企鹅口袋书系列·伟大的思想

论　自　然

（英汉双语）

[美] 拉尔夫·瓦尔多·爱默　著

吴瑞楠　译

中国对外翻译出版公司

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自　然

环环相扣的精妙链条，
向无垠的远方延伸；
目光解读它触及的征兆，
玫瑰诉说万语千言；
幼虫历尽一次次的蜕变，

导　言

我们这个时代是怀旧的。人们为逝者建墓立碑，写作各种传记、历史和评论。我们的祖先直视上帝和自然，我们却通过先人的眼睛与之交流。我们为什么不去享受一种与世界的全新关系呢？我们的诗歌和哲学为什么总是遵循传统，却没有洞察力呢？我们的宗教为什么要经由先人，而不是直接给我们启示呢？我们生活在自然的怀抱里，生命之流在我们体内和周围流淌，邀请我们凭借其力量与自然和谐相伴。我们为什么要在历史的残垣断壁中孜孜寻找呢？为什么要让今时的人身着褪色的旧服？今天，太阳同样放射光芒，原野和田间收获更多的羊毛和亚麻。土地是新的，人们是新的，思想也是新的。让我们创造自己的作品、法律和宗教吧。

当然，我们不会质疑那些无法回答的问题。我们必须相信上帝的创世是完美的，相信无论我们有多少好奇和不解，万物之序自有它的解释。每个人

的状态，就是在象形意义上对他的疑问的解答。人类先有生活，而后才知晓真理。同样，自然已经在以它的形式和偏好，描述自身的存在。让我们来研读自然那伟大的灵魂吧，它在我们周围散发着宁静的光芒。让我们来探究自然的终极所在吧。

所有的科学都有一个目的：找到关于自然的理论。我们已经有了种族的理论、函数的理论，却没有一个，即便是模糊的，关于创世的概念。我们离发现真理还有遥远的路途。宗教布道者意见不和，彼此憎恨，而宗教研究者往往被认为既愚蠢又不可靠。然而，如果评判公正，最抽象的真理是最现实的。真理无论何时出现，都是自身最好的证据。证明真理的标准是，它可以解释一切现象。今天，许多问题仍然没有得到解答，人们甚至认为它们是无法解释的，如：语言、睡眠、疯狂、梦、怪兽、性。

从哲学意义上考虑，宇宙是由自然和心灵构成的。所以，严格说来，一切独立于我们之外的，所有哲学意义上的非我，即自然和艺术、他人，以及我自身都属于这一范畴。在细数自然的价值并计算其总和时，我指的是这个词的两层意义：通常意义和哲学含义。我们正在进行的探究非常宽泛，两种意义上的差别没有什么影响，并不会造成思想上的

混乱。一般意义上讲，自然指的是未经人类改变的物质，如太空、空气、河流、树叶等。艺术则是人类的意愿与这些物质混和后的产物，比如一座房屋、一条运河、一尊雕像或是一幅画。但是，人类的参与总体而言是微不足道的，仅仅是修修补补，烘烤洗刷，并不能改变世界给予人的宏伟印象。

一

自　然

人不仅要远离社会，还需远离书房，方可进入孤独的境界。当我读书写作时，虽然无人相伴，但并不孤独。仰望星空吧，它会让你体验到什么是孤独。来自天国的光芒将你和你所接触的世界分离。你或许会想到，空气之所以是透明的，就是要让人类感受到天体那亘古不变的崇高和壮美。在城市的街道上仰望它们，多么壮观啊！假如这些繁星在一千年中仅仅出现一次，人们将如何信仰和崇拜它们啊，又将如何代代相传，纪念那上帝之城的光芒啊！然而，每一晚，这些美的使者都以训诫的微笑照亮寰宇。

繁星虽然每晚都会出现，人类却无法接近，也因而对其心生敬畏之情。当你放开心灵去感受万物时，你会发现一切自然之物都像星辰那样，令人产

生类似的感觉。大自然从不平凡。最聪明的智者也无法穷尽自然的秘密，不会因发现自然的完美而失去好奇心。对智者来说，自然决不是一个玩物。鲜花、动物、山峦愉悦了他纯真的童年，也映射出他睿智的盛年。

当我们这样描述自然时，我们的感觉是清晰又极具诗意的。我们指的是各种自然物给予人的整体印象。正是这种整体印象将伐木工人看到的木头与诗人眼中的树木区别开来。今天早上我看到的迷人景象是由大约二三十个农场构成的。这块地属于米勒，旁边那块是洛克的，再远处的山林是曼宁的。然而，这迷人的风景却不属于他们中的任一位。只有诗人的眼睛才能将一个个农场的美景凝为一体。农场的景色融为一体，才成为最美，这并非农场主人的地契所能赋予的。

坦白地说，没有几个成年人能发现自然。大多数人意识不到太阳的存在。至少，他们对自然的理解是非常肤浅的。阳光仅能帮助成年人视物，却能深入孩童的眼睛和心灵。自然的热爱者，他内心和外在的感觉仍然是协调变化的，即使进入成年，他仍能保有童时的心灵。与天国和尘世的交流成为他每天生活的一部分。面对自然，即便他正经历苦痛，却有强烈的愉悦之情滋养身心。自然在诉说：

我是他的造物主，不管他有多少痛苦，跟我在一起，他就是快乐的。不仅仅是白昼、夏日，每一小时、每一季节都给人带来愉悦。从令人窒息的正午到最阴冷的午夜，每一小时，每一变化，都使人产生不同的心境。无论是喜悦还是悲伤，自然都是契合的背景。若你身体健康，大自然的空气就是绝佳的甜果汁饮料。黎明时分，天空中满是云朵，穿过一片空旷的公地，脚下是雪地的小水洼，脑海中没有任何要交好运的念头闪过，我的心中却满是喜悦。我快乐得几乎要到恐惧的边缘。在树林里，人们丢掉年龄，就像蛇褪皮一样，在生命中的任何时期，都是孩子。在树林里，青春是永恒的。在这些上帝的树林里，仪礼和神圣主宰一切，节日四季不断，在这里生活即便是千年，也没有人会厌倦。在树林里，我们回归理性和信仰。在树林里，我感到，不会有不幸降临，没有耻辱，没有灾难（把双眼留给我），不幸、耻辱、灾难的伤害是自然也无法弥补的。站在空地上，沐浴在快乐的空气中，我仰头望向无尽的天穹——所有狭隘的自我消失了。我变成了一个透明的眼球。我什么都不是，我看到了一切。全能的上帝之流在我体内流淌，我是上帝的一个颗粒，是上帝的一部分。我最亲密朋友的名字听上去陌生又遥远，是兄弟？朋友？还是主仆？

这一问题变得琐屑又扰人。我热爱那无限又永恒的美。原野更让我觉得可爱、可亲，胜过街道或是乡村。在静谧的风景里，在遥远的地平线上，人类看到了像其本性一样美的东西。

田野和树林赋予人的最大快乐，在于揭示了人与植物间的神秘关系。我并不孤独，也不陌生。植物冲我点头，我也向它们致意。在我看来，暴风雨中摇曳的树枝既新奇又熟悉，让我吃惊却并不陌生；就像是当我认为我在公正地思考或做事时，那种涌上心头的崇高思想或美好感觉。

然而，这种体验快乐的力量并非在于自然，而是属于人类，或是在于人与自然的和谐。体验这些快乐需要很有节制。因为，自然并非总是穿着节日的盛装，昨日因美丽少女嬉戏而飘香、灿烂的景象，今天却会布满忧郁。自然总是呈现心灵的色彩。在灾害后劳作的人啊，他燃起的火焰中带着悲伤。刚刚被死神夺去挚友的人啊，他在风景中感受到的还有一份冷漠。那些贫穷的小人物啊，看到的天空也不会那么壮观。

二

物　质

无论是谁，在思考世界的根源时，都会发现它

是由许多不同元素构成的。这些元素可以归于以下几个范畴：物质、美、语言、知识。

在这里，我将所有自然给予我们的馈赠归为物质的范畴。当然，这种馈赠是暂时、过渡的，而不是最终的，如同物质相对于心灵。虽然物质是低一级的范畴，它本身却是完美的，也是所有人都感受到的自然的赠予。自然源源不断地向人类提供丰富的物质，使之在地球上得以生存和快乐，最终进入天堂。当我们想到这些时，人类的痛苦看上去就像孩童的任性。这些灿烂的装饰、充裕的物质、天穹、海洋、大地、阳光、云朵、气候、四季，什么样的天使才能创造出来呢？野兽、火焰、水流、岩石、谷物，都是人的奴仆。田野是他的居所、工作间、休息室、花园、卧室。

“侍奉他的奴仆，
多得超出他的想象。”

自然对于人类，不仅仅是物质，还是过程和结果。万物相互作用，每时每刻都在为人类谋福祉。风播下种子，太阳蒸发海洋，轻风将水蒸气送到田野，地球那侧的寒冰在这里化身为雨，雨水浇灌植物，植物养育动物。自然神圣的馈赠循环往复，哺育着人类。

有用的艺术是人类利用智慧对自然的馈赠进行再生产，或重新组合。他不再等待风的到来，却通过蒸气使埃俄罗斯[①]之袋的寓言成为现实，他的轮船蒸汽机承载了自然的三十二种风。人类用铁棒铺路，减少磨擦。他驾驭着马车，载着一车人、动物、商品，在一个个乡镇间穿行，就像一只雄鹰、一只燕子在天空急速飞过。自然的赐予使世界从诺亚方舟进入了拿破仑时代。人类有了城市、轮船、运河、桥梁。走进邮局，有人为你服务；进入书店，你会发现人们阅读、写作所有发生的事情；到了法院，国家纠正你的错误。你若在路边建了房子，人们每天来来往往，在下雪天铲除积雪，为你找出一条道来。

这里，没必要将物质的范畴一一列举。它是无穷尽的，例子非常明显，读者可自己想象。物质与更高的善相联系。人类之所以得到物质上的满足，并非是因为他可以被满足，而是因为他可以工作。

三
美

自然还满足人类另一个更崇贵的需求：热爱美。

古希腊人以“美”来描述世界。最原始的形

态，如天空、山峦、树木、动物使人愉悦；这种愉悦是内含于事物本身的，由轮廓、颜色、动作和组合构成。这就是所有事物的本性，或者说是人类眼睛的塑造力。似乎美仅仅因眼睛而存在，眼睛是最好的艺术家。眼球的运动与光的规律结合在一起，就产生了视角。所有的物体都映射在色泽均匀、浓淡相宜的地球之上。无论个中物件如何平庸、不起眼，它们构成的风景都是圆满、对称的。正因为眼睛是最好的艺术家，所以光是最优秀的画家。无论多么丑陋的事物，强烈的光线都会使之美丽起来。光所给予人的感官刺激，所具有的像时空一样无限永恒的特性，让一切事物明快起来。即便是人类的遗体，也有它的美。但是，除了这种遍布于大自然的整体的美感，几乎所有的个体形象都是令人愉悦的。这从人类对某些形象从未停止的模仿和描画上就可以看出，比如：橡子、葡萄、松锥、麦耳、鸡蛋、飞鸟的翅膀和形态、狮爪、蟒蛇、蝴蝶、贝壳、火焰、云朵、花蕾、树叶，以及许许多多树的形态，如棕榈树等。

为了更好地理解，我们可以从三个方面来探究美的特点。

第一，对自然形态的认识和感受是一种快乐。自然的形态和行为对人类来说必不可少，即便在最

低层次上，它也是物质和美的分界线。对于因工作或应酬而身心俱疲的人，自然可以疗伤，使他恢复气力。商人、律师从闹市的工作间走出，仰望天空，看到树林，就再次成为快乐的人儿。他在天空和树林永恒的宁静里，重新找回了自我。眼睛的健康似乎需要地平线的存在。只要我们能看得足够远，就不会感觉疲惫。

但在黎明和黄昏时分，自然不需借助物质，它的可爱足以愉悦人类。清晨，从黎明到日出，遥望远处的山顶，我的心情如天使一般。纤细的云朵在空中飘浮，像日出时大海中的游鱼，笼罩在深红色的光芒中。我站在地球上就好像在岸边，凝视安静的大海，似乎随着它千变万化；魔力进入我的身体，我开始膨胀，与晨风融为一体。自然以这几样极普通的元素使我们享有神明般的地位！赐予我健康和一天的时光，我将蔑视君王的虚华。黎明是我的亚述帝国；日落和月升是我的帕福斯[②]，那超出想象的仙境；正午是那充满理智与情感的英格兰；夜晚则是以神秘哲学和梦境著称的德意志。

一月份的日落时分同样充满魅力，除非我们的知觉在午后变得迟钝起来。在西方的天空下，云朵已经化成一片片粉色的薄云，有说不出的柔软，空中弥漫着生命的气息和活力。此时，呆在屋中，不

去欣赏美景是多么痛苦啊。自然要述说什么呢？磨坊后面那安静的山谷，即使是荷马，或者莎士比亚也无法描述，它们难道没有意义吗？暮色中，光秃秃的树木变成了燃烧的火焰，远处东方的天空已变为深蓝色，死去的星状花朵，枯萎的茎干和残株挂着寒霜，这一切都化成了无声的音乐。

城市居民通常认为，乡村的景色一年中只有半年是宜人的。我却同样陶醉于冬日乡村的优雅，它给予我们的感动毫不逊于夏日。若细心观察，你会发现四季之美各有特色。一块田地，每一小时都呈现一幅全新的图画。天空总在变化，原野映出它的灿烂和阴郁。周围农场的作物让大地的表情周周都有不同。牧场和路边野生的植物默默提醒人们夏日的时光，在有心人的眼里，甚至可以揭示时光的流转。飞鸟和昆虫，就像植物那样守时，一拨拨来，一拨拨走，都在四季里找到各自的位置。沿着河流，景色变化更为明显。七月，蓝色的匹克罗草大片大片地盛开在浅浅的河床上，成群的黄色蝴蝶翩翩起舞。这华丽的紫色和黄色的美景啊，没有艺术能与之匹敌。河流总是穿着节日的盛装，每个月份都有新的装饰。

但是，这种人们看到、感受到的美景是自然最稀有的部分。白昼的美景、露水湿润的早晨、山

峦、花儿盛开的果园、星辰、月光、安静水面上的倒影，如此种种，如若人们过于热切地追求，就变成了一场秀，化为泡影，嘲笑我们。走出屋外去看月亮，它仅仅是闪光的亮片。只有你身处旅途，月亮的光芒才会那么宜人。十月黄昏薄暮的美景又有谁能攫取呢？你去寻找，它却消失了，就像从那驿车窗口看到的幻影。

第二，美若要臻于完美，更高层次精神元素的存在是极重要的。崇高又神圣的美只有与人的意志相融合，才不会显得矫揉造作。美是上帝赋予美德的标记。每一个自然的行为都是优美的。每一次英雄的事迹都是高尚的，并让那环境和参与者也灿烂起来。伟大的事迹告诉我们，宇宙属于每一个个体。自然是每一个人的嫁妆和财产。如果人类愿意，自然就是属于他的。他可能会抛弃自然，或者偷偷地溜到一个角落，放弃他的自然王国。大部分人都会这样做，但人类生来就有权利拥有自然。人类能在多大程度上拥有它，取决于他的思想和意志。塞勒斯特说过：“一切人们耕作、建造、航行所追寻的事物都臣服于美德。”吉本则说：“风浪总是帮助最能干的水手。”不仅是风浪，太阳、月亮、所有的星辰皆是如此。高贵的行为发生，可能恰巧是在一个风景秀丽之处。斯巴达国王列奥尼达

和他的三百勇士即将失去生命的一天，日月相继照耀德摩比勒隘口；阿诺德·温克里德在那高耸的阿尔卑斯山上，面对可能发生的雪崩抓起奥地利大把长矛，为他的战友杀开一条血路，难道美丽的风景没有让这些英雄的事迹更加辉煌吗？哥伦布的航船靠近美洲的海岸，岸上的土著居民纷纷逃离茅舍，他的身后是汪洋大海，四周是紫色的印第安群岛，我们又怎能将这位英雄与风景隔裂？新大陆没有用她的棕榈林和大草原来装点英雄吗？自然的美景总是像空气一样，悄无声息地环绕伟大的行为。当亨利·范爵士坐在雪撬上被拖上塔山，即将作为英国法律的先驱者牺牲生命时，人群中就有人向他高喊，“你的座位从未像今天那样荣耀”。查理二世为了恐吓伦敦的民众，迫使爱国人士罗素勋爵坐在敞开的马车上通过城市的大街，驶向绞刑架。罗素勋爵的传记作者这样写道：“众人在想象中，看到自由和美德与他比肩而坐。”在周围都是肮脏事物的环境里，追求真理，或是英雄的行为即刻将天空变成了自己的庙宇殿堂，太阳成为它的蜡烛。只要人类的思想足够伟大，自然就会伸开双臂，拥抱他。自然欣然地以玫瑰和紫罗兰跟随他的脚步，以她的壮丽和优雅装扮她可爱的孩子。只要人类的思想足够宽广，自然总会契合他的一举一动。具有美

德的人与自然是融为一体的，是风景的中心人物。在我们的记忆中，荷马、品达、苏格拉底、福基昂③都与希腊的地理和气候完美地联系在一起。我们所能看到的天堂和尘世与耶稣休戚与共。生活中，具有坚强性格的天才，总能从容地主宰万物——人群、舆论、时光、自然都成为他的附属。

第三，美还有另外一个特点，它是理智思考的对象。美不仅与美德相联系，还与思想有关系。理智寻求万物的绝对秩序，不带任何感情色彩。思考与行动的力量似乎彼此接续，一方独有的行为催生另一方的行动。二者好像并不友好，但又像动物交替进行的进食和工作，前者为后者做准备，后者跟随前者发生。因此，与行动相联系的美，是自然产生的，也正因为并非刻意追求，美才得以生成。这种美成为思考所追逐理解的对象，又继而转化为行动的力量。神圣的事物不会消亡。所有的善都具有永恒重生的力量。人类的理智重新构画自然的美，不仅仅是为了思考，还为了新的创造。

自然给予所有人不同程度的影响。有些人因为自然而快乐，这种对美的热爱是一种喜好；还有一些人同样热爱自然，他们不满足于仰慕它，还要以新的形式将自然表现出来。这种对美的创造就是艺术。

艺术作品的创造有助于揭示人性的奥秘。艺术作品是对世界的抽象，是世界的缩影。它是缩微的自然，是对自然的表述。尽管自然界的万物数不胜数，千变万化，但对它们的表述却都是相似的，甚至是相同的。自然是由各种形态构成的海洋，它们极为相似。一片树叶、一缕阳光、一块土地、海洋给人带来相同的印象，它们所共有的完美和谐即是美。衡量美的标准是自然形态的统一——自然的一体完整性，这也体现在意大利人对美的定义上："万物合一"。单个的事物不会太美丽，只有属于一个整体，才显出美来。诗人、画家、雕刻家、音乐家、建筑师，都试图将自然的美集中于一点，每一个人都在他的不同作品中满足对美的热爱。正是对美的热爱激发了他创作的热情。因此，艺术是经过人类加工的自然。在艺术作品里，人类将自然之物原初的美展现出来。

自然的存在，满足了人类灵魂对美的渴望。我称其为一种终极目标。至于灵魂为什么追求美，没有理由，也无法解释。在最广泛最深远的意义上，美是对世界的表达。上帝是完美的。真、善、美只是上帝的不同面孔。但是，美在本质上并不是最终的。它是内在永恒之美的预示，它本身并非完满又令人满足的善。美是个体，不是整体，也并非自然

之源最终最崇高的表达。

四
语　言

语言是自然赠予人类的第三个礼物。自然是思想的载体，这一点可从三个方面来阐释。

一、词语是自然存在的符号表达。

二、特定的自然存在是精神存在的象征。

三、自然是精神的象征。

第一，词语是自然存在的符号表达。自然史的作用是帮助我们理解超自然的历史。物质存在的作用是给予我们语言，来表达精神的存在和变化。每一个表达道德或精神存在的词语，如果我们寻根究底，会发现它们都是起源于某些物质现象。正确包含直的意味，错误则有弯曲的含义；精神最初的含义是风；谮越原指跨过一条线；傲慢是说扬起眉毛。我们说，心表达情感，头脑传达思想；思想和情感这两个词来自有形的物质存在，现在专门指代精神的意义。这种变化大多数在遥远的语言成形时期就已经发生了，我们无法得知其中详情。但在日常生活中，我们却可以在儿童身上发现类似的表现。儿童和原始人只使用名词或事物的名字，他们将这些名称转化成动词，并用来表达类似的精神行

为。

第二，所有表达精神含义的词语都起源于自然界的物质，这是语言史上一个非常明显的特点。然而，这远非自然对人类的最大恩惠。不仅仅是词语具有象征意义，物质存在本身都具有象征意义。每一个自然事实都是某些精神存在的象征。每一个自然现象都对应一种思想状态，这种思想状态只有通过对自然现象的描画才能表述出来。暴怒的人是狮子，狡猾的人是狐狸，坚定的人是岩石，博学的人是火炬。羔羊寓义天真，蛇代表恶毒，鲜花表达爱意。光明和黑暗是我们熟知的对知识和无知的表述；热则用来形容爱情。我们背后和面前的可视距离，则分别代表回忆和希望。

站在河边深思的人，谁又不会想到万物的流动呢？向溪水中投掷一枚石子，那一圈圈的涟漪完美显现了事物之间的相互影响。人类意识到，上帝存在于他的生活中，就像正义、真理、爱、自由在天穹升起，熠熠生辉。他称上帝为理性：它不属于我，不属于你，也不属于他。我们人类是它的财产，它的子民。地球所处的蓝色宇宙，布满永恒的天体，处于亘古不变的宁静中，这就是理性的一种。与自然相联系的理性，我们称之为精神。精神是造物主。它本身具有生命。所有时代、所有国家

的人都称其为“我父上帝”。

很容易可以看出，这些类比没有任何偶然的因素在内，没有变化，它们是一贯的、恒定的，在自然中无处不在。这些并非少许几个诗人的梦想，人类是善于类比的，他探究万物间的联系。人被置于万物的中心，联系的光线从每一个事物指向他。没有其他事物，人类无法被理解，没有人类其他事物也不可能被理解。自然历史上的所有存在，如果单独来看，没有任何意义，就像仅有男人或女人，并无生命力。若将它与人类的历史结合起来，就充满了生机和活力。自然学家关于动植物的著述仅仅是枯燥的对事实的记录。但是，这些事实中最不起眼的部分，如某个植物的习性、某个昆虫的器官、工作或声音，假如用来说明思想哲学的某个事实，或与人类的本性联系起来，就能以一种最为生动和宜人的方式打动我们。植物的种子在有关人类本性的比喻中被应用到了极致，以至于保罗将人的尸体比作种子：“它作为自然的实体被播种；成为精神的实体被收获。”地球自转，产生日夜；它绕太阳转动，生成四季。虽然这些仅仅是光和热的变化，但是人的生活和四季间没有相似之处吗？四季难道不因这种类比而披上华彩，增添感伤吗？假如我们认为蚂蚁就只是蚂蚁而已，它的本能就微不足道了。

但是，如果我们将它与人类联系起来，就会对它有新的认识。辛苦劳作的蚂蚁就好像人类的督导员，弱小的身体里却藏着一颗坚强的心。如此一来，蚂蚁的习性，包括最近刚刚发现的它从不睡觉，都变得崇高起来。

正因为可见的物质存在与人类思想具有这种根本的对应关系，只有生活必需品的原始人是以图像来交流的。沿着人类的历史逐步回溯，语言的形象化就越来越明显。语言最初成形时，完全以诗歌的形式存在，所有精神存在都是通过自然的象征来表达。而这些象征正是语言最初的组成部分。人们还发现，不同语言中的成语在那些最雄辩最有力的篇章中是相似的。最古老的语言是这样，最新的语言也是如此。语言从自然中生成，它将自然的现象转变成某种人类的生活，它对我们的影响力从未减弱过。正是这种影响力使性情刚强的农夫或边疆居民的言谈增添了一分酣畅淋漓，得到所有人的喜爱。

人类用恰当的象征符号来表达思想，并通过语言描述出来的这种能力取决于他质朴的个性，也即是他对真理的热爱，以及完整传达真理的愿望。人类堕落之后，语言也随之堕落。如果人类质朴的本性和独立的思想被各种衍生的欲望取代，如对财富、享乐、权力、奉承的追求，复杂和虚妄代替了

质朴和真理，人类就在某种程度上失去了利用自然阐释意志的能力。新的形象不再生成；旧的词语受到歪曲，就不再传达正确的含义；当金库里不再有黄金时，纸币就产生了。到了某个时候，欺骗和虚假成为主宰，词语就再也无法达意，不能激发人类情感了。在每一个高度文明的国家，都有数以百计的作家，他们仅在一个较短的时期内相信，或使别人相信，他们看到了并且说出了真理。他们自身并不是利用自然来表达思想，而是无意识地应用了最早期作家所创造的语言。那些最早期的作家才真正是以自然为语言。

但是，睿智的人会丢弃那些陈腐的措辞，再次将语言与自然之物联系起来。图画般的语言郑重证明了，使用它的人是与真理和上帝站在一起的。有时，我们的语言会超越日常熟悉的事实，充满激情，或因思想而升华，此时的语言完全是各种自然的形象。一个正在诚挚交谈的人，如果他注意到自己的思想历程，会发现与他的每一个想法相伴，都有一个或多或少明亮的物质形象出现在脑海里。这个形象即是思想的外衣。因此，好的作品和精彩的演讲都是永恒的隐喻。这种形象是自然生成的，是经验与即时思想活动的融合，是恰当的创造。它是上帝对自然之子的再创造。

以上事实或许可以说明，对于富有思想的人，乡村生活要胜于拥挤又虚伪的城市生活。从自然中我们知晓更多，而不仅仅是我们想要表达的。自然的光芒洒进我们的思维，我们几乎忘记它的存在。在树林中长大的诗人或演说家，自然那美丽又令人愉悦的变化满足了他的感官需求，年复一年，从无定式，悄无声息。城市的喧嚣或是政界的纷争也不会使他全然忘掉自然的教诲。多年以后，当他身处充斥着愤怒和恐惧的国民议会中，在那革命的时刻，自然那神圣的意象将再次闪耀光芒，就像合适的象征，完美表达了他彼时的感受。受到高尚情感的召唤，他再次看到、听到那摇动的树林、低语的松枝、波光粼粼的河流，还有山脚下的水牛，就像他童时看到和听到的一样。有了这些自然形象的帮助，他就拥有了游说的魔力，掌握了力量之匙。

第三，自然之物帮助我们表达特定的意义。但是，表达这些琐屑信息的语言是多么伟大啊！这些高贵的物种、多姿多彩的自然形态、天穹中那数不清的天体，它们的存在就只是为他市政演说中提供单词和语法吗？当我们利用这种伟大的暗码使生活更加方便时，我们并没有发挥到极致，也没有能力做到。我们就像旅行者，利用火山的余烬来烤鸡蛋。尽管我们知道，自然每时每刻都能传达我们的

思想，我们却禁不住要问，自然本身难道就没有意义吗？山峦、海浪、天空，我们将它们作为象征，来表达我们的思想。除此之外，它们没有任何意义吗？世界是象征的。我们言语中的一部分是隐喻，因为自然是人类思想的一个隐喻。精神世界的法则与物质世界一一对应，就像镜子内外的两个形象。“可见的物质世界及其各组成部分的相互关系是不可见的精神世界的刻度盘。”物理学的公理阐释了伦理学的法则。比如，“整体大于部分”；“反作用力等于作用力”；“如果用时间来弥补质量之差，最轻的物体可以撬动最重的物体。”其他类似的命题还有很多，它们不仅具有物理学意义，还有伦理学意义。这些命题被应用于人类生活时，它们的意义更广泛、更普遍。

同样地，历史上流传下来的谚语以及各个民族的格言通常由自然事实构成，用来寓意表达道德上的真理。比如：滚石不生苔；一鸟在手胜于二鸟在林；走对路的瘸子要快过走错路的运动员；趁热打铁；杯满则溢；青出于蓝；压倒骆驼的最后一根稻草；早生根的树更长久；如此种种。这些谚语最初只是琐屑的自然事实，却因为它们的象征意义不断得到重复。谚语是这样，所有的神话、寓言、隐喻都是如此。

物质与精神间的这种联系并非是某个诗人凭空想象的，而是上帝的意志，所有人都可以知晓。它在人类面前时隐时现。当我们在某些幸运的时刻思考这个奇迹时，智慧的人会反思：他在其他时刻是否目不能视，耳不能闻？

“这些奇迹的存在，
像夏日的云朵征服我们，
不应引起我们特别惊叹吗？”

此时，宇宙变得透明，上帝之律的光芒穿越世界。自从世界出现，这个问题就不断地激发天资聪颖的人去思考和研究，从古代埃及人和印度婆罗门，到毕达哥拉斯、柏拉图、培根、莱布尼兹、斯威登堡，无不如此。斯芬克斯一直蹲踞路旁，一代代的预言家从她身边走过，都要碰碰运气，企图解开她的谜语。看来精神必须凭借物质形态来表现自己。白昼与黑夜、河流与风暴、飞禽与走兽、酸与碱，都预存于上帝的理念中，因为它们是先于精神情感的特点而得以成为物质。可见的物质事实是不可见的精神的最终表现。物质世界是精神世界的终端，或者说精神世界内含于物质世界中。有位法国哲学家这样说：“物质实体必然是造物主思想提炼后的产物，与其母体必定保留着某种关系。换句话

说，物质世界的自然必然包含精神和道德的特点。”

这个概念很难理解。尽管以上我们提到的镜子、外衣、提炼等形象可以激发想象，但是我们还需要更精确更重要的方法来解释它。“每条经文都应凭借生成它的精神来解读”——这是批评的基本法则。与自然和谐相处的生活、对真理和美德的热爱，将使人类的双眼得到净化，从而了解自然的含义。我们将逐步理解永恒的自然之物的最初含义，世界就是一本打开的书，每个自然形态都因它隐含的生命和终极缘由而具有意义。

根据以上所说，当我们思考广博的自然世界时，不禁会吃一惊，因为“每个自然物，如果观察得当，都展示了一种新的精神力量。”这种精神力量是无意识的真理，当人类通过自然物来定义和解释它时，它就变成了知识领域的一部分。知识则是获得力量的新武器。

五

知　识

此时，我们对自然的意义有了新的认识，它是赋予人类知识的导师。以上所说的世界对人类的种种馈赠都包含在这层含义里面。

空间、时间、社会、劳动、气候、食物、运动、动物、机械力，每时每刻都给予人类无限最真实的知识。它们不仅指导人类的感性认识，还帮助他进行理性推断。每一样物质都使人类产生感性认识，如：它的体积、抵抗力、惯性、延展性、形状、可分割性等等。这种感性认识经过一系列的融合变化，最终发现该物质在自然界存在的原因和作用。同时，人类的理性推断力意识到物质与精神的联系，将这些感性认识转变成自己的思想。

第一，自然是人类理解精神世界真理的导师。我们在与自然界万物接触的过程中，不断地学习事物之间的相同和不同、万物的秩序、存在和表象、逐步发展的过程、从个体到一般，以及各种力量的综合。个体越重要，自然的教诲就越细致，所有事物都是如此。日复一日，年复一年，漫长的学习过程从未停止，直到人类拥有了常识；与此同时，烦恼、不便、困境不断出现；为平凡的人而欢欣；对价格争执不休，对利益锱铢必较；所有这一切都是为了给人类添上思想之翼，教导我们“好的思想如果不付诸实施，就不过是黄粱美梦！”

财产及其相关的债权和债务对人类有同样的帮助。债务，可怕的债务，无情的债务使孀妇、孤儿和天才之子对它既怕又恨。它耗尽人的时间，折磨

人的心灵，它对人类的作为看上去那么可憎。然而，它是一位训诫者，它对人类的教导决不能丢弃，那些受它折磨的人最需要它。更重要的是，财产曾被恰当地比作雪花——“如果雪花今天落下，明天就会被风吹走。”它是内在机制的外部表现，就像钟表表盘上的指针。虽然人类的理解力受到考验，从更高的精神视角来看，他正在体验更深层次的法则。

个人理解力方面极小的差异，比如对于不同的认识，都影响到性格和运气。人类对时空的理解也是如此，他可能会发现世间万物并不是拥挤地混杂在一起，而是一个个独立的个体。钟和犁各有用途，彼此无法替代。水适于饮用，煤用来燃烧，羊毛可以制衣；但羊毛无法饮用，水不能制衣，煤也不可食用。有智慧的人懂得区分事物，知道给事物排序，他理解的生物与美德像自然一样广博。愚蠢的人不懂得区分，以为人与人都是一样的。他们认为“不好”即是“最差”，“不坏”就是“最好”。

同样，自然对人类的关注是多么细微啊！她不原谅任何的错误，是就是是，否就是否。

农业、天文学、动物学的最基本知识（农民、猎人、水手最初学习的知识）教给我们，自然永远

都在掷骰子；自然的垃圾堆里隐藏着明确又有用的果实。

人类理解了一个又一个物理学的法则，是多么平静和快活啊！他走进造物的世界，明白人类生存的特权，多么高贵的情感在他心中激荡啊！洞察力使他更高尚纯净。自然的美在他胸中闪耀。人类明白这些了，他就变得更为高大，宇宙则渺小起来，因为时空关系随着自然法则的揭示而消失。

人类要探索的宇宙是那么浩瀚，再一次使我们震撼，甚至是畏惧。“相比未知的领域，我们已知的只是沧海一粟。”打开一本近期的科学杂志，看看有关光、热、电、磁、生理学、地理学等方面的问题，你就知道人类对自然科学的兴趣是不会很快消失的。

在自然众多的教诲中，我们必须特别指出其中的两点。

自然世界的每一个事件，都教导人类运用意志或力量。孩童渐渐学会驾驭自己的感官意识，直到有一天他说：“我会做到。”他参透了秘密，明白只要他愿意，他不仅可以简化特定的事件，还能分解一系列的事件，使所有事实遵从他。自然完全是一种媒介，它存在的意义即是为人类服务。自然接受人类的主宰，温顺地就像救世主耶稣的毛驴。自

然王国就是人类的原材料，他将其加工成有价值的事物。人类将细微精妙的空气变成智慧优美的言语，再添上翅膀，使其成为劝导和命令的天使。人类胜利的思想一个接一个地产生并分解所有的事物，直至世界最终变成一个实现了的意志——人类的自我复制。

第二，可感知的事物符合理性的预感，并反映良知。一切事物都具有道德意义；在它们无限的变化中，精神本性是永恒存在的。自然因为无限的形态、色彩和运动而壮丽华美。遥远寰宇中的每一个天体；最粗糙水晶的每一个化学变化乃至生命的法则；从一片树叶的生长到热带森林和上古的煤矿、每一个植物的变化；从海绵到赫拉克勒斯④，每一个动物的行为，都以或明或暗的方式教导人类有关正确与错误的法则，与《十诫》相呼应。自然从来都是宗教的盟友，向宗教情感出借所有的壮丽景色和财富。大卫、以赛亚、耶稣，这些预言家和布道者都曾从自然中获得大量帮助。伦理的特点如此深入自然的骨髓，似乎这就是自然存在的目的。无论自然的个体满足了怎样的人类需求，伦理意义是自然公共又普遍的功能，决不可忽视。自然个体的价值从来不会被消耗殆尽。当事物在某方面已经得到最大程度的利用时，对于另一个外部需求来说，它

