded by the powers of nature over the lives and destinies of the human race. That such influence is a real and a great one no thoughtful man can for a moment doubt. But few of us have, I think, an adequate conception of *how great* has been the power exerted by the physical world in moulding and fashioning the individual and collective life of our race, from the time when our first parents wandered amid the trickling fountains and the shady groves of the Garden of Eden down to the present day, when well-nigh every hill and valley, and every forest and plain, echoes to the sound of our industries, our pleasures, and our strifes. In some small measure to trace and illustrate the subtle connection between the life of the race and its physical surroundings will be the endeavour of your lecturer\* this evening, and he hopes that he may obtain the pardon of his audience if,

\* This paper was originally delivered as a lecture.