

the utmost moment to discover the true laws of life—those by conformity with which happiness is to be secured for ourselves and others. Instead of trusting to outside influences to repair the errors we may make in the conduct of life, we shall feel that the only forces available are the very ones against which we have transgressed. Instead of trusting to prayer to deflect, in our interest, the natural line of the succession of phenomena, we shall assume that that line is never deflected; and we shall labor the more assiduously to understand the conditions upon which we can obtain, from the working of natural laws, the results we desire. Instead of asking for miracles we shall make a duty of submission.

“A duty!” those who think, with the Bishop of Ontario, that “resignation is an utterly unmeaning word in the mouth of an Agnostic,”* will here exclaim. Yes, a duty; why not? We have the choice of two courses. One is to rail and fret at an order of things that we cannot alter; the other is to accept that order and summon all our powers to make the best of it, to lighten the incidence of such evils as it may entail, to augment the benefits—always more numerous—that it bestows. One is to waste our strength in angry and fruitless struggle; the other is, by submission, to husband our strength for the duties that yet lie before us. One is to destroy the unity of our moral nature by rebellion, the other is to perfect it by the contemplation of those larger and abiding interests which the constancy of natural law promotes. It seems to me that I see a duty emerging here—the duty of submission, of resignation—if it can ever be a duty to choose the better, and turn aside from the worse, of two lines of action. I feel, indeed, that resignation

* Let it be fully understood that I quote this word everywhere, when applied to myself, under protest.