

ground as the Academy of Sciences of the Institute of France, the Science division of the Royal Irish Academy, the Royal Society of London, and the National Academy of Sciences of the United States.

The two sections into which our second class is now divided, namely III. including Mathematic, Physic and Chemistry, and IV. embracing Biology and Geology, are, in their aims and their objects, closely related to each other, and widely separated from sections I. and II. which are devoted respectively to French and English Literature and History. Differences in language thus establish in the literary department of this society a natural division into two sections. In the department of the sciences, however, there is no natural basis for a similar division, and it will probably be found in the near future that subjects of common interest will draw more and more closely together our two sections until, as in the various societies which we have named, the distinction between mathematical, physical and chemical studies on the one hand, and geological and biological studies on the other, will be lost sight of. It seems to me therefore fitting that we should in this time and place consider the mutual relations of these two divisions, and inquire into the value of the distinctions upon which they have been based.

Apart from pure mathematic, which is based upon our intuitions of space, the sciences which now concern us have to do with material nature, and are properly called natural sciences. It is not their province to look behind or beyond the material world of nature, nor to grapple with the mystery of the Infinite with which, in the last analysis, the inquirer always finds himself face to face. Our various metaphysical systems are schemes which men have devised to solve this mighty problem, and to translate into intelligible language their efforts to comprehend it. What we call Nature is at once a mantle and a veil in which the spiritual both clothes and conceals itself. "I weave," Goethe makes the world-spirit say, "the living garment of the Deity." This phrase embodies a profound truth. All nature is living; it is, as the word *natura* itself, equally with its Greek equivalent, *physis*, implies, that which is growing, the perpetually-becoming or being born; and this sense, which underlies etymologically the words *natural* and *physical*, should never be lost sight of.

It is a common reproach in the mouths of certain cavillers at science that it does not explain the beginnings of life in matter.