仍是全新的。在上帝眼中，每一个目的都是新的工具。因此，对物资的使用，从它本身来说是卑微可鄙的。但对思想来说，它却教导了人类什么是价值，即：事物必须有用，才是好的；对任何自然的个体来说，各组成部分共同协作，实现最终目的是至关重要的。这个真理最直白的表现就是，我们虽然不喜欢，却必须从玉米和食物中知道什么是价值，什么是需求。

如上所述，所有的自然过程都蕴含道德意义。道德法则是自然的核心，向四周辐射其影响，是所有物质、联系、过程的精髓。我们接触的一切事物都在向我们布道。农场不就是无声的绝对真理吗？谷壳、麦子、野草、庄稼、病害、雨水、昆虫、太阳，从春天的第一条垄沟到冬雪覆盖的残株，一切都是神圣的象征。水手、牧羊人、矿工、商人，在他们各自的领域里体验类似的经历，得出相同的结论：所有的组织都是极相似的。道德的情感在空气中弥漫，在谷物中生长，浸入水流，被人类吸收，沁入心灵，这一点不容置疑。自然对人类的道德影响即是它教导人类的真理。谁能说出这影响有多大呢？谁又猜得出饱受海浪拍打的岩石教给了渔夫多少坚强？碧蓝的天空，纯净澄澈，风摇移朵朵白云，不着一丝痕迹，人类从中感知多少的宁静啊？

百兽出演的无言的戏剧，教给了人类多少勤奋、神意和爱啊？多变的健康状况是多么孜孜不倦的自律的布道者啊！

我们要特别理解一下自然的统一性。它是变化中的统一，在自然中随处可遇。万物无穷无尽的变化都给人相同的印象。色诺芬⑤在晚年时抱怨说，无论他看到的是什么，都展现出统一性。在不同的形态中看到同样的存在，这让他感到厌倦。普洛透斯的寓言蕴含温和的真理。一片树叶、一滴水、一块水晶、一段时间，都与整体相关，与整体的完善密不可分。每个个体都是一个微观世界，真实地体现世界的统一性。

这种统一性不仅存在于类比明显的事物中，比如，我们在化石中发现类似人类手掌的动物脚蹼，还存在于表面上差异很大的事物中。斯塔尔和歌德将建筑称作“凝固的音乐”。维特鲁威认为建筑师也应该是音乐家。柯尔律治说：“哥特式的教堂是石化了的宗教。”米开朗基罗认为，解剖学方面的知识对建筑师来说非常重要。在海顿的清唱剧中，音符不仅使人想象出蛇、鹿、大象的移动，还使人看到明亮的色彩：如绿草。和谐音乐的法则在和谐的色彩中重现。花岗石与冲刷它的河流之不同，只是热量的多少；流动的河水像吹拂它的空气；空气

像穿越它的更复杂的光；光像其携带穿透太空的热。每个事物仅仅是另一个事物的变体，它们的相同之处远超过差异，它们的基本法则是同一的。一门艺术或某个组织的法则，在自然中都是适用的。这种统一性极其密切，很容易发现，它藏在自然最深层的衣饰下，显露普遍精神的起源；它同样遍布人类的思想。我们用词语表达的每一个普遍真理，都暗示或推断了另一个真理。所有的真理都是一致的。就像球面上的大圆，包含所有可能的小圆。或者说，一个个小圆构成大圆。从一个侧面看，每一个真理都是绝对的实体。但是，这个绝对的实体却由无数的侧面构成。

世界的统一性在行动中更为明显。词语是对无限思想的有限表达，无法表现真理的全部内涵。词语打断割裂了真理，使它的意义丢失。行动则是思想的外化，是思想的完善。正确的行动似乎可以占据人们的视线，与整个自然联系起来。“睿智的人做一件事，也完成了其他的事；他只做一件正确的事，就发现了所有正确行动的相似性。”

词语和行动并非原始自然的属性，它们使人类形态得以生成。与人类相比，所有其他机体看上去都是退化和堕落。当人类在万物中出现时，上帝偏爱他胜过一切。它说：“我从人类那儿得到快乐和

知识；我从人类中发现并看到了自己；我愿向他言语；他能再次言语；他可予我已经成形的鲜活的思想。”事实上，眼睛（即是思维）永远看到人类的形态，男人和女人；这些形态是处于万物核心的力量和秩序最丰富的信息。不幸的是，每个人类形态都带着某种伤害的痕迹，遭到损毁，表面看来是有缺陷的。然而，与周围沉默无声的自然相比，在深不可测的思想海洋中，人类像是泉水的导管，唯有他是通向所有组织形态的入口。

详细探究自然对人类的教诲是一件快乐的事，但哪里有尽头呢？我们在青年和成年生活中有一些朋友，他们就像天空和流水，与我们的思想一致；我们在某方面喜爱他们，他们使我们满意；我们无法将他们置于很近的位置，来改变甚至是分析他们。我们只能选择爱他们。上帝送来一位真实的胜过我们理想的人，我们与他深入交流，得知优秀的标准，对上帝的才智更为尊重；当这位朋友成为思想的对象，尽管他的性格仍保留了所有无意识的影响，他在我们的思维里已变成了真实怡人的智慧。这是一个信号：他的职责即将完成，通常情况下，不久他就会离开我们的视线。

六

理　念

就这样，自然通过每一个感官的对象，将世界无法言说但又可以理解的实际意义传达给人类，那永生的门徒。在教导人类知识方面，自然的所有组成部分都扮演了某个角色。

一个崇高的疑问始终挥之不去：知识是否宇宙的最终因？外在的自然存在吗？上帝教导人类，使人类获得一系列一致的感觉，我们称之为太阳和月亮、男人和女人、房子和交易，这足以描述我们称为世界的表象。我毫无办法检验感觉的真实性，不知道它们带给我的印象是否与实际的对象相符，这会有什么不同呢？俄里翁⑥在天堂里吗？有哪一个神灵描画灵魂的外衣吗？万物间的联系和一切事物的终极目标保持不变，区别是什么呢？陆地与海洋相互作用吗？无数的世界不断演化、融合（在绝对空间里，海洋下面接着海洋，星系连着星系），如果时空关系不再存在，人类还会永远信仰同样的表象吗？自然有真实的外在存在吗？还是只存在于思想的启示里？在我看来，它既有用，又脆弱。无论它是什么，只要我无法验证感觉的准确性，自然就是理念。

这种理念论令轻佻的人发笑，好像这种理论很滑稽，好像它影响了自然的稳定性。它当然不会。

上帝从不与人类开玩笑，也不会就自然的终极目标妥协，不会允许自然的队列出现任何矛盾。对于永恒自然法则的任何怀疑都会使人类丧失能力。永恒的自然法则受到神圣的尊崇，人类的信仰也因此而完美。人类的力量和活力即是在自然永恒的假设下设定。人类像一座矗立的房子，而不是摇摆的帆船。因此，只要行动的力量超越思想的力量，对于任何自然比精神更短暂、更多变的暗示，我们都将愤怒地反对。经纪人、车匠、木工、收费员对于这种暗示都深为不满。

但是，尽管我们完全认同自然法则是永恒的，自然的绝对存在仍然是一个开放的问题。文明无一例外地使人类坚信特定自然现象的不变性，如：热、水、氮；却又引导我们将自然视为现象，而非存在；将存在归因于精神；认为自然是偶然，是结果。

感官认识和未开化的理解力，使人们本能地相信自然是绝对存在的，人类与自然密不可分，万物是终极结果。未经教化的人，目光从不会超越他居住的区域。理性的存在使人类对绝对自然的信仰受到质疑。思想一开始就试图放松感官认识对人类的束缚，向我们展示自然是浮动的、超然的。直到理性介入，人类的眼睛才精确地看到清晰的轮廓和五

彩的表象。理性给这些轮廓和表象增添了优雅，使它们生动起来。这些来自于人类的想象和爱，使万物的棱角变得柔和了。假如理性激发人类更真切的想象，轮廓和表象就变得透明，不见了，人类从中看到的是原因和精神。此时，人类唤醒那更高层次的力量，虔诚地将自然回归它的造物主，这个时刻多么宜人啊！它是人生最美妙的时刻。

让我们来逐一说明文明的作用吧。

一、理念哲学最初产成就是源自自然的暗示。

上帝创造自然，让它与精神一起来解放我们。某些机械的变化，我们所处位置的改变，使我们意识到二元论的存在。在不同情形下看岸边，比如：在航行的帆船上、在热气球上，或是透过色彩奇异的天空，都让我们产生特殊的感受。视角的任何微小变化，都让世界宛若图画。很少乘车的人只需坐上一辆马车，穿过小镇的街道，街景就变成了木偶剧。男人和女人们在交谈、奔跑、交易、打架，诚恳的机械师、散步的人、乞丐、小男孩们、狗，都变得虚幻了，与旁观者不再有任何联系，变透明了，不再是真实的存在。在快速移动的火车车厢里，看到熟悉的乡村，会激发多少新的思考啊！不仅如此，最平常的事物，只需稍稍改变一下视角，就能给我们最大的快乐。在照相机的镜头里，卖肉

小贩的马车、我们家人的样子都让我们发笑。某个著名人物的肖像则让我们满足。弯下腰，从两腿中间看远处的风景，你会觉得风景真美啊，尽管在过去二十年里你曾经无数次看到它。

借助机械工具，我们发现了观察者与景色的差别，也就是人类与自然的区别。我们感受到的不只是愉悦，还伴随着敬畏。我可以说，人类明白了：世界是一种现象，人类本身却拥有某种永恒的特质。这一事实让我们感受到某种程度的崇高。

二、诗人以更高的方式传达同样的愉悦。只需寥寥数笔，他就描绘出了太阳、山峦、帐篷、城市、英雄、少女，这些与我们所知的并无不同，只是脱离了地面，浮动在我们眼前，就像在空中一样。他移动土地和海洋，使之围绕他的思想转动，呈现出全新的姿态。英雄的感情占据了他的身心，并将物质作为象征。只听从感觉的人，其思想遵从物质；诗人则使万物符合他的思想。前者认为自然是固定、坚实的；诗人则将自然看作流动的，影响着他的存在。在诗人看来，执拗的世界是灵活易塑的；他赋予灰尘和石头人性的光芒，使它们成为理性的语言。想象力可以定义为理性对物质世界的应用。莎士比亚利用自然来达意的能力居所有诗人之首。自然的万物就像他手中的玩物，可以表达任何

思想的变化。自然最偏僻的角落得到造访，最遥远的独立的事物因为复杂的精神上的联系聚在一起。我们得知，物质世界的博大是相对的，所有事物都能缩小或变大来服务于诗人的激情。在莎翁笔下，鸟的歌声、花的芬芳和露珠都是爱人的身影；胸膛喻义时间，它让爱人无法接近；爱人激起疑惑，那是她的饰物：

疑惑，是美的饰物，
像那欢呼划过天堂最甘甜的空气。

莎翁的激情并非一时兴起，当他对一个城市、一个国家诉说时，激情在他心中澎湃。

不，它的产生远非偶然；
虚华的赞美，不满的蹙额，
都对它毫无影响；
它不惧政策，不怕那转瞬即逝的
异教徒，
它是那么睿智和谨慎。

他持之以恒，充满力量。在他看来，金字塔是飘渺、短暂的。青春和爱就像清晨，使他眩晕：

将那双唇移开

放弃它们的甜蜜誓言已经许下；
还有那双眼，它们的光芒划破黎明，
让清晨迷失方向。

我或许可以顺便评论一下，这个比喻的奇美恐怕在文学中很难超越了。

莎翁的激情改变万物，伟岸变成低矮，渺小变得伟大。这样的例子数不胜数。我这里只引《暴风雨》中的几句。

阿里尔：牢固的海角
被我撼动，冲动之下我连根拔起
雪松和青松。

普罗斯珀罗诉诸音乐来安慰发狂的阿隆佐和他的同伴：

神圣的氛围，疯狂幻想最好的慰藉
为你们的头脑疗伤
它如今已在你们的身体里燃烧，再无效用。

此外：

魔力迅速消退，
当白昼尾随黑夜，

溶化黑暗，他们的感官
开始追逐那遮敝理性的
无知的迷雾。
他们的感性认识
开始膨胀：即将成为潮水
迅速填满已经变得肮脏泥泞的
理性的海岸

莎翁对于事件之间真实联系（真实存在的理念上的联系）的认识，使他可以得心应手地处理世界那壮观的形态和表象，肯定精神的主宰地位。

三、诗人用思想让自然灵动起来。他与哲学家的唯一不同在于，前者以美为最终诉求；后者视真理为最终目标。然而，与诗人一样，哲学家将事物之间显而易见的秩序和关系归诸思想的王国。柏拉图如是说，“哲学的问题在于，为一切有条件的存在，找到一个无条件的绝对基础。”哲学的首要信仰是，法则决定现象，人类知晓了法则，就可预知现象。这个法则在人类头脑中出现时，即是理念。理念的美是无限的。真正的哲学家和真正的诗人是合二为一的。美是真，真是美，是二者的共同追求。柏拉图或是亚里士多德的某个定义，与索福克里斯笔下的安提格涅，难道不具有相同的魅力吗？在哲学家的定义和作家的人物中，精神融入了自

然；看上去坚实的物质被思想占据、消解；脆弱的人类在灵魂的指导下，渗透自然界的万物，在万物的和谐中发现自我，掌握它们的法则。在物理学里，假如人类掌握了法则，就不必再去记忆浩繁的个体，只需一个公式就可表达人类千百年来的观察结果。

即便在物理学中，精神（法则和理念）也高于物质。天文学家、几何学者相信法则无可争辩的分析，鄙弃对物质的观察。欧拉这样描述他的拱形法则，“它与所有的经验相左，却是真理。”这一神圣的话语已将自然变成思想，徒留下物质的空壳。

四、哲学不可避免地引发人类对物质存在的怀疑。杜尔哥说过，“从未质疑过物质存在的人，不具备进行哲学探索的天赋。”哲学使我们将注意力集中在永恒、必要、未经创造的自然，即理念上；理念的存在让我们感到，外在的环境只是一场梦、一个影子。我们在众神的奥林匹斯山上等候时，就会认识到自然是精神的附属。我们升入理念的王国，明白它们就是上帝的思想。“它们与地球同在。上帝创造天堂，理念已在那里；上帝创造云朵，理念已在那里；上帝创造海洋，理念已在那里。理念在上帝旁边侍立，就像与它同生。上帝向它们寻求建议。”

理念的影响是适当的。作为哲学的对象，仅有少数人可以接近它们。但是，无论是谁，出于虔诚或是热情，都可进入理念的领域。任何人，只要触及这些神圣的自然，在某种程度上都变得神圣起来。理念就像崭新的灵魂，使肉体得到新生。我们的躯体变得敏捷又轻巧；我们在空气中行走；生活不再让人厌烦，我们再也不会生此念头。在理念宁静的陪伴下，无人惧怕暮年、不幸，或是死亡，他已脱离人生变化的司辖。我们揭开理念的面纱，直视正义和真理时，我们发现了绝对与相对的区别。我们理解了什么是绝对，就好像我们第一次存在了。人类变得永恒，因为时空只是物质关系，如若我们知晓真理，或者崇高意志的存在，它们之间不会再有任何联系。

五、最后，宗教和伦理学可以恰当地称为理念的实践，将理念引入人类生活。它们对低级文明的处理是相同的：贬低自然，强调自然对精神的依附。二者的区别在于，伦理学是源于人类的职责体系；宗教则是源于上帝的人类职责体系。宗教包含上帝的存在；伦理学则没有。在当前特定的语境下，二者是统一的，它们都将自然踏在脚下。贯穿宗教始终的教义是：“看得到的事物，都是短暂的；看不到的事物，才是永恒的。”宗教蔑视自

然。宗教告诉那些未受教育的人，自然是可鄙的，就像哲学对伯克利和费而萨的教导一样。在最无知的教区里，所有教堂里回荡的话语是：“唾弃世界那毫无意义的表象。它们是虚无、梦境、影子，是不存在的。追求宗教的现实。”宗教信仰者蔑视自然。一些信仰者甚至对物质产生了敌意和愤慨，比如摩尼教徒和普罗提诺。任何时候，回想起埃及烹煮美味的大锅，他们便不再信任自己。普罗提诺甚至为自己的身体感到羞耻。简而言之，米开朗基罗对外在美的评价，可以表达他们对于物质的看法：“它是脆弱疲倦的野草，上帝用它给精神穿上外衣。”

运动、诗歌、物理学、哲学似乎都会影响我们对外在世界真实存在的信念。然而，我承认，如果对这个命题无限扩展，认为一切文明都向我们显示理念的存在，就有些不恰当了。我对自然毫无敌意，只有童稚的爱。我就像玉米和甜瓜一样，在温暖的晴日里生长。让我们公正地对待自然吧。我无意攻击我美丽的母亲，也不愿弄脏我安静的家园。我只想指出自然相对于人类的真实位置，从而以自然为参照物来确定人类的方位，这也是所有正确教导的做法，因为，人类生活想要达到的目标即是建立人与自然的联系。文明颠覆了我们对自然庸俗的

看法，它让我们相信，我们以往称之为真实存在的事物只是表象，我们原以为是幻想和空想的事物才是真实的存在。当然，孩童相信外在的世界。我们认为外在世界只是一种表象，这是后来的思考。在文明的教导下，这一信念在我们的思想里生成，就像一开始就存在那样。

与传统的信仰相比，理念论的优势在于，它所展示的世界是人类头脑中最想要的。事实上，这种视角正是理性（无论是深思的哲学，还是实际的美德）的视角。哲学认为，世界永远都是表象。美德同样将世界视为头脑中思想的附属。理念论在世界中看到上帝的存在。在它看来，人物、事物、行动、事件、国家、宗教，并非一点一滴，一个一个艰难地累积成古老迟缓的历史，而是上帝在永恒的画布上绘出的巨幅图画，给精神提供思考的对象。因此，精神对宇宙的探究不会过于琐屑和微观。它尊重结果，不会让自己成为工具。它认为基督教本身要比教会史上的丑闻，或是批评的准确更重要。它对个人或是奇迹毫无兴趣，不会因历史事实的断裂而困扰，它坦然接受上帝画出的现象，认为它是这个世界纯粹而又令人敬畏的宗教形式。它不因自己运气的好坏，他人的支持或反对而或喜或悲。它没有敌人。无论是不幸还是好运，它都平静接受，

认为那是上帝的教诲。它更多地是一个观察者，而非行动者。只有在观察的意义上，它才是一位行动者。

七
精　神

关于自然和人类的真正理论，主要的是必然要具备某种发展性。人类在他勇敢生存的世界里，不断地以合适方式锻炼他的各种能力。这个世界源源不断地给予人类财富，它的事实无法用一句话来涵盖。自然所有的作用可以归结为一点：它赋予了人类活动无限的领域。自然的所有王国，直到事物的外延，都忠实于它的起因。自然一直都在讲述精神，它暗示了绝对存在。它是一种永恒的结果。它就像一个巨大的影子，向我们揭示身后的太阳。

自然是虔诚的。像耶稣那样，自然低头直立，双手交叉放于胸前。谁若向自然学会了信仰，谁就是最快乐的人。

关于我们称为精神的神圣存在，思考最多的人说的就会最少。在粗俗又似乎很遥远的物质现象里，我们可以看到上帝的存在。但是，当我们试图去定义和描述上帝本身时，语言和思想都变得苍白无力，我们就像傻子和野蛮人那样无助。精神无法

用命题来描述，然而，如果人类在思想上信奉它，最高贵的自然业绩即是上帝的化身。上帝通过自然与人类交流，并努力使人类回归自然。

我们谈到精神时，上文提到的观点并未涵盖人类的所有关切。这里必须补充一些有关的思考。

自然向智者提出了三个问题：什么是物质？它来自何方？要去向哪方？理念论仅仅回答了第一个问题：物质是现象，不是存在。理念论让我们知道，人类存在的证据与世界存在的证据是全然不一致的。一者是完美的，另一者则无任何确定性。思想是自然万物中的一部分。世界是一个神圣的梦，如今我们从中醒来，面对真实确定而又光辉的白昼。理念论是一种假设，它解释自然的原则与木工和化学的不同。然而，如果它否定物质的存在，就无法满足精神的需求。它使上帝离我而去，使我在感官认识的宏大迷宫中漫无目的地流浪。那么，我们的内心会抗拒这种理论，因为它否定了男人和女人的真实存在，给爱设置了障碍。人类生活填满自然的各个角落，几乎所有的自然个体都浸染了人性。理念论却让自然变得陌生起来，无法解释我们与自然的血缘关系。

那么，限于我们目前的知识水平，我们姑且把理念论当作一个有用的初步假设。它使我们知晓精

神与世界永恒的不同。

但是，当我们追随思想那看不见的足迹，询问物质从哪方来，要到哪方去时，许多真理从意识的深处显现出来。我们发现，人类的灵魂可知至高无上者上帝；令人敬畏的上帝并非智慧、爱、美，或力量中的某一个，而是它们的集合，一切事物因它而生，为它而存在；精神是造物主；在自然的背后，精神贯穿自然的全部；精神不是从外在的时空，而是经由我们自身向我们施加影响；因此，精神，也就是无上的天主，并非在人类的周围创设自然，而是经由人类来创设万物，就像树木的旧枝叶掉落，新枝叶在同一位置生发。正如植物根植于大地，人类栖息在上帝的怀抱。永不干涸的泉水滋养着人类，他从上帝那里得到无穷的力量。谁又能给人类的能力设限呢？一旦人类呼吸到精神的空气，获许直视正义和真理的绝对存在，人类就可进入上帝的所有思想领域，他本身就是上帝在有限世界中的存在。这一观点提醒了我智慧和力量的源泉所在，指出美德是

“打开永恒之殿的
金钥匙”

它使我通过灵魂的净化，得以创造自己的世

界。这本身就是最高真理的证明。

世界与人类的肉体一样，起源于精神。它是离上帝更远的低级化身，是在无意识领域里对上帝的映射。但是，世界与人类的肉体有一个重要不同，它并不受制于人类的意志，人类无法亵渎它的神圣秩序。因此，对人类来说，世界是对上帝的现时解释。它是一个固定的参照物，我们可以此衡量与上帝的距离。随着我们一步步堕落，我们与自己的居所之间的反差就越来越明显。我们对自然有多陌生，与上帝就有多远。我们听不懂飞鸟的歌唱。狐狸和鹿逃避我们，熊和老虎噬咬人类。许多植物我们不能物尽其用，像玉米、苹果、土豆、葡萄藤等等。乡村的风景无论何时看到，都给人庄严壮丽之感，难道它不是上帝的面孔吗？然而，这也使我们发现人类与自然的不和。因为，如果有农民正在田地里辛苦劳作，你就无法尽情欣赏壮丽的风景。除非人类从他的视线里消失，诗人才不会觉得他的愉悦是荒诞可笑的。

八

未　来

当我们探究世界的法则和万物的框架时，最高的理性往往是最真实的。那些看上去可能性很小的

结论却是最精练的。它之所以看上去不清晰不明确，是因为在永恒的真理中，它处于思想的最深处。经验科学常常会遮蔽人类的视线，关于函数和过程的知识恰恰使人类无法对整体进行思考。学者不再具有诗人的想象力。但是，以全部精力关注真理最博学的博物学家会发现，关于人类与世界的关系还有许多需要学习，而学习的方法并非是对已知事物的加减比较，而是精神自然生发的隽语、持续的自我恢复，以及全然的谦卑。他还会发现，人类的优秀品质不仅限于准确和绝对可靠；猜测常常比无可置疑的肯定更有用；一场梦让我们知晓的自然秘密比一百次实验还要多。

这些要解决的问题恰恰是生理学家和博物学家在表达中遗漏的。人类更需要知道的，并非动物王国中的每一个个体，而是主宰一切的统一性从何处来，要到何处去。这种统一性永远在对事物进行分类和区别，试图将千变万化的形态归结为一种。我面对层次丰富的风景，想做的不是准确复述风景中各层次的顺序和重合，却是想知道为什么所有的思绪都消失在安静的一体感中。如果不能解释事物与思想的关系，我就无法给予精微细节很高的评价；如果贝壳学、植物学、艺术不能展示花朵、贝壳、动物、建筑物的形态与思想的关系，不在理念的基

础上建立科学，它们就不具有纯正哲学的光芒。在自然历史的陈列柜中，对于那些最笨重、最奇特的野兽、鱼、昆虫的形态，我们会有某种神秘的认同感和同情感。美国人在国内看到的建筑物都是按照国外的样式建造的。当他步入英国的约克大教堂，或罗马的圣彼得大教堂时，他会感到吃惊。因为他会感到，这些建筑同样是模仿物，隐约复制了某种看不见的原型。如果博物学家忽视了人类与世界奇妙的一致性，科学就不具备充分的人性。人类是世界的主人。这并不是因为人类是世界上最聪明的物种，而是因为，人类是世界的头脑和心灵，他在所有的事物中，在每一层山峦、每一条新的色彩法则、每一个天文学事实或大气的影响（它们的观察或分析都是开放的）中，都会发现自己的影子。这种神秘使诗人乔治·赫尔伯特，17世纪美妙的赞美诗作者获得灵感。以下诗句节选自他关于人类的一首小诗。

人类是完全的对称，
充满了比例，一个肢体相对另一个肢体，
一个世界相对另一个世界。
每一部分都可称呼离它最远的部分，兄弟；
因为头和脚私交颇佳，
二者都与月亮和潮汐交好。

没有哪个事物像人类那样
成功抓获并俘虏了它；
他的双眼使最高的星辰落下：
他就是缩小了的整个世界。
药草快乐地治愈我们的躯体，因为
它们是我们身体的朋友。
为了人类，风儿吹起，
地球休息，天空移动，泉水奔流；
我们看到的一切，都是为了人类，
是我们的快乐，或财富；
一切都是人类的食橱，
或者快乐的陈列柜。

星辰服侍我们睡下：
夜幕拉起窗帘；太阳将其拉开。
音乐和阳光侍奉我们的大脑。
一切事物在存在和低级意义上，
是人类肉体的朋友；在原因和高级意义上，
是人类思想的朋友。

侍奉他的奴仆，
多得超出他的想象。每条路上，
当疾病使人类变得苍白虚弱时，
一切都对他友善。
啊　伟大的爱！人类是一个世界，
另一个世界是他的仆从。

对此类真理的认识使人类对科学感兴趣。然而，对工具的关注使人类无法看到目标。因为科学有限的视野，我们接受柏拉图的结论：“诗歌比历史更接近于真理。”思想的每一个推测和预言都应受到尊重。比起做过整理都无任何宝贵建议的体系，我们更愿意接受不完美的理论和可以瞥见真理身影的语句。聪明的作者会发现，研究和创作最好的目标是宣布未经发现的思想领域，并通过希望，向迟钝的精神传达新的活动。

因此，我愿意以一些关于人与自然的传统概念来结束本文，一位诗人向我吟诵过。它们一直存在于这个世界，或许每位吟游诗人都会遇到。那么，它们既是历史，又是预言。

“人类的根本不在物质，而是精神。精神的元素是永恒的。所以，对于精神来说，最漫长的事件、最古老的编年史都是年轻短暂的。人类的个体繁衍生息，在这个普遍的人类循环中，世纪只是一个个点，所有的历史只是一次堕落的时代。”

“我们从内心怀疑并否认他对自然的认同。我们反复承认和否认自身与自然的关系。我们就像失去王位的尼布甲尼撒，丧失了理智，像牛一样吃草。但谁又能给精神的修复力设限呢？”

“人类是被毁坏了的上帝。人类堕落之前，生命原本可以更长，可以温和地得到永生，就像我们从梦中醒来一样。今时，如果无序和混乱持续几百年，世界将会变得疯狂暴躁。死亡和新生使这一点得到遏制。婴儿的降生是永恒的救世主，它来到堕落的人类的怀抱，乞求和他们一起回到乐园。”

“人类是自身的侏儒。一旦精神充斥他的身心，将他消解，人类之流就弥漫在自然中。太阳和月亮由此而生：男人生成太阳，女人生成月亮。人类思想的法则和行动外化成白昼与黑夜，年岁和四季。但是，自从人类给自己建造了这个巨大的安身之所，他的水流退却了，不再充满大大小小的血管和动脉，他萎缩成了一滴水。他发现，这个住所仍然适合他，但过于庞大。或者说，它曾经是大小合适的，现在却以一种远远俯视的姿态与他交流。人类羞怯地崇拜他自己的作品。如今，男人是太阳的追随者，女人是月亮的追随者。然而，人类有时从沉睡中惊醒，惊奇地打量自己和他的居所，奇怪地深思二者之间的相似之处。他意识到，如果他的法则仍然是至高无上的，如果他仍然具有元素的力量，如果他的话语本质上是纯粹的，这就并非意识的力量，并非低于而是高于人类的意志。这就是本能。”以上便是俄耳普斯诗人对我的吟唱。

今天，人类面对自然只使用了一半力量。他在世界上仅仅运用了感官认识的理解力。他动用极少的智慧来把握生活，并不是完全意义上的人。尽管他双臂强壮、消化良好，他的思想却是未开化的，是自私的野蛮人。人类与自然的关系、驾驭自然的能力是通过理解力来实现的，就像肥料，火、风、水、指南针的经济效用，蒸汽、煤、化学农业，牙医和外科医生对人体的治疗等。这种力量的恢复就像遭到放逐的国王应该一寸一寸地收复失地，而不是立即冲向他的王位。与此同时，在厚重的黑暗中，光明并非绝不存在。人类偶尔会发挥出全部的力量，不仅有理解力，还有理性。这样的例子很多：所有民族最古老的传说中流传的奇迹，耶稣的生平，宗教和政治革命、废除奴隶贸易中原则的胜利，传说中关于斯威登堡、霍恩洛厄、震教教徒的热情的奇迹，许多被归于“动物磁性说”的模糊有争议的事实，祈祷，雄辩，自我痊愈，儿童的智慧等等。在这些例子中，理性暂时掌握了权杖。理性的力量并不在时空中存在，它是瞬时的内流推动力。经院学者对人类实际力量与理性力量的区别作了有趣的比喻：人类的知识是晚上的，上帝的知识却是早晨的。

灵魂的救赎使世界回复原初永恒的美。人类在

自然中看到的废墟或是空白仅仅存在于他自己的眼中。人类的视觉之轴与万物之轴并不一致，所以，它们看上去是模糊不透明的。世界缺乏统一性，破碎割裂的原因在于，人类与他自身并不统一。人类只有在满足了精神的所有需求之后，才能成为博物学家。爱与感知一样，同样是精神的需求。的确，二者相互依存，缺一不可。从词语最深的意义上来说，思想是虔诚的，虔诚即是思想。二者互为呼应。然而，在现实生活中，二者的联姻并未得到颂扬。清白无罪的人按照祖先的传统信奉上帝，可是他们对人类责任的认识并不包括应用全部的能力。有些博物学家足够耐心，却仅以冰冷的理解力来看待自然。难道祈祷不是对真理的追逐吗，不是灵魂对无限的未知领域的睿智之语吗？任何人，只要虔诚地祈祷，都会学到知识。但是，若虔诚的思想者决心切断事物与人类的一切联系，使其完全成为思考的对象，那么，他同时以最神圣的爱之火点燃了科学，上帝也将呈现全新的面貌。

当人类思想准备探究自然时，它并不需要寻找对象。智慧不变的标识即是在平凡中发现奇迹。日是什么？年是什么？夏是什么？女人是什么？孩子是什么？睡眠是什么？由于人类的失明，这些事物似乎平淡无奇。人类编造寓言，来遮蔽事实的枯

燥，并像我们所称的，使它符合思想的高级法则。但是，当理念的光芒照亮事实时，花哨的寓言就褪色枯萎了，我们得以发现真正的高级法则。所以，对智慧的人来说，事实是真正的诗歌，是最美丽的寓言。这些美景就在我们的门前。你也成为一个人。男人、女人、他们的社会生活、贫穷、劳动、睡眠、恐惧、财富，你都一清二楚。要记住，它们从不肤浅，每个现象都根植于思想的能力和爱。你的理智被抽象的问题占据；自然则带来具体的问题，需要你用双手去解决。逐一比较人类的日常史实与思想中理念的产生和发展，特别是在生命的危机时刻，会是对秘密多么智慧的探索啊。

那么，让我们用新的目光来解读世界吧。臣服于受到教化的意志，自然将回答关于理智和爱的无穷质疑：什么是真理？什么是善？我的诗人这样回答：“自然是流动的，不是固定的。精神改变、塑造、创造自然。自然之所以一成不变，或低俗暴力，是因为精神的缺位。在纯粹的精神看来，自然是流动、多变、温顺的。精神给自己建造居所，居所之外是世界，世界之外是天堂。此时，你明白了世界是为你而存在的。现象为了你而完美。我们只能看到，我们是谁。亚当拥有的一切，你也有；凯撒能做到的，你也能。亚当称他的居所为天地；凯

撒称自己的家为罗马。你或许会说，你的居所只是修鞋匠的店铺、百亩耕地、学者的阁楼。但是，你的领土丝毫不亚于他们，一样伟大，只是没有漂亮的名字而已。所以，构建你自己的世界吧。以最快的速度使自己的生活遵从思想的纯粹理念，它将向你展现它的宏大领域。随着精神的流入，万物会发生相应的演变。令人厌恶的现象、猪、蜘蛛、蛇、昆虫、疯人院、监狱、敌人，都很快消失了。它们只是暂时的，再也不复存在。阳光蒸发掉自然的污秽，风将其吹散，使它消失。当夏季从南方来到时，河岸的积雪就消融了，大地呈现绿色。同样，行进中的精神沿途创造自己的饰物，随身携带遇到的美景和听到的迷人歌声。它一路唤起美丽的面容、温暖的心、智慧的语言、英雄的行为，直到恶永远消失。人类对自然的主宰并非来自于观察，这个领域已经超越了人类关于上帝的梦想。就像失明的人逐渐恢复全部的视力，人类进入他的自然王国，不应有更多的惊讶。”

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注释

① 希腊神话中的风神。
② 希腊神话中爱和丰饶女神。
③ 古希腊时期的雅典政治家（公元前402—318年）。

④　希腊神话中最伟大的英雄，宙斯与底比斯国王之女阿尔克墨涅之子，半人半神，在十二年中完成了十二项英勇业绩。

⑤　约公元前430—354年，古希腊历史学家、作家。

⑥　希腊神话中俊美而强壮的猎人，追求普勒阿德斯的七个女儿，后被狩猎女神阿尔忒弥斯所杀。

历　史

在造物主面前
无大小之分：
万物与它同源；
它无处不在。

我拥有这个星球，
拥有北斗七星和太阳年，
拥有凯撒的手和柏拉图的智慧，
还有耶稣的心灵和莎翁的禀性。

所有人类共有同一的精神，每个人都是这一精神的某个出口。一旦获得理性，人类就成为世界的自由民。柏拉图思考的，他也会思考；圣徒感受到的，他也能感受；任何人遭遇到的任何事，他都能理解。谁理解了这个精神，谁就成为过去或未来的参与者。因为，精神是唯一至高无上的原动力。

历史纪录了精神的作品。它的天分体现在所有时光中。人类所有历史是对人的阐释。精神从一开始就不紧不慢、从无停顿地在合适的事件中表现属于它的所有能力、思想和情感。但是，思想永远都是先于事实的；所有历史事实都是精神中预先存在的法则。每一个法则在一定情形中成为主宰，而自然每次只会赋予一个法则力量。人是所有事实的百

科全书。一颗橡子生成数以千计的森林；埃及、希腊、罗马、高卢、英国、美国，已在亚当身上蕴含。一个时代接着一个时代。部落、王国、帝国、共和国、民主国家，仅仅是人类无限丰富的精神在这个无限丰富的世界中的应用。

