

Finite or infinite, to which we tend,  
Thro' test and trial of a hundred haps,  
And nature's ever new experiment  
In all the eras of aeonian change ?

This wistful world our sadly splendid home,  
Ocean and earth and heaven, the giant sun,  
And the moon's glittering globe and all the stars,  
What are they and whence come they, by what hand,  
By what force fashioned ? atoms fortuitously  
Conglomerate, they say, the subtle Grecians,  
And he who followed, trenchant son of Rome,  
A dust of atoms driven in endless dance,  
Like links to like, and round and round they whirl  
Awhile, then wearying seek new partnership :  
So Love and Hate are stewards of the ball,  
But over all Necessity is lord,  
Necessity, what is Necessity ?  
Natural Law, Necessity, high names  
For what we know, yet know not, order noted  
In our brief span of sense, and stretched beyond  
Our senses' scope : long searching, long perpending,  
Two ultimates, two only can I find,  
Matter and Mind, matter imperishable  
In its prime elements, but ever mutable.  
Mutable matter—is the mind as mutable ?  
Hath it invisible atoms of its own,  
Doth it too sunder and reshape itself,  
Or doth it only dress itself anew,  
With form on form thro' cycles of creation ?  
In ooze, and sand, in crystal of the rock,  
In sponge or coral, weed of sea or shore,  
In branch and bloom, in fish or fowl or brute,  
In man, himself first brute and barbarous,  
Fiery and dour as old Deucalion's flint,  
Then scaling into law and art and song