

## "ONLY A CLOD."\*

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WANDERING, it may be, on some bright day of Spring or Summer, along a country road, we have crushed or kicked aside some brown clay heap. Looking from an elevated position over some glorious panorama of hill and dale, especially in Autumn, we have noticed many a field heavy with brown clods of clay. To-day I ask you to consider briefly these unsightly clods, from which we have often turned away in indifference. Long ago a learned theologian said, "A clod, a pebble, or a liquid drop might be"—*i. e.*, might be of itself. Had he lived in our day that sentence would never have been written. Science has undeceived us in this respect, and has shown us that even the humble, despised clod of clay has its history and manifold uses; that it bears the stamp of Divine workmanship as much as the gem, the flower, or man himself. Science has here brought home to us with more force than ever the Divine assertion to St. Peter on the housetop, "what God hath made (to slightly alter the sacred text) that call not thou common or unclean."

1. First, let us regard its history. Tracing yonder clay-clod back a few thousand years, let us see the fields and roads, the villages and towns, and forests of to-day covered by the blue sea with its gracefully curving shores, its lovely bays, and sandy beach. Let us enter one of the sheltered bays and see some muddy stream debouching there. Let us observe the mud slowly sinking through the crystal water and the clay being

formed, layer upon layer. So the work goes on, now slowly now rapidly, each layer hardening by the pressure of those above it, till our bay is either "silted up," or its body has been pushed bodily above the water and has become dry land. Thus grow our fields, thus to-day under many an inlet of old ocean, and under many a bay and lakelet, are fields of the future forming. But, you ask, whence the mud, in the stream of which you have spoken? Let us follow our stream up to its source in the far-distant hills, and note as we ascend the river ceaselessly cutting its banks and carrying them away. Notice that from mouth to source, on all sides, rocks and stones are "weathering" into the soil; that air, frost, rain, snow, the humble lichen and the lowly moss, as well as the lofty tree, are slowly but surely reducing alike the pebble and the hill-summit, the lowland and the rocky ledge. Anon the storms will wash these weathered soils into the rills, the rills into the rivulets, the rivulets into the river, the river into the sea. True, the over-laden current may part with some of its burden; some clay and sand may line its bed; yet a great portion will reach either lake or inlet of sea, lake or ocean, and there slowly sink to rest. Yet again, you may reasonably ask, whence the rocks of which you have spoken? And, I answer that throughout all time, since the first morning of the third great Creative Age, the story will be the same as that told above. The flux and reflux, ebb and flow, are indefinitely the same. Birth, growth, change, maturity, decay, death; these

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