

minor importance, or of no importance at all, had been devoted to representing nature and law in general as the steadfast friend of man, a friend which, as Matthew Arnold has expressed it, never "promised aught it did not give," and which stands ever ready to second every effort made in a right direction. The eminent writer, whose name I have just mentioned, has told us much, but not too much, about "a power that makes for righteousness." That such a power does reside in the very constitution of things is abundantly capable of proof, and—we may rejoice to think—is being proved in the daily experience of thousands. Who does not recall those wonderful lines of Wordsworth's, in his "Ode to Duty?"—

"Stern law-giver! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace,
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face;
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds;
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
And the most ancient heavens through thee
are fresh and strong!"

Then follows the earnest personal appeal:

I myself commend
Unto thy guidance from this hour;
Oh let my weakness have an end!
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice,
The confidence of reason give;
And in the light of truth thy bondman let
me live!

It is a bold figure of speech which represents duty as "preserving the stars from wrong," but the meaning of the poet, I need hardly explain, is that the starry heavens exemplify the law and order of which duty is simply the expression in the moral sphere.

If it be asked by what special course of training men may best be brought to feel the force and recognize the essential beneficence of natural law, I would answer that, in the first place, we must avail ourselves of the teach-

ing which nature itself every day affords to those who will open their eyes to see and their ears to hear. We cannot too early teach children the properties of objects and the necessary results of certain actions. This kind of teaching, not calling for any exercise of abstract thought, but depending almost wholly on direct sense-impressions, will not overstrain their minds. It is the kind—as of course we might expect—which they most readily assimilate, and which indeed they are in one way or another always pursuing themselves. Children "want to know" a great many things about the world around them; but I never yet met the child who wanted to know—that is to say as a matter of spontaneous desire—whether a certain word was an adverb or a preposition, or what were the boundaries of the kingdom of Timbuctoo. In saying this I do not wish to disparage the study of grammar or of political geography; I only wish to call attention to the difference between two kinds of knowledge, one of which has a natural affinity for the human mind, while the other is only secondarily, or, so to speak, artificially, a matter of human interest at all. As to the extent to which natural science need be pursued in any general system of education much diversity of opinion exists. A competent teacher might convert a very little natural knowledge into an invaluable instrument of education, while another might go through a considerable course of science with his pupils, and leave them, so far as his efforts were concerned, but little better than he found them. Love is at all times the great interpreter; and no one is a worthy interpreter or commentator of nature who is not in love with nature, who does not rejoice in the idea of law. Let the idea of law be at the base of education, and very useful results may be obtained from any