

As Mr. Ruskin ceased, Walter Bagehot, the then editor of the *Economist*, and a favorite amongst us for his literary brilliance, opened his wide black eyes, and, gulping down what seemed to be an inclination to laugh at some recollection of his own, said: Mr. Ruskin's remark that he had always been expecting the sun to stand still was to me peculiarly interesting, because, as I have formerly told the Society, whatever may be the grounds for assuming the uniformity of Nature, I hold that there is nothing which the natural mind of man, unless subjected to a very serious discipline for the express purpose of producing that belief, is less likely to assume. A year or two ago I ventured to express in this room the opinion that credulity is the *natural* condition of almost every man. "Every child," I said, "believes what the footman tells it, what the nurse tells it, and what its mother tells it, and probably every one's memory will carry him back to the horrid mass of miscellaneous confusion which he acquired by believing all he heard." I hold that children believe in the suggestions of their imaginations quite as confidently as they believe in the asseverations of their memories; and if grown-up men do not, it is only that their credulity has been battered out of them by the hard discipline of constant disappointment. What can be better evidence that there is at least no *a priori* belief in the uniformity of Nature than the delight in fairy tales, which, certainly in childhood, are accepted with quite as much private belief that some great enchanter's wand will be triumphantly found at last, as are the dullest and most matter-of-fact of histories. Indeed, you will find in almost every young person of any promise the profoundest tendency to revolt against the law of uniform succession as too dull to be credible, and to exult in the occasional evidence which the history of their time affords that "truth after all is stranger than fiction." Is not the early love of tales of marvel, and the later love of tales of wild adventure and hair-breadth escapes, and again, the deep pleasure which we all feel in that "poetic justice" which is so rare in actual experience, a sufficient proof that men