人类精神写出了历史，历史也必须由精神来阅读。斯芬克斯必须解出她自己的谜语。如果所有的历史归结于一人，对它的阐释必须通过人的经历来进行。人类以小时计的生命与以百年计的时间存在关联。正如人类呼吸的空气来自于自然的宏大宝库，照耀人类书本的光线来自于数以亿计英里之外的某个星辰，人类身体的平衡取决于离心引力和向心引力的平衡，人类生活应由时代来教导，时代则应由人类生活来解释。每个人都是同一精神的化身，他体现了它的所有特点。个人生活的每个新事实都展示了伟人们所做的事，而个人生活的危机也体现了民族的危机。每一次革命最初只是某个人头脑中的想法，当另一个人也有同样的想法时，时代的转折点就产生了。每一次改革曾经只是某个人的观点，当他人有同样的观点时，时代的问题就得到了解决。历史叙述的事实必须与人类生活相一致，才是可信的，可理解的。我们阅读历史时，必须成为希腊人、罗马人、土耳其人、牧师和国王、烈士

和刽子手；必须将这些形象与我们隐密体验中的某种事实联系起来。否则，我们什么也学不到。阿斯德鲁巴或凯撒·博尔吉亚的遭遇，跟我们的遭遇相似，都显示了精神的力量和堕落。每一个新律法和政治运动对你来说，都有意义。站在历史的铭文前，对自己说："我那普洛透斯[1]的本性，就隐藏在这个面具下。"这弥补了我们与自己太过亲近的缺陷，使我们的行为变成远景。就像螃蟹、山羊、蝎子、秤和水瓶成为十二星座的标志时不再卑劣和平庸，我在遥远的历史人物，如所罗门、阿尔西比亚德斯、和喀提林身上，看到自己的邪恶而不会过于激动。

正是这种普遍的本性使个别的人和物具有了价值。蕴含这种本性的人类生活是神秘不可亵渎的。我们以惩罚和律法来确保它不被侵犯。因此，所有的法则都衍生最终的理性，都或多或少清楚表达了这种最高的无限本质的要求。物质同样把握精神，涵盖伟大的精神事实。我们最初就本能地用剑、律法、各种广泛复杂的组合形式来捍卫它。对于这个事实的模糊意识在今天已经非常明晰，表现为对权利的要求，对教育、正义、慈善的诉求；是友谊、爱、英雄主义和庄严的自立行为的基础。值得注意的是，人类总是不自觉地以一种优越的姿态阅读历

史。诗人和传奇小说家在对最宏大场面（祭司、帝王的宫殿、意志或是天才的胜利）的历史叙述中，从不会让我们失去听觉，不会让我们觉得自己是闯入者，让我们感到这些叙述适合更优秀的人来读。相反，在他们最壮丽的诗篇中，我们最为舒适自在。莎士比亚对国王的所有描述，那边在角落里阅读的小男孩会认为这也是在说他自己。我们认同历史上的伟大时刻、伟大发现、伟大反抗，以及人类的繁荣富足。因为，在那些时刻，法律得以制定，海洋得到探索，新大陆被发现，甚或是受到打击，一切都是为了我们。假若我们身处那个历史时刻，我们会做同样的事，同样拍手喝彩。

我们同样关注条件和人物。我们尊重富有的人，因为他们具有外在的自由、力量、优雅，它们在我们看来是适合人类的，适合我们的。斯多葛派、东方的或是现代的作家对智慧的人的描述，都是在向读者表达自己的观念，描述他尚未实现但又能实现的自我。所有的文学作品都描述智者。书籍、纪念碑、图画、对话，都是肖像，作者从中发现他正在刻画的轮廓。沉默的人和雄辩的人都赞美他，和他打招呼。无论走到哪儿，他好像都会因为人类的喻指得到灵感。因此，真正胸怀大志的人从不需要在交谈中寻找别人的赞美。他所追求的智

者，关于人物的每一句描述，每一个事实和情形（流动的河水和沙沙作响的谷物）都甜蜜地赞美他。爱从沉默的自然、山峦和天穹的光芒中流出，赞美从中生发，崇敬因之变得柔和。

这些提示，好像从睡眠和夜晚中遗落，让我们在白昼使用。学生应积极地研读历史，而不是被动地阅读；应将自己的生活视为历史的教科书，书本则是评论。如此，历史的缪斯将向他说出神谕。那些不尊重自己的人，从不会获得这样的垂青。我不认为任何人都能正确地阅读历史，都能发现，在遥远的年代里，那些名字听上去很遥远的人们所做的事情对他今日的所作所为有着深远的意义。

世界的存在是为了教导每一个人。历史上不管哪个朝代、哪种社会、哪种行为方式都与人类生活存在某种对应。任何事物都以一种奇妙的方式试图简化自己，给予人类自身的美德。人类应该看到，他本身即可经历所有的历史。他必须稳坐家中，深谙他比所有的疆域、所有的政府都要强大，而不是被国王和帝国处处欺凌；他必须将传统的读史视角从罗马、雅典、伦敦转移到他自身，坚信他就是法庭，假如英国或埃及向他提出要求，他就会审判案例；如果没有要求，就让他们永远沉默吧。他必须获得并保持高超的洞察力，只有这种洞察力才能使

历史事实传达它们的秘密，诗歌和编年史同样如此。当我们对历史的符号叙述加以利用时，思想的本能、自然的目的就显露无遗了。时间使历史事实的坚硬棱角消散成发光的气体。铁锚、缆索、栅栏都无法使历史事实持续存在，保持原样。巴比伦、特洛伊、提尔、巴勒斯坦，甚至早期的罗马都已经变成了虚构。伊甸园，太阳静止在基遍，已经成为所有民族的诗歌。当我们把它当作高悬天上的星座，成为天堂永恒的标记时，谁又在乎事实是怎样的呢？伦敦、巴黎、纽约必将是同样的归宿。拿破仑说：“历史如果不是公认的寓言，还能是什么呢？”我们的这种生活被埃及、希腊、高卢、英格兰、战争、殖民、教堂、法庭和商业环绕，就会像有众多花朵和天然的饰物那样庄严和快乐。我这里不再详述。我相信永恒。我在自己的思想里发现希腊、亚洲、意大利、西班牙和群岛——每个时代、所有时代的天才和创造的原则。

在我们的个人经历中，我们总是会想到历史上的重要事实，并证实它们。所有历史变得主观起来；或者说，可能历史并不存在，存在的只是传记。每个心灵必须知道所有的教导——必须经历所有的事实。没有看到的，没有经历的，他不会知道。上个时代的人们为了操作方便概括出公式或法

则，如果这个时代的人们利用法则的屏障试图证实它本身，就失去了所有的意义。在某个时候，思想必然要求通过亲身体验，来补偿丢失的意义。弗格森发现了许多天文学中早已被人知晓的事物。这对他本人再好不过了。

历史必然是这样的，否则它就一无是处。国家实施的每项法律都显示了人类本性的某个事实；这就足矣。我们自身必须看到每个事实的必然原因，明白它为何如此，又必然如此。所以，让我们来体验每一件或公共或私人的作品，伯克的演说，拿破仑的胜利，托马斯·莫尔爵士、西德尼、马默杜克·罗宾逊的殉教，法国的恐怖统治，塞拉姆巫师的绞刑，巴黎或者普罗维登斯的狂热复兴和动物磁性论。我们假设，在类似的环境中，我们会受到类似的影响，获得类似的成就。我们的目标是，与我们的同胞和先人相比，在思想上逐步达到与之相同的高度，或是经历同样的堕落。

我们对古老遗迹的探索，对金字塔、发掘出的古城、巨石阵、俄亥俄圈、墨西哥、孟斐斯的所有好奇都是为了消除荒芜野蛮又不合理的那里和那时，用这里和这时来代替。贝而佐尼在底比斯的木乃伊墓葬和金字塔遗址上不停挖掘测量，直到发现那庞大的作品与他自身已无不同。他满足地发现，

无论是在总体还是细节上，墓葬和金字塔的建造者像他一样，有着同样的装备和同样的动力，换成他，也会为了同样的目标而努力。此时，问题得到了解决；贝而佐尼的思想满足地穿越寺庙、斯芬克斯、地下墓穴，而它们也在其思想中再次鲜活起来，成为现在。

一座哥特式的教堂证明，它由人类建造，又不是人类所为。当然，它是人类建造的。但是，它又并非来自人类本身。我们来思考一下它的产生历史。让我们假设自己是建造者，我们想起森林的居住者、最初产生的殿堂、对这种建筑类型的继承，以及随着国民财富的增长对殿堂的装饰；通过雕刻赋予木材价值的做法演变成后来人们对教堂所有石块的雕琢。当我们经历了这个过程，再思考天主教堂，它的十字架、音乐、队列、圣徒日，以及形象崇拜时，我们就好像是教堂的建造者，看到了它的成因，它的必然性。我们具有充分的理性。

人类个体的不同在于联系的原则。有人通过颜色和大小区分事物，有人以外表来判断，还有人凭借内在的相似性或因果关系来划分事物。理智的进步是为了超越表象的不同，对原因有更清晰的认识。在诗人、哲学家和圣人看来，一切事物都是友好神圣的，一切事件都是有益的，所有时光、所有

人类都是神圣的。因为，他们的眼睛与生命紧密相连，周围的环境都渺小起来。每一种化学物质、每一株植物、每一个正在长大的动物都教导人类，原因是统一的，表象是多样的。

我们被创造一切的自然支撑和包围着，像云朵一样柔软，像空气一样流动。为什么要像顽固的老学究，夸大不多的几种形态呢？我们为什么要叙述时间、数量或数字呢？灵魂不了解它们。天才遵循自然的法则，知道如何与它们嬉戏，就像孩童在教堂玩耍，与老人做游戏。天才研究因果思想，在万物孕育之初，就发现光芒从某个中心向无限远处发散。天才在完成自然的轮回中，透过所有面具注视物质的起源。天才从苍蝇、毛虫、幼虫和卵中发现不变的个体；从无数的个体中发现固定的类；从许多类中发现属；从所有属中发现恒定的类型；从所有有序生活的王国中发现永恒的统一性。自然是一朵多变的云，在不变中有着多样的变化。她在许多不同形态中注入相同的思想，就像诗人用二十篇寓言来讲述同一个寓意。通过粗陋低俗的物质，神秘的精神使所有的事物服从它的意志。在精神面前，硬石化成柔软而又精确的形态，我注视着它，它的轮廓和质地又发生了变化。没有事物像形态那样短暂飞逝；然而，形态从不否认自身。我们仍然可以

发现，人类身上残留着被认为是属于低级种族的奴役标记；但是，这些标记更突显了他的高贵和优雅。就像埃斯库罗斯笔下的伊俄[②]，变成了一头小牛，触犯了我们的想象力。然而，就像埃及的伊西斯女神，当伊俄遇见宙斯时，除了那额前华美闪亮的双角饰物，美丽的女人没有一丝蜕变的痕迹！

历史的同一性是本质上的，它的多样性同样显著。万物在表象上千变万化，却具有同样的因。某人的诸多行为，展现同样的性格特点！观察一下我们是如何获得古希腊人的信息的。我们有社会历史，如希罗多德、修昔底德、色诺芬、布鲁达克所记载的，详细叙述了希腊人的风俗和事迹。我们有文学，史诗、抒情诗、戏剧、哲学同样表现了希腊人的思想，是一种非常完整的形式。我们有建筑，它的美含蓄内敛，由直线和正方形构成——是希腊人建造的几何形状。我们还有雕塑，“和谐表达的语言”，各种形态做出极自由的动作，却从不僭越那完美的平静；就像在众神面前表演宗教舞蹈的信徒，尽管因抽搐而疼痛或正与别人争斗，却决不敢破坏舞蹈的队形和仪态。所以，关于希腊人，我们有来自四个方面的表现：品达的颂诗、大理石雕刻的马人、帕台农神庙的列柱、福基昂临终的行为，对于感官来说，还有什么比它们更像希腊人呢？

谁都曾注意到，一些看上去毫不相像的面孔和形态，却给人留下类似的印象。一幅画，或一首诗，以及荒山上的一条小路，即便不能唤起类似的形象，却能激发同样的情感。它们的相似之处虽在感官看来并不明显，却是神秘而超出人类理解力的。自然就是对极少数几个法则的无限组合和复制。自然以无限的变化哼唱着古老的乐曲。

自然的所有作品都充满一种神圣而又亲切的相似。在最令人想不到的地方，自然展现的相像让我们吃惊，她则以此为乐。我在森林里见到一位老酋长，他的头立刻让我想到了光秃秃的山峰，他额头上的皱纹则让我想起岩石的分层。有些人的仪态就像帕台农神庙檐壁上简单又庄严的雕刻，或是最早期希腊艺术的遗迹，有着同样的优雅和壮丽。在所有年代的书籍里，都能发现有相同特点的篇章。圭多的《罗斯皮格里奥希·奥罗拉》不就是清晨的思绪吗？画中的群马不就是清晨的云朵吗？若有人愿意花力气作一番观察，看看他在不同精神状态下愿意去做的事情，或者反感的行为，他会发现它们有多么相似。

有一位画家告诉我，除非画家在某种程度上先变成树，他才能画出一棵树来；仅仅通过端详一个孩子的外貌，画家没有办法勾画他，只有在细细观

察他的举动和游戏之后，画家才能深入他的内心，随意画出他的各种姿态。鲁斯就这样“深入了绵羊最内在的本性”。我认识一位参与公共调查的制图员，他发现，如果没有人向他解释清楚岩石的地质结构，他就没办法描画它们。各种工作共同的起源都是某种思想状态。相同的是精神，不是事实。艺术家首先要通过深入的理解，而不是费力地掌握许多肢体的技巧，才能获得以行动震撼他人心灵的力量。

一直有这样的说法：“普通的灵魂通过行动创造价值，高贵的灵魂本身就是价值。”为什么？这是因为人类内心深刻的本性，是为其行动、语言、外表、仪态与雕塑艺术馆或者画廊具有的相同力量和美唤醒的。

社会史、自然史、艺术史和文学史，必须通过一个人的历史来阐释，否则，它们永远只是词语而已。一切都与人类相联系，一切都让我们好奇——王国、学院、树、马、铁鞋——万物起源于人类。圣十字教堂和圣彼得大教堂只是对某个神圣原型的拙劣复制。斯特拉斯堡大教堂只是厄文·斯泰因巴哈心灵的物质体现。真正的诗是诗人的心灵；真正的船是造船者。假如我们可以透视人类，他的所有行为的理由就纤毫毕现；就像海贝的每一根脊柱，每

一种色彩都预先存在于它神秘的机体里。纹章学和骑士精神的全部都在于礼仪。举止优雅的人称呼你的名字，会赋予它贵族称号所能增添的光辉。

琐屑的日常生活总是在向我们证实一些古老的预言，将我们曾听到看到，却没有注意的词语和符号转变成万物。我曾与一位妇人一起穿过森林，她对我说，她一直觉得森林在等待，就好像居住在林间的精灵们暂停了动作，直到行人走过。这一想法在诗歌里得到表现：仙女们听到人类的脚步声，就暂停了舞蹈。如果有人在午夜看到明月在云朵中显露，他就像是上帝创造光和世界时在场的大天使。我记得夏日的一天，在田野里，我的同伴指给我看一片巨大的云彩，它与地平线平行，延长了大约四分之一英里，极像教堂里彩绘的小天使——中部是圆的，很容易发现眼睛和嘴巴的形状，两侧是伸展开的对称的翅膀。天空中出现一次的景象有可能是经常出现的。毫无疑问，这块云彩就是我们熟悉的小天使的原型。我见过天空中一连串夏日的闪电，它们立即使我想起，古希腊人描绘宙斯手中的雷电时，正是受到自然的启发。我还看到积雪沿着石墙的两侧向下滑移，很显然，它使人类发明了塔似的常见的建筑样式。

在自然原生的环境中，人类创造了建筑物新的

秩序和饰物。让我们来看看每个民族如何装饰他们最初的居所。多立斯庙宇保存了多立斯人居住的木屋的特点。中国的宝塔显然是鞑靼人的帐篷。印度和埃及的寺庙仍然显露出他们祖先的墓葬特点。希伦在他的《埃塞俄比亚人研究》中说：“在岩石上建造房屋和墓穴的风俗，非常自然地形成了努比亚埃及人建筑物外形庞大的主要特点。在这些巨大的洞窟里，双眼在自然的帮助下，已经习惯了巨大的形状和体积。当艺术来帮助表现自然时，在缩小规模的同时，它不得不弱化了自己。在那些巨大的殿堂里，此前只有巨人才能看守，才能凭靠内部的立柱。那么，与这些殿堂相比，正常大小的雕像，或者整洁的走廊、侧厅会是什么样呢？”

哥特式教堂很明显来源于人类对森林中的树木及其枝桠进行的原始改造，成为或欢快或庄重的拱廊。教堂裂开的立柱周围的绑带仍然暗示将它们扎在一起的绿色枝条。无论是谁，穿过松林中的小径时，都会因松林展现出的建筑样式而震撼，特别是在冬季，其他光秃秃的树木好像撒克逊人低低的拱门。在冬日的树林里，透过交叉而又光秃的枝桠看西方天空的颜色，你立即会发现哥特式教堂里彩色玻璃窗的原型。任何一个热爱自然的人，走进牛津宏伟的古建筑和英格兰的教堂，都会感到森林主宰

了建筑师的心灵，建筑师的凿子、锯、刨再现了森林中蕨类植物、花穗、槐树、榆树、橡树、松树、枞树和云杉。

哥特式教堂是在石头中盛开的花朵，服从于人类对和谐永不满足的需求。大理石块盛开成永恒的花朵，明亮、精致，具有柔和的比例和植物的美。

同样的，所有公共的事实都可个体化，所有个体的事实都可一般化。这样，历史立刻变得流动真实，传记也变得厚重神圣。波斯人的建筑物中，纤细的轴和柱模仿了荷花和棕榈树的干和花朵。波斯宫殿在它的极盛时期从未因野蛮部落的流浪状态而遗失，却从春天的埃克巴坦纳，流传至夏天的苏萨，再到冬天的巴比伦。

在亚洲和非洲的早期历史上，游牧业和农业是两种对立的事实。亚洲和非洲的地理特点使游牧生活成为必需。但另有一部分人因为土地和贸易的好处，开始建造城市。对于这部分人来说，游牧民族是可怕的威胁。正因为游牧业的威胁，农业因此成为一种宗教强制令。在晚期的文明国家英国和美国，这两种倾向仍然进行着古老的斗争，无论是民族层面还是个人层面都如此。非洲的游牧民族因为牛虻的袭击不得不流浪，牛虻会让牲畜发疯。他们不得不在雨季迁移，将牲畜驱赶到更高的沙地。亚

洲的游牧民族则追逐着牧草，月月迁徙。美国和欧洲的游牧业起因于贸易和好奇心；当然，从阿斯塔布拉斯的牛虻到波斯顿湾对英国、意大利的狂热，这是一个进步。定期宗教朝圣的圣城，或严格的律法和习俗增强民族凝聚力的城市，都是对古老游牧民族的遏制；长期定居的累积效果限制了今天的游牧业。游牧业和农业两种倾向的对立在个人身上同样明显，表现为对探险的热爱和对平静生活的热爱。身体强壮思维活跃的人有快速适应环境的能力，他住在马车里，像卡尔穆克那样很容易地游遍世界。在海上、森林里、雪地上，他都能温暖入睡，食欲极佳，就像在自家烟囱旁那样快活。或许他有更高级的装备，那就是更广泛的观察力。无论新鲜的事物何时出现，他都会兴致勃勃。游牧民族是贫穷挨饿的，几乎要到绝望的边缘；这种思想上的流浪如果超出限度，就会在杂乱的事物上耗尽精力，丧失精神。另一方面，喜欢固定生活的人在他的土地上满足地发现所有生活的元素；这种生活方式有它自身的危险，如果没有外部因素的刺激，就会变得单调和退化。

一个人看到的每一个外部事物都对应于他的思想状态。一切事物都是可知的，因为，思想会引导人类发现事实所属的真理。

原初世界——德国人称为元古社会——我可以亲自去钻研，可以通过探寻墓穴、图书馆、破碎的浮雕、庄园遗迹来研究它。

希腊的历史、文学、艺术、诗歌，从荷马时期直到四五百年后雅典和斯巴达人的家庭生活，所有人都为之着迷，这种兴趣的基础是什么？原因只能是，每个人都会经历希腊时期。希腊时代崇尚身体本能和感官的完美，是精神本性与身体严格统一的时代。希腊时期的人体为雕塑家提供了赫拉克利斯、阿波罗、宙斯的原型，与现代城市街头随处可见的面孔截然不同。后者模糊不清，毫无特点。希腊时期的面孔却极为鲜明、清晰、匀称。他们从不斜视，或鬼祟地偷瞥左右，总是直视前方，这是他们眼窝的生理结构决定的。希腊时期的风俗质朴而又热烈。人们崇尚个体的优秀品质：勇气、演讲术、自律、正义、力量、敏捷、洪亮的声音、宽阔的胸膛。那时的人们不知奢侈风度为何物。因为人口稀少，物质匮乏，每个人都是自己的奴仆、厨师、屠夫、士兵，身兼数职。自给自足的习惯使希腊人拥有了卓越的才能，比如荷马笔下的阿伽门农和狄俄墨得斯。与之类似的还有色诺芬在《万人大撤退》中对自己和同胞的描述：“部队渡过亚美尼亚的特拉玻斯河后，下了许多的雪，士兵们都凄惨

地倒在雪地上。色诺芬却裸身站起来，拿起斧头，开始劈柴。其他人见状，也都起身劈起柴来。”在他的部队里，言论完全自由。士兵们为战利品争吵，为每一个新命令与将军们辩论。色诺芬跟任何人一样言辞锋利，又胜过所有人。他不仅获取，同时也一样给予。有谁不认为他们是一群伟大的男子呢？与其他伟人一样，他们纪律松弛，却信守荣誉的准则。

古代悲剧，以及所有古代文学的可贵魅力在于，人物的语言质朴纯粹。人们具有极佳的感知力，却不自知。那时沉思还未成为人类头脑的主要任务。我们之所以仰慕古代，并非是喜欢旧事物，而是因为仰慕自然。希腊人不喜思考，却具有完美的感知力和最健美的躯体。成年人的举止如孩童般纯粹优美。他们制造花瓶，写作悲剧，雕刻人物，就像拥有健康感官的人都会做的，品味高雅。任何时代，只要存在健康的人类体格，花瓶、悲剧、雕塑都会持续不断地被创造出来，今天同样如此。然而，作为一个类别，希腊人的创作因为他们卓越的方式，超越了其他所有的作品。他们将成人的力量与迷人的儿童无意识融合起来。这些儿童的特点属于人类，任何经历了孩童时期的人都能理解；此外，总有一些人在成年后仍保留了童时的特点。若

有人具有孩子般的天赋和天生的力量，他仍然是希腊人，重新燃起我们对希腊女神的热爱。我敬慕《菲洛克忒忒斯》中对自然的爱。读到诗人对梦境、星辰、岩石、山峦和海浪的呼语时，我感到时间像大海退潮一样流逝。我体会到人类的永恒，人类思想的同一性。似乎希腊人有着跟我相同的伙伴。我心中的太阳、月亮、水、火，同样进入希腊人的心灵。那么，过分夸大希腊人与英国人、古典学派与浪漫学派之间的区别，就显得肤浅和迂腐了。当柏拉图的思考同样进入我的脑海，点燃品达心灵的真理同样点燃了我时，时间就不存在了。当我发现，我们具有相同的感觉，我们的灵魂具有相同的色彩，就好像融为了一体时，我为什么还要量度自由的尺度？还要计数埃及的年岁？

学生通过亲身经历的骑士精神来理解历史上的骑士时代，通过自己相似的小规模经历来解读航海探险和环游世界的年代。对于神圣的世界史，他用同样的钥匙来开启。当远古时期一位预言家的声音仅仅使他回想起童年时的情感、青年时的祷告时，他就穿透了所有混乱的传统和制度的乱象，发现了真理。

稀有奇异的精神不时在人类身边现身，向我们揭示自然新的事实。我看到，上帝之子一直都行走

在人群中，最普通听众的心灵和灵魂都能感受到他们的使命。很显然，三足鼎、牧师、女祭司都得到神圣灵感的启示。

耶稣震撼征服感性的人。他们无法将耶稣归为历史，也不能将其与自身妥协。当他们开始尊重制度，渴望神圣生活时，他们的虔诚就解释了一切事实，一切语言。

摩西、琐罗亚斯德、麦努、苏格拉底的信仰毫不费力地被思想吸收。我从未感到它们的遥远。它们同样是我的信仰。

我并未远涉重洋，也没有穿越百年，就认识了最早的僧侣和隐士。不止一次，他们中有人在我看来无视劳作，却拥有高高在上的思考力。他们是以上帝名义乞讨的高傲的受惠者，就像19世纪的修行者西蒙、底比斯、最早的方济各会士。

东方和西方的牧师、骑教僧侣、婆罗门、德鲁伊特教徒、印加人的影响力在个人生活中得到印证。顽固形式主义者的影响压抑幼儿的精神和勇气，麻痹他的理解力，不但没有激起愤怒，反而使他顺从和恐惧，甚至认同这种专制。这是我们常见的事实。当孩子长大后，他会发现，压迫他青春的不是别人，而是他自己。那些僧侣教徒的名字、话语、形态使孩童的他成为压制自己青春的机体。事

实使他明白，巴比伦主神马尔杜克如何受到崇拜，金字塔如何建成，这要比商博良发现所有建筑工人的名字、每片砖瓦的成本来得更有意义。他在自己的家门口发现亚述和乔卢拉的土堆，他本人即是开路者。

每一个善于思考的人在反抗他所在时代的盲目崇拜时，都在重复此前改革者的道路。在追逐真理的过程中，跟前人一样，他会发现美德面临新的危险。他再次明白，要抵制盲目崇拜需要多大的精神力量。放荡紧追着改革的脚步。在人类历史上，有多少次，路德不得不哀叹虔诚在自己家庭里消失！一天，马丁·路德的妻子询问他："老师，以前教皇在位时，我们热烈又频繁地祈祷。为什么现在我们祈祷这么少，又这么冷漠呢？"

进步的人类在文学中——在所有的寓言和所有的历史中——发现宝贵的财富。他发现，文学不是古怪的诗人描述奇异怪诞的情景，而是普通人用笔表述自己和所有人的真实告白。在字里行间，他清晰地读出关于自己的传记，而这在他出生前已经写下。在他个人的经历中，他接连遇到伊索、荷马、哈菲兹、阿里奥斯托、乔叟、司各特的每一篇寓言，并以自己的头脑和双手印证它们的真实。

古希腊的美丽寓言不是幻想的产物，是想象力

的贴切创造，是普遍的真理。普罗米修斯的故事寓义何其丰富，主题何其永恒！它不仅是欧洲史的第一篇章（神话给历史事实罩上了薄薄的面纱，如机械工艺的发明、殖民地的移民），还记述了宗教的历史，在某种程度上近似后期的信仰。普罗米修斯是这个古老神话中的耶稣。他是人类的朋友；一边是永生之父上帝并不公正的“正义”，一边是终将死亡的噍类人类。他随时准备为人类承受苦难。但是，与加尔文派基督教不同，神话中的普罗米修斯是宙斯的挑战者。这体现了一种思想状态，当有神论的教义以一种粗陋客观的方式传播时，它就会出现。它似乎是人类对谎言的自我防卫，他不满于人们相信的上帝存在的事实，觉得敬畏上帝这一义务过于繁重。如果可以的话，他愿意偷走造物主的火种，脱离他，独立生活。《被缚的普罗米修斯》是一部怀疑主义的传奇。它的细节在任何时代都同样真实。诗人们说，阿波罗为阿德墨托斯看护羊群。当众神降临人间时，无人能辨识。耶稣不为人理解；苏格拉底和莎士比亚亦是。安泰俄斯[③]被赫拉克利斯扼杀，却在每次触及大地母亲时恢复力量。人类就是被打败了的巨人安泰俄斯，尽管他在身体上和思想上都是弱小的，却在与自然交流的习惯中获得力量。音乐和诗歌的力量松开，拍动自然的翅

膀，解答俄尔斐斯的谜语。透过无穷无尽变化的形态，看到哲学上的同一，人类因此得以理解普洛透斯④。昨日欢笑哭泣、昨夜沉睡如尸体、今日又起身奔跑的我还能是谁呢？我在任何角度看到的，不是普洛透斯的转生轮回，还会是什么呢？我能用任一生物、任一事实的名字来象征表达我的思想，因为每一个生物都是人类的动因或结果。坦塔罗斯⑤对于你我来说仅仅是一个名字，意味着一直在灵魂可视范围内隐现浮动的思想之水无法饮用。灵魂的转生轮回决不是寓言。虽然我希望它只是寓言，但是世间男女仅仅在百分之五十的意义上是人类。谷仓旁、田地里、森林中、地底下、海洋中的每一个动物都极力获得一席之地，在某个或某些直立的、面向天空的人类中留下它的形态和印记。啊！兄弟，请你的灵魂不要退却，不要退入多年来你已经习以为常的形态。斯芬克斯的古老寓言在我们看来同样熟悉和贴切。据说她坐在路边，向每一个路人出谜语。如果行人答不出，她就将其活活吞下。如果行人答对了谜语，就杀死她。我们的生活不就是反复出现的斯芬克斯吗？她们形态多样，变幻无穷，无一例外地向人类灵魂提出问题。那些不具有高级智慧的人，无法解答时代的事实或问题，就成为她们的奴隶。他们被事实包围，制服，成为普

通、感官的人。对事实的机械顺从，窒息了所有精神的火花，而只有它们才使他成为真正的人。但是，如果他忠实于自己更高级的本能或情感，就好像来自于更高级的物种，拒绝事实的主宰，信守灵魂，并看到事实背后的法则，那么，所有事实将温顺退却，回归原位。它们知道主人是谁，最平庸的事实也使他荣耀光辉。

在歌德塑造的人物海伦娜中，我们发现同样的寓义：每个名字都代表存在。歌德希望表达的是，这些人物，如喀戎、格里芬、弗尔克亚、海伦、利达在某种程度上的确对思想产生特定的影响。他们至今仍是永恒存在的实体，如同奥林匹亚众神时期一样真实。歌德在深入思考它们的同时，自由地挥洒幽默，在自己的想象中赋予它们实体。尽管长诗《浮士德》像梦境一样离奇飘渺，却比作者其他较大众的剧作更具吸引力。原因在于，它非常奇妙地使思想从习以为常的形象中解放出来，以狂放自由的设计、接连不断出其不意的情节，唤醒了读者的想象和创造。

普遍的自然对于渺小的诗人来说太过强大。它端坐在诗人颈部，通过诗人之手来写作。当诗人似乎只是在表达一时的奇想和虚构的故事时，最后完成的作品却是精确的寓言。柏拉图因此说：“诗人

说出的伟大智慧之语，他们自身并不理解。”中世纪所有虚构的作品都以或隐蔽或欢快的方式表达了那个时代的思想要努力实现的目标。所有的魔法都是对科学力量的深远预感。最快的鞋、最锋利的剑、制服自然的元素、利用矿物的神秘特质、听懂鸟类的语言，这些都是思想沿着正确方向的模糊努力。英雄超自然的力量、永恒青春的馈赠，诸如此类，都是人类精神“改变事物表象，满足思想需求”的努力。

在《佩尔赛森林》和《高卢人阿玛迪斯》中，花环和玫瑰在忠贞的女孩头上盛开，在不忠者的额头枯萎。在《男孩与斗篷》的故事里，即便是成熟的读者也会因绅士维尼拉的胜利而吃惊地感到美德的愉悦。所有关于精灵记录的假设，如仙女不喜欢被命名，她们的礼物是多变的、不可信任的，寻宝的人不可言语，等等，不仅在康韦尔或布列塔尼的作品中存在，在康科德的作品中也不例外。

近期的传奇小说中存在寓言吗？我读过《拉马摩尔的新娘》。威廉·阿斯顿爵士是低俗诱惑的化身，锐文斯伍德城堡意味着高傲的贫穷，外国使节则是班扬笔下正直勤勉的代表。通过抵制不公和放荡，我们都可以射杀抛弃美和善的野牛。露西·阿斯顿是忠贞的另一个名字，永远美丽，又总是很容易

遭遇世间的不幸。

与人类的社会史和纯正哲学史共同发展的还有外在世界的历史，人类与其有着同样紧密的联系。人类是时间的概要，是自然的关联物。他的力量在于其联系的广泛性，他的生活与整个有机和无机存在的链条密不可分。在古罗马，条条通衢从广场开始向东西南北延伸，直达帝国各省的中心。帝国首都的士兵因此可达波斯、西班牙、英国的所有通商城镇。与之类似，人类的心灵与自然万物之间有通道相连，使它们臣服于人类的主宰。人类是关系的集合，是万物之根，他的花朵和果实就是整个世界。他的能力涉及人类外在的自然，预示着他将居住的世界，就像鱼鳍预示了水的存在，还未孵化的鹰的双翅预设了空气。没有世界，人类不可能生活。将拿破仑置于孤岛的监狱，没有士兵来展现他的能力，没有阿尔卑斯山可以攀援，没有赌注可以押上，他只能与空气作战，看上去颇为愚蠢。将他送至疆域辽阔的大国，满是拥挤的人口、复杂的利益、对立的力量，你会发现受到如此束缚的拿破仑已经不再是真正的拿破仑了。这仅仅是塔尔博特的阴影；——

“他的实体不在这儿。
你看到的只是人性最小

最少的部分；
但，若框架的整体都在这儿，
它是那么宽敞高大，
你的屋檐无法容纳。”

哥伦布需要在地球上规划他的航线。牛顿和拉普拉斯需要时代的万物和布满天体的星空。有人可能说，牛顿思想的本性已经预言了引力太阳系。戴维或盖·吕萨克的思想同样如此，他们从小就开始探索粒子的吸引和排斥，预测了有机体的法则。难道人类胚胎的眼睛没有预见光的存在吗？难道亨德尔的耳朵没有预知和谐之音的魔力吗？瓦特、富尔顿、怀特莫尔、阿克赖特富有创造性的双手，难道没有预示金属易熔、坚硬、可回火的质地，石、水、木的性能吗？难道少女的可爱特质没有预示文明社会的优雅和装饰吗？这里，我们还想到人与人之间的行为。人们用多少年的时间去思考，获得的自我认知却不及热情的爱一日的教导。个人若不曾因恶行感到愤慨，不曾听到雄辩的语言，不曾在举国的欢庆或惊惧中与成千上万的人分享内心的悸动，他又怎会了解自己呢？没有人能预期自己的经历，也无法猜测新事物会揭示怎样的能力或感觉，就像他明天要初次会见的人，今天是无论如何也画不出面孔的。

我不再详细探究这种联系的起因。我们明了以下两个事实就足够了：思想是同一的；自然是它的关联物，历史是可读出可写出的。

精神因此以各种方式为它的生徒集中、重现它的财富。人类也应历经所有的循环，将自然之光集为一体。历史不再是沉闷的书籍，它将化身为每一个正直智慧的人。你不必告诉我阅读过的历史书本清单和语言，却应让我感受到你所经历的历史时期。人类应是荣誉之殿。就像诗人们所描述的，他像女神那样行走，身着的彩衣印满奇妙的事件和经历；他自己的形态和特点在诗人智慧的笔下成为五彩斑斓的内衣。在他身上，我看到前世；他的童年，我看到人类的黄金时代、知识之果、阿尔戈的探险、亚伯拉罕的呼唤、神殿的建造、耶稣的降临、黑暗时代、文艺复兴、宗教改革、新大陆的发现、新科学和新宗教的产生。人类应是畜牧神的祭司，将晨星的祝福、天堂人世有记载的所有财富带入简陋的茅舍。

