

What did the ancient myth-makers say of this universe, and what interest or value has their statement for us at this moment?

The primitive men of America saw before them forests, plains, deserts, mountains, lakes, and rivers of various sizes, from the smallest to the greatest; they lived in climates varying from the coldest and most inclement to the hottest and most difficult of endurance. They saw around them on all sides a world far more hostile than friendly, — a world of savage beasts, wild creatures, poisonous reptiles, deadly insects. Each creature, every plant had its own fixed and settled character, its own aim and object. Whence came beasts good for food or clothing; whence others dangerous to life, beasts to be slain or avoided? Whence came trees and plants of various kinds and uses? Whence came sweetness in the maple or bitterness and poison in another tree? What is the origin of corn, and why do poisons grow to kill as corn does to nourish? Whence came the rattlesnake, and whence the salmon? Because of these questions myths appeared, and those myths gave answers which received full faith and credence, — answers on which was built a theory of how this world arose, and what the true and proper scheme of life was.

The myth-maker looked at the universe around him, and saw throughout every part of it individualities having qualities, desires, and passions in varying degrees. He observed these individualities, and gave a detailed account and history of how