

livered to the nebulous universe, if not put out at usury, has at least held its own. The capital could be returned at any moment if called. The coal bins of Pennsylvania contain the primeval forest, and large investments from the sun, which it has not seen proper to recall. The forests owed their existence to the flora, the earth, the air, and the light. When we use the anthracite every article is paid back to us and nature. None of it is lost but by a mysterious and divine economy the heat and light and energy return to the vast reservoirs of the universe maybe to be re-employed by the sun or, perhaps, Saturn or Mars. This lifts us to a very high altitude from which to pass in review the sociological phenomena of famine, plagues, persecution, revolution and war, that will with our poor powers, even with this advantage, almost certainly confuse and confound our philosophy.

We can easily see and all admit that death is the supreme evil if we consider the individual, but when we consider society it becomes the supreme natural good. It was well said "One must always die for the people." The axiom is limited here by the context to sacrifice or satisfaction for sin. But it has likewise a universal meaning and application. It is just as true to say all must die for the people—for society. Society is an ever extending telescope, every generation adding a new chamber, widening as it goes, to let in more light. There are 1,500 millions, say, in each generation. If, as a unit, they faced death they would do so in natural revolt but they would leave their estates behind, not so much their physical chattels and assets as their quota, their contribution to the intellectual and the moral storehouses of the race. Individuals may lose the deposit, sections of society may degenerate, but society as a whole forges forward, because progress is an inexorable law; the law of the intellect, the law of the will, the law of nature. That is the only way nature and creation can return to the Creator as final cause. Being born and dying at specified intervals and in the main precisely marked—man at seventy years, the elephant at a hundred and so on, is a most benevolent design of the Creator's in the interest of society that the inertia, the momentum of its morals and rationale may continually but ordinate increase. Shall we conclude, then, that death is the supreme natural evil to the individual and the supreme natural good to society? To die a natural death at seventy, after having spent a devoted and dutiful life is still paying a double debt—life has been at usury—to nature and to society. We return to nature less, but to society more, than we received. There you have it; evil for the individual, and good for society. But suppose a man dies at thirty-three for religion, the natural evil is greater and so is the social