这一要求是否有些自负呢？那么，我否认所写下的一切，假装知道我们并不知道的事物有什么意义？我们在强烈表达某个事实的同时，必然表现出还相信其他的事实，这是语言的缺陷。我认为人类的真实所知非常肤浅。听听墙上的老鼠，看看篱笆

上的蜥蜴、脚下的蘑菇、木料上的苔藓。无论是出于同情，抑或道义，我对它们生活的世界有多少了解呢？这些生物跟高加索人一样古老，甚至年代更久远。它们在人类之外保持着自己的生活，没有留下任何互相交流的词语或者符号的迹象。书上展示了五六十种化学元素与历史年代间什么样的联系呢？不仅如此，历史记录了怎样的人类哲学呢？我们以死亡和永生之名隐藏的诸多神秘，历史又给出了怎样的解答呢？真正的历史写作需要智慧，它预知人类联系的广泛性，视事实为象征。我羞愧地发现，我们所谓的历史是多么肤浅的村庄故事啊。多少次，我们反反复复地说罗马、巴黎、君士坦丁堡！罗马知道老鼠和蜥蜴吗？奥林匹克运动会和领事馆对这些人类之外的生物有什么意义？甚至，对爱斯基摩的海豹捕猎者、划独木舟的肯纳卡人、渔夫、码头工人、搬运工，它们提供了任何食物、经验或帮助吗？

我们写作历史必须更广泛、更深刻。为此，我们需要道德改革，需要永远新鲜的可以疗伤的良知流入，才能真正表达我们居于中心又广泛联系的自然，而不是记录人类很久以来关注的自私和傲慢。这一天已经存在，人类无意中已经沐浴它的光芒。但是，科学和文学并不是通往自然的道路。理解自

然所需的光芒离傻子、印第安人、儿童、未受教育的农民的儿子，比解剖学者和文物研究者更近。

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注释

① 希腊神话中能预知未来，并能随意改变形状的海中牧人。

② 希腊神话中河神伊那科斯的女儿，主神宙斯的情人之一。宙斯与其交欢后，为避免赫拉对其迫害，将伊娥变成了母牛。

③ 希腊神话中的巨人，是大地女神盖亚和海神波塞冬的儿子，力大无穷，只要他保持与大地的接触，就可以从母亲那里持续获得无限的力量。在与赫刺克勒斯的战斗中，赫刺克勒斯发现他力量的秘密，将其举到空中使其无法从盖亚那里获取力量，最终将他扼死。

④ 见第44页注释1。

⑤ 希腊神话中宙斯之子，因蔑视众神被罚入地狱。他站在一池深水中，只要他饥渴难耐，弯下腰想喝水时，池水立即消退，他永远也无法喝到。

自　立

“不要在自我之外寻求自我。”
人类是自身的星辰；造就
正直完美人类的灵魂，
主宰所有的光、影响、命运；
人类经历的一切都适逢其时。
我们的行动是我们的天使，无论善恶，
是悄然走过我们身旁的命运的影子。

——博蒙特和弗莱彻所著
《诚实人的命运》后记

将婴儿置在岩石中，
使它吸吮母狼的乳头，
与鹰隼和狐狸共度冬日，
力量和速度是它的手足。

几天前，我读到一位著名画家写作的几首诗，新颖而不落俗套。这样的诗句无论是什么题材，灵魂都可以从中听到训诫。它们流露的情感比可能包含的任何思想都要宝贵。相信自己的思想，相信你心中的真情实感对于所有人都是真实的，这就是天赋。说出你潜在的信念，它会具有普遍意义；因为，内在在合适的时机就变成外在，于是人类最初的思想在最终审判的号角下再次出现。思想的声音

每个人都很熟悉，我们认为摩西、柏拉图、弥尔顿最大的优点是，他们蔑视书本和传统，他们表达的不是大众，而是自己的思想。一个人需要更多地学会发现并观察来自他内心的光芒，而不是诗人和圣人光辉的思想。然而，他却在没有察觉的情况下舍弃了自己的思想，因为那是他的。在每一本天才的著作中，我们发现曾被自己否决的思想；它们带着陌生的威严再次出现在我们面前。这是伟大的艺术作品对我们最感人的教导了。它们教导我们，即使所有的声音都反对，也应心平气和地信守内心自发的感想。否则，明天会有一个陌生人，以极佳的判断力准确表述出我们一直以来的所想所感，我们就将不得不羞愧地从其他人那里接受我们自己的观点。

每个人在受教育的过程中，总会在某个时刻开始相信：忌妒是无知；模仿是自杀；无论好坏；他必须自己拿到他的那一份；尽管世界充满了善，他也必须亲自在土地上耕耘劳作才可收获滋养的谷物。实际上他内在的力量是全新的，只有在尝试过后，他才知道自己能做什么。一张面孔、一个人物、一个事实给他留下深刻印象，另一个却什么也未留下，这不是没有道理的。没有预定的和谐这种记忆中的塑像并不存在。有光线洒落的地方，目光

就在那里，见证那特别的光束。我们仅仅表达了自己的一半，又因每个人阐释的神圣理念而羞愧。我们尽可以相信，这一神圣理念是合宜恰切的，它将如实地传达给我们。然而，上帝不会让懦夫来展示他的作品。一个人全心投入工作，尽力做到最好，他就是放松快乐的；但是，他说过的话、做过的事却让他不得清闲。那是一种无法实现的解救。当他试图尝试时，天赋就离他而去；没有灵感的帮助；没有创造力，没有希望。

相信你自己：每颗心都跟随那存在之链颤动。接受上苍赐予你的位置，你同时代的人，事件之间的联系。伟大的人物都会这样做，他们如孩子般向同时代的天才吐露心声，显示他们的感知：绝对真理存在于他们心中，通过他们的双手展现力量，支配他们所有的存在。我们是今天的人类，必须以最崇高的思想接受同样超验的命运；我们不是在狭小角落里受保护的未成年人和病人，不是在革命面前逃跑的懦夫，而是向导、救赎者、行善之人，遵从上帝的力量，在黑暗和混沌中前行。

大自然通过孩子、婴儿，甚至野蛮人的面孔和行为，向我们传达了多么悦耳的神谕啊！他们身上不存在使我们对情感产生怀疑的分裂反叛思想、计算推断力量，以及与我们目的相左的方法。他们的

思想是完整的，他们的眼睛是不可征服的。注视他们的面孔，我们会觉得不安。婴儿不会顺从任何人，所有人都遵从他；一个婴儿通常会有四五个成人陪他咿呀说话和玩耍。所以，上帝赋予幼儿、青年、成人同样的独特趣味和魅力，使它优雅又令人羡慕，如果它要求独立，它的权利必须得到重视。不要以为幼儿无法跟你我讲话，他就没有力量。听！在隔壁的房间里，他的声音清晰有力。似乎他明白如何跟同龄人交流。无论羞怯或勇敢，他会发现如何使我们这些长者变得多余。

自信有晚餐吃的男孩子冷漠又无动于衷，像贵族那样不屑于去博取别人的好感，这是人类本性的健康态度。坐在客厅里的男孩就像剧场中的正厅后座；独立、漠然，在他的角落里观察路人和周围的事物，以男孩子快速概括的方式评价他们的优缺点，如：好的、坏的、有趣的、愚蠢的、雄辩的、讨厌的。他从不为结果和利益所累，他给出独立真实的判断。你必须追求他，他不会向你献殷勤。但是人类好像被自己的意识关进了监牢。一旦他的行动或语言获得荣誉，他就担负了责任。成百上千的人注视着他，或同情或憎恨，他们的情感他必须考虑。这一点他无法忘却。啊，他可以再次回复他的中立！避开所有的誓言，再次以同样真挚、公正、

不可贿赂、无所畏惧的纯真来评价事物，就像他评价过的那样，可以做到这样的人永远令人钦佩。他对所有经历的事件做出评价，它们不是私密的，却是必要的，像箭一样射入人类的耳中，使他们心生敬畏。

我们独自一人时，会听到这样的声音，但若我们进入人类社会，它们就变得微弱起来，无法听到。社会总是与每个成年人作对。它就像一个股份合作公司，为了更好地保证持股人的利益，牺牲了所有成员的自由和文化。社会要求的一大美德即是顺从，自立是它的反面。社会不喜事实和创造者，却爱名号和惯例。

一个真正的人，必须做到不墨守成规。采摘永恒棕榈树的人，不可被女神的名字吓阻，却应该探究一下它是否真女神。最终，只有你自己的完整思想才是神圣的。宽恕你自己，你将获得世界的决定权。我记得很年轻时，一位重要的导师习惯于强求我学习宗教的古老教义，我忍不住反问他：“假如我完全听从内心来生活，这些神圣的传统与我有什么关系呢？”我的朋友说：“这些神圣的传统或许来自人间，而非上苍。”我回答说：“它们在我看来不是这样；但假如我是撒旦之子，我将追随撒旦生活。”在我看来，除了我的本性，没有任何法则

是神圣的。好和坏不过是随时可以用来指称事物的名字；唯一正确的是追随我的内心；唯一错误的是违背我的内心。一个人勇于面对所有的反对，就好像除了他，一切事物都是短暂的、有名无实的。我们屈从于徽章、名号、大的团体和僵死的制度，想到这一点我就非常羞愧。每一个体面又善于辞令的人对我的影响和掌控都超出了合理界线。我的生活理应正直而充满生气，无论用什么方法，我都应直言不讳地说出真相。假如恶意和虚荣披着慈善的外衣，应该放过它们吗？假如一个愤怒的顽固之人投身于废除奴隶制度的宏大事业，带着来自加勒比海东岸巴巴多斯的最新消息来到我面前，我难道不应对他说：“去爱你的婴儿；爱你的伐木工；要谦虚和蔼；要宽容；不要用这种对千里之外的黑人的不可思议的温柔来掩饰你冷酷、毫不仁慈的野心。你对遥远的人给予爱，却对周围的人充满怨恨。”虽然这话很刺耳，真理却比虚假的爱更漂亮。你的善良必须要有棱角，否则它什么都不是。哀鸣啜泣发生时，必须要宣讲恨的教义，来中和爱的教义。当我听到精神的呼唤时，我会避开父母妻子和兄弟。我会在门柱的楣石上写上“奇想”。当然，我希望它不仅仅是一时兴起，不过我们不能花费一天的时间来解释。不要期待我会解释为什么有时寻求，有

时拒绝别人的陪伴。那么，也不要像今天的某个好人，告诉我，让所有穷人过上好日子是我的义务。他们难道是我的穷人吗？我告诉你，愚蠢的博爱主义者，我舍不得给他们一块钱、一毛钱、一分钱。他们不属于我，我也不属于他们。有一类人，在精神上我是他们的奴隶；如果有需要，我愿意为他们去坐牢；但决不是你那五花八门通俗的慈善，不是对傻瓜的学院教育，不是建造毫无意义的聚会之所，不是对酒鬼的施舍，不是成百上千的救济团体。尽管我羞愧地承认，有时我会屈服而施舍一块钱，但那钱却是邪恶的，不久我就会有勇气不再施舍。

人们通常认为，美德并不多见。人类和他的美德是并行存在的。人们会做一些好事，比如英勇行为或是慈善活动，就跟他们因自己平常不参加游行而交罚款一样。他们的行为是对其生活的歉意或辩护，就像伤残之人和精神病人支付高额的膳食费一样。他们的美德是悔过。我想要的不是赎罪，而是生活。我的生活是为了生活本身，而不是供他人观看。我喜欢的生活是低调朴实的，不要华丽多变，那样它才是真实公平的。我想要的是健康甜蜜的生活，不需要节食和流血。我的要求是，你首先要证明自己是真正的人，而不是诉诸行动来说明自己。

我清楚知道，是否去表现公认的优秀行为，这对于我来说没有任何区别。对于我固有的权利，却要再次付出代价来获得，这一点我无法认同。尽管我天赋不高，资质平凡，我却是真正的自己，不需要次要的证明来给自己或他人信心。

我必须要做的是与我有关的事，而非别人认为我该做什么。这一标准无论是在现实生活还是精神生活中都难以达到，却是伟大与平庸的所有区别。你总会发现有一些人，他们自认为比你自己还要清楚你的职责所在，这使得以上标准更难以实现。在这个世界上随波逐流很容易；在孤独中过自己的生活也很简单；但是，伟大的人却可以在人群中实现完美甜蜜的独处。

我之所以反对遵从已经死亡的习俗，是因为它会分散你的力量。它耗费你的时间，使人看不清你的性格。假如你信奉已经死亡的宗教，捐助毫无生命力的圣经团体，跟随一个政党投票支持或反对政府，像卑下的女佣一样摆放你的餐桌，在所有这些遮蔽之下，我很难看清你是一个怎样的人。如此“合宜”的生活也占用了你不少精力。但是，做你自己的事，我就会认识你。做自己的事，你会强化自己。人类必须明白，这种顺从的游戏不过是捉迷藏罢了。如果我知道你的派别，我就可以预测你

的论点。我听到一位牧师宣布，他要讲的话题和主旨是某种宗教制度的合适与否。难道我没有预知他不可能讲出一个自然的新词吗？难道我不知道尽管他装模作样探究了一番这种制度的理由，却不会真正去做吗？难道我不知道他已经向自己承诺，只能作为牧师，而不是真正的人，采取唯一获许的视角吗？他是一位受聘律师，那些法庭的架势是最空洞的矫揉造作。然而，绝大多数人都用手绢蒙住了自己的眼睛，使自己隶属于某个舆论团体。这种循规蹈矩使他们在一些个别问题上不会犯错，他们只说几次谎言，却总是虚伪不诚实的。他们所谓的真理总不是那么真实。他们口中的二不是真正的二，四也不是真正的四。因此，他们说的每句话都让我们苦恼，不知从哪里开始纠正他们。与此同时，大自然很快就给我们配备了我们所拥护派别的囚犯制服。我们开始展现同样的面孔和体态，并逐步获得最平静的愚笨表情。这里有一个让人羞愧的特别例子，它在历史上也一直存在。我指的是“愚蠢的赞美表情”，是我们在感觉并不舒服的人群中，回应并不感兴趣的交谈时所做出的强颜欢笑。此时，我们的表情极不自然，完全由低级的僭越任性所牵动，面部轮廓变得僵硬，流露最让人讨厌的情感。

因为你的不顺从，世人不悦地向你扬起鞭子。

所以，人类必须知道如何判断刻薄的面孔。旁观者在大街上、在朋友的客厅里对他侧目。如果这种反感起源于鄙视和抗拒，跟他本人一样，他大可以带着悲伤的表情回家了。但是，大众刻薄的面孔，跟他们的温柔表情一样，并无任何深刻缘由，就像风吹起、报纸指向一样随时呈现和消失。与元老院和大学师生的不满相比，大众的不满更为可怕。知晓这个世界的坚定的人可以很容易地容忍上流社会的愤怒。他们的愤怒是审慎有礼貌的，因为他们性情羞怯，本身就很脆弱。但是，当上流社会阴柔的怒气附加上民众的愤慨，无知的穷人被号召起来，存在于社会底部的无知残暴的力量开始咆哮发力时，人们就需要高尚的习惯和宗教来帮助他们像神祇那样视其为无关紧要的小事。

另一个使我们担心自信的事情是我们的一贯性，一种对我们过去言行的尊敬。因为，他人只有通过我们过去的言行才可推断我们的做事方式，而我们不愿让其失望。

但是，你为什么要时刻保持清醒呢？为什么要拖曳着死去的记忆，唯恐自己与此前公开的言行产生不一致呢？即便你前后矛盾，又如何呢？永远不要仅仅依赖你自己的记忆，甚至是纯粹记忆的行为；将过去置于当前，在几千人的注视下进行评

判，每天都是新生活，这似乎才是智慧的准则。当灵魂生发虔敬的行动时，尽管它们可以赋予上帝外形和色彩，却全身心地屈服于他，在你自己的纯正哲学中，你已经否定了上帝的人性。像约瑟将外套弃在荡妇手中那样，丢掉你的理论，逃走吧。

荒谬的一贯性是凡人作弄别人的伎俩，受到庸俗的政客、哲学家、牧师的追捧。伟大的灵魂与一贯性没有任何关系，否则，他大可关注自己在墙上的影子了。坚定地说出今日所想，明天继续表达那时所感，虽然它可能与今天的看法格格不入。“啊，那你肯定要被误解的。”但，被误解有那么糟糕吗？毕达哥拉斯没有得到理解，苏格拉底、耶稣、路德、哥白尼、伽利略、牛顿，每一个纯粹智慧的灵魂无不如此。伟大的人注定得不到同时代人的理解。

我认为，没有人可以违反他的本性。就像安第斯山脉与喜马拉雅山高度的差异在地球表面上微乎其微，他所有意志的爆发都在其存在法则范围之内。无论你用何种方式判断考验他，结果不会受影响。每个人的性格就像离合体或亚历山大诗，无论是向前读，向后读，还是横着读，表达的都是同样的意义。上帝允我在宜人的林间生活中悔罪，让我逐日记录我的真实所感吧，没有预期和回顾。我不

能置疑，它将会是对称平衡的，尽管这并非我的本意，也不是我的观点。我的书将有松林的气息和昆虫的嗡鸣。窗前的燕子将口中所衔的丝线或稻草织入我的文中。我们假扮着自己。性格却不受我们意志的左右表露自身。人们以为，只有外在的行为才能表现他们的美德或恶意，却没有发现，善与恶每时每刻都在散发生命的气息。

无论有多少变化，行为之间存在一致性，这样，每一个行为时刻都是诚实自然的。因为来自于同一个意志，不管看上去如何千差万别，它们却是和谐统一的。假如思想站得更高一点，离得更远一点，行为之间的不同就消失了。同一个趋势把它们统一起来。最好船只的轨迹是一百种不同方向的Z字形构成的。在足够远的距离观看，Z字都不见了，船只沿着它的航向径直前行。你某个真诚的行为会阐释自身及其他真诚的行为。循规蹈矩，你就什么也解释不了。独立行动，以及你已经独立完成的事将为现在的你辩护。伟大诉诸未来。假如我今天足够坚定去做正确的事，鄙视他人的目光，我必然已经做了足够多正确的事来为现在的我辩护。不管将来会如何，现在就行动吧。蔑视表象，一直都要这样。性格的力量是会累积的。所有过去日子的美德都有益于性格的健康。元老院和战场上的英雄

何来如此的威严？是什么充斥我们的想象？是对他们身后一连串伟大的日子和胜利的意识。它们像集中的光束，照耀前进中的英雄。他就像得到天使清晰可见的引导。正是这种引导使查塔姆的声音如雷贯耳，使华盛顿港神圣庄严，使美利坚得到亚当的垂青。荣誉值得我们尊敬因它并非瞬息即逝。它永远是古时的美德。我们今天之所以膜拜它，是因为它不属于今时。我们热爱它，尊敬它，因为它不是一个诡计，却是独立自生的，也因此具有古老无瑕的血统，即使是在年轻人身上也能体现出来。

我希望，在这些日子里，我们已经最后一次听到循规蹈矩和一贯性。让这两个词见诸报端，从此变得荒唐可笑吧。舍弃就餐的铜锣，让我们听听斯巴达横笛的声音吧。让我们不再鞠躬道歉。一个大人物要来我家就餐。我不想讨好他，我希望他应该取悦于我。我支持人性，尽管我希望它是善良的，我却希望它首先是真实的。让我们直面并谴责这个时代逢迎讨好的平庸和虚伪讨厌的满足，用事实来驳斥习俗、贸易、官场。这个事实是所有历史的结论，即：只要有人类工作的地方，就有一位伟大负责任的思想者和行动者；真正的人不属于任何其他的时空，却是万物的中心。有他在的地方，就有自然。他是你、所有人、所有事件的度量。一般情况

下，社会的每一个人都会让我们想起一些其他事物或其他人。性格、现实不会让你想到其他。它取代了所有的创造。人类必须做到使所有的境况变得无关紧要。每个真正的人都是一项事业、一个国家、一个时代，需要无限的空间、数量和足够的时间来实现他的计划，子孙后代则像随从一样追随他的脚步。凯撒诞生了，几十年后我们有了罗马帝国。耶稣降生了，数以百万计的民众渐渐发展为忠实于他，所以他为人类的美德和潜能感到困惑和惊讶。一个制度是某个人拉长了的影子，比如，修道院制度之于隐士梁锦松、宗教改革之于路德、贵格会教义之于乔治·福克斯、卫理公会教义之于约翰·卫斯理、废奴主义之于托马斯·克拉克森。西皮奥被弥尔顿评价为“罗马的高度”。所有的历史都很容易演变成关于一些勇敢诚实之人的传记。

让人类知晓他的价值，将万物置于脚下。让他不要偷窥或窃取，不要像孤儿院的男孩、私生子，或闯入者那样在这个为他存在的世界里上下躲藏。但是，市井之人，不具备建造高楼或雕刻大理石神像的能力，他看到这些，就会自觉谦卑。对他来说，一座宫殿、一尊雕像，或一本昂贵的书给人陌生和令人生畏的感觉，就像一辆装饰华丽的马车，似乎在问：“先生，你是谁？”然而，它们都属于

他，追求他的关注，祈求他展示出自己的能力，拥有它们。风景等待我的评判，它无法命令我，我才能决定它是否应得到赞美。一个广为流传的酒鬼的寓言讲述的是，大街上一个烂醉如泥的酒鬼，被带到公爵家中，沐浴更衣后睡在公爵的床上，在他醒来后，像公爵那样得到奴仆所有谦卑的侍奉，结果，他确信自己之前曾发生精神错乱。这个故事受欢迎的原因在于，它以极佳的象征手法表现了人类的状态：人在这个世界上就像一个醉鬼，却时不时偶尔醒来，诉诸理性，发现自己是一个真正的王子。

我们的阅读是一种乞讨和奉承。在历史中，我们的想象力欺骗了我们。王国郡主、权利地位，是比平民百姓日常生活更华丽的词汇。但是，王侯和庶民经历的是相同的生活，这两个阶级的生活也是相同的。为什么要对阿尔弗雷德、斯坎德贝格、古斯塔夫如此敬仰？假如他们是高尚的，他们是否耗尽了美德呢？那时，他们闻名遐迩的事迹使其青史留名，今天，个人生活的言行同样至关重要。如果平民百姓能做到言行独立，他们将承接君王的光辉。

一直以来，君王们统治世界，吸引举国的目光。这个巨大的象征告诉我们人与人之间应有的互

相尊重。人们快活地忠诚于国王、贵族，或大业主，使其按照自己的法则行事，设定自己关于人和事物的规则，推翻平民百姓的准则，以荣誉而非金钱来偿付受益，他本身即是法律的体现。这种忠诚是一种象形符号，通过它人们模糊地表明他们对自己的权利和美的意识，这也是每个人应有的权利。

我们来探究一下自信的理由，即可解释所有自立行动的魅力所在。谁是受托人？什么是可以普遍信赖的原汁原味的自我？那让科学困惑的星辰，没有视差，没有可计数的元素，即使是琐屑不洁的行为，如果有丝毫独立的色彩，它也会赋之以美丽的光辉，它的本质和力量又是什么？疑问引领我们发现最根本的缘由，它也是天赋、美德、生命的本质所在，我们称之为自发性或本能。我们将这种第一位的智慧称为直觉，而所有之后的学习都是后天所得。本能是研究所能触及的最终事实，是一切事物的共同根源。我们并不清楚，存在感在静谧的时刻如何在灵魂中涌现，它与万物、时空、光、人类并无不同，却与之同在。显然，同一个终极缘由赋予它们生命和存在。起初，我们共享万物得以存在的生命。然后，我们将万物视为自然的表象，忘记我们曾来自相同的根源。本能是行动和思想的源泉。本能是我们获得灵感的肺脏，它给予人类智慧，只

有不虔敬之人和无神论者才会否认。我们被无穷的智慧环绕，获取真理，承载直觉的行动。当我们发现正义，发现真理时，这不是我们自己完成的，而是直觉通过我们显露光芒。如果我们质疑直觉从何处来，如果我们试图窥视万物之源的精神，所有的哲学都站不住脚。我们唯一能确认的是，直觉是否存在。每个人都会区分思想的自觉行动和不自觉的感知，他知道完美的信仰来自于不自觉的感知。他或许在表达这些不自觉的感知时并不准确，但他明白，它们就像白昼与黑夜一样无可置疑。我任性的行为和习得是徘徊流动的；最无聊的幻想、最微弱的乡土情感，都激起我的好奇和尊重。没有思想的人们像反驳观点一样不假思索地反对感知的表达，甚至更为急切。他们不会区分感知和观点。他们以为，我是有选择地看到了这个或是那个事物。但是，感知不是异想天开，却至关重要。如果我发现一个特征，我的孩子以后也会发现，随着时间的推移，所有人类都会发现，尽管有可能在我之前没人发现它。因为，我对它的感知就像太阳一样，是无可争辩的事实。

灵魂与上帝的联系如此纯粹，应用任何辅助的介质都是亵渎。当上帝言语时，它传达的不是一件事，而是所有事；它的声音充满这个世界；它从现

时思想的中心撒播光芒、自然、时间、灵魂；时光更新，一切获得新生。无论何时，纯粹的思想获得神圣的智慧，旧事物就会消亡，方法、导师、课本、神殿不复存在；它生活在现在，将过去和未来都融入现时。一切事物因与上帝的联系变得神圣起来，并无区别。万物因其缘由消解于上帝，在这个普遍的奇迹中，个体的小奇迹都消失不见。因此，如果有人声称他知晓上帝，说上帝之言，将你带回另一个世界、另一个国家某个古老腐朽民族的用语，那么，不要相信他。橡子成熟之后是橡树，前者比后者更好吗？父母在孩子身上倾注他成熟的存在，他比孩子更好吗？那么，这种对于过去的崇拜从何而来？逝去的世纪密谋对抗灵魂的清醒和权威。时空不过是眼睛创造的生理色彩，灵魂却是光：光存在的地方，是白昼；光曾经存在的地方，是黑夜；如果历史不是关于我的存在和未来那令人愉快的寓言，它就是一种无礼和伤害。

人类羞怯又充满歉意，他的腰杆不再挺直，他不敢说“我认为”，“我是”，却要引用圣人或贤者所言。面对一叶草或盛开的玫瑰，他是羞愧的。我窗前的玫瑰花从不会提及之前的，或是更好的玫瑰。它们为自己而存在，与今时的上帝共生。对它们来说，时间并不存在，只有玫瑰，每时每刻都是

完美的。叶芽绽放前，它生命的旅途已然走完，盛开的花朵、无叶的根里再无它的影子。它的本性得到满足，同时它也在一生中满足了自然。然而，人类会拖延，会记忆。他并非生活在现时，却以回溯的眼光哀悼过去，或无视身边的财富，踮着脚尖预知未来。他只有超越时间，生活在现时的自然中，才能快乐和强大。

以上所说显而易见。然而，拥有丰富智慧的人却不敢直接聆听上帝，只能经由我不认识的大卫、耶利米，或是保罗的言辞才能知晓上帝。我们不能总是认为某些文本、某些人生特别弥足珍贵。我们就像小时候死记硬背祖母和老师话语的儿童，当我们长大，成为有才能和个性的人时，我们会痛苦地回忆起说过的话；然后，我们拥有了与祖母和老师相同的视角，我们就理解了他们，希望忘掉那些学来的话，因为，无论何时，我们都可以在合适的时候同样自如地说话。如果我们真实地生活，我们就可以看得清楚明白。强者示强，就像弱者守弱一样容易。我们有了新的感知，我们就应该快活地像丢垃圾一样扔掉过去的记忆。当人类与上帝同在时，他的声音会像潺潺溪流和簌簌谷穗一样悦耳。

写到这里，我仍未触及这个话题的最高真理；或许也无法触及；因为我们所说的一切都是对直觉

的遥远回忆。我尽最大努力表达的思想，就是这些。如果善在你的身边，如果你有自立的生活，那肯定不会是以某种已知的或惯常的方式；你不会察觉他人的足迹；看不到人类的面孔；听不到任何名字——生活方式、思想、善都将是全新的、陌生的。自立排斥实例和经验。你从人类那里取得方法，而不是给予他们方法。所有曾经存在的人都是自立被遗忘的牧师。自立的生活同样有恐惧和希望。希望中甚至有几分低俗。在想象的时刻人们不会有感激之情，也不会有通常的喜悦。超越激情的精神发现同一性和永恒的因果，察觉真理和权利的自我存在，知晓万物运行良好从而内心平静。广阔的自然空间、大西洋、南海，久远的时间间隔、年岁、世纪，都无足轻重。我所想所感的这些，是此前任何生活状态和环境的基础，也是我的现时生活，以及所谓生命死亡的基础。

生命本身，而非已经逝去的生命，才是有益的。力量在静止的一刻终止；它存在于从过去向新状态的转变中，存在于海湾的急流和飞向靶心的箭镞中。世界憎恨这个事实：精神永远都在变。这个事实让过去永远受到贬抑，财富变成贫穷，所有的美名变成耻辱，使圣徒和无赖同样迷惑，将耶稣和犹大一样推到旁边。那么，我们为什么要喋喋不休

地说自立呢？因为精神的存在，力量不是自发力，而是使然力。讨论依赖是糟糕的外在言说方式。应该讨论的是依赖者，因为它是存在的、运动的。比我更顺从的人，尽管他不会举起自己的手指，却是我的主人。因为精神的引力，我必然围绕他转动。当我们谈及非凡的美德，我们以为那是华而不实的。但是，我们没有发现，美德是高度，如果一个人或一类人适应并接受准则，那么按照自然规律，他们必然征服驾驭所有的城市、民族，以及不接受准则的国王、富人和诗人。

这就是我们就这个话题很快触及的最终事实，跟其他任何话题一样，一切答案都归结于受到赐福的“一”。最高的因是自我存在的，它化身进入低级形态的程度各不相同，也因此成为判断善的标准。一切事物包含多少美德，就有多少真实。贸易、农牧业、狩猎、捕鲸、战争、雄辩、个人体重，在某种程度上都是自立存在的实例和不纯粹的行动，也因此引起我的尊重。在自然的守恒和增长中，我发现同样的法则在起作用。力量从本质上来说是权利的核心标准。在她的王国里，自然不允许无法自立者存在。行星的诞生和成熟、它的平衡和轨道、被强风吹弯的树木恢复原来的形态、每一个动植物的生命之源，都是自力更生、自立精神的表

现。

那么，一切都归于一点：让我们不再漂泊，让我们带着以上的思想端坐家中。让我们只需声明这个神圣的事实，来震惊闯入的乌合之众、书籍、制度。命令侵入者脱掉脚上的鞋子，因为上帝在我们内心。用我们的纯粹来评判他们，我们遵从自己的法则，让这种顺从不仅表现我们固有的财富，还要体现自然的贫乏和命运。

但是，如今我们只是一群暴徒。人类并不畏惧他人，他的智慧也未得到训诫待在家中，与内心的海洋交流，却要远走他乡，从他人那里求得一杯水喝。我们必须独立行走。我喜欢礼拜开始之前寂静的教堂，胜过任何布道。被圣殿环绕的人，看上去是那么遥远，那么平静，那么纯洁！所以让我们一直端坐吧。为什么要承担我们的朋友、妻子、父亲，或孩子的过错呢？难道是因为他们与我们共享壁炉的温暖，或是人们所说的与我们同一血脉吗？所有人都流着我的血，我也流着他们的血。我不会接受他们的任性或是愚蠢，甚至不会为他们感到羞耻。然而，你的独立不可是机械的，必须是精神上的，也就是说，它必须是一种提高。每时每刻，世界似乎都在谋划强调琐事来纠缠你。朋友、客户、孩子、疾病、恐惧、贫穷、慈善，同时来敲你的

门，说：“出来见我们吧。”但是你要保持你的状态，不要被它们迷惑。人们拥有的能力打扰我，我并不感兴趣。没有人可以接近我，除非我自己走过去。“我们爱自己所拥有的；但是，因为欲望，我们失去了自己的爱。”

假如我们不能马上实现神圣的顺从和信仰，至少让我们抵制住诱惑吧；让我们进入战争状态唤醒萨克逊人心中的雷神托尔和主神沃登，它们是勇气和忠诚的象征。和平年代，我们需要做的是诉说真言。制止虚伪的好客和伪善的爱。不要再按照我们与之交谈的人们的期望生活，他们要么骗人要么被骗。告诉他们：“啊父亲，啊母亲，啊妻子，啊兄弟，啊朋友，一直以来，我跟随你们生活在表象中。今后，我将过真实的生活。希望你们明白，此后我只遵从永恒的法则。我不再允诺，只会尽力而为。我会努力赡养我的父母，照顾我的家庭，做一个诚实的丈夫。但是，我会以一种全新的，从未尝试过的方式来实现。我不再遵从你的习惯，我必须是我自己。我不能再为了你们失去完整的自我。如果你们爱本色的我，我们都会更快乐。如果你们无法接受，我仍然坚持认为你们应该接受。我将不再隐藏自己的好恶。我深信，深沉的就是神圣的；不论何时，我都将听从心灵的召唤，做任何让我开心

的事。如果你言行高尚，我会热爱你；如果你不是，我不会以虚伪的关切来伤害你，伤害我自己。如果你是真实的，但与我追逐的真理不同，那么，呆在你的同类中吧，我将寻找我的同伴。我这样做并不是自私，却是谦逊真诚的。无论我们在谎言中生活了多久，重拾真实的生活，对于你我、对于所有人，都是有益的。这些话在今天听起来刺耳吗？不用太久，你会爱上你我的本性诉求。如果我们追随真理的脚步，最终它会使我们更加自信、更为出色。——但是，你带给这些朋友很多痛苦。的确如此，但我无法因为他们的感情牺牲我的自由和权力。此外，所有人在探究绝对真理的时候，都会在某个时刻具备理性的力量；那时，他们将证明我是对的，会做与我相同的事。

通常认为，你对普遍标准的否认是对一切标准的否认，是一种唯信仰论；厚颜无耻的感觉主义者用哲学之名粉饰他的罪过。然而，意识的法则一直存在。我们得以免罪的忏悔只有两种。你必须以或直接或间接的方式证明自己的清白，履行自己的职责。你思考一下是否处理好了与父母、表亲、邻居、城镇、猫狗的关系，他们中的任何一个是否有理由谴责你。然而，我同样可以忽略这种间接的标准，免除自己的责任。我有自己坚定的权利要求和

完美的领域。在我的领域里，许多通常被称为职责的并不是真正的责任。但是，假如我可以履行自己领域的职责，我就能摒弃普遍的准则。如果有人认为这种法则不算严厉，就让他有朝一日遵守它的戒律吧。

如果有人抛弃了人性的普遍动机，试图相信自己是真正的主人，他的内心必须具备某种神性。如果他的心灵是高尚的，意志是坚贞的，目光是明澈的，他就完全可以是自我的准则、社会和法律。一个简单的目标对于他，就像别人眼中必不可少的事物一样重要！

任何人，如果对比思考一下我们称之为社会的当前状况，就会发现上述伦理道德标准是多么必需。人类仿佛被抽空了心脏和肌腱，变成胆怯沮丧的抱怨之徒。我们惧怕真理、惧怕命运、惧怕死亡、惧怕其他人。我们这个时代没有伟大完美的人。我们需要有人给我们的生命和社会注入活力。但是，我们发现，大多数人没有这个能力，他们无法满足自己的需求，却有着远远超出自己实际力量的野心，终日所做的就是躬身乞讨。我们打理家务的方式是乞求得来的，我们的艺术、职业、婚姻、宗教并非由我们自己选择，而是社会为我们做出的选择。我们是客厅里的士兵，避开了与命运的残酷

