

no condition of life that has not at some time or other felt something in existence that is not all prose and pain, that has not seen through the rift of the cloud-years, the sunlit peaks of some Utopian land, that has not heard above the tumult of traffic, the roar of battle, and the strife of living, a still small voice, the murmur of its parent main, reverberating through the chambers of the soul and conveying message of a loftier, better sphere, perchance a higher plane in the infinity of existence.

Eternal process moving on,
From state to state the spirit walks,
And these are but the shatter'd stalks
Or ruin'd chrysalis of one.

And now for the moral of all this poetic instinct in man.

I deem no more beautiful and perfect theory than the Darwinian theory of evolution has ever been formulated by human intellect, or perfected by patient investigation and self-abnegating heroism. And I think few other theories have been so misunderstood and so maligned by the unthinking, the misinformed, the prejudiced, or the dogmatist, who wishes to hold everything, even men's souls and God's methods in the hollow of his own hand. Why will a mannikin restrict the plan of Providence, and oversee his purposes? If the Almighty, or Jove, or the First Cause, have it what you will, had the power to call a universe into being at all, was he not able to call it into being as he liked, fashion it as he chose, finish it after his own set and pre-ordained purpose? What is there in evolution that should offend the most sensitive theocrat? What that should scandalize the most devout Christian? Whether is it nobler to have ascended from Amœba to man or to have descended from God-like Adam to "Jack the Ripper," the Whitechapel fiend? Evolution at least enshrines this hope, that man will go on pro-

gressing. The counter theory, so far as I can see, and I have not thought lightly on this subject,—it is one very near my heart,—merely promises further debasement, or the fluctuating tide of an unstable mediocrity.

Yet in spite of my leanings to the general theory of evolution, I confess to a difficulty at the very outset, unless we admit concurrently—and divergently in a sense—with physical evolution, a spiritual, or rather an æsthetically mental evolution. I say divergently advisedly, for I see no flaw in the evidence that the development of the protoplasmic gem of palæozoic epochs *may* have culminated in physical man, but man only as a perfect animal. To me there is no difference between the moneron and the Amœba of one hundred million years since, admitting the earliest life-forms to reach to such an antiquity, and the elephant of to-day. They alike consist of the same elements only *differently mixed*, a fuller development of a more complex organism being the result of the mixing. Once start the life germ on its way and the riddle of complexity is read. Mobility, adaptation to surroundings, and division of labour are the foundation stones upon which is reared the pyramid of physical being with man the apex. But with man comes the difficulty. The beast is simply beast with a highly organized physical system and evolved sense of a certain kind. *The man is a poet.* No elephant, so far as rational supposition goes, could have written, could ever write, "In Memoriam," no ape, conceive the religious sense and frame the word "God." What is a probable solution of the enigma? There must either have been the religious germ, which is the poetic germ in the Amœba, or man has evolved for himself a new faculty not possessed by other related forms of life. Whence did he evolve it, when and how? I believe the