

Christian influences, and even those who are loudest in their discordant outcry against Christianity are largely dependent on it for the exercise of their powers of vituperation. For we must borrow the glorious light of the sun, before we shall be able to criticize the spots which microscopical examination assures us rest upon it. But if we look at the anti-Christian thought of modern times in its best forms, we shall discover not so much a tone of defiance as a tone of sadness and sometimes of despair.

“Tendebantque manus ripae ulterioris amore.”

“They stretch forth their hands in yearning for a farther shore.” There is infinite unrest and discontent of soul; a constant chafing against the narrow horizon of the senses, which seems like an iron cage; a longing for the free flight of the bird into the blue heaven of God. Is it by accident or mistake that Thorvaldsen, in his statue of Schiller, represents the great poet standing with downcast head; or does he not rather intend to represent the bearing of dejected thinking and brooding over the contrast between the real and the ideal—the unsolved riddle of life? In spite of Schiller’s optimism, we hear him, as has been well said, “like a pilgrim, a wanderer upon earth, complain that he set out into life with a quiet hope and an obscure word of faith, to find an outlet from this labyrinth; but the longer and further he had wandered the more had he experienced that heaven and earth will not unite; that as often as he approached the goal it drew further away from him into the distance.” The end of it all is simple resignation to the inevitable. Man can become blessed only through miraculous power:—

“From what is unworthy the will that is earnest can keep thee;
All that is highest comes freely down from the Gods.”

And when we turn to the literature of our own country, we shall find the same sad acknowledgment on the part of earnest seekers after truth, that, aside from revelation, all is vanity and vexation of spirit. “We have lived,” says a modern sceptic, “to see the sun shine out of an empty heaven to light up a soulless earth; we have felt with utter loneliness that the great Companion is dead.” The heart of man cannot be content with a shrewd guess at the great problems of life. The advice of Plato in the *Phaedo* is not sufficient. If it is impossible for men to learn the truth, “I would have him,” he says, “take the best and most irrefragable of human notions, and let this be the raft upon which he sails through life, not without risk, as I admit, if he cannot find some word of God which will more surely and safely carry him.” The ocean upon which we have to sail is too rough and stormy for any other ship than the ark of God! A one-sided intellectualism will not avail for the true ends of being. We turn away dissatisfied with any knowledge which has not been pressed into character. We seek after and admire that exquisite symmetry of life in which, though the mind is acting vigorously, its action is not obtruded upon our notice by inharmonious prominence, but is found in such perfect accord with the conscience, the