战争。然而，只有在与命运的抗争中，力量才会产生。

如果我们的年轻人在第一次创业时失败了，他们就失去了所有的信心。如果年轻的商人赔了钱，人们就说他破产了。如果最优秀的天才在大学里就读，毕业一年后还没能在波士顿或纽约城中或是郊区谋到一份差事，那么他的朋友和他自己似乎可以相信，他从此一蹶不振，在抱怨中度过余生是理所当然的了。一位来自新罕布什尔或佛蒙特的健壮小伙子，在多年间尝试了所有的职业：他组建团队，耕种农场，做买卖，办学校，做牧师，当报纸编辑，参加国会，买小镇，如此种种，这些经历自然得就像猫儿落到他脚下。他的价值要比那些在城里像玩偶一样的人高过百倍。他与他的时代并肩同行，并不因没有“专职某个行业”感到惭愧，因为他已经真正生活过，而不是将生活推延。他拥有的机会不是一次，而是百次。让一位斯多葛派的学者来挖掘人类的潜力吧，告诉人们：他们不是倾斜的柳树，能够也必须自己独立；只要人类做到相信自我，他就会具有新的力量；人类是上帝之言化身而成的肉体，生来就是要给各个民族疗伤的；他因为我们的怜悯而羞愧，当他开始独立行动，将律法、书籍、盲目崇拜、习惯扔出窗外时，我们将不再可

怜他，却要感谢他尊重他。这样的老师会使人类的生命重现辉煌，他的名字也会万古流芳。

我们很容易发现，更多的自立将给人类的一切领域和所有关系带来一场革命，无论是宗教、教育、追求、生活方式、社会联系、财产，甚至是思维视角，无不如此。

第一，人类沉溺于什么样的祈祷之中啊！人们口中神圣的祈祷并没有那么勇敢和果断。它将目光投向国外，乞求用他国的事物来经历他国的美德，在无穷无尽的自然、超自然、中介和奇迹的迷宫中迷失了自我。渴求某样事物，而非真正的善，这种祈祷是邪恶的。祈祷是以最高的视角思考生活的事实，是喜悦的观察者的心灵独白。它是上帝之灵宣告其行为的完满。但是，为了私人目的进行祈祷是卑鄙的，是一种偷窃。这种祈祷预设了二元论的存在，认为自然与意识是不统一的。一旦人类与上帝成为一体，他将不再乞求，他将在一切行为中发现祈祷存在。农民在田中跪求上帝为其除草，划船者跪持船桨乞求上帝给予助力，尽管他们的要求那么卑微，却是自然听到的真实祈祷。在约翰·弗莱彻的《邦都卡》剧中，卡拉塔克被要求去探听奥德神的意图，他回答说：

他隐藏的旨意在于我们的努力；

我们的英勇是最好的神。

另一种虚假的祈祷是我们的懊悔。不满是一种自立的缺位，是意志的不坚定。如果可以帮助受难者，你尽可以去为灾难感到后悔；如果后悔无济于事，做好你自己的工作吧，此时，厄运已经渐渐过去。人们的同情同样卑劣。有人坐在那里愚蠢地痛哭，乞求别人的陪伴，我们走向他怜悯他，却没有像猛烈的电击一般告诉他真理，给予他健康，使他再次恢复自己的理性。命运的秘密是我们手中的快乐。自助的人永远受到众神和他人的欢迎。所有的大门向他敞开，所有人都跟他打招呼，所有的荣誉加冕于他，所有的目光都热切地追随他。我们爱他，拥抱他，因为他并不需要我们的爱。我们关切又歉疚地爱抚他，赞美他，因为他坚定地走自己的路，对我们的反对不屑一顾。众神关爱他，因为人类憎恨他。古波斯祆教先知琐罗亚斯特如是说："对不屈不挠的人类来说，永生的众神来得很快。"

正如人类的祈祷是意志的病态一样，他们的信条是理智的病态。他们那些像愚蠢的以色列人那样说话："请上帝不要同我们说话，以免我们死去。你说话吧，跟我们在一起的任何人，请说话吧，我

们将听从你。”无论在哪里，我的兄弟都阻止我遇见上帝，因为他已经关闭了自己的圣殿之门，只是背诵他的兄弟，或者他的兄弟的兄弟的关于上帝的寓言。每个新思想都是一种新的分类方式。假如某人的思想具备不平凡的力量，进行不平凡的活动，就像洛克、拉瓦锡、哈顿、边沁、傅立叶，他就将自己的分类方式加于他人，看哪！那是一个全新的体系。他的自满程度与其思想的深度、触及并教导学生的事物数量成正比。但是，这一点在信条和宗教上同样明显。它们同样是一些具有强大思想的人对职责和人与至高无上的上帝关系的基本思考，比如加尔文主义、教友派、斯韦登堡论。思想的学习者快乐地将一切事物归类在新的术语里，就像刚学习了植物学的女孩发现新的土地、新的季节一样。到了某个时候，学生会发现，通过学习老师的思想，他的智力也提高了。但是，那些思想偏颇的人对信条和宗教极端崇拜，将它们视作结果，而不是很快耗尽的工具。因此，在他们眼中，信条和宗教体系的界线在遥远的地平线上与宇宙的界限融合了，天空中发光的星体似乎挂在他们老师建造的拱门之上。他们无法想象，你们这些陌生人怎么会有权利看到它们，怎么能看到它们。“肯定是你们从我们这里偷走了光。”他们却没有察觉，不属于任

何体系、不可征服的光可以洒进任何一间屋子，包括他们自己的房间。就让他们叽喳片刻，将光称作他们自己的吧。如果他们是诚实的，并且学得不错，很快，他们整齐的新藩篱就会变得狭窄低矮，断裂倾斜，腐烂消失；而永恒的光，那么的青春和快乐，散发千万道光环，展现千万种色彩，将如初生之日那般在宇宙闪耀。

第二，正因为自我学习的缺位，去国外游历的迷信仍然吸引着所有受过教育的美国人。他们崇拜的对象是意大利、英国、埃及。那些为英国、意大利或者希腊赢得尊重的人们，却像地轴一样牢牢地坚守自己的家园。唯因如此，这些国家才成为人们尊重的对象。在充满英勇气概的时刻，我们感到，职责是我们的位置所在。灵魂决不是旅行者。有智慧的人守着自己的家园，无论何时，当他的职责需要他离开自己的家，或者踏上异国的土地时，他的心仍然属于自己的家。他的表情告诉人们，他是智慧和美德的传道者；他像君王一样拜访异国的城市和居民，决非闯入者或者奴仆。

人们出于艺术、学习、慈善的目的进行环球航行，我决无粗鲁的反对之意。不然，人类就首先被驯化了，不会为了求知而走出国门。而那些出于玩乐目的，或是为了获取他没有的事物而旅行的人，

越来越远离自我，即便是年轻人，也在古旧的事物中老去。在底比斯和巴尔米拉，他的意志和思想变得如古城般陈旧和破败。他给废墟带来的只是陈腐和遗迹。

旅行是傻瓜的天堂。我们的初次旅途就使我们发觉了各地景色的冷漠。我在家里梦想着去那不勒斯、去罗马，以为我会被那里的美景迷醉，会忘记我的忧伤。我收拾行装，跟朋友们拥抱告别，踏上远航的船只。当我在那不勒斯醒来时，却发现这样一个冷峻的事实：我还是那个忧伤的我，没有放松，别无二致，我无法逃离自我。我参观了梵蒂冈和各处的宫殿。我假装陶醉于风景及其意境，但我事实上并无感动。无论我去哪里，自我的巨人都如影随形。

第三，但旅行的流行是一种深层病态的表征，影响所有的思想活动。思想是流浪的，我们的教育体系催生了浮躁。我们的身体被迫待在家中，思想却远游各处。我们模仿他人，而模仿不就是思想的游历吗？我们按照其他国家的喜好建造房屋；我们的书架用外国的饰品装点；我们的观点、喜好、能力都仰慕追随历史和他国。艺术无论是在何处繁荣，都是由灵魂创造的。艺术家的原型来自于自己的思想，并非他处。他将自己的思想应用于作品和

周围环境，从而创造艺术。我们为何需要复制多立克或哥特的模型呢？美、舒适、伟大的思想、新奇的表达离我们绝不遥远。假如美国的艺术家怀着希望去学习，热爱他要完成的工作，考虑到美国的气候、土壤、日长、人们的需要、政府的习惯和形式，他将建造出一所适合各方面条件的房屋，人们的喜好和情感也将得到满足。

坚持做你自己，决不要模仿他人。在你一生的学习中，每时每刻你都可以表现自己的才能；但若你只是模仿他人的才能，你不过暂且拥有了它们的一半。每个人能发挥出多大的潜力，只有造物主可以告诉他。除非他表现出来，没有人会知道，也无法知道他的潜质。有谁是莎士比亚的老师？有谁教导了富兰克林、华盛顿、培根、牛顿？伟大的人都是独一无二的。西皮奥的思想恰恰是他无法从别人那里学到的。研究学习莎士比亚决不会造就另一个莎翁。做你自己应做的事，不要期望过高，不要过于无畏。此时，你的话语就如菲迪亚斯的巨凿、埃及人的镘刀、摩西或但丁的笔一样英勇壮丽，但又与它们都不相同。极丰富极雄辩的灵魂，诉说千变万化的语言，不可能屈尊重复自身。但如果你能听到这些伟人之语，自然你可以用同样的音调回复他们，因为耳与舌是本质相同的两个器官。信守你简

单又高贵的生活，听从你的心灵，你将再次重现史前世界。

第四，我们的宗教、教育、艺术都以他国为典范，社会精神也不例外。所有人都用社会的进步装饰自己，却没有人真正有所进步。

社会从来不会进步。它在一方面有所发展，在另一方面就有所退化。社会不断地在变化；它依次经历了野蛮、文明、基督教化、富裕、科学的时期；但这种变化不是进步。它获得某样事物，就失去另一样事物。社会有了新的艺术，却失去了古老的本能。衣着光鲜、阅读、写作、思考的美国人，口袋里装着怀表、铅笔、支票；赤裸身体的新西兰人，他的财产不过是一根木棒、一只矛、一张草席、二十人合居的一间茅屋；二者的对比多么鲜明！然而，比较一下两人的健康状况，你会发现美国人已经失去了原住民的力量。如果那些旅行者所言不假，用阔斧击打野蛮人，过一两天，他的伤口就会愈合，就好像你击中的是柔软的田地。而这样的一击却会要了美国人的命。

文明的人类发明了马车，却舍弃了双脚的作用。他用手杖支撑自己，却失去了肌肉的力量。他拥有精致的日内瓦手表，却不知如何通过太阳来辨别时辰。他手持格林尼治航海年历，需要时就会得

到信息，却不认得天空中的任何一个星球。他从不注意夏至和冬至，对春分和秋分同样所知甚少，他脑中从来就无清晰的年度日历。笔记本损害了他的记忆力；图书馆给他的才智带来重负；保险公司使事故增加；机械是不是一种阻力仍有争议；我们是不是在精致的生活中失去了力量，是不是在囿于制度和形式的基督教中失去了天然美德的活力，没有确切的答案。每一个斯多葛主义者都是真正的禁欲者，但是在基督教王国里，基督徒在哪里呢？

道德标准就像高度或体积的标准，并无什么偏离。现在的人并不比以前的人更伟大。最遥远时代与最晚近时代的伟人极其相同；19世纪的科学、艺术、宗教、哲学并不会比两千三四百年前普鲁塔克笔下的英雄教育出更伟大的人。人类不会随着时间进步。西皮奥、苏格拉底、阿那克萨哥拉、狄奥根尼都是伟人，但他们并未留下任何辨识的类别。真正与他们同类的人，人们不会用西皮奥等名字来称呼他，他是独立的自我的代表，也因此成为派系的创始人。每个时期的艺术和发明仅仅是时代的服饰，并不会焕发人类的活力。机械水平提高，其弊端可能完全抵消了它的好处。哈得森和贝林的渔船极其出色，让帕里和富兰克林深为震惊，虽然后者的设备应用了所有科学和艺术。伽利略利用观剧镜

发现了更为壮丽的天体现象，后来者无人能及。哥伦布依靠没有甲板的小船发现了新大陆。令人奇怪的是，几年前或几百年前受到人们热烈欢迎的工具和机械，在一段时期之后就被弃用，消亡了。伟大的天才是回复本质的人。在科学的一次次胜利中，我们以为战争艺术也提高了。然而，拿破仑征服欧洲凭借的却是野营——依靠赤裸裸的英勇并解除一切帮助。拉斯·卡萨斯说，拿破仑相信，只有“放弃我们的武器、弹药、杂货铺、马车，效仿古罗马的习惯，让每个士兵收获他的谷物，用手磨机研磨，自己烤面包”，才能造就一支无往不胜的部队。

社会就像波浪。波浪向前移动，构成它的水却不会随之前移。水的微粒并未从波谷升到波峰。它的统一性只是一种现象。今天构成一个国家的成员可能明年就会死去，他们的经历也随之消亡。

因此，对于财产的依赖，对保护财产的政府的依赖，都是缺乏自立的表现。很久以来，人们关注的对象不是自我，而是身外之物。他们视宗教、学者、社会制度为财产的守护者，若有人冒犯它们，他们会觉得那是对财产的冒犯，从而强烈反对。他们互相尊重的标准并非他们是什么样的人，而是他们拥有什么。然而，若有教养的人开始重新尊崇他的本性，他会因财产而羞愧。当他发现财产只是一

种偶然和意外，以遗产、馈赠、罪恶的方式来到他的手中时，他觉得那不是拥有；它不属于他，它的根不在他的手中；它之所以还呆在他旁边，是因为还没有革命或是强盗将它带走；他会开始憎恨它。但是，一个人的本性是与生俱来的，这种本性是具有生命力的财产。它不会因统治者的命令、暴徒、革命、烈火、风暴、破产而失去，无论是在何处，它永远都在新生。哈里发阿里说：“你的命运或生命在追逐你，所以，停止对它们的追逐吧。”我们对陌生财物的依赖，导致盲目尊崇数量。政治党派在无数次的会议上碰面；人群越来越庞大，每次宣告都引起新的喧嚣，埃塞克斯郡代表团！新罕布什尔州民主党人！缅因州自由党人！年轻的爱国者身处上千人中，而感到自己更加强大。与之类似，改革者召集大会，大批的民众一起投票和表决。啊，朋友们！上帝不会屈身降临于你，真正的路径恰恰相反。人类只有舍弃所有外部的帮助，自我独立，才是强大的成功的。每一次有新人加入他的团体，他的力量就削弱一部分。人难道不会胜过一座城池吗？不要向他人乞求，在无止境的变化中，你是唯一坚定的主体，必将很快成为周围一切事物的支柱。力量是与生俱来的，人类之所以软弱无力，是因为他在自我之外寻找善的存在。当人类认识到这

一点时，他毫不犹豫地专注于自己的思想，即刻纠正自己，笔直站立，控制自己的四肢，创造出奇迹。直立者总是比倒立者强大。

所以，把握一切所谓的命运。大多数人与命运赌博，随着命运之轮的旋转，他们得到一切，又失去了一切。但是，请你不要认为这些赌博中的胜利是合法的，而要去探究原因与结果，它们才是上帝的法官。用意志去工作和获取，你就给命运之轮套上了锁链，从此可以安心就座，不再惧怕它的转动。政治上获得胜利、收了更多租金、病后身体康复、出远门的朋友归来等等使你颇为欢喜，你会觉得好日子在前面等着你。不要相信！只有你自己，才能给你安宁。只有法则的胜利，才能让你安宁。

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Ralph Waldo Emerson
Nature

PENGUIN BOOKS — GREAT IDEAS

Nature

A subtle chain of countless rings
The next unto the farthest brings;
The eye reads omens where it goes,
And speaks all languages the rose;
And, striving to be man, the worm
Mounts through all the spires of form.

INTRODUCTION

Our age is retrospective. It builds the sepulchres of the fathers. It writes biographies, histories, and criticism. The foregoing generations beheld God and nature face to face; we, through their eyes. Why should not we also enjoy an original relation to the universe? Why should not we have a poetry and philosophy of insight and not of tradition, and a religion by revelation to us, and not the history of theirs? Embosomed for a season in nature, whose floods of life stream around and through us, and invite us, by the powers they supply, to action proportioned to nature, why

should we grope among the dry bones of the past, or put the living generation into masquerade out of its faded wardrobe? The sun shines to-day also. There is more wool and flax in the fields. There are new lands, new men, new thoughts. Let us demand our own works and laws and worship.

Undoubtedly we have no questions to ask which are unanswerable. We must trust the perfection of the creation so far as to believe that whatever curiosity the order of things has awakened in our minds, the order of things can satisfy. Every man's condition is a solution in hieroglyphic to those inquiries he would put. He acts it as life, before he apprehends it as truth. In like manner, nature is already, in its forms and tendencies, describing its own design. Let us interrogate the great apparition that shines so peacefully around us. Let us inquire, to what end is nature?

All science has one aim, namely, to find a theory of nature. We have theories of races and of functions, but scarcely yet a remote

approach to an idea of creation. We are now so far from the road to truth, that religious teachers dispute and hate each other, and speculative men are esteemed unsound and frivolous. But to a sound judgment, the most abstract truth is the most practical. Whenever a true theory appears, it will be its own evidence. Its test is, that it will explain all phenomena. Now many are thought not only unexplained but inexplicable as language, sleep, madness, dreams, beasts, sex.

Philosophically considered, the universe is composed of Nature and the Soul. Strictly speaking, therefore all that is separate from us, all which Philosophy distinguishes as the NOT ME, that is, both nature and art, all other men and my own body, must be ranked under this name, NATURE. In enumerating the values of nature and casting up their sum, I shall use the word in both senses; — in its common and in its philosophical import. In inquiries so general as our present one, the inaccuracy is not material; no confusion of thought will occur.

Nature, in the common sense, refers to essences unchanged by man; space, the air, the river, the leaf. Art is applied to the mixture of his will with the same things, as in a house, a canal, a statue, a picture. But his operations taken together are so insignificant, a little chipping, baking, patching, and washing, that in an impression so grand as that of the world on the human mind, they do not vary the result.

Nature
I

To go into solitude, a man needs to retire as much from his chamber as from society. I am not solitary whilst I read and write, though nobody is with me. But if a man would be alone, let him look at the stars. The rays that come from those heavenly worlds will separate between him and what he touches. One might think the atmosphere was made transparent with this design, to give man, in the heavenly

bodies, the perpetual presence of the sublime. Seen in the streets of cities, how great they are! If the stars should appear one night in a thousand years, how would men believe and adore; and preserve for many generations the remembrance of the city of God which had been shown! But every night come out these envoys of beauty, and light the universe with their admonishing smile.

The stars awaken a certain reverence, because though always present, they are inaccessible; but all natural objects make a kindred impression, when the mind is open to their influence. Nature never wears a mean appearance. Neither does the wisest man extort her secret, and lose his curiosity by finding out all her perfection. Nature never became a toy to a wise spirit. The flowers, the animals, the mountains, reflected the wisdom of his best hour, as much as they had delighted the simplicity of his childhood.

When we speak of nature in this manner, we have a distinct but most poetical sense in the

mind. We mean the integrity of impression made by manifold natural objects. It is this which distinguishes the stick of timber of the wood-cutter from the tree of the poet. The charming landscape which I saw this morning is indubitably made up of some twenty or thirty farms. Miller owns this field, Locke that, and Manning the woodland beyond. But none of them owns the landscape. There is a property in the horizon which no man has but he whose eye can integrate all the parts, that is, the poet. This is the best part of these men's farms, yet to this their warranty-deeds give no title.

To speak truly, few adult persons can see nature. Most persons do not see the sun. At least they have a very superficial seeing. The sun illuminates only the eye of the man, but shines into the eye and the heart of the child. The lover of nature is he whose inward and outward senses are still truly adjusted to each other; who has retained the spirit of infancy even into the era of manhood. His intercourse

with heaven and earth becomes part of his daily food. In the presence of nature a wild delight runs through the man, in spite of real sorrows. Nature says, — he is my creature, and maugre all his impertinent griefs, he shall be glad with me. Not the sun or the summer alone, but every hour and season yields its tribute of delight; for every hour and change corresponds to and authorizes a different state of the mind, from breathless noon to grimmest midnight. Nature is a setting that fits equally well a comic or a mourning piece. In good health, the air is a cordial of incredible virtue. Crossing a bare common, in snow puddles, at twilight, under a clouded sky, without having in my thoughts any occurrence of special good fortune, I have enjoyed a perfect exhilaration. I am glad to the brink of fear. In the woods, too, a man casts off his years, as the snake his slough, and at what period soever of life is always a child. In the woods is perpetual youth. Within these plantations of God, a decorum and sanctity reign, a perennial festival is

dressed, and the guest sees not how he should tire of them in a thousand years. In the woods, we return to reason and faith. There I feel that nothing can befall me in life, — no disgrace, no calamity (leaving me my eyes), which nature cannot repair. Standing on the bare ground, — my head bathed by the blithe air and uplifted into infinite space, — all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eyeball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or parcel of God. The name of the nearest friend sounds then foreign and accidental: to be brothers, to be acquaintances, master or servant, is then a trifle and a disturbance. I am the lover of uncontained and immortal beauty. In the wilderness, I find something more dear and connate than in streets or villages. In the tranquil landscape, and especially in the distant line of the horizon, man beholds somewhat as beautiful as his own nature.

The greatest delight which the fields and woods minister is the suggestion of an occult

relation between man and the vegetable. I am not alone and unacknowledged. They nod to me, and I to them. The waving of the boughs in the storm is new to me and old. It takes me by surprise, and yet is not unknown. Its effect is like that of a higher thought or a better emotion coming over me, when I deemed I was thinking justly or doing right.

Yet it is certain that the power to produce this delight does not reside in nature, but in man, or in a harmony of both. It is necessary to use these pleasures with great temperance. For nature is not always tricked in holiday attire, but the same scene which yesterday breathed perfume and glittered as for the frolic of the nymphs is overspread with melancholy to-day. Nature always wears the colors of the spirit. To a man laboring under calamity, the heat of his own fire hath sadness in it. Then there is a kind of contempt of the landscape felt by him who has just lost by death a dear friend. The sky is less grand as it shuts down over less worth in the population.

Commodity
II

Whoever considers the final cause of the world will discern a multitude of uses that enter as parts into that result. They all admit of being thrown into one of the following classes: Commodity; Beauty; Language; and Discipline.

Under the general name of commodity, I rank all those advantages which our senses owe to nature. This, of course, is a benefit which is temporary and mediate, not ultimate, like its service to the soul. Yet although low, it is perfect in its kind, and is the only use of nature which all men apprehend. The misery of man appears like childish petulance, when we explore the steady and prodigal provision that has been made for his support and delight on this green ball which floats him through the heavens. What angels invented these splendid ornaments, these rich conveniences, this ocean of air above, this ocean of water beneath, this

firmament of earth between? this zodiac of lights, this tent of dropping clouds, this striped coat of climates, this fourfold year? Beasts, fire, water, stones, and corn serve him. The field is at once his floor, his work-yard, his play-ground, his garden, and his bed.

'More servants wait on man
Than he'll take notice of.'

Nature, in its ministry to man, is not only the material, but is also the process and the result. All the parts incessantly work into each other's hands for the profit of man. The wind sows the seed; the sun evaporates the sea; the wind blows the vapor to the field; the ice, on the other side of the planet, condenses rain on this; the rain feeds the plant; the plant feeds the animal; and thus the endless circulations of the divine charity nourish man.

The useful arts are reproductions or new combinations by the wit of man, of the same natural benefactors. He no longer waits for

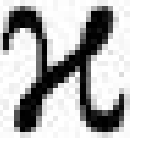
favoring gales, but by means of steam, he realizes the fable of Æolus's bag, and carries the two and thirty winds in the boiler of his boat. To diminish friction, he paves the road with iron bars, and, mounting a coach with a ship-load of men, animals, and merchandise behind him, he darts through the country, from town to town, like an eagle or a swallow through the air. By the aggregate of these aids, how is the face of the world changed, from the era of Noah to that of Napoleon! The private poor man hath cities, ships, canals, bridges, built for him. He goes to the post-office, and the human race run on his errands; to the book-shop, and the human race read and write of all that happens, for him; to the court-house, and nations repair his wrongs. He sets his house upon the road, and the human race go forth every morning, and shovel out the snow, and cut a path for him.

But there is no need of specifying particulars in this class of uses. The catalogue is endless, and the examples so obvious, that I

shall leave them to the reader's reflection, with the general remark, that this mercenary benefit is one which has respect to a farther good. A man is fed, not that he may be fed, but that he may work.

Beauty
III

A nobler want of man is served by nature, namely, the love of Beauty.

The ancient Greeks called the world  όβμος, beauty. Such is the constitution of all things, or such the plastic power of the human eye, that the primary forms, as the sky, the mountain, the tree, the animal, give us a delight in and for themselves; a pleasure arising from outline, color, motion, and grouping. This seems partly owing to the eye itself. The eye is the best of artists. By the mutual action of its structure and of the laws of light, perspective is produced, which integrates every mass of

objects, of what character soever, into a well colored and shaded globe, so that where the particular objects are mean and unaffecting, the landscape which they compose is round and symmetrical. And as the eye is the best composer, so light is the first of painters. There is no object so foul that intense light will not make beautiful. And the stimulus it affords to the sense, and a sort of infinitude which it hath, like space and time, make all matter gay. Even the corpse has its own beauty. But besides this general grace diffused over nature, almost all the individual forms are agreeable to the eye, as is proved by our endless imitations of some of them, as the acorn, the grape, the pine-cone, the wheat-ear, the egg, the wings and forms of most birds, the lion's claw, the serpent, the butterfly, sea-shells, flames, clouds, buds, leaves, and the forms of many trees, as the palm.

For better consideration, we may distribute the aspects of Beauty in a threefold manner.

1. First, the simple perception of natural

forms is a delight. The influence of the forms and actions in nature is so needful to man, that, in its lowest functions, it seems to lie on the confines of commodity and beauty. To the body and mind which have been cramped by noxious work or company, nature is medicinal and restores their tone. The tradesman, the attorney comes out of the din and craft of the street and sees the sky and the woods, and is a man again. In their eternal calm, he finds himself. The health of the eye seems to demand a horizon. We are never tired, so long as we can see far enough.

But in other hours, nature satisfies by its loveliness, and without any mixture of corporeal benefit. I see the spectacle of morning from the hilltop over against my house, from daybreak to sunrise, with emotions which an angel might share. The long slender bars of cloud float like fishes in the sea of crimson light. From the earth, as a shore, I look out into that silent sea. I seem to partake its rapid transformations; the active

enchantment reaches my dust, and I dilate and conspire with the morning wind. How does nature deify us with a few and cheap elements! Give me health and a day, and I will make the pomp of emperors ridiculous. The dawn is my Assyria; the sunset and moonrise my Paphos, and unimaginable realms of faerie; broad noon shall be my England of the senses and the understanding; the night shall be my Germany of mystic philosophy and dreams.

Not less excellent, except for our less susceptibility in the afternoon, was the charm, last evening, of a January sunset. The western clouds divided and subdivided themselves into pink flakes modulated with tints of unspeakable softness, and the air had so much life and sweetness that it was a pain to come within doors. What was it that nature would say? Was there no meaning in the live repose of the valley behind the mill, and which Homer or Shakespeare could not re-form for me in words? The leafless trees become spires of flame in the sunset, with the blue east for their

background, and the stars of the dead calices of flowers, and every withered stem and stubble rimed with frost, contribute something to the mute music.

The inhabitants of cities suppose that the country landscape is pleasant only half the year. I please myself with the graces of the winter scenery, and believe that we are as much touched by it as by the genial influences of summer. To the attentive eye, each moment of the year has its own beauty, and in the same field, it beholds, every hour, a picture which was never seen before, and which shall never be seen again. The heavens change every moment, and reflect their glory or gloom on the plains beneath. The state of the crop in the surrounding farms alters the expression of the earth from week to week. The succession of native plants in the pastures and roadsides, which makes the silent clock by which time tells the summer hours, will make even the divisions of the day sensible to a keen observer. The tribes of birds and insects, like the plants

punctual to their time, follow each other, and the year has room for all. By watercourses, the variety is greater. In July, the blue pontederia or pickerel-weed blooms in large beds in the shallow parts of our pleasant river, and swarms with yellow butterflies in continual motion. Art cannot rival this pomp of purple and gold. Indeed the river is a perpetual gala, and boasts each month a new ornament.

But this beauty of nature which is seen and felt as beauty, is the least part. The shows of day, the dewy morning, the rainbow, mountains, orchards in blossom, stars, moonlight, shadows in still water, and the like, if too eagerly hunted, become shows merely, and mock us with their unreality. Go out of the house to see the moon, and 't is mere tinsel; it will not please as when its light shines upon your necessary journey. The beauty that shimmers in the yellow afternoons of October, who ever could clutch it? Go forth to find it, and it is gone; 't is only a mirage as you look from the windows of diligence.

2. The presence of a higher, namely, of the spiritual element is essential to its perfection. The high and divine beauty which can be loved without effeminacy, is that which is found in combination with the human will. Beauty is the mark God sets upon virtue. Every natural action is graceful. Every heroic act is also decent, and causes the place and the bystanders to shine. We are taught by great actions that the universe is the property of every individual in it. Every rational creature has all nature for his dowry and estate. It is his, if he will. He may divest himself of it; he may creep into a corner, and abdicate his kingdom, as most men do, but he is entitled to the world by his constitution. In proportion to the energy of his thought and will, he takes up the world into himself. 'All those things for which men plough, build, or sail, obey virtue;' said Sallust. 'The winds and waves,' said Gibbon, 'are always on the side of the ablest navigators.' So are the sun and moon and all the stars of heaven. When a noble act is done, — perchance in a

scene of great natural beauty; when Leonidas and his three hundred martyrs consume one day in dying, and the sun and moon come each and look at them once in the steep defile of Thermopylæ; when Arnold Winkelried, in the high Alps, under the shadow of the avalanche, gathers in his side a sheaf of Austrian spears to break the line for his comrades; are not these heroes entitled to add the beauty of the scene to the beauty of the deed? When the bark of Columbus nears the shore of America; — before it the beach lined with savages, fleeing out of all their huts of cane; the sea behind; and the purple mountains of the Indian Archipelago around, can we separate the man from the living picture? Does not the New World clothe his form with her palm-groves and savannahs as fit drapery? Ever does natural beauty steal in like air, and envelope great actions. When Sir Harry Vane was dragged up the Tower-hill, sitting on a sled, to suffer death as the champion of the English laws, one of the multitude cried out to him,

'You never sate on so glorious a seat!' Charles Ⅱ., to intimidate the citizens of London, caused the patriot Lord Russell to be drawn in an open coach through the principal streets of the city on his way to the scaffold. 'But,' his biographer says, 'the multitude imagined they saw liberty and virtue sitting by his side.' In private places, among sordid objects, an act of truth or heroism seems at once to draw to itself the sky as its temple, the sun as its candle. Nature stretches out her arms to embrace man, only let his thoughts be of equal greatness. Willingly does she follow his steps with the rose and the violet, and bend her lines of grandeur and grace to the decoration of her darling child. Only let his thoughts be of equal scope, and the frame will suit the picture. A virtuous man is in unison with her works, and makes the central figure of the visible sphere. Homer, Pindar, Socrates, Phocion, associate themselves fitly in our memory with the geography and climate of Greece. The visible heavens and earth sympathize with Jesus. And

in common life whosoever has seen a person of powerful character and happy genius, will have remarked how easily he took all things along with him, — the persons, the opinions, and the day, and nature became ancillary to a man.

3. There is still another aspect under which the beauty of the world may be viewed, namely, as it becomes an object of the intellect. Beside the relation of things to virtue, they have a relation to thought. The intellect searches out the absolute order of things as they stand in the mind of God, and without the colors of affection. The intellectual and the active powers seem to succeed each other, and the exclusive activity of the one generates the exclusive activity of the other. There is something unfriendly in each to the other, but they are like the alternate periods of feeding and working in animals; each prepares and will be followed by the other. Therefore does beauty, which, in relation to actions, as we have seen, comes unsought, and comes because it is

unsought, remain for the apprehension and pursuit of the intellect; and then again, in its turn, of the active power. Nothing divine dies. All good is eternally reproductive. The beauty of nature re-forms itself in the mind, and not for barren contemplation, but for new creation.

All men are in some degree impressed by the face of the world; some men even to delight. This love ofbeauty is Taste. Others have the same love in such excess, that, not content with admiring, they seek to embody it in new forms. The creation of beauty is Art.

The production of a work of art throws a light upon the mystery of humanity. A work of art is an abstract or epitome of the world. It is the result or expression of nature, in miniature. For although the works of nature are innumerable and all different, the result or the expression of them all is similar and single. Nature is a sea of forms radically alike and even unique. A leaf, a sunbeam, a landscape, the ocean, make an analogous impression on the mind. What is common to them all, — that

perfectness and harmony, is beauty. The standard of beauty is the entire circuit of natural forms, — the totality of nature; which the Italians expressed by defining beauty 'il più nell' uno.' ['The many in the one']. Nothing is quite beautiful alone; nothing but is beautiful in the whole. A single object is only so far beautiful as it suggests this universal grace. The poet, the painter, the sculptor, the musician, the architect, seek each to concentrate this radiance of the world on one point, and each in his several work to satisfy the love of beauty which stimulates him to produce. Thus is Art a nature passed through the alembic of man. Thus in art does nature work through the will of a man filled with the beauty of her first works.

The world thus exists to the soul to satisfy the desire of beauty. This element I call an ultimate end. No reason can be asked or given why the soul seeks beauty. Beauty, in its largest and profoundest sense, is one expression for the universe. God is the all-fair. Truth, and

goodness, and beauty, are but different faces of the same All. But beauty in nature is not ultimate. It is the herald of inward and eternal beauty, and is not alone a solid and satisfactory good. It must stand as a part, and not as yet the last or highest expression of the final cause of nature.

Language
IV

Language is a third use which nature subserves to man. Nature is the vehicle of thought, and in a simple, double, and three-fold degree.

1. Words are signs of natural facts.

2. Particular natural facts are symbols of particular spiritual facts.

3. Nature is the symbol of spirit.

1. Words are signs of natural facts. The use of natural history is to give us aid in supernatural history; the use of the outer creation, to give us language for the beings

and changes of the inward creation. Every word which is used to express a moral or intellectual fact, if traced to its root, is found to be borrowed from some material appearance. Right means straight; wrong means twisted. Spirit primarily means wind; transgression, the crossing of a line; supercilious, the raising of the eyebrow. We say the heart to express emotion, the head to denote thought; and thought and emotion are words borrowed from sensible things, and now appropriated to spiritual nature. Most of the process by which this transformation is made, is hidden from us in the remote time when language was framed; but the same tendency may be daily observed in children. Children and savages use only nouns or names of things, which they convert into verbs, and apply to analogous mental acts.

2. But this origin of all words that convey a spiritual import, — so conspicuous a fact in the history of language, — is our least debt to nature. It is not words only that are emblematic; it is things which are emblematic.

