

mysterious grandeur or to fall back expiring into the ceaseless whirl of mindless atoms. No discovery can eclipse its brightness, though each may contribute to its significance. Far as men may press their inquiries, outward or upward or inward, explore what secrets and solve what mysteries they may, the face of God has shone upon the world in Jesus Christ, and the old dimness and darkness and confusion of the Pagan world is gone forever. With such a faith men can find life now worth the living. But Lucretius counselled suicide. What say Milton and Browning, Schiller and Whittier?

And so beside the shoreless sea,
I wait the muffled oar;
No harm from Him can come to me
On ocean or on shore.
I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air,
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care.

But contrast again the hopes of modern society with the despair which had settled down upon the old Mediterranean civilization at the beginning of the Christian era. Who can read the later literature of Rome without sharing the sadness with which the nobler thinkers of that time contemplated life and human destiny? Look where they would destruction threatened. Life had grown with many to be an intolerable burden. Men, writes Tacitus in one awful passage, had come to be their own survivors, and moved about like silent spectres among the ruins of all they once held dear. Reflection made the burden heavier. The noblest spirits became the saddest, and the stoutest hearts grew sick with hope deferred. Plato, like Milton's eagle mowing his mighty youth, had for a moment kindled his undazzled eyes at the full mid-day beam, purging and unscaling his sight at the fountain of heavenly radiance; but few could follow Plato, and those who did returned delirious from the fight. Men were without God, having no hope in the world—no hope for themselves, no hope for the human race. When Alexander the Great died, Demades exclaimed: "Greece, like Polyphemus, has lost its only eye." When Cæsar fell, he seemed to the wisest of his contemporaries to carry with him all the hopes of Rome, so desperate had men even then become, so prone to lean upon some single man, to stake their all upon the triumph of some astounding personality. Such faith in single natures still survives, just as skepticism survives or ignorance or superstition or brutality, but somehow or other there has gone out among men the cry that to the race belongs a future brighter than the brightest dreams; a future dependent upon no accident of human birth, upon no startling or unusual apparition of individual genius, but upon the slow and certain movement of the masses upwards towards light and power. This hope acknowledged or unacknowledged inspires all our science, gives wings to enterprise, and stirs in every movement for juster law and purer intelligence. I shut my eyes to no existing evils, I see famine sometimes destroying its thousands in distant lands and gaunt misery pinching pale women's cheeks at home. I see the restless ghost of war disturbing Europe with his bloodshot eyes, and honest poverty too often writhing in the clutch of selfish opulence. I see crime unpunished and innocence too often unavenged; but though it all and in spite of all I know I share the feeling of the noblest of my age that the vision is for an appointed time. If it tarry, wait for it; it will not tarry, it will surely come. Tell me, what mighty spirit has breathed upon these dry bones? Is this hope that animates us and drives us ever onward only the yet unexhausted energy of our Celtic and German ancestors? If so it cannot last much longer, and it is doomed to a catastrophe as terrible as that which fell upon the older civilization. For who will breathe a second time upon the slain? Or is this new hope perchance a product of intellectual speculation? Has some new Plato soared higher than the old, and in discovering