

with the royal Poet, have their souls suffused with reverent wonderment and awe, when they behold "the moon and the stars which Thou hast created." Some of natures so unpoetic and unimpressible as to behold only the common-place accident of life. Others—alas! that they are so many!—to cherish that spirit of pantheistic and undistinguishing devotion, absurd were it not wicked, which finds its fitting culmination in the rhapsodical apostrophe of Emerson addressed to an humble bee: "Thou yellow-breached philosopher." We are not stating that the tendency of Science is towards irreligion, in assuming that in unreflecting minds scientific investigation does tend to foster this latter sentiment. Our constitution is governed by fixed laws, and Infinite Benevolence has never placed a blessing within the sphere of our existences which we may not transform into a curse. Man's power is altogether of a delegated nature. If this fact is overlooked, scientific study is, of all employments, the most unprofitable. Philosophers may be pious—Astronomers, devout—and Mathematicians, orthodox; yet the general tendency of their published speculations and discoveries is to lead the unthinking to form widely elevated ideas of human reason and human power. Nature and revelation are not at variance. They subsist in the relationship of grand and eternal harmony. But this harmony is not upon the surface—it eludes the glance of ordinary observation—and reveals itself in all its exelling beauty only to the search of patient and protracted thought. The cause of truth suffers seriously at the hands of those who refuse to recognize this: that rhetorical piety which finds no difficulty in transforming each sunny mountain and each placid ocean into a symbol of the Great Invisible, plays directly into the hands of practical atheism,—for mountains are not always sunny, nor oceans always placid. It throws discredit on the patient and life-long labours of the men—the immortal men—who have spent their strength in revealing the grand coincidences which refer to the same glorious authorship, God's word and God's works. Wearing the garb, it breathes not the spirit of reverence. It is empty—it is formal—it is professional—and it shows its consistency by adopting as its chosen watchwords the thread-bare platitudes of the pantheist. We are not speaking of a proper recognition of His power, to whose creative and supporting energy all things owe their origin and existence; nor of a genuine appreciation of whatever is marvellous or lovely in nature—but of that mischievous counterfeit of both so prevalent to-day, which, lacking the worship of the one and the inspiration of the other, causes men to err by causing them to forget to think. Dangers are terrible, by as much as they are unseen. The rock-bound coast is to be feared only when enveloped in fog, or shrouded in the shades of night. So here, the tendency towards an undue exaltation of derived or delegated power, to which we have alluded, acquires a fearful force when men are so blinded by the vapid declamations of a superficial piety, that they never recognize it. The literature of the present day is reproducing the faded splendors of idolatry. The Mythic deities may not have resumed their abandoned shrines; the burning sun, the sweeping tempest, the solemn shade, of which they were the controlling spirits, have taken their place. What we have said applies substantially to practical as well as speculative science. Worn with corroding toil, man has hailed with unbounded joy the marvellous revolution which has placed beneath his sway, as willing subjects, the over active forces of the natural world. Power, like beauty, lies hidden everywhere. The earth, the air, the sea, are full of it. Its fountains have, at length, been unsealed, and, with musical flow, its streams are carrying joy and gladness to the nations. It is not wonderful, then, that man, in the midst of this proud achievement, himself a prominent actor in the mighty drama, flushed with the joy of victory, his arm clothed with power and his feet with speed, should abate somewhat of the claims of Him to whom all these things belong.

The sentiment thus produced is in direct antagonism to all true and desirable progress. It dwarfs man by excluding from his cognizance and experience the powers of the world to come. It renders his development unnatural and incomplete. It limits his advancement to a single duration. He gains an artificial elevation, at the expense of real and infinite depression. His nature loses at once its fervor and its faith—it is sun-light, with the heating ray extracted. Does not the age abound with such men,

familiar with all the forms of human learning—aye, even the master-spirits of literature and science, who, refusing to recognize any reforming agencies outside of their ordinary circles of thought, have settled down into the dreary and depressing conviction that the evils which press upon society admit at best of but a partial and temporary modification. A timorous, temporizing spirit is abroad in the world. The very word "Reform," is subjected to abuse. When a good and wholesome institution falls into desuetude or decay, by all means renew, revive, and re-establish it. When a system is evil only in its branches, lop them off, that, free from deformity or defect, it may fulfil its healthful mission. But those other, full of all unsoundness from lowest tap-root to outermost bough, calling for the lightning of heaven to blast them with eternal barrenness—to name reform in connection with these is absolute desecration! And yet, this is what our boasted age is doing, as it gives itself up to the exclusive guidance of its sciences and philosophies. It smiles on old and decaying abominations as "necessary evils," or profanely claims for them the sanction of the Most High, till our moral perceptions reel and stagger, and our very faith in the Supreme Love becomes shaken. It does this, too, in face and defiance of the truth which history is evermore evolving, that when once an evil has been brought out into the light of free and full discussion, its doom is sealed, for "God's challenging trumpet has blown against it, and it cannot stand."

We cannot help thinking that the influences of art are tending in the same direction. The occasion does not demand a critical or exhaustive analysis of the principles of art—wherein rests its power to please or its power to improve. We may simply say that nothing is beautiful or really useful, when taken from its proper sphere and made to occupy a false and unnatural position. He can have but slight acquaintance with the constitution of the human mind who fails to see that influences are ascribed to the fine arts, which they are utterly incapable of exerting. Great moral reforms and great political revolutions fall alike within the claims of their enthusiastic advocates. A felicitous stanza or stirring air marks the crises and transitions of national history. Within the narrower circle of individual movement, still more wonderful triumphs are achieved. Undrainable fountains of bliss are opened up between the shining covers of blue and gold, and unbounded ecstasies spring from the melodious twangings of the syren strings. Even the old fashioned weapons of faith and patience are liable to go into disuse, since a devotional frame of mind is ever ready at the beck of an organ voluntary. As an affectation this is very pretty, but as a philosophy it is very absurd. It merges all of our nature—especially the more grand and heroic portion of it—in the æsthetic. We become mere pleasure-seekers, attaining the end of our being in gazing on beautiful sights, or listening to beautiful sounds. Facts fare equally ill. It is forgotten that some of the divinest strains which ever charmed the ear of earth have been sung by souls bowed in abject submission at the shrines of lust and power. It is forgotten that ancient art—far more splendid than that of later date—became the potent minister of evil, till, in the excess of its vileness, God swept it away as with the besom of destruction. Above all is it forgotten that in those sublimest passages of history, when nations die or are born, we hear only the foot-falls of those plain and unpoetic men, who are ever the heroes of the world. In short, there are springs within us which left untouched, all the poetry of the universe cannot move us to a lofty thought or an heroic deed. The soul has energies music cannot evoke, and which, when once aroused, it hath no power to subdue; deep fountains of feeling, which play obedient to a higher law than that of the mythical Euterpe. The cornet and the drum may inspire on parade, or even thrill on a gala-day; men need different excitement in the great crises of their experience and destiny. We put the delicate susceptibilities with which our whole being is intertwined to but a poor use, when we attempt to substitute impressions made on them, for the action of the sterner powers of the soul. A close examination will reveal the fact that just here lies the secret of much of our prevailing apathy.

The position taken by many sincere friends of Christianity (which is at once the basis and the main-spring of all genuine reform), tends to confirm the sway of this cold and chilling spirit of indifference. Hitherto Christianity has stood distinct from all