Every natural fact is a symbol of some spiritual fact. Every appearance in nature corresponds to some state of the mind, and that state of the mind can only be described by presenting that natural appearance as its picture. An enraged man is a lion, a cunning man is a fox, a firm man is a rock, a learned man is a torch. A lamb is innocence; a snake is subtle spite; flowers express to us the delicate affections. Light and darkness are our familiar expression for knowledge and ignorance; and heat for love. Visible distance behind and before us, is respectively our image of memory and hope.

Who looks upon a river in a meditative hour and is not reminded of the flux of all things? Throw a stone into the stream, and the circles that propagate themselves are the beautiful type of all influence. Man is conscious of a universal soul within or behind his individual life, wherein, as in a firmament, the natures of Justice, Truth, Love, Freedom, arise and shine. This universal soul he calls Reason: it is not mine, or thine, or his, but we are its; we are its

property and men. And the blue sky in which the private earth is buried, the sky with its eternal calm, and full of everlasting orbs, is the type of Reason. That which intellectually considered we call Reason, considered in relation to nature, we call Spirit. Spirit is the Creator. Spirit hath life in itself. And man in all ages and countries embodies it in his language as the FATHER.

It is easily seen that there is nothing lucky or capricious in these analogies, but that they are constant, and pervade nature. These are not the dreams of a few poets, here and there, but man is an analogist, and studies relations in all objects. He is placed in the centre of beings, and a ray of relation passes from every other being to him. And neither can man be understood without these objects, nor these objects without man. All the facts in natural history taken by themselves, have no value, but are barren, like a single sex. But marry it to human history, and it is full of life. Whole floras, all Linnæus' and Buffon's volumes, are

dry catalogues of facts; but the most trivial of these facts, the habit of a plant, the organs, or work, or noise of an insect, applied to the illustration of a fact in intellectual philosophy, or in any way associated to human nature, affects us in the most lively and agreeable manner. The seed of a plant, — to what affecting analogies in the nature of man is that little fruit made use of, in all discourse, up to the voice of Paul, who calls the human corpse a seed, — 'It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.' The motion of the earth round its axis and round the sun, makes the day and the year. These are certain amounts of brute light and heat. But is there no intent of an analogy between man's life and the seasons? And do the seasons gain no grandeur or pathos from that analogy? The instincts of the ant are very unimportant considered as the ant's; but the moment a ray of relation is seen to extend from it to man, and the little drudge is seen to be a monitor, a little body with a mighty heart, then all its habits, even

that said to be recently observed, that it never sleeps, become sublime.

Because of this radical correspondence between visible things and human thoughts, savages, who have only what is necessary, converse in figures. As we go back in history, language becomes more picturesque, until its infancy, when it is all poetry; or all spiritual facts are represented by natural symbols. The same symbols are found to make the original elements of all languages. It has moreover been observed, that the idioms of all languages approach each other in passages of the greatest eloquence and power. And as this is the first language, so is it the last. This immediate dependence of language upon nature, this conversion of an outward phenomenon into a type of somewhat in human life, never loses its power to affect us. It is this which gives that piquancy to the conversation of a strong-natured farmer or backwoodsman, which all men relish.

A man's power to connect his thought with

its proper symbol, and so to utter it, depends on the simplicity of his character, that is, upon his love of truth and his desire to communicate it without loss. The corruption of man is followed by the corruption of language. When simplicity of character and the sovereignty of ideas is broken up by the prevalence of secondary desires, — the desire of riches, of pleasure, of power, and of praise, — and duplicity and falsehood take place of simplicity and truth, the power over nature as an interpreter of the will is in a degree lost; new imagery ceases to be created, and old words are perverted to stand for things which are not; a paper currency is employed, when there is no bullion in the vaults. In due time the fraud is manifest, and words lose all power to stimulate the understanding or the affections. Hundreds of writers may be found in every long-civilized nation who for a short time believe and make others believe that they see and utter truths, who do not of themselves clothe one thought in its natural garment, but

who feed unconsciously on the language created by the primary writers of the country, those, namely, who hold primarily on nature.

But wise men pierce this rotten diction and fasten words again to visible things; so that picturesque language is at once a commanding certificate that he who employs it is a man in alliance with truth and God. The moment our discourse rises above the ground line of familiar facts and is inflamed with passion or exalted by thought, it clothes itself in images. A man conversing in earnest, if he watch his intellectual processes, will find that a material image more or less luminous arises in his mind, contemporaneous with every thought, which furnishes the vestment of the thought. Hence, good writing and brilliant discourse are perpetual allegories. This imagery is spontaneous. It is the blending of experience with the present action of the mind. It is proper creation. It is the working of the Original Cause through the instruments he has already made.

These facts may suggest the advantage which the country-life possesses, for a powerful mind, over the artificial and curtailed life of cities. We know more from nature than we can at will communicate. Its light flows into the mind evermore, and we forget its presence. The poet, the orator, bred in the woods, whose senses have been nourished by their fair and appeasing changes, year after year, without design and without heed, — shall not lose their lesson altogether, in the roar of cities or the broil of politics. Long hereafter, amidst agitation and terror in national councils, — in the hour of revolution, — these solemn images shall reappear in their morning lustre, as fit symbols and words of the thoughts which the passing events shall awaken. At the call of a noble sentiment, again the woods wave, the pines murmur, the river rolls and shines, and the cattle low upon the mountains, as he saw and heard them in his infancy. And with these forms, the spells of persuasion, the keys of power are put into his hands.

3. We are thus assisted by natural objects in the expression of particular meanings. But how great a language to convey such pepper-corn informations! Did it need such noble races of creatures, this profusion of forms, this host of orbs in heaven, to furnish man with the dictionary and grammar of his municipal speech? Whilst we use this grand cipher to expedite the affairs of our pot and kettle, we feel that we have not yet put it to its use, neither are able. We are like travellers using the cinders of a volcano to roast their eggs. Whilst we see that it always stands ready to clothe what we would say, we cannot avoid the question whether the characters are not significant of themselves. Have mountains, and waves, and skies, no significance but what we consciously give them when we employ them as emblems of our thoughts? The world is emblematic. Parts of speech are metaphors, because the whole of nature is a metaphor of the human mind. The laws of moral nature answer to those of matter as face to face in a

glass. 'The visible world and the relation of its parts, is the dial plate of the invisible.' The axioms of physics translate the laws of ethics. Thus, 'the whole is greater than its part;' 'reaction is equal to action;' 'the smallest weight may be made to lift the greatest, the difference of weight being compensated by time;' and many the like propositions, which have an ethical as well as physical sense. These propositions have a much more extensive and universal sense when applied to human life, than when confined to technical use.

In like manner, the memorable words of history and the proverbs of nations consist usually of a natural fact, selected as a picture or parable of a moral truth. Thus; A rolling stone gathers no moss; A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush; A cripple in the right way will beat a racer in the wrong; Make hay while the sun shines; 'T is hard to carry a full cup even; Vinegar is the son of wine; The last ounce broke the camel's back; Long-lived trees make roots first; — and the like. In their

primary sense these are trivial facts, but we repeat them for the value of their analogical import. What is true of proverbs, is true of all fables, parables, and allegories.

This relation between the mind and matter is not fancied by some poet, but stands in the will of God, and so is free to be known by all men. It appears to men, or it does not appear. When in fortunate hours we ponder this miracle, the wise man doubts if at all other times he is not blind and deaf;

'Can such things be,
And overcome us like a summer's cloud,
Without our special wonder?'

for the universe becomes transparent, and the light of higher laws than its own shines through it. It is the standing problem which has exercised the wonder and the study of every fine genius since the world began; from the era of the Egyptians and the Brahmins to that of Pythagoras, of Plato, of Bacon, of

Leibnitz, of Swedenborg. There sits the Sphinx at the road-side, and from age to age, as each prophet comes by, he tries his fortune at reading her riddle. There seems to be a necessity in spirit to manifest itself in material forms; and day and night, river and storm, beast and bird, acid and alkali, pre-exist in necessary Ideas in the mind of God, and are what they are by virtue of preceding affections in the world of spirit. A Fact is the end or last issue of spirit. The visible creation is the terminus or the circumference of the invisible world. 'Material objects,' said a French philosopher, 'are necessarily kinds of scoriœ of the substantial thoughts of the Creator, which must always preserve an exact relation to their first origin; in other words, visible nature must have a spiritual and moral side.'

This doctrine is abstruse, and though the images of 'garment,' 'scoriæ,' 'mirror,' etc., may stimulate the fancy, we must summon the aid of subtler and more vital expositors to make it plain. 'Every scripture is to be interpreted by

the same spirit which gave it forth,' — is the fundamental law of criticism. A life in harmony with nature, the love of truth and of virtue, will purge the eyes to understand her text. By degrees we may come to know the primitive sense of the permanent objects of nature, so that the world shall be to us an open book, and every form significant of its hidden life and final cause.

A new interest surprises us, whilst, under the view now suggested, we contemplate the fearful extent and multitude of objects; since 'every object rightly seen, unlocks a new faculty of the soul.' That which was unconscious truth, becomes, when interpreted and defined in an object, a part of the domain of knowledge, — a new weapon in the magazine of power.

Discipline
V

In view of the significance of nature, we

arrive at once at a new fact, that nature is a discipline. This use of the world includes the preceding uses, as parts of itself.

Space, time, society, labor, climate, food, locomotion, the animals, the mechanical forces, give us sincerest lessons, day by day, whose meaning is unlimited. They educate both the Understanding and the Reason. Every property of matter is a school for the understanding, — its solidity or resistance, its inertia, its extension, its figure, its divisibility. The understanding adds, divides, combines, measures, and finds nutriment and room for its activity in this worthy scene. Meantime, Reason transfers all these lessons into its own world of thought, by perceiving the analogy that marries Matter and Mind.

1. Nature is a discipline of the understanding in intellectual truths. Our dealing with sensible objects is a constant exercise in the necessary lessons of difference, of likeness, of order, of being and seeming, of progressive arrangement; of ascent from

particular to general; of combination to one end of manifold forces. Proportioned to the importance of the organ to be formed, is the extreme care with which its tuition is provided, — a care pretermitted in no single case. What tedious training, day after day, year after year, never ending, to form the common sense; what continual reproduction of annoyances, inconveniences, dilemmas; what rejoicing over us of little men; what disputing of prices, what reckonings of interest, — and all to form the Hand of the mind; — to instruct us that 'good thoughts are no better than good dreams, unless they be executed!'

The same good office is performed by Property and its filial systems of debt and credit. Debt, grinding debt, whose iron face the widow, the orphan, and the sons of genius fear and hate; — debt, which consumes so much time, which so cripples and disheartens a great spirit with cares that seem so base, is a preceptor whose lessons cannot be foregone, and is needed most by those who suffer from

it most. Moreover, property, which has been well compared to snow, — 'if it fall level to-day, it will be blown into drifts to-morrow,' — is the surface action of internal machinery, like the index on the face of a clock. Whilst now it is the gymnastics of the understanding, it is having, in the foresight of the spirit, experience in profounder laws.

The whole character and fortune of the individual are affected by the least inequalities in the culture of the understanding; for example, in the perception of differences. Therefore is Space, and therefore Time, that man may know that things are not huddled and lumped, but sundered and individual. A bell and a plough have each their use, and neither can do the office of the other. Water is good to drink, coal to burn, wool to wear; but wool cannot be drunk, nor water spun, nor coal eaten. The wise man shows his wisdom in separation, in gradation, and his scale of creatures and of merits is as wide as nature. The foolish have no range in their scale, but

suppose every man is as every other man. What is not good they call the worst, and what is not hateful, they call the best.

In like manner, what good heed nature forms in us! She pardons no mistakes. Her yea is yea, and her nay, nay.

The first steps in Agriculture, Astronomy, Zoology (those first steps which the farmer, the hunter, and the sailor take), teach that nature's dice are always loaded; that in her heaps and rubbish are concealed sure and useful results.

How calmly and genially the mind apprehends one after another the laws of physics! What noble emotions dilate the mortal as he enters into the councils of the creation, and feels by knowledge the privilege to BE! His insight refines him. The beauty of nature shines in his own breast. Man is greater that he can see this, and the universe less, because Time and Space relations vanish as laws are known.

Here again we are impressed and even daunted by the immense Universe to be explored. 'What we know is a point to what we

do not know.' Open any recent journal of science, and weigh the problems suggested concerning Light, Heat, Electricity, Magnetism, Physiology, Geology, and judge whether the interest of natural science is likely to be soon exhausted.

Passing by many particulars of the discipline of nature, we must not omit to specify two.

The exercise of the Will, or the lesson of power, is taught in every event. From the child's successive possession of his several senses up to the hour when he saith, 'Thy will be done!' he is learning the secret that he can reduce under his will not only particular events but great classes, nay, the whole series of events, and so conform all facts to his character. Nature is thoroughly mediate. It is made to serve. It receives the dominion of man as meekly as the ass on which the Saviour rode. It offers all its kingdoms to man as the raw material which he may mould into what is useful. Man is never weary of working it up. He

forges the subtile and delicate air into wise and melodious words, and gives them wing as angels of persuasion and command. One after another his victorious thought comes up with and reduces all things, until the world becomes at last only a realized will, — the double of the man.

2. Sensible objects conform to the premonitions of Reason and reflect the conscience. All things are moral; and in their boundless changes have an unceasing reference to spiritual nature. Therefore is nature glorious with form, color, and motion; that every globe in the remotest heaven, every chemical change from the rudest crystal up to the laws of life, every change of vegetation from the first principle of growth in the eye of a leaf, to the tropical forest and antediluvian coal-mine, every animal function from the sponge up to Hercules, shall hint or thunder to man the laws of right and wrong, and echo the Ten Commandments. Therefore is nature ever the ally of Religion: lends all her pomp and

riches to the religious sentiment. Prophet and priest, David, Isaiah, Jesus, have drawn deeply from this source. This ethical character so penetrates the bone and marrow of nature, as to seem the end for which it was made. Whatever private purpose is answered by any member or part, this is its public and universal function, and is never omitted. Nothing in nature is exhausted in its first use. When a thing has served an end to the uttermost, it is wholly new for an ulterior service. In God, every end is converted into a new means. Thus the use of commodity, regarded by itself, is mean and squalid. But it is to the mind an education in the doctrine of Use, namely, that a thing is good only so far as it serves; that a conspiring of parts and efforts to the production of an end is essential to any being. The first and gross manifestation of this truth is our inevitable and hated training in values and wants, in corn and meat.

It has already been illustrated, that every natural process is a version of a moral

sentence. The moral law lies at the centre of nature and radiates to the circumference. It is the pith and marrow of every substance, every relation, and every process. All things with which we deal, preach to us. What is a farm but a mute gospel? The chaff and the wheat, weeds and plants, blight, rain, insects, sun, — it is a sacred emblem from the first furrow of spring to the last stack which the snow of winter overtakes in the fields. But the sailor, the shepherd, the miner, the merchant, in their several resorts, have each an experience precisely parallel, and leading to the same conclusion: because all organizations are radically alike. Nor can it be doubted that this moral sentiment which thus scents the air, grows in the grain, and impregnates the waters of the world, is caught by man and sinks into his soul. The moral influence of nature upon every individual is that amount of truth which it illustrates to him. Who can estimate this? Who can guess how much firmness the sea-beaten rock has taught the fisherman? how

much tranquillity has been reflected to man from the azure sky, over whose unspotted deeps the winds forevermore drive flocks of stormy clouds, and leave no wrinkle or stain? how much industry and providence and affection we have caught from the pantomime of brutes? What a searching preacher of self-command is the varying phenomenon of Health!

Herein is especially apprehended the unity of nature, — the unity in variety, — which meets us everywhere. All the endless variety of things make an identical impression. Xenophanes complained in his old age, that, look where he would, all things hastened back to Unity. He was weary of seeing the same entity in the tedious variety of forms. The fable of Proteus has a cordial truth. A leaf, a drop, a crystal, a moment of time, is related to the whole, and partakes of the perfection of the whole. Each particle is a microcosm, and faithfully renders the likeness of the world.

Not only resemblances exist in things

whose analogy is obvious, as when we detect the type of the human hand in the flipper of the fossil saurus, but also in objects wherein there is great superficial unlikeness. Thus architecture is called 'frozen music,' by De Staël and Goethe. Vitruvius thought an architect should be a musician. 'A Gothic church,' said Coleridge, 'is a petrified religion.' Michael Angelo maintained, that, to an architect, a knowledge of anatomy is essential. In Haydn's oratorios, the notes present to the imagination not only motions, as of the snake, the stag, and the elephant, but colors also; as the green grass. The law of harmonic sounds reappears in the harmonic colors. The granite is differenced in its laws only by the more or less of heat from the river that wears it away. The river, as it flows, resembles the air that flows over it; the air resembles the light which traverses it with more subtile currents; the light resembles the heat which rides with it through Space. Each creature is only a modification of the other; the likeness in them is more than the

difference, and their radical law is one and the same. A rule of one art, or a law of one organization, holds true throughout nature. So intimate is this Unity, that, it is easily seen, it lies under the undermost garment of nature, and betrays its source in Universal Spirit. For it pervades Thought also. Every universal truth which we express in words, implies or supposes every other truth. Omne verum vero consonat ['All truth accords with truth']. It is like a great circle on a sphere, comprising all possible circles; which, however, may be drawn and comprise it in like manner. Every such truth is the absolute Ens seen from one side. But it has innumerable sides.

The central Unity is still more conspicuous in actions. Words are finite organs of the infinite mind. They cannot cover the dimensions of what is in truth. They break, chop, and impoverish it. An action is the perfection and publication of thought. A right action seems to fill the eye, and to be related to all nature. 'The wise man, in doing one thing,

does all; or, in the one thing he does rightly, he sees the likeness of all which is done rightly.'

Words and actions are not the attributes of brute nature. They introduce us to the human form, of which all other organizations appear to be degradations. When this appears among so many that surround it, the spirit prefers it to all others. It says, 'From such as this have I drawn joy and knowledge; in such as this have I found and beheld myself; I will speak to it; it can speak again; it can yield me thought already formed and alive.' In fact, the eye, — the mind, — is always accompanied by these forms, male and female; and these are incomparably the richest informations of the power and order that lie at the heart of things. Unfortunately every one of them bears the marks as of some injury; is marred and superficially defective. Nevertheless, far different from all deaf and dumb nature around them, these all rest like fountain-pipes on the unfathomed sea of thought, and virtue whereto they alone, of all organizations, are the

entrances.

It were a pleasant inquiry to follow into detail their ministry to our education, but where would it stop? We are associated in adolescent and adult life with some friends, who, like skies and waters, are coextensive with our idea; who, answering each to a certain affection of the soul, satisfy our desire on that side; whom we lack power to put at such focal distance from us, that we can mend or even analyze them. We cannot choose but love them. When much intercourse with a friend has supplied us with a standard of excellence, and has increased our respect for the resources of God who thus sends a real person to outgo our ideal; when he has, moreover, become an object of thought, and, whilst his character retains all its unconscious effect, is converted in the mind into solid and sweet wisdom, — it is a sign to us that his office is closing, and he is commonly withdrawn from our sight in a short time.

Idealism
VI

Thus is the unspeakable but intelligible and practicable meaning of the world conveyed to man, the immortal pupil, in every object of sense. To this one end of Discipline, all parts of nature conspire.

A noble doubt perpetually suggests itself, — whether this end be not the Final Cause of the Universe; and whether nature outwardly exists. It is a sufficient account of that Appearance we call the World, that God will teach a human mind, and so makes it the receiver of a certain number of congruent sensations, which we call sun and moon, man and woman, house and trade. In my utter impotence to test the authenticity of the report of my senses, to know whether the impressions they make on me correspond with outlying objects, what difference does it make, whether Orion is up there in heaven, or some god paints the image in the firmament of the soul? The relations of

parts and the end of the whole remaining the same, what is the difference, whether land and sea interact, and worlds revolve and intermingle without number or end, — deep yawning under deep, and galaxy balancing galaxy, throughout absolute space, — or whether, without relations of time and space, the same appearances are inscribed in the constant faith of man? Whether nature enjoy a substantial existence without, or is only in the apocalypse of the mind, it is alike useful and alike venerable to me. Be it what it may, it is ideal to me so long as I cannot try the accuracy of my senses.

The frivolous make themselves merry with the Ideal theory, as if its consequences were burlesque; as if it affected the stability of nature. It surely does not. God never jests with us, and will not compromise the end of nature by permitting any inconsequence in its procession. Any distrust of the permanence of laws would paralyze the faculties of man. Their permanence is sacredly respected, and his faith

therein is perfect. The wheels and springs of man are all set to the hypothesis of the permanence of nature. We are not built like a ship to be tossed, but like a house to stand. It is a natural consequence of this structure, that so long as the active powers predominate over the reflective, we resist with indignation any hint that nature is more short-lived or mutable than spirit. The broker, the wheelwright, the carpenter, the tollman, are much displeased at the intimation.

But whilst we acquiesce entirely in the permanence of natural laws, the question of the absolute existence of nature still remains open. It is the uniform effect of culture on the human mind, not to shake our faith in the stability of particular phenomena, as of heat, water, azote; but to lead us to regard nature as phenomenon, not a substance; to attribute necessary existence to spirit; to esteem nature as an accident and an effect.

To the senses and the unrenewed understanding, belongs a sort of instinctive

belief in the absolute existence of nature. In their view man and nature are indissolubly joined. Things are ultimates, and they never look beyond their sphere. The presence of Reason mars this faith. The first effort of thought tends to relax this despotism of the senses which binds us to nature as if we were a part of it, and shows us nature aloof, and, as it were, afloat. Until this higher agency intervened, the animal eye sees, with wonderful accuracy, sharp outlines and colored surfaces. When the eye of Reason opens, to outline and surface are at once added grace and expression. These proceed from imagination and affection, and abate somewhat of the angular distinctness of objects. If the Reason be stimulated to more earnest vision, outlines and surfaces become transparent, and are no longer seen; causes and spirits are seen through them. The best moments of life are these delicious awakenings of the higher powers, and the reverential withdrawing of nature before its God.

Let us proceed to indicate the effects of culture.

1. Our first institution in the Ideal philosophy is a hint from nature herself.

Nature is made to conspire with spirit to emancipate us. Certain mechanical changes, a small alteration in our local position, apprizes us of a dualism. We are strangely affected by seeing the shore from a moving ship, from a balloon, or through the tints of an unusual sky. The least change in our point of view gives the whole world a pictorial air. A man who seldom rides, needs only to get into a coach and traverse his own town, to turn the street into a puppet-show. The men, the women, — talking, running, bartering, fighting, — the earnest mechanic, the lounger, the beggar, the boys, the dogs, are unrealized at once, or, at least, wholly detached from all relation to the observer, and seen as apparent, not substantial beings. What new thoughts are suggested by seeing a face of country quite familiar, in the rapid movement of the railroad car! Nay, the

most wonted objects, (make a very slight change in the point of vision,) please us most. In a camera obscura, the butcher's cart, and the figure of one of our own family amuse us. So a portrait of a well-known face gratifies us. Turn the eyes upside down, by looking at the landscape through your legs, and how agreeable is the picture, though you have seen it any time these twenty years!

In these cases, by mechanical means, is suggested the difference between the observer and the spectacle — between man and nature. Hence arises a pleasure mixed with awe; I may say, a low degree of the sublime is felt, from the fact, probably, that man is hereby apprized that whilst the world is a spectacle, something in himself is stable.

2. In a higher manner the poet communicates the same pleasure. By a few strokes he delineates, as on air, the sun, the mountain, the camp, the city, the hero, the maiden, not different from what we know them, but only lifted from the ground and

afloat before the eye. He unfixes the land and the sea, makes them revolve around the axis of his primary thought, and disposes them anew. Possessed himself by a heroic passion, he uses matter as symbols of it. The sensual man conforms thoughts to things; the poet conforms things to his thoughts. The one esteems nature as rooted and fast; the other, as fluid, and impresses his being thereon. To him, the refractory world is ductile and flexible; he invests dust and stones with humanity, and makes them the words of the Reason. The Imagination may be defined to be the use which the Reason makes of the material world. Shakspeare possesses the power of subordinating nature for the purposes of expression, beyond all poets. His imperial muse tosses the creation like a bauble from hand to hand, and uses it to embody any caprice of thought that is uppermost in his mind. The remotest spaces of nature are visited, and the farthest sundered things are brought together, by a subtile spiritual connection. We are made

aware that magnitude of material things is relative, and all objects shrink and expand to serve the passion of the poet. Thus in his sonnets, the lays of birds, the scents and dyes of flowers he finds to be the shadow of his beloved; time, which keeps her from him, is his chest; the suspicion she has awakened, is her ornament;

The ornament of beauty is Suspect,
A crow which flies in heaven's sweetest air.

His passion is not the fruit of chance; it swells, as he speaks, to a city, or a state.

No, it was builded far from accident;
It suffers not in smiling pomp, nor falls
Under the brow of thralling discontent;
It fears not policy, that heretic,
That works on leases of short numbered hours,
But all alone stands hugely politic.

In the strength of his constancy, the Pyramids seem to him recent and transitory. The freshness of youth and love dazzles him with its resemblance to morning;

Take those lips away
Which so sweetly were forsworn;
And those eyes, — the break of day,
Lights that do mislead the morn.

The wild beauty of this hyperbole, I may say in passing, it would not be easy to match in literature.

This transfiguration which all material objects undergo through the passion of the poet, — this power which he exerts to dwarf the great, to magnify the small, — might be illustrated by a thousand examples from his Plays. I have before me the Tempest, and will cite only these few lines.

ARIEL. The strong based promontory
Have I made shake, and by the spurs

plucked up
The pine and cedar.

Prospero calls for music to soothe the frantic Alonzo, and his companions;

A solemn air, and the best comforter
To an unsettled fancy, cure thy brains
Now useless, boiled within thy skull.

Again;

The charm dissolves apace,
And, as the morning steals upon the night,
Melting the darkness, so their rising senses
Begin to chase the ignorant fumes that mantle
Their clearer reason.
Their understanding
Begins to swell: and the approaching tide
Will shortly fill the reasonable shores
That now lie foul and muddy.

The perception of real affinities between events (that is to say, of ideal affinities, for those only are real), enables the poet thus to make free with the most imposing forms and phenomena of the world, and to assert the predominance of the soul.

3. Whilst thus the poet animates nature with his own thoughts, he differs from the philosopher only herein, that the one proposes Beauty as his main end; the other Truth. But the philosopher, not less than the poet, postpones the apparent order and relations of things to the empire of thought. 'The problem of philosophy,' according to Plato, 'is, for all that exists conditionally, to find a ground unconditioned and absolute.' It proceeds on the faith that a law determines all phenomena, which being known, the phenomena can be predicted. That law, when in the mind, is an idea. Its beauty is infinite. The true philosopher and the true poet are one, and a beauty, which is truth, and a truth, which is beauty, is the aim of both. Is not the charm of one of Plato's or

Aristotle's definitions strictly like that of the Antigone of Sophocles? It is, in both cases, that a spiritual life has been imparted to nature; that the solid seeming block of matter has been pervaded and dissolved by a thought; that this feeble human being has penetrated the vast masses of nature with an informing soul, and recognized itself in their harmony, that is, seized their law. In physics, when this is attained, the memory disburthens itself of its cumbrous catalogues of particulars, and carries centuries of observation in a single formula.

Thus even in physics, the material is degraded before the spiritual. The astronomer, the geometer, rely on their irrefragable analysis, and disdain the results of observation. The sublime remark of Euler on his law of arches, 'This will be found contrary to all experience, yet is true;' had already transferred nature into the mind, and left matter like an outcast corpse.

4. Intellectual science has been observed to

beget invariably a doubt of the existence of matter. Turgot said, 'He that has never doubted the existence of matter, may be assured he has no aptitude for metaphysical inquiries.' It fastens the attention upon immortal necessary uncreated natures, that is, upon Ideas; and in their presence we feel that the outward circumstance is a dream and a shade. Whilst we wait in this Olympus of gods, we think of nature as an appendix to the soul. We ascend into their region, and know that these are the thoughts of the Supreme Being. 'These are they who were set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When he prepared the heavens, they were there; when he established the clouds above, when he strengthened the fountains of the deep. Then they were by him, as one brought up with him. Of them took he counsel.'

Their influence is proportionate. As objects of science they are accessible to few men. Yet all men are capable of being raised by piety or by passion, into their region. And no man

touches these divine natures, without becoming, in some degree, himself divine. Like a new soul, they renew the body. We become physically nimble and lightsome; we tread on air; life is no longer irksome, and we think it will never be so. No man fears age or misfortune or death in their serene company, for he is transported out of the district of change. Whilst we behold unveiled the nature of Justice and Truth, we learn the difference between the absolute and the conditional or relative. We apprehend the absolute. As it were, for the first time, we exist. We become immortal, for we learn that time and space are relations of matter; that with a perception of truth or a virtuous will they have no affinity.

5. Finally, religion and ethics, which may be fitly called the practice of ideas, or the introduction of ideas into life, have an analogous effect with all lower culture, in degrading nature and suggesting its dependence on spirit. Ethics and religion differ herein; that the one is the system of human

duties commencing from man; the other, from God. Religion includes the personality of God; Ethics does not. They are one to our present design. They both put nature under foot. The first and last lesson of religion is, 'The things that are seen, are temporal; the things that are unseen, are eternal.' It puts an affront upon nature. It does that for the unschooled, which philosophy does for Berkeley and Viasa. The uniform language that may be heard in the churches of the most ignorant sects is — 'Contemn the unsubstantial shows of the world; they are vanities, dreams, shadows, unrealities; seek the realities of religion.' The devotee flouts nature. Some theosophists have arrived at a certain hostility and indignation towards matter, as the Manichean and Plotinus. They distrusted in themselves any looking back to these flesh-pots of Egypt. Plotinus was ashamed of his body. In short, they might all say of matter, what Michael Angelo said of external beauty, 'It is the frail and weary weed, in which God dresses the soul which he has

called into time.'

It appears that motion, poetry, physical and intellectual science, and religion, all tend to affect our convictions of the reality of the external world. But I own there is something ungrateful in expanding too curiously the particulars of the general proposition, that all culture tends to imbue us with idealism. I have no hostility to nature, but a child's love to it. I expand and live in the warm day like corn and melons. Let us speak her fair. I do not wish to fling stones at my beautiful mother, nor soil my gentle nest. I only wish to indicate the true position of nature in regard to man, wherein to establish man all right education tends; as the ground which to attain is the object of human life, that is, of man's connection with nature. Culture inverts the vulgar views of nature, and brings the mind to call that apparent which it uses to call real, and that real which it uses to call visionary. Children, it is true, believe in the external world. The belief that it appears only, is an afterthought, but with culture this faith will

as surely arise on the mind as did the first.

The advantage of the ideal theory over the popular faith is this, that it presents the world in precisely that view which is most desirable to the mind. It is, in fact, the view which Reason, both speculative and practical, that is, philosophy and virtue, take. For seen in the light of thought, the world always is phenomenal; and virtue subordinates it to the mind. Idealism sees the world in God. It beholds the whole circle of persons and things, of actions and events, of country and religion, not as painfully accumulated, atom after atom, act after act, in an aged creeping Past, but as one vast picture which God paints on the instant eternity for the contemplation of the soul. Therefore the soul holds itself off from a too trivial and microscopic study of the universal tablet. It respects the end too much to immerse itself in the means. It sees something more important in Christianity than the scandals of ecclesiastical history or the niceties of criticism; and, very incurious

concerning persons or miracles, and not at all disturbed by chasms of historical evidence, it accepts from God the phenomenon, as it finds it, as the pure and awful form of religion in the world. It is not hot and passionate at the appearance of what it calls its own good or bad fortune, at the union or opposition of other persons. No man is its enemy. It accepts whatsoever befalls, as part of its lesson. It is a watcher more than a doer, and it is a doer, only that it may the better watch.

Spirit
VII

It is essential to a true theory of nature and of man, that it should contain somewhat progressive. Uses that are exhausted or that may be, and facts that end in the statement, cannot be all that is true of this brave lodging wherein man is harbored, and wherein all his faculties find appropriate and endless exercise. And all the uses of nature admit of being

summed in one, which yields the activity of man an infinite scope. Through all its kingdoms, to the suburbs and outskirts of things, it is faithful to the cause whence it had its origin. It always speaks of spirit. It suggests the absolute. It is a perpetual effect. It is a great shadow pointing always to the sun behind us.

The aspect of nature is devout. Like the figure of Jesus, she stands with bended head, and hands folded upon the breast. The happiest man is he who learns from nature the lesson of worship.

Of that ineffable essence which we call spirit, he that thinks most, will say least. We can foresee God in the coarse, and, as it were, distant phenomena of matter; but when we try to define and describe himself, both language and thought desert us, and we are as helpless as fools and savages. That essence refuses to be recorded in propositions, but when man has worshipped him intellectually, the noblest ministry of nature is to stand as the apparition

of God. It is the organ through which the universal spirit speaks to the individual, and strives to lead back the individual to it.

When we consider spirit, we see that the views already presented do not include the whole circumference of man. We must add some related thoughts.

Three problems are put by nature to the mind: What is matter? Whence is it? and Whereto? The first of these questions only, the ideal theory answers. Idealism saith: matter is a phenomenon, not a substance. Idealism acquaints us with the total disparity between the evidence of our own being and the evidence of the world's being. The one is perfect; the other, incapable of any assurance; the mind is a part of the nature of things; the world is a divine dream, from which we may presently awake to the glories and certainties of day. Idealism is a hypothesis to account for nature by other principles than those of carpentry and chemistry. Yet, if it only deny the existence of matter, it does not satisfy the

demands of the spirit. It leaves God out of me. It leaves me in the splendid labyrinth of my perceptions, to wander without end. Then the heart resists it, because it balks the affections in denying substantive being to men and women. Nature is so pervaded with human life that there is something of humanity in all and in every particular. But this theory makes nature foreign to me, and does not account for that consanguinity which we acknowledge to it.

Let it stand then, in the present state of our knowledge, merely as a useful introductory hypothesis, serving to apprize us of the eternal distinction between the soul and the world.

But when, following the invisible steps of thought, we come to inquire, Whence is matter? and Whereto? many truths arise to us out of the recesses of consciousness. We learn that the highest is present to the soul of man; that the dread universal essence, which is not wisdom, or love, or beauty, or power, but all in one, and each entirely, is that for which all

things exist, and that by which they are; that spirit creates; that behind nature, throughout nature, spirit is present; one and not compound it does not act upon us from without, that is, in space and time, but spiritually, or through ourselves: therefore, that spirit, that is, the Supreme Being, does not build up nature around us, but puts it forth through us, as the life of the tree puts forth new branches and leaves through the pores of the old. As a plant upon the earth, so a man rests upon the bosom of God; he is nourished by unfailing fountains, and draws at his need inexhaustible power. Who can set bounds to the possibilities of man? Once inhale the upper air, being admitted to behold the absolute natures of justice and truth, and we learn that man has access to the entire mind of the Creator, is himself the creator in the finite. This view, which admonishes me where the sources of wisdom and power lie, and points to virtue as to

'The golden key
Which opes the palace of eternity,'

carries upon its face the highest certificate of truth, because it animates me to create my own world through the purification of my soul.

The world proceeds from the same spirit as the body of man. It is a remoter and inferior incarnation of God, a projection of God in the unconscious. But it differs from the body in one important respect. It is not, like that, now subjected to the human will. Its serene order is inviolable by us. It is, therefore, to us, the present expositor of the divine mind. It is a fixed point whereby we may measure our departure. As we degenerate, the contrast between us and our house is more evident. We are as much strangers in nature as we are aliens from God. We do not understand the notes of birds. The fox and the deer run away from us; the bear and tiger rend us. We do not know the uses of more than a few plants, as corn and the apple, the potato and the vine. Is

not the landscape, every glimpse of which hath a grandeur, a face of him? Yet this may show us what discord is between man and nature, for you cannot freely admire a noble landscape if laborers are digging in the field hard by. The poet finds something ridiculous in his delight until he is out of the sight of men.

