

*tion or comprehension.* In this way we go on, discovering new classes and assigning new individuals to those already discovered, not as long as we live, but as long as we *learn*. For what is it to learn a thing? Two things: first, to *comprehend* it; secondly, to *remember* it. And what is it to comprehend? The word you know, is from the Latin *com, together*, and *PREHENDO, I take or grasp*—meaning, therefore, to take together or embrace in one idea. To comprehend, then, is to embrace many cognate facts or things so as to constitute from them one larger fact or thing, i. e. a general truth or a class. For we cannot by any possibility thus grasp under one idea two or more thoughts or things of diverse nature; and no sane mind ever attempts to bring such together, except it be to produce, by showing their palpable incongruity, a *witticism*.

The mind, then, that comprehends or knows much, has arranged the things and thoughts within its reach more into distinct and appropriate classes, that is all. For what does the most profound philosopher know of the *essence*, the *inner substance* of any one thing, more than you or I, or the most illiterate even? Nothing. Nor, again, has he any clearer insight into the real nature of the connection between cause and effect, than the peasant. Yet he generalizes, classifies, that is, comprehends more.—This point no student should forget, because it furnishes him with a key to the whole *machinery* of human knowledge!

Let us look now at some of the general truths with which our minds are already stored. I have not the time to undertake an investigation of these truths, and shall rather cite your minds to certain results, than to the observations or reasoning on which they are based.

No wider field opens itself to our comprehension than that which the science of Astronomy reveals to us, spreading through universal space.—Here we are taught, and the enlightened mind cannot reject the inference, are hosts of suns, absolutely countless in number, of all degrees of size, and attractive, and illuminating power, scattered, one would think, at broad-cast, at vast and yet various distances from each other, yet each of these a systemic center, surrounded by worlds of varying number, sizes, weights, densities, and geographical contour, receiving diverse degrees of heat, light and attractive force, and presenting accordingly every conceivable variety of vegetable and animal life; for I assume that Nature's laws cannot be modified by space or time, and consequently the forces which produce an animal of one sort on a planet revolving about *Sol*, will produce an animal of the same or some other sort on a planet revolving about *Sirius*. Now what were the elements required by Creative Wisdom to fabricate and set in motion this grand panorama, this world-waltz of eternal ages? What conditions were necessary to the production of these endless chains of ever-varying phenomena? Barely *three* conditions, and these of the simplest;—namely, *SPACE*, in which to locate matter, and allow of its motions; *MATTER*, to form bodies or foci of power; and *PROPERTIES*, by which this matter is impelled to aggregation and motion, and is enabled to form centres or reservoirs of power; in fewer words, *SPACE, MATTER, PROPERTIES*.