Prospects

VIII

In inquiries respecting the laws of the world and the frame of things, the highest reason is always the truest. That which seems faintly possible, it is so refined, is often faint and dim because it is deepest seated in the mind among the eternal verities. Empirical science is apt to cloud the sight, and by the very knowledge of functions and processes to bereave the student of the manly contemplation of the whole. The savant becomes unpoetic. But the best read naturalist who lends an entire and devout attention to

truth, will see that there remains much to learn of his relation to the world, and that it is not to be learned by any addition or subtraction or other comparison of known quantities, but is arrived at by untaught sallies of the spirit, by a continual self-recovery, and by entire humility. He will perceive that there are far more excellent qualities in the student than preciseness and infallibility; that a guess is often more fruitful than an indisputable affirmation, and that a dream may let us deeper into the secret of nature than a hundred concerted experiments.

For the problems to be solved are precisely those which the physiologist and the naturalist omit to state. It is not so pertinent to man to know all the individuals of the animal kingdom, as it is to know whence and whereto is this tyrannizing unity in his constitution, which evermore separates and classifies things, endeavoring to reduce the most diverse to one form. When I behold a rich landscape, it is less to my purpose to recite correctly the order and

superposition of the strata, than to know why all thought of multitude is lost in a tranquil sense of unity. I cannot greatly honor minuteness in details, so long as there is no hint to explain the relation between things and thoughts; no ray upon the metaphysics of conchology, of botany, of the arts, to show the relation of the forms of flowers, shells, animals, architecture, to the mind, and build science upon ideas. In a cabinet of natural history, we become sensible of a certain occult recognition and sympathy in regard to the most unwieldy and eccentric forms of beast, fish, and insect. The American who has been confined, in his own country, to the sight of buildings designed after foreign models, is surprised on entering York Minster or St Peter's at Rome, by the feeling that these structures are imitations also, — faint copies of an invisible archetype. Nor has science sufficient humanity, so long as the naturalist overlooks that wonderful congruity which subsists between man and the world; of which he is

lord, not because he is the most subtile inhabitant, but because he is its head and heart, and finds something of himself in every great and small thing, in every mountain stratum, in every new law of color, fact of astronomy, or atmospheric influence which observation or analysis lays open. A perception of this mystery inspires the muse of George Herbert, the beautiful psalmist of the seventeenth century. The following lines are part of his little poem on Man.

Man is all symmetry,
Full of proportions, one limb to another,
And all to all the world besides.
Each part may call the farthest, brother;
For head with foot hath private amity,
And both with moons and tides.

Nothing hath got so far
But man hath caught and kept it as his prey;
His eyes dismount the highest star:

He is in little all the sphere.
Herbs gladly cure our flesh, because that they
Find their acquaintance there.

For us, the winds do blow,
The earth doth rest, heaven move, and fountains flow;
Nothing we see, but means our good,
As our delight, or as our treasure;
The whole is either our cupboard of food,
Or cabinet of pleasure.

The stars have us to bed:
Night draws the curtain; which the sun withdraws.
Music and light attend our head.
All things unto our flesh are kind,
In their descent and being; to our mind,
In their ascent and cause.

More servants wait on man
Than he'll take notice of. In every path,

He treads down that which doth befriend him
When sickness makes him pale and wan.
Oh mighty love! Man is one world, and hath
Another to attend him.

The perception of this class of truths makes the attraction which draws men to science, but the end is lost sight of in attention to the means. In view of this half-sight of science, we accept the sentence of Plato, that 'poetry comes nearer to vital truth than history.' Every surmise and vaticination of the mind is entitled to a certain respect, and we learn to prefer imperfect theories, and sentences which contain glimpses of truth, to digested systems which have no one valuable suggestion. A wise writer will feel that the ends of study and composition are best answered by announcing undiscovered regions of thought, and so communicating, through hope, new activity to the torpid spirit.

I shall therefore conclude this essay with

some traditions of man and nature, which a certain poet sang to me; and which, as they have always been in the world, and perhaps reappear to every bard, may be both history and prophecy.

'The foundations of man are not in matter, but in spirit. But the element of spirit is eternity. To it, therefore, the longest series of events, the oldest chronologies are young and recent. In the cycle of the universal man, from whom the known individuals proceed, centuries are points, and all history is but the epoch of one degradation.

'We distrust and deny inwardly our sympathy with nature. We own and disown our relation to it, by turns. We are like Nebuchadnezzar, dethroned, bereft of reason, and eating grass like an ox. But who can set limits to the remedial force of spirit?

'A man is a god in ruins. When men are innocent, life shall be longer, and shall pass into the immortal as gently as we awake from dreams. Now, the world would be insane and

rabid, if these disorganizations should last for hundreds of years. It is kept in check by death and infancy. Infancy is the perpetual Messiah, which comes into the arms of fallen men, and pleads with them to return to paradise.

'Man is the dwarf of himself. Once he was permeated and dissolved by spirit. He filled nature with his overflowing currents. Out from him sprang the sun and moon; from man the sun, from woman the moon. The laws of his mind, the periods of his actions externized themselves into day and night, into the year and the seasons. But, having made for himself this huge shell, his waters retired; he no longer fills the veins and veinlets; he is shrunk to a drop. He sees that the structure still fits him, but fits him colossally. Say, rather, once it fitted him, now it corresponds to him from far and on high. He adores timidly his own work. Now is man the follower of the sun, and woman the follower of the moon. Yet sometimes he starts in his slumber, and wonders at himself and his house, and muses strangely at the resemblance

betwixt him and it. He perceives that if his law is still paramount, if still he have elemental power, if his word is sterling yet in nature, it is not conscious power, it is not inferior but superior to his will. It is instinct.' Thus my Orphic poet sang.

At present, man applies to nature but half his force. He works on the world with his understanding alone. He lives in it and masters it by a penny-wisdom; and he that works most in it is but a half-man, and whilst his arms are strong and his digestion good, his mind is imbruted, and he is a selfish savage. His relation to nature, his power over it, is through the understanding, as by manure; the economic use of fire, wind, water, and the mariner's needle; steam, coal, chemical agriculture; the repairs of the human body by the dentist and the surgeon. This is such a resumption of power as if a banished king should buy his territories inch by inch, instead of vaulting at once into his throne. Meantime, in the thick darkness, there are not wanting

gleams of a better light, — occasional examples of the action of man upon nature with his entire force, — with reason as well as understanding. Such examples are, the traditions of miracles in the earliest antiquity of all nations; the history of Jesus Christ; the achievements of a principle, as in religious and political revolutions, and in the abolition of the slave-trade; the miracles of enthusiasm, as those reported of Swedenborg, Hohenlohe, and the Shakers; many obscure and yet contested facts, now arranged under the name of Animal Magnetism; prayer; eloquence; self-healing; and the wisdom of children. These are examples of Reason's momentary grasp of the sceptre; the exertions of a power which exists not in time or space, but an instantaneous in-streaming causing power. The difference between the actual and the ideal force of man is happily figured by the schoolmen, in saying, that the knowledge of man is an evening knowledge, vespertina cognitio, but that of God is a morning knowledge, matutina

cognitio.

The problem of restoring to the world original and eternal beauty is solved by the redemption of the soul. The ruin or the blank that we see when we look at nature, is in our own eye. The axis of vision is not coincident with the axis of things, and so they appear not transparent but opaque. The reason why the world lacks unity, and lies broken and in heaps, is because man is disunited with himself. He cannot be a naturalist until he satisfies all the demands of the spirit. Love is as much its demand as perception. Indeed, neither can be perfect without the other. In the uttermost meaning of the words, thought is devout, and devotion is thought. Deep calls unto deep. But in actual life, the marriage is not celebrated. There are innocent men who worship God after the tradition of their fathers, but their sense of duty has not yet extended to the use of all their faculties. And there are patient naturalists, but they freeze their subject under the wintry light of the understanding. Is not prayer also a

study of truth, — a sally of the soul into the unfound infinite? No man ever prayed heartily without learning something. But when a faithful thinker, resolute to detach every object from personal relations and see it in the light of thought, shall, at the same time, kindle science with the fire of the holiest affections, then will God go forth anew into the creation.

It will not need, when the mind is prepared for study, to search for objects. The invariable mark of wisdom is to see the miraculous in the common. What is a day? What is a year? What is summer? What is woman? What is a child? What is sleep? To our blindness, these things seem unaffecting. We make fables to hide the baldness of the fact and conform it, as we say, to the higher law of the mind. But when the fact is seen under the light of an idea, the gaudy fable fades and shrivels. We behold the real higher law. To the wise, therefore, a fact is true poetry, and the most beautiful of fables. These wonders are brought to our own door. You also are a man. Man and woman and their

social life, poverty, labor, sleep, fear, fortune, are known to you. Learn that none of these things is superficial, but that each phenomenon has its roots in the faculties and affections of the mind. Whilst the abstract question occupies your intellect, nature brings it in the concrete to be solved by your hands. It were a wise inquiry for the closet, to compare, point by point, especially at remarkable crises in life, our daily history with the rise and progress of ideas in the mind.

So shall we come to look at the world with new eyes. It shall answer the endless inquiry of the intellect, — What is truth? and of the affections, — What is good? by yielding itself passive to the educated Will. Then shall come to pass what my poet said: 'Nature is not fixed but fluid. Spirit alters, moulds, makes it. The immobility or bruteness of nature is the absence of spirit; to pure spirit it is fluid, it is volatile, it is obedient. Every spirit builds itself a house, and beyond its house a world, and beyond its world a heaven. Know then that the

world exists for you. For you is the phenomenon perfect. What we are, that only can we see. All that Adam had, all that Cæesar could, you have and can do. Adam called his house, heaven and earth; Cæsar called his house, Rome; you perhaps call yours, a cobbler's trade; a hundred acres of ploughed land; or a scholar's garret. Yet line for line and point for point your dominion is as great as theirs, though without fine names. Build therefore your own world. As fast as you conform your life to the pure idea in your mind, that will unfold its great proportions. A correspondent revolution in things will attend the influx of the spirit. So fast will disagreeable appearances, swine, spiders, snakes, pests, mad-houses, prisons, enemies, vanish; they are temporary and shall be no more seen. The sordor and filths of nature, the sun shall dry up and the wind exhale. As when the summer comes from the south the snow-banks melt and the face of the earth becomes green before it, so shall the advancing spirit create its

ornaments along its path, and carry with it the beauty it visits and the song which enchants it; it shall draw beautiful faces, warm hearts, wise discourse, and heroic acts, around its way, until evil is no more seen. The kingdom of man over nature, which cometh not with observation, — a dominion such as now is beyond his dream of God, — he shall enter without more wonder than the blind man feels who is gradually restored to perfect sight.'

1836

History

There is no great and no small
To the Soul that maketh all:
And where it cometh, all things are;
And it cometh everywhere.

I am owner of the sphere,
Of the seven stars and the solar year,
Of Cæsar's hand, and Plato's brain,
Of Lord Christ's heart, and Shakspeare's strain.

There is one mind common to all individual men. Every man is an inlet to the same and to all of the same. He that is once admitted to the right of reason is made a freeman of the whole estate. What Plato has thought, he may think; what a saint has felt, he may feel; what at any time has befallen any man, he can understand. Who hath access to this universal mind is a party to all that is or can be done, for this is the only and sovereign agent.

Of the works of this mind history is the

record. Its genius is illustrated by the entire series of days. Man is explicable by nothing less than all his history. Without hurry, without rest, the human spirit goes forth from the beginning to embody every faculty, every thought, every emotion which belongs to it, in appropriate events. But the thought is always prior to the fact; all the facts of history pre-exist in the mind as laws. Each law in turn is made by circumstances predominant, and the limits of nature give power to but one at a time. A man is the whole encyclopædia of facts. The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn, and Egypt, Greece, Rome, Gaul, Britain, America, lie folded already in the first man. Epoch after epoch, camp, kingdom, empire, republic, democracy, are merely the application of his manifold spirit to the manifold world.

This human mind wrote history, and this must read it. The Sphinx must solve her own riddle. If the whole of history is in one man, it is all to be explained from individual

experience. There is a relation between the hours of our life and the centuries of time. As the air I breathe is drawn from the great repositories of nature, as the light on my book is yielded by a star a hundred millions of miles distant, as the poise of my body depends on the equilibrium of centrifugal and centripetal forces, so the hours should be instructed by the ages and the ages explained by the hours. Of the universal mind each individual man is one more incarnation. All its properties consist in him. Each new fact in his private experience flashes a light on what great bodies of men have done, and the crises of his life refer to national crises. Every revolution was first a thought in one man's mind, and when the same thought occurs to another man, it is the key to that era. Every reform was once a private opinion, and when it shall be a private opinion again it will solve the problem of the age. The fact narrated must correspond to something in me to be credible or intelligible. We, as we read, must become Greeks, Romans,

Turks, priest and king, martyr and executioner; must fasten these images to some reality in our secret experience, or we shall learn nothing rightly. What befell Asdrubal or Cæsar Borgia is as much an illustration of the mind's powers and depravations as what has befallen us. Each new law and political movement has a meaning for you. Stand before each of its tablets and say, 'Under this mask did my Proteus nature hide itself.' This remedies the defect of our too great nearness to ourselves. This throws our actions into perspective, — and as crabs, goats, scorpions, the balance and the waterpot lose their meanness when hung as signs in the zodiac, so I can see my own vices without heat in the distant persons of Solomon, Alcibiades, and Catiline.

It is the universal nature which gives worth to particular men and things. Human life, as containing this, is mysterious and inviolable, and we hedge it round with penalties and laws. All laws derive hence their ultimate reason; all express more or less distinctly some command

of this supreme, illimitable essence. Property also holds of the soul, covers great spiritual facts, and instinctively we at first hold to it with swords and laws and wide and complex combinations. The obscure consciousness of this fact is the light of all our day, the claim of claims; the plea for education, for justice, for charity; the foundation of friendship and love and of the heroism and grandeur which belong to acts of self-reliance. It is remarkable that involuntarily we always read as superior beings. Universal history, the poets, the romancers, do not in their stateliest pictures, — in the sacerdotal, the imperial palaces, in the triumphs of will or of genius, — anywhere lose our ear, anywhere make us feel that we intrude, that this is for better men; but rather is it true that in their grandest strokes we feel most at home. All that Shakspeare says of the king, yonder slip of a boy that reads in the corner feels to be true of himself. We sympathize in the great moments of history, in the great discoveries, the great resistances, the great

prosperities of men; — because there law was enacted, the sea was searched, the land was found, or the blow was struck, for us, as we ourselves in that place would have done or applauded.

We have the same interest in condition and character. We honor the rich because they have externally the freedom, power, and grace which we feel to be proper to man, proper to us. So all that is said of the wise man by Stoic or Oriental or modern essayist, describes to each reader his own idea, describes his unattained but attainable self. All literature writes the character of the wise man. Books, monuments, pictures, conversation, are portraits in which he finds the lineaments he is forming. The silent and the eloquent praise him and accost him, and he is stimulated wherever he moves, as by personal allusions. A true aspirant therefore never needs look for allusions personal and laudatory in discourse. He hears the commendation, not of himself, but, more sweet, of that character he seeks, in

every word that is said concerning character, yea further in every fact and circumstance, — in the running river and the rustling corn. Praise is looked, homage tendered, love flows, from mute nature, from the mountains and the lights of the firmament.

These hints, dropped as it were from sleep and night, let us use in broad day. The student is to read history actively and not passively; to esteem his own life the text, and books the commentary. Thus compelled, the Muse of history will utter oracles, as never to those who do not respect themselves. I have no expectation that any man will read history aright who thinks that what was done in a remote age, by men whose names have resounded far, has any deeper sense than what he is doing to-day.

The world exists for the education of each man. There is no age or state of society or mode of action in history to which there is not somewhat corresponding in his life. Every thing tends in a wonderful manner to abbreviate

itself and yield its own virtue to him. He should see that he can live all history in his own person. He must sit solidly at home, and not suffer himself to be bullied by kings or empires, but know that he is greater than all the geography and all the government of the world; he must transfer the point of view from which history is commonly read, from Rome and Athens and London, to himself, and not deny his conviction that he is the court, and if England or Egypt have anything to say to him he will try the case; if not, let them forever be silent. He must attain and maintain that lofty sight where facts yield their secret sense, and poetry and annals are alike. The instinct of the mind, the purpose of nature, betrays itself in the use we make of the signal narrations of history. Time dissipates to shining ether the solid angularity of facts. No anchor, no cable, no fences avail to keep a fact a fact. Babylon, Troy, Tyre, Palestine, and even early Rome are passing already into fiction. The Garden of Eden, the sun standing still in Gibeon, is poetry

thenceforward to all nations. Who cares what the fact was, when we have made a constellation of it to hang in heaven an immortal sign? London and Paris and New York must go the same way. 'What is history,' said Napoleon, 'but a fable agreed upon?' This life of ours is stuck round with Egypt, Greece, Gaul, England, War, Colonization, Church, Court and Commerce, as with so many flowers and wild ornaments grave and gay. I will not make more account of them. I believe in Eternity. I can find Greece, Asia, Italy, Spain and the Islands, — the genius and creative principle of each and of all eras, in my own mind.

We are always coming up with the emphatic facts of history in our private experience and verifying them here. All history becomes subjective; in other words there is properly no history, only biography. Every mind must know the whole lesson for itself, — must go over the whole ground. What it does not see, what it does not live, it will not know. What the former age has epitomized into a formula

or rule for manipular convenience, it will lose all the good of verifying for itself, by means of the wall of that rule. Somewhere, sometime, it will demand and find compensation for that loss, by doing the work itself. Ferguson discovered many things in astronomy which had long been known. The better for him.

History must be this or it is nothing. Every law which the state enacts indicates a fact in human nature; that is all. We must in ourselves see the necessary reason of every fact, — see how it could and must be. So stand before every public and private work; before an oration of Burke, before a victory of Napoleon, before a martyrdom of Sir Thomas More, of Sidney, of Marmaduke Robinson; before a French Reign of Terror, and a Salem hanging of witches; before a fanatic Revival and the Animal Magnetism in Paris, or in Providence. We assume that we under like influence should be alike affected, and should achieve the like; and we aim to master intellectually the steps and reach the same height or the same

degradation that our fellow, our proxy has done.

All inquiry into antiquity, all curiosity respecting the Pyramids, the excavated cities, Stonehenge, the Ohio Circles, Mexico, Memphis, — is the desire to do away this wild, savage, and preposterous There or Then, and introduce in its place the Here and the Now. Belzoni digs and measures in the mummy-pits and pyramids of Thebes until he can see the end of the difference between the monstrous work and himself. When he has satisfied himself, in general and in detail, that it was made by such a person as he, so armed and so motived, and to ends to which he himself should also have worked, the problem is solved; his thought lives along the whole line of temples and sphinxes and catacombs, passes through them all with satisfaction, and they live again to the mind, or are now.

A Gothic cathedral affirms that it was done by us and not done by us. Surely it was by man, but we find it not in our man. But we

apply ourselves to the history of its production. We put ourselves into the place and state of the builder. We remember the forest-dwellers, the first temples, the adherence to the first type, and the decoration of it as the wealth of the nation increased; the value which is given to wood by carving led to the carving over the whole mountain of stone of a cathedral. When we have gone through this process, and added thereto the Catholic Church, its cross, its music, its processions, its Saints' days and image-worship, we have as it were been the man that made the minster; we have seen how it could and must be. We have the sufficient reason.

The difference between men is in their principle of association. Some men classify objects by color and size and other accidents of appearance; others by intrinsic likeness, or by the relation of cause and effect. The progress of the intellect is to the clearer vision of causes, which neglects surface differences. To the poet, to the philosopher, to the saint, all

things are friendly and sacred, all events profitable, all days holy, all men divine. For the eye is fastened on the life, and slights the circumstance. Every chemical substance, every plant, every animal in its growth, teaches the unity of cause, the variety of appearance.

Upborne and surrounded as we are by this all-creating nature, soft and fluid as a cloud or the air, why should we be such hard pedants, and magnify a few forms? Why should we make account of time, or of magnitude, or of figure? The soul knows them not, and genius, obeying its law, knows how to play with them as a young child plays with graybeards and in churches. Genius studies the causal thought, and far back in the womb of things sees the rays parting from one orb, that diverge, ere they fall, by infinite diameters. Genius watches the monad through all his masks as he performs the metempsychosis of nature. Genius detects through the fly, through the caterpillar, through the grub, through the egg, the constant individual; through countless

individuals the fixed species; through many species the genus; through all genera the steadfast type; through all the kingdoms of organized life the eternal unity. Nature is a mutable cloud which is always and never the same. She casts the same thought into troops of forms, as a poet makes twenty fables with one moral. Through the bruteness and toughness of matter, a subtle spirit bends all things to its own will. The adamant streams into soft but precise form before it, and whilst I look at it its outline and texture are changed again. Nothing is so fleeting as form; yet never does it quite deny itself. In man we still trace the remains or hints of all that we esteem badges of servitude in the lower races; yet in him they enhance his nobleness and grace; as Io, in Æschylus, transformed to a cow, offends the imagination; but how changed when as Isis in Egypt she meets Osiris-Jove, a beautiful woman with nothing of the metamorphosis left but the lunar horns as the splendid ornament of her brows!

The identity of history is equally intrinsic, the diversity equally obvious. There is, at the surface, infinite variety of things; at the centre there is simplicity of cause. How many are the acts of one man in which we recognize the same character! Observe the sources of our information in respect to the Greek genius. We have the civil history of that people, as Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, and Plutarch have given it; a very sufficient account of what manner of persons they were and what they did. We have the same national mind expressed for us again in their literature, in epic and lyric poems, drama, and philosophy; a very complete form. Then we have it once more in their architecture, a beauty as of temperance itself, limited to the straight line and the square, — a builded geometry. Then we have it once again in sculpture, the 'tongue on the balance of expression,' a multitude of forms in the utmost freedom of action and never transgressing the ideal serenity; like votaries performing some religious dance

before the gods, and, though in convulsive pain or mortal combat, never daring to break the figure and decorum of their dance. Thus of the genius of one remarkable people we have a fourfold representation: and to the senses what more unlike than an ode of Pindar, a marble centaur, the peristyle of the Parthenon, and the last actions of Phocion?

Every one must have observed faces and forms which, without any resembling feature, make a like impression on the beholder. A particular picture or copy of verses, if it do not awaken the same train of images, will yet superinduce the same sentiment as some wild mountain walk, although the resemblance is nowise obvious to the senses, but is occult and out of the reach of the understanding. Nature is an endless combination and repetition of a very few laws. She hums the old wellknown air through innumerable variations.

Nature is full of a sublime family likeness throughout her works, and delights in startling us with resemblances in the most unexpected

quarters. I have seen the head of an old sachem of the forest which at once reminded the eye of a bald mountain summit, and the furrows of the brow suggested the strata of the rock. There are men whose manners have the same essential splendor as the simple and awful sculpture on the friezes of the Parthenon and the remains of the earliest Greek art. And there are compositions of the same strain to be found in the books of all ages. What is Guido's Rospigliosi Aurora but a morning thought, as the horses in it are only a morning cloud? If any one will but take pains to observe the variety of actions to which he is equally inclined in certain moods of mind, and those to which he is averse, he will see how deep is the chain of affinity.

A painter told me that nobody could draw a tree without in some sort becoming a tree; or draw a child by studying the outlines of its form merely, — but by watching for a time his motions and plays, the painter enters into his nature and can then draw him at will in every

attitude. So Roos 'entered into the inmost nature of a sheep.' I knew a draughtsman employed in a public survey who found that he could not sketch the rocks until their geological structure was first explained to him. In a certain state of thought is the common origin of very diverse works. It is the spirit and not the fact that is identical. By a deeper apprehension, and not primarily by a painful acquisition of many manual skills, the artist attains the power of awakening other souls to a given activity.

It has been said that 'common souls pay with what they do, nobler souls with that which they are.' And why? Because a profound nature awakens in us by its actions and words, by its very looks and manners, the same power and beauty that a gallery of sculpture or of pictures addresses.

Civil and natural history, the history of art and of literature, must be explained from individual history, or must remain words. There is nothing but is related to us, nothing that

does not interest us, — kingdom, college, tree, horse, or iron shoe, — the roots of all things are in man. Santa Croce and the Dome of St Peter's are lame copies after a divine model. Strasburg Cathedral is a material counterpart of the soul of Erwin of Steinbach. The true poem is the poet's mind; the true ship is the ship-builder. In the man, could we lay him open, we should see the reason for the last flourish and tendril of his work; as every spine and tint in the sea-shell pre-exists in the secreting organs of the fish. The whole of heraldry and of chivalry is in courtesy. A man of fine manners shall pronounce your name with all the ornament that titles of nobility could ever add.

The trivial experience of every day is always verifying some old prediction to us and converting into things the words and signs which we had heard and seen without heed. A lady with whom I was riding in the forest said to me that the woods always seemed to her to wait, as if the genii who inhabit them

suspended their deeds until the wayfarer had passed onward; a thought which poetry has celebrated in the dance of the fairies, which breaks off on the approach of human feet. The man who has seen the rising moon break out of the clouds at midnight, has been present like an archangel at the creation of light and of the world. I remember one summer day in the fields my companion pointed out to me a broad cloud, which might extend a quarter of a mile parallel to the horizon, quite accurately in the form of a cherub as painted over churches, — a round block in the centre, which it was easy to animate with eyes and mouth, supported on either side by wide-stretched symmetrical wings. What appears once in the atmosphere may appear often, and it was undoubtedly the archetype of that familiar ornament. I have seen in the sky a chain of summer lightning which at once showed to me that the Greeks drew from nature when they painted the thunderbolt in the hand of Jove. I have seen a snow-drift along the sides of the

stone wall which obviously gave the idea of the common architectural scroll to abut a tower.

By surrounding ourselves with the original circumstances we invent anew the orders and the ornaments of architecture, as we see how each people merely decorated its primitive abodes. The Doric temple preserves the semblance of the wooden cabin in which the Dorian dwelt. The Chinese pagoda is plainly a Tartar tent. The Indian and Egyptian temples still betray the mounds and subterranean houses of their forefathers. 'The custom of making houses and tombs in the living rock,' says Heeren in his Researches on the Ethiopians, 'determined very naturally the principal character of the Nubian Egyptian architecture to the colossal form which it assumed. In these caverns, already prepared by nature, the eye was accustomed to dwell on huge shapes and masses, so that when art came to the assistance of nature it could not move on a small scale without degrading itself. What would statues of the usual size, or neat

porches and wings have been, associated with those gigantic halls before which only Colossi could sit as watchmen or lean on the pillars of the interior?'

The Gothic church plainly originated in a rude adaptation of the forest trees, with all their boughs, to a festal or solemn arcade; as the bands about the cleft pillars still indicate the green withes that tied them. No one can walk in a road cut through pine woods, without being struck with the architectural appearance of the grove, especially in winter, when the barrenness of all other trees shows the low arch of the Saxons. In the woods in a winter afternoon one will see as readily the origin of the stained glass window, with which the Gothic cathedrals are adorned, in the colors of the western sky seen through the bare and crossing branches of the forest. Nor can any lover of nature enter the old piles of Oxford and the English cathedrals, without feeling that the forest overpowered the mind of the builder, and that his chisel, his saw and plane still

reproduced its ferns, its spikes of flowers, its locust, elm, oak, pine, fir and spruce.

The Gothic cathedral is a blossoming in stone subdued by the insatiable demand of harmony in man. The mountain of granite blooms into an eternal flower, with the lightness and delicate finish as well as the aerial proportions and perspective of vegetable beauty.

In like manner all public facts are to be individualized, all private facts are to be generalized. Then at once History becomes fluid and true, and Biography deep and sublime. As the Persian imitated in the slender shafts and capitals of his architecture the stem and flower of the lotus and palm, so the Persian court in its magnificent era never gave over the nomadism of its barbarous tribes, but travelled from Ecbatana, where the spring was spent, to Susa in summer and to Babylon for the winter.

In the early history of Asia and Africa, nomadism and Agriculture are the two

antagonist facts. The geography of Asia and of Africa necessitated a nomadic life. But the nomads were the terror of all those whom the soil or the advantages of a market had induced to build towns. Agriculture therefore was a religious injunction, because of the perils of the state from nomadism. And in these late and civil countries of England and America these propensities still fight out the old battle, in the nation and in the individual. The nomads of Africa were constrained to wander, by the attacks of the gad-fly, which drives the cattle mad, and so compels the tribe to emigrate in the rainy season and to drive off the cattle to the higher sandy regions. The nomads of Asia follow the pasturage from month to month. In America and Europe the nomadism is of trade and curiosity; a progress, certainly, from the gad-fly of Astaboras to the Anglo and Italo-mania of Boston Bay. Sacred cities, to which a periodical religious pilgrimage was enjoined, or stringent laws and customs tending to invigorate the national bond, were the check

on the old rovers; and the cumulative values of long residence are the restraints on the itinerancy of the present day. The antagonism of the two tendencies is not less active in individuals, as the love of adventure or the love of repose happens to predominate. A man of rude health and flowing spirits has the faculty of rapid domestication, lives in his wagon and roams through all latitudes as easily as a Calmuc. At sea, or in the forest, or in the snow, he sleeps as warm, dines with as good appetite, and associates as happily as beside his own chimneys. Or perhaps his facility is deeper seated, in the increased range of his faculties of observation, which yield him points of interest wherever fresh objects meet his eyes. The pastoral nations were needy and hungry to desperation; and this intellectual nomadism, in its excess, bankrupts the mind through the dissipation of power on a miscellany of objects. The home-keeping wit, on the other hand, is that continence or content which finds all the elements of life in its own soil; and which has

its own perils of monotony and deterioration, if not stimulated by foreign infusions.

Every thing the individual sees without him corresponds to his states of mind, and every thing is in turn intelligible to him, as his onward thinking leads him into the truth to which that fact or series belongs.

The primeval world, — the Fore-World, as the Germans say, — I can dive to it in myself as well as grope for it with researching fingers in catacombs, libraries, and the broken reliefs and torsos of ruined villas.

What is the foundation of that interest all men feel in Greek history, letters, art and poetry, in all its periods from the Heroic or Homeric age down to the domestic life of the Athenians and Spartans, four or five centuries later? What but this, that every man passes personally through a Grecian period. The Grecian state is the era of the bodily nature, the perfection of the senses, — of the spiritual nature unfolded in strict unity with the body. In it existed those human forms which supplied

the sculptor with his models of Hercules, Phoebus, and Jove; not like the forms abounding in the streets of modern cities, wherein the face is a confused blur of features, but composed of incorrupt, sharply defined and symmetrical features, whose eye-sockets are so formed that it would be impossible for such eyes to squint and take furtive glances on this side and on that, but they must turn the whole head. The manners of that period are plain and fierce. The reverence exhibited is for personal qualities; courage, address, self-command, justice, strength, swiftness, a loud voice, a broad chest. Luxury and elegance are not known. A sparse population and want make every man his own valet, cook, butcher and soldier, and the habit of supplying his own needs educates the body to wonderful performances. Such are the Agamemnon and Diomed of Homer, and not far different is the picture Xenophon gives of himself and his compatriots in the Retreat of the Ten Thousand. 'After the army had crossed the

river Teleboas in Armenia, there fell much snow, and the troops lay miserably on the ground covered with it. But Xenophon arose naked, and taking an axe, began to split wood; whereupon others rose and did the like.' Throughout his army exists a boundless liberty of speech. They quarrel for plunder, they wrangle with the generals on each new order, and Xenophon is as sharp-tongued as any and sharper-tongued than most, and so gives as good as he gets. Who does not see that this is a gang of great boys, with such a code of honor and such lax discipline as great boys have?

The costly charm of the ancient tragedy, and indeed of all the old literature, is that the persons speak simply, — speak as persons who have great good sense without knowing it, before yet the reflective habit has become the predominant habit of the mind. Our admiration of the antique is not admiration of the old, but of the natural. The Greeks are not reflective, but perfect in their senses and in their health,

with the finest physical organization in the world. Adults acted with the simplicity and grace of children. They made vases, tragedies and statues, such as healthy senses should, — that is, in good taste. Such things have continued to be made in all ages, and are now, wherever a healthy physique exists; but, as a class, from their superior organization, they have surpassed all. They combine the energy of manhood with the engaging unconsciousness of childhood. The attraction of these manners is that they belong to man, and are known to every man in virtue of his being once a child; besides that there are always individuals who retain these characteristics. A person of childlike genius and inborn energy is still a Greek, and revives our love of the Muse of Hellas. I admire the love of nature in the Philoctetes. In reading those fine apostrophes to sleep, to the stars, rocks, mountains and waves, I feel time passing away as an ebbing sea. I feel the eternity of man, the identity of his thought. The Greek had, it seems, the same

fellow-beings as I. The sun and moon, water and fire, met his heart precisely as they meet mine. Then the vaunted distinction between Greek and English, between Classic and Romantic schools, seems superficial and pedantic. When a thought of Plato becomes a thought to me, — when a truth that fired the soul of Pindar fires mine, time is no more. When I feel that we two meet in a perception, that our two souls are tinged with the same hue, and do as it were run into one, why should I measure degrees of latitude, why should I count Egyptian years?

The student interprets the age of chivalry by his own age of chivalry, and the days of maritime adventure and circumnavigation by quite parallel miniature experiences of his own. To the sacred history of the world he has the same key. When the voice of a prophet out of the deeps of antiquity merely echoes to him a sentiment of his infancy, a prayer of his youth, he then pierces to the truth through all the confusion of tradition and the caricature of

institutions.

Rare, extravagant spirits come by us at intervals, who disclose to us new facts in nature. I see that men of God have from time to time walked among men and made their commission felt in the heart and soul of the commonest hearer. Hence evidently the tripod, the priest, the priestess inspired by the divine afflatus.

Jesus astonishes and overpowers sensual people. They cannot unite him to history, or reconcile him with themselves. As they come to revere their intuitions and aspire to live holily, their own piety explains every fact, every word.

How easily these old worships of Moses, of Zoroaster, of Menu, of Socrates, domesticate themselves in the mind. I cannot find any antiquity in them. They are mine as much as theirs.

I have seen the first monks and anchorets, without crossing seas or centuries. More than once some individual has appeared to me with

such negligence of labor and such commanding contemplation, a haughty beneficiary begging in the name of God, as made good to the nineteenth century Simeon the Stylite, the Thebais, and the first Capuchins.

The priestcraft of the East and West, of the Magian, Brahmin, Druid, and Inca, is expounded in the individual's private life. The cramping influence of a hard formalist on a young child, in repressing his spirits and courage, paralyzing the understanding, and that without producing indignation, but only fear and obedience, and even much sympathy with the tyranny, — is a familiar fact, explained to the child when he becomes a man, only by seeing that the oppressor of his youth is himself a child tyrannized over by those names and words and forms of whose influence he was merely the organ to the youth. The fact teaches him how Belus was worshipped and how the Pyramids were built, better than the discovery by Champollion of the names of all the workmen and the cost of every tile. He

finds Assyria and the Mounds of Cholula at his door, and himself has laid the courses.

Again, in that protest which each considerate person makes against the superstition of his times, he repeats step for step the part of old reformers, and in the search after truth finds, like them, new perils to virtue. He learns again what moral vigor is needed to supply the girdle of a superstition. A great licentiousness treads on the heels of a reformation. How many times in the history of the world has the Luther of the day had to lament the decay of piety in his own household! 'Doctor,' said his wife to Martin Luther, one day, 'how is it that whilst subject to papacy we prayed so often and with such fervor, whilst now we pray with the utmost coldness and very seldom?'

The advancing man discovers how deep a property he has in literature, — in all fable as well as in all history. He finds that the poet was no odd fellow who described strange and impossible situations, but that universal man

wrote by his pen a confession true for one and true for all. His own secret biography he finds in lines wonderfully intelligible to him, dotted down before he was born. One after another he comes up in his private adventures with every fable of Æsop, of Homer, of Hafiz, of Ariosto, of Chaucer, of Scott, and verifies them with his own head and hands.

The beautiful fables of the Greeks, being proper creations of the imagination and not of the fancy, are universal verities. What a range of meanings and what perpetual pertinence has the story of Prometheus! Beside its primary value as the first chapter of the history of Europe, (the mythology thinly veiling authentic facts, the invention of the mechanic arts and the migration of colonies,) it gives the history of religion, with some closeness to the faith of later ages. Prometheus is the Jesus of the old mythology. He is the friend of man; stands between the unjust 'justice' of the Eternal Father and the race of mortals, and readily suffers all things on their account. But

where it departs from the Calvinistic Christianity and exhibits him as the defier of Jove, it represents a state of mind which readily appears wherever the doctrine of Theism is taught in a crude, objective form, and which seems the self-defence of man against this untruth, namely a discontent with the believed fact that a God exists, and a feeling that the obligation of reverence is onerous. It would steal if it could the fire of the Creator, and live apart from him and independent of him. The Prometheus Vinctus is the romance of skepticism. Not less true to all time are the details of that stately apologue. Apollo kept the flocks of Admetus, said the poets. When the gods come among men, they are not known. Jesus was not; Socrates and Shakspeare were not. Antæus was suffocated by the gripe of Hercules, but every time he touched his mother-earth his strength was renewed. Man is the broken giant, and in all his weakness both his body and his mind are invigorated by habits of conversation with nature. The power of

music, the power of poetry, to unfix and as it were clap wings to solid nature, interprets the riddle of Orpheus. The philosophical perception of identity through endless mutations of form makes him know the Proteus. What else am I who laughed or wept yesterday, who slept last night like a corpse, and this morning stood and ran? And what see I on any side but the transmigrations of Proteus? I can symbolize my thought by using the name of any creature, of any fact, because every creature is man agent or patient. Tantalus is but a name for you and me. Tantalus means the impossibility of drinking the waters of thought which are always gleaming and waving within sight of the soul. The transmigration of souls is no fable. I would it were; but men and women are only half human. Every animal of the barn-yard, the field and the forest, of the earth and of the waters that are under the earth, has contrived to get a footing and to leave the print of its features and form in some one or other of these upright, heaven-facing speakers. Ah!

brother, stop the ebb of thy soul, — ebbing downward into the forms into whose habits thou hast now for many years slid. As near and proper to us is also that old fable of the Sphinx, who was said to sit in the road-side and put riddles to every passenger. If the man could not answer, she swallowed him alive. If he could solve the riddle, the Sphinx was slain. What is our life but an endless flight of winged facts or events? In splendid variety these changes come, all putting questions to the human spirit. Those men who cannot answer by a superior wisdom these facts or questions of time, serve them. Facts encumber them, tyrannize over them, and make the men of routine, the men of sense, in whom a literal obedience to facts has extinguished every spark of that light by which man is truly man. But if the man is true to his better instincts or sentiments, and refuses the dominion of facts, as one that comes of a higher race; remains fast by the soul and sees the principle, then the facts fall aptly and supple into their places;

they know their master, and the meanest of them glorifies him.

See in Goethe's Helena the same desire that every word should be a thing. These figures, he would say, these Chirons, Griffins, Phorkyas, Helen and Leda, are somewhat, and do exert a specific influence on the mind. So far then are they eternal entities, as real to-day as in the first Olympiad. Much revolving them he writes out freely his humor, and gives them body to his own imagination. And although that poem be as vague and fantastic as a dream, yet is it much more attractive than the more regular dramatic pieces of the same author, for the reason that it operates a wonderful relief to the mind from the routine of customary images, — awakens the reader's invention and fancy by the wild freedom of the design, and by the unceasing succession of brisk shocks of surprise.

The universal nature, too strong for the petty nature of the bard, sits on his neck and writes through his hand; so that when he

seems to vent a mere caprice and wild romance, the issue is an exact allegory. Hence Plato said that 'poets utter great and wise things which they do not themselves understand.' All the fictions of the Middle Age explain themselves as a masked or frolic expression of that which in grave earnest the mind of that period toiled to achieve. Magic and all that is ascribed to it is a deep presentiment of the powers of science. The shoes of swiftness, the sword of sharpness, the power of subduing the elements, of using the secret virtues of minerals, of understanding the voices of birds, are the obscure efforts of the mind in a right direction. The preternatural prowess of the hero, the gift of perpetual youth, and the like, are alike the endeavor of the human spirit 'to bend the shows of things to the desires of the mind.'

In Perceforest and Amadis de Gaul a garland and a rose bloom on the head of her who is faithful, and fade on the brow of the inconstant. In the story of the Boy and the

Mantle even a mature reader may be surprised with a glow of virtuous pleasure at the triumph of the gentle Venelas; and indeed all the postulates of elfin annals, — that the fairies do not like to be named; that their gifts are capricious and not to be trusted; that who seeks a treasure must not speak; and the like, — I find true in Concord, however they might be in Cornwall or Bretagne.

Is it otherwise in the newest romance? I read the Bride of Lammermoor. Sir William Ashton is a mask for a vulgar temptation, Ravenswood Castle a fine name for proud poverty, and the foreign mission of state only a Bunyan disguise for honest industry. We may all shoot a wild bull that would toss the good and beautiful, by fighting down the unjust and sensual. Lucy Ashton is another name for fidelity, which is always beautiful and always liable to calamity in this world.

But along with the civil and metaphysical history of man, another history goes daily

forward, — that of the external world, — in which he is not less strictly implicated. He is the compend of time; he is also the correlative of nature. His power consists in the multitude of his affinities, in the fact that his life is intertwined with the whole chain of organic and inorganic being. In old Rome the public roads beginning at the Forum proceeded north, south, east, west, to the centre of every province of the empire, making each market-town of Persia, Spain and Britain pervious to the soldiers of the capital: so out of the human heart go as it were highways to the heart of every object in nature, to reduce it under the dominion of man. A man is a bundle of relations, a knot of roots, whose flower and fruitage is the world. His faculties refer to natures out of him and predict the world he is to inhabit, as the fins of the fish foreshow that water exists, or the wings of an eagle in the egg presuppose air. He cannot live without a world. Put Napoleon in an island prison, let his faculties find no men to act on, no Alps to

climb, no stake to play for, and he would beat the air, and appear stupid. Transport him to large countries, dense population, complex interests and antagonist power, and you shall see that the man Napoleon, bounded that is by such a profile and outline, is not the virtual Napoleon. This is but Talbot's shadow; —

'His substance is not here.
For what you see is but the smallest part
And least proportion of humanity;
But were the whole frame here,
It is of such a spacious, lofty pitch,
Your roof were not sufficient to contain it.'

Columbus needs a planet to shape his course upon. Newton and Laplace need myriads of age and thick-strewn celestial areas. One may say a gravitating solar system is already prophesied in the nature of Newton's mind. Not less does the brain of Davy or of Gay-Lussac, from childhood exploring the affinities and repulsions of particles, anticipate

the laws of organization. Does not the eye of the human embryo predict the light? the ear of Handel predict the witchcraft of harmonic sound? Do not the constructive fingers of Watt, Fulton, Whittemore, Arkwright, predict the fusible, hard, and temperable texture of metals, the properties of stone, water, and wood? Do not the lovely attributes of the maiden child predict the refinements and decorations of civil society? Here also we are reminded of the action of man on man. A mind might ponder its thoughts for ages and not gain so much self-knowledge as the passion of love shall teach it in a day. Who knows himself before he has been thrilled with indignation at an outrage, or has heard an eloquent tongue, or has shared the throb of thousands in a national exultation or alarm? No man can antedate his experience, or guess what faculty or feeling a new object shall unlock, any more than he can draw to-day the face of a person whom he shall see to-morrow for the first time.

I will not now go behind the general

statement to explore the reason of this correspondency. Let it suffice that in the light of these two facts, namely, that the mind is One, and that nature is its correlative, history is to be read and written.

Thus in all ways does the soul concentrate and reproduce its treasures for each pupil. He too shall pass through the whole cycle of experience. He shall collect into a focus the rays of nature. History no longer shall be a dull book. It shall walk incarnate in every just and wise man. You shall not tell me by languages and titles a catalogue of the volumes you have read. You shall make me feel what periods you have lived. A man shall be the Temple of Fame. He shall walk, as the poets have described that goddess, in a robe painted all over with wonderful events and experiences; — his own form and features by their exalted intelligence shall be that variegated vest. I shall find in him the Foreworld; in his childhood the Age of Gold, the Apples of Knowledge, the Argonautic Expedition, the calling of Abraham, the building

of the Temple, the Advent of Christ, Dark Ages, the Revival of Letters, the Reformation, the discovery of new lands, the opening of new sciences and new regions in man. He shall be the priest of Pan, and bring with him into humble cottages the blessing of the morning stars, and all the recorded benefits of heaven and earth.

Is there somewhat overweening in this claim? Then I reject all I have written, for what is the use of pretending to know what we know not? But it is the fault of our rhetoric that we cannot strongly state one fact without seeming to belie some other. I hold our actual knowledge very cheap. Hear the rats in the wall, see the lizard on the fence, the fungus under foot, the lichen on the log. What do I know sympathetically, morally, of either of these worlds of life? As old as the Caucasian man, — perhaps older, — these creatures have kept their counsel beside him, and there is no record of any word or sign that has passed from one to the other. What connection do the

books show between the fifty or sixty chemical elements and the historical eras? Nay, what does history yet record of the metaphysical annals of man? What light does it shed on those mysteries which we hide under the names Death and Immortality? Yet every history should be written in a wisdom which divined the range of our affinities and looked at facts as symbols. I am ashamed to see what a shallow village tale our so-called History is. How many times we must say Rome, and Paris, and Constantinople! What does Rome know of rat and lizard? What are Olympiads and Consulates to these neighboring systems of being? Nay, what food or experience or succor have they for the Esquimaux seal-hunter, for the Kanàka in his canoe, for the fisherman, the stevedore, the porter?

Broader and deeper we must write our annals, — from an ethical reformation, from an influx of the ever new, ever sanative conscience, — if we would trulier express our central and wide-related nature, instead of this

old chronology of selfishness and pride to which we have too long lent our eyes. Already that day exists for us, shines in on us at unawares, but the path of science and of letters is not the way into nature. The idiot, the Indian, the child and unschooled farmer's boy stand nearer to the light by which nature is to be read, than the dissector or the antiquary.

1841

Self-Reliance

'Ne to quæsiveris extra.' ['Do not seek yourself outside yourself']

Man is his own star; and the soul that can
Render an honest and a perfect man,
Commands all light, all influence, all fate;
Nothing to him falls early or too late.
Our acts our angels are, or good or ill,
Our fatal shadows that walk by us still.
Epilogue to Beaumont and Fletcher's
Honest Man's Fortune

Cast the bantling on the rocks,
Suckle him with the she-wolf's teat,
Wintered with the hawk and fox,
Power and speed be hands and feet.

I read the other day some verses written by an eminent painter which were original and not conventional. The soul always hears an admonition in such lines, let the subject be what it may. The sentiment they instil is of

more value than any thought they may contain. To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men, — that is genius. Speak your latent conviction, and it shall be the universal sense; for the inmost in due time becomes the outmost, and our first thought is rendered back to us by the trumpets of the Last Judgment. Familiar as the voice of the mind is to each, the highest merit we ascribe to Moses, Plato and Milton is that they set at naught books and traditions, and spoke not what men, but what they thought. A man should learn to detect and watch that gleam of light which flashes across his mind from within, more than the lustre of the firmament of bards and sages. Yet he dismisses without notice his thought, because it is his. In every work of genius we recognize our own rejected thoughts; they come back to us with a certain alienated majesty. Great works of art have no more affecting lesson for us than this. They teach us to abide by our spontaneous

impression with good-humored inflexibility then most when the whole cry of voices is on the other side. Else to-morrow a stranger will say with masterly good sense precisely what we have thought and felt all the time, and we shall be forced to take with shame our own opinion from another.

There is a time in every man's education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better for worse as his portion; that though the wide universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given to him to till. The power which resides in him is new in nature, and none but he knows what that is which he can do, nor does he know until he has tried. Not for nothing one face, one character, one fact, makes much impression on him, and another none. This sculpture in the memory is not without pre-established harmony. The eye was placed where one ray should fall, that it

might testify of that particular ray. We but half express ourselves, and are ashamed of that divine idea which each of us represents. It may be safely trusted as proportionate and of good issues, so it be faithfully imparted, but God will not have his work made manifest by cowards. A man is relieved and gay when he has put his heart into his work and done his best; but what he has said or done otherwise shall give him no peace. It is a deliverance which does not deliver. In the attempt his genius deserts him; no muse befriends; no invention, no hope.

Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string. Accept the place the divine providence has found for you, the society of your contemporaries, the connection of events. Great men have always done so, and confided themselves childlike to the genius of their age, betraying their perception that the absolutely trustworthy was seated at their heart, working through their hands, predominating in all their being. And we are now men, and must accept in the highest mind

the same transcendent destiny; and not minors and invalids in a protected corner, not cowards fleeing before a revolution, but guides, redeemers and benefactors, obeying the Almighty effort and advancing on Chaos and the Dark.

What pretty oracles nature yields us on this text in the face and behavior of children, babes, and even brutes! That divided and rebel mind, that distrust of a sentiment because our arithmetic has computed the strength and means opposed to our purpose, these have not. Their mind being whole, their eye is as yet unconquered, and when we look in their faces we are disconcerted. Infancy conforms to nobody; all conform to it; so that one babe commonly makes four or five out of the adults who prattle and play to it. So God has armed youth and puberty and manhood no less with its own piquancy and charm, and made it enviable and gracious and its claims not to be put by, if it will stand by itself. Do not think the youth has no force, because he cannot speak

to you and me. Hark! in the next room his voice is sufficiently clear and emphatic. It seems he knows how to speak to his contemporaries. Bashful or bold then, he will know how to make us seniors very unnecessary.

The nonchalance of boys who are sure of a dinner, and would disdain as much as a lord to do or say aught to conciliate one, is the healthy attitude of human nature. A boy is in the parlor what the pit is in the playhouse; independent, irresponsible, looking out from his corner on such people and facts as pass by, he tries and sentences them on their merits, in the swift, summary way of boys, as good, bad, interesting, silly, eloquent, troublesome. He cumbers himself never about consequences, about interests; he gives an independent, genuine verdict. You must court him; he does not court you. But the man is as it were clapped into jail by his consciousness. As soon as he has once acted or spoken with éclat he is a committed person, watched by the sympathy

or the hatred of hundreds, whose affections must now enter into his account. There is no Lethe for this. Ah, that he could pass again into his neutrality! Who can thus avoid all pledges and, having observed, observe again from the same unaffected, unbiased, unbribable, unaffrighted innocence, — must always be formidable. He would utter opinions on all passing affairs, which being seen to be not private but necessary, would sink like darts into the ear of men, and put them in fear.

These are the voices which we hear in solitude, but they grow faint and inaudible as we enter into the world. Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members. Society is a joint-stock company, in which the members agree, for the better securing of his bread to each shareholder, to surrender the liberty and culture of the eater. The virtue in most requests is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion. It loves not realities and creators, but names and customs.

Whoso would be a man, must be a nonconformist. He who would gather immortal palms must not be hindered by the name of goodness, but must explore if it be goodness. Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind. Absolve you to yourself, and you shall have the suffrage of the world. I remember an answer which when quite young I was prompted to make to a valued adviser who was wont to importune me with the dear old doctrines of the church. On my saying, 'What have I to do with the sacredness of traditions, if I live wholly from within?' my friend suggested, — 'But these impulses may be from below, not from above.' I replied, 'They do not seem to me to be such; but if I am the Devil's child, I will live then from the Devil.' No law can be sacred to me but that of my nature. Good and bad are but names very readily transferable to that or this; the only right is what is after my constitution; the only wrong what is against it. A man is to carry himself in the presence of all opposition as if every thing

were titular and ephemeral but he. I am ashamed to think how easily we capitulate to badges and names, to large societies and dead institutions. Every decent and well-spoken individual affects and sways me more than is right. I ought to go upright and vital, and speak the rude truth in all ways. If malice and vanity wear the coat of philanthropy, shall that pass? If an angry bigot assumes this bountiful cause of Abolition, and comes to me with his last news from Barbadoes, why should I not say to him, 'Go love thy infant; love thy wood-chopper; be good-natured and modest; have that grace; and never varnish your hard, uncharitable ambition with this incredible tenderness for black folk a thousand miles off Thy love afar is spite at home.' Rough and graceless would be such greeting, but truth is handsomer than the affectation of love. Your goodness must have some edge to it, — else it is none. The doctrine of hatred must be preached, as the counteraction of the doctrine of love, when that pules and whines. I shun

father and mother and wife and brother when my genius calls me. I would write on the lintels of the door-post, Whim. I hope it is somewhat better than whim at last, but we cannot spend the day in explanation. Expect me not to show cause why I seek or why I exclude company. Then again, do not tell me, as a good man did to-day, of my obligation to put all poor men in good situations. Are they my poor? I tell thee, thou foolish philanthropist, that I grudge the dollar, the dime, the cent I give to such men as do not belong to me and to whom I do not belong. There is a class of persons to whom by all spiritual affinity I am bought and sold; for them I will go to prison if need be; but your miscellaneous popular charities; the education at college of fools; the building of meeting-houses to the vain end to which many now stand; alms to sots, and the thousand-fold Relief Societies; — though I confess with shame I sometimes succumb and give the dollar, it is a wicked dollar, which by and by I shall have the manhood to withhold.

Virtues are, in the popular estimate, rather the exception than the rule. There is the man and his virtues. Men do what is called a good action, as some piece of courage or charity, much as they would pay a fine in expiation of daily non-appearance on parade. Their works are done as an apology or extenuation of their living in the world, — as invalids and the insane pay a high board. Their virtues are penances. I do not wish to expiate, but to live. My life is for itself and not for a spectacle. I much prefer that it should be of a lower strain, so it be genuine and equal, than that it should be glittering and unsteady. I wish it to be sound and sweet, and not to need diet and bleeding. I ask primary evidence that you are a man, and refuse this appeal from the man to his actions. I know that for myself it makes no difference whether I do or forbear those actions which are reckoned excellent. I cannot consent to pay for a privilege where I have intrinsic right. Few and mean as my gifts may be, I actually am, and do not need for my own assurance or

the assurance of my fellows any secondary testimony.

What I must do is all that concerns me, not what the people think. This rule, equally arduous in actual and in intellectual life, may serve for the whole distinction between greatness and meanness. It is the harder because you will always find those who think they know what is your duty better than you know it. It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.

The objection to conforming to usages that have become dead to you is that it scatters your force. It loses your time and blurs the impression of your character. If you maintain a dead church, contribute to a dead Bible-society, vote with a great party either for the government or against it, spread your table like base house-keepers, — under all these screens I have difficulty to detect the precise man you

are: and of course so much force is withdrawn from your proper life. But do your work, and I shall know you. Do your work, and you shall reinforce yourself. A man must consider what a blind-man's-bluff is this game of conformity. If I know your sect I anticipate your argument. I hear a preacher announce for his text and topic the expediency of one of the institutions of his church. Do I not know beforehand that not possibly can he say a new and spontaneous word? Do I not know that with all this ostentation of examining the grounds of the institution he will do no such thing? Do I not know that he is pledged to himself not to look but at one side, the permitted side, not as a man, but as a parish minister? He is a retained attorney, and these airs of the bench are the emptiest affectation. Well, most men have bound their eyes with one or another handkerchief, and attached themselves to some one of these communities of opinion. This conformity makes them not false in a few particulars, authors of a few lies, but false in all

particulars. Their every truth is not quite true. Their two is not the real two, their four not the real four; so that every word they say chagrins us and we know not where to begin to set them right. Meantime nature is not slow to equip us in the prison-uniform of the party to which we adhere. We come to wear one cut of face and figure, and acquire by degrees the gentlest asinine expression. There is a mortifying experience in particular, which does not fail to wreak itself also in the general history; I mean 'the foolish face of praise,' the forced smile which we put on in company where we do not feel at ease, in answer to conversation which does not interest us. The muscles, not spontaneously moved but moved by a low usurping wilfulness, grow tight about the outline of the face, with the most disagreeable sensation.

For nonconformity the world whips you with its displeasure. And therefore a man must know how to estimate a sour face. The by-standers look askance on him in the public

street or in the friend's parlor. If this aversion had its origin in contempt and resistance like his own he might well go home with a sad countenance; but the sour faces of the multitude, like their sweet faces, have no deep cause, but are put on and off as the wind blows and a newspaper directs. Yet is the discontent of the multitude more formidable than that of the senate and the college. It is easy enough for a firm man who knows the world to brook the rage of the cultivated classes. Their rage is decorous and prudent, for they are timid, as being very vulnerable themselves. But when to their feminine rage the indignation of the people is added, when the ignorant and the poor are aroused, when the unintelligent brute force that lies at the bottom of society is made to growl and mow, it needs the habit of magnanimity and religion to treat it godlike as a trifle of no concernment.

The other terror that scares us from self-trust is our consistency; a reverence for our past act or word because the eyes of others

have no other data for computing our orbit than our past acts, and we are loth to disappoint them.

But why should you keep your head over your shoulder? Why drag about this corpse of your memory, lest you contradict somewhat you have stated in this or that public place? Suppose you should contradict yourself; what then? It seems to be a rule of wisdom never to rely on your memory alone, scarcely even in acts of pure memory, but to bring the past for judgment into the thousand-eyed present, and live ever in a new day. In your metaphysics you have denied personality to the Deity, yet when the devout motions of the soul come, yield to them heart and life, though they should clothe God with shape and color. Leave your theory, as Joseph his coat in the hand of the harlot, and flee.

A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do. He may as

well concern himself with his shadow on the wall. Speak what you think now in hard words and tomorrow speak what tomorrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict every thing you said today. — 'Ah, so you shall be sure to be misunderstood.' — Is it so bad then to be misunderstood? Pythagoras was misunderstood, and Socrates, and Jesus, and Luther, and Copernicus, and Galileo, and Newton, and every pure and wise spirit that ever took flesh. To be great is to be misunderstood.

I suppose no man can violate his nature. All the sallies of his will are rounded in by the law of his being, as the inequalities of Andes and Himmaleh are insignificant in the curve of the sphere. Nor does it matter how you gauge and try him. A character is like an acrostic or Alexandrian stanza; — read it forward, backward, or across, it still spells the same thing. In this pleasing contrite wood-life which God allows me, let me record day by day my honest thought without prospect or

retrospect, and, I cannot doubt, it will be found symmetrical, though I mean it not and see it not. My book should smell of pines and resound with the hum of insects. The swallow over my window should interweave that thread or straw he carries in his bill into my web also. We pass for what we are. Character teaches above our wills. Men imagine that they communicate their virtue or vice only by overt actions, and do not see that virtue or vice emit a breath every moment.

There will be an agreement in whatever variety of actions, so they be each honest and natural in their hour. For of one will, the actions will be harmonious, however unlike they seem. These varieties are lost sight of at a little distance, at a little height of thought. One tendency unites them all. The voyage of the best ship is a zigzag line of a hundred tacks. See the line from a sufficient distance, and it straightens itself to the average tendency. Your genuine action will explain itself and will explain your other genuine actions. Your conformity

explains nothing. Act singly, and what you have already done singly will justify you now. Greatness appeals to the future. If I can be firm enough to-day to do right and scorn eyes, I must have done so much right before as to defend me now. Be it how it will, do right now. Always scorn appearances and you always may. The force of character is cumulative. All the foregone days of virtue work their health into this. What makes the majesty of the heroes of the senate and the field, which so fills the imagination? The consciousness of a train of great days and victories behind. They shed a united light on the advancing actor. He is attended as by a visible escort of angels. That is it which throws thunder into Chatham's voice, and dignity into Washington's port, and America into Adams's eye. Honor is venerable to us because it is no ephemera. It is always ancient virtue. We worship it to-day because it is not of to-day. We love it and pay it homage because it is not a trap for our love and homage, but is self-dependent, self-derived,

and therefore of an old immaculate pedigree, even if shown in a young person.

I hope in these days we have heard the last of conformity and consistency. Let the words be gazetted and ridiculous henceforward. Instead of the gong for dinner, let us hear a whistle from the Spartan fife. Let us never bow and apologize more. A great man is coming to eat at my house. I do not wish to please him; I wish that he should wish to please me. I will stand here for humanity, and though I would make it kind, I would make it true. Let us affront and reprimand the smooth mediocrity and squalid contentment of the times, and hurl in the face of custom and trade and office, the fact which is the upshot of all history, that there is a great responsible Thinker and Actor working wherever a man works; that a true man belongs to no other time or place, but is the centre of things. Where he is, there is nature. He measures you and all men and all events. Ordinarily, every body in society reminds us of somewhat else, or of some other

person. Character, reality, reminds you of nothing else; it takes place of the whole creation. The man must be so much that he must make all circumstances indifferent. Every true man is a cause, a country, and an age; requires infinite spaces and numbers and time fully to accomplish his design; — and posterity seem to follow his steps as a train of clients. A man Caesar is born, and for ages after we have a Roman Empire. Christ is born, and millions of minds so grow and cleave to his genius that he is confounded with virtue and the possible of man. An institution is the lengthened shadow of one man; as, Monachism, of the Hermit Antony; the Reformation, of Luther; Quakerism, of Fox; Methodism, of Wesley; Abolition, of Clarkson. Scipio, Milton called 'the height of Rome,' and all history resolves itself very easily into the biography of a few stout and earnest persons.

Let a man then know his worth, and keep things under his feet. Let him not peep or steal, or skulk up and down with the air of a charity-

boy, a bastard, or an interloper in the world which exists for him. But the man in the street, finding no worth in himself which corresponds to the force which built a tower or sculptured a marble god, feels poor when he looks on these. To him a palace, a statue, or a costly book have an alien and forbidding air, much like a gay equipage, and seem to say like that, Who are you, Sir?' Yet they all are his, suitors for his notice, petitioners to his faculties that they will come out and take possession. The picture waits for my verdict; it is not to command me, but I am to settle its claims to praise. That popular fable of the sot who was picked up dead-drunk in the street, carried to the duke's house, washed and dressed and laid in the duke's bed, and, on his waking, treated with all obsequious ceremony like the duke, and assured that he had been insane, owes its popularity to the fact that it symbolizes so well the state of man, who is in the world a sort of sot, but now and then wakes up, exercises his reason and finds himself a true prince.

Our reading is mendicant and sycophantic. In history our imagination plays us false. Kingdom and lordship, power and estate, are a gaudier vocabulary than private John and Edward in a small house and common day's work; but the things of life are the same to both; the sum total of both is the same. Why all this deference to Alfred and Scanderbeg and Gustavus? Suppose they were virtuous; did they wear out virtue? As great a stake depends on your private act to-day as followed their public and renowned steps. When private men shall act with original views, the lustre will be transferred from the actions of kings to those of gentlemen.

The world has been instructed by its kings, who have so magnetized the eyes of nations. It has been taught by this colossal symbol the mutual reverence that is due from man to man. The joyful loyalty with which men have everywhere suffered the king, the noble, or the great proprietor to walk among them by a law of his own, make his own scale of men and

things and reverse theirs, pay for benefits not with money but with honor, and represent the law in his person, was the hieroglyphic by which they obscurely signified their consciousness of their own right and comeliness, the right of every man.

The magnetism which all original action exerts is explained when we inquire the reason of self-trust. Who is the Trustee? What is the aboriginal Self, on which a universal reliance may be grounded? What is the nature and power of that science-baffling star, without parallax, without calculable elements, which shoots a ray of beauty even into trivial and impure actions, if the least mark of independence appear? The inquiry leads us to that source, at once the essence of genius, of virtue, and of life, which we call Spontaneity or Instinct. We denote this primary wisdom as Intuition, whilst all later teachings are tuitions. In that deep force, the last fact behind which analysis cannot go, all things find their common origin. For the sense of being which

in calm hours rises, we know not how, in the soul, is not diverse from things, from space, from light, from time, from man, but one with them and proceeds obviously from the same source whence their life and being also proceed. We first share the life by which things exist and afterwards see them as appearances in nature and forget that we have shared their cause. Here is the fountain of action and of thought. Here are the lungs of that inspiration which giveth man wisdom and which cannot be denied without impiety and atheism. We lie in the lap of immense intelligence, which makes us receivers of its truth and organs of its activity. When we discern justice, when we discern truth, we do nothing of ourselves, but allow a passage to its beams. If we ask whence this comes, if we seek to pry into the soul that causes, all philosophy is at fault. Its presence or its absence is all we can affirm. Every man discriminates between the voluntary acts of his mind and his involuntary perceptions, and knows that to his involuntary perceptions a

perfect faith is due. He may err in the expression of them, but he knows that these things are so, like day and night, not to be disputed. My wilful actions and acquisitions are but roving; — the idlest reverie, the faintest native emotion, command my curiosity and respect. Thoughtless people contradict as readily the statement of perceptions as of opinions, or rather much more readily; for they do not distinguish between perception and notion. They fancy that I choose to see this or that thing. But perception is not whimsical, but fatal. If I see a trait, my children will see it after me, and in course of time all mankind, — although it may chance that no one has seen it before me. For my perception of it is as much a fact as the sun.

The relations of the soul to the divine spirit are so pure that it is profane to seek to interpose helps. It must be that when God speaketh he should communicate, not one thing, but all things; should fill the world with his voice; should scatter forth light, nature,

time, souls, from the centre of the present thought; and new date and new create the whole. Whenever a mind is simple and receives a divine wisdom, old things pass away, — means, teachers, texts, temples fall; it lives now, and absorbs past and future into the present hour. All things are made sacred by relation to it, — one as much as another. All things are dissolved to their centre by their cause, and in the universal miracle petty and particular miracles disappear. If therefore a man claims to know and speak of God and carries you backward to the phraseology of some old mouldered nation in another country, in another world, believe him not. Is the acorn better than the oak which is its fulness and completion? Is the parent better than the child into whom he has cast his ripened being? Whence then this worship of the past? The centuries are conspirators against the sanity and authority of the soul. Time and space are but physiological colors which the eye makes, but the soul is light: where it is, is day; where it

was, is night; and history is an impertinence and an injury if it be any thing more than a cheerful apologue or parable of my being and becoming.

Man is timid and apologetic; he is no longer upright; he dares not say 'I think,' 'I am,' but quotes some saint or sage. He is ashamed before the blade of grass or the blowing rose. These roses under my window make no reference to former roses or to better ones; they are for what they are; they exist with God to-day. There is no time to them. There is simply the rose; it is perfect in every moment of its existence. Before a leaf-bud has burst, its whole life acts; in the full-blown flower there is no more; in the leafless root there is no less. Its nature is satisfied and it satisfies nature in all moments alike. But man postpones or remembers; he does not live in the present, but with reverted eye laments the past, or, heedless of the riches that surround him, stands on tiptoe to foresee the future. He cannot be happy and strong until he too lives with nature

in the present, above time.

This should be plain enough. Yet see what strong intellects dare not yet hear God himself unless he speak the phraseology of I know not what David, or Jeremiah, or Paul. We shall not always set so great a price on a few texts, on a few lives. We are like children who repeat by rote the sentences of grandames and tutors, and, as they grow older, of the men of talents and character they chance to see, — painfully recollecting the exact word they spoke; afterwards, when they come into the point of view which those had who uttered these sayings, they understand them and are willing to let the words go; for at any time they can use words as good when occasion comes. If we live truly, we shall see truly. It is as easy for the strong man to be strong, as it is for the weak to be weak. When we have new perception, we shall gladly disburden the memory of its hoarded treasures as old rubbish. When a man lives with God, his voice shall be as sweet as the murmur of the brook and the rustle of the

corn.

And now at last the highest truth on this subject remains unsaid; probably cannot be said; for all that we say is the far-off remembering of the intuition. That thought by what I can now nearest approach to say it, is this. When good is near you, when you have life in yourself, it is not by any known or accustomed way; you shall not discern the footprints of any other; you shall not see the face of man; you shall not hear any name; — the way, the thought, the good, shall be wholly strange and new. It shall exclude example and experience. You take the way from man, not to man. All persons that ever existed are its forgotten ministers. Fear and hope are alike beneath it. There is somewhat low even in hope. In the hour of vision there is nothing that can be called gratitude, nor properly joy. The soul raised over passion beholds identity and eternal causation, perceives the self-existence of Truth and Right, and calms itself with knowing that all things go well. Vast

spaces of nature, the Atlantic Ocean, the South Sea; long intervals of time, years, centuries, are of no account. This which I think and feel underlay every former state of life and circumstances, as it does underlie my present, and what is called life and what is called death.

Life only avails, not the having lived. Power ceases in the instant of repose; it resides in the moment of transition from a past to a new state, in the shooting of the gulf, in the darting to an aim. This one fact the world hates; that the soul becomes; for that forever degrades the past, turns all riches to poverty, all reputation to a shame, confounds the saint with the rogue, shoves Jesus and Judas equally aside. Why then do we prate of self-reliance? Inasmuch as the soul is present there will be power not confident but agent. To talk of reliance is a poor external way of speaking. Speak rather of that which relies because it works and is. Who has more obedience than I masters me, though he should not raise his finger. Round him I must revolve by the

gravitation of spirits. We fancy it rhetoric when we speak of eminent virtue. We do not yet see that virtue is Height, and that a man or a company of men, plastic and permeable to principles, by the law of nature must overpower and ride all cities, nations, kings, rich men, poets, who are not.

This is the ultimate fact which we so quickly reach on this, as on every topic, the resolution of all into the ever-blessed ONE. Self-existence is the attribute of the Supreme Cause, and it constitutes the measure of good by the degree in which it enters into all lower forms. All things real are so by so much virtue as they contain. Commerce, husbandry, hunting, whaling, war, eloquence, personal weight, are somewhat, and engage my respect as examples of its presence and impure action. I see the same law working in nature for conservation and growth. Power is, in nature, the essential measure of right. Nature suffers nothing to remain in her kingdoms which cannot help itself. The genesis and maturation of a planet, its poise and orbit,

the bended tree recovering itself from the strong wind, the vital resources of every animal and vegetable, are demonstrations of the self-sufficing and therefore self-relying soul.

Thus all concentrates: let us not rove; let us sit at home with the cause. Let us stun and astonish the intruding rabble of men and books and institutions by a simple declaration of the divine fact. Bid the invaders take the shoes from off their feet, for God is here within. Let our simplicity judge them, and our docility to our own law demonstrate the poverty of nature and fortune beside our native riches.

But now we are a mob. Man does not stand in awe of man, nor is his genius admonished to stay at home, to put itself in communication with the internal ocean, but it goes abroad to beg a cup of water of the urns of other men. We must go alone. I like the silent church before the service begins, better than any preaching. How far off, how cool, how chaste the persons look, begirt each one with a

precinct or sanctuary! So let us always sit. Why should we assume the faults of our friends, or wife, or father, or child, because they sit around our hearth, or are said to have the same blood? All men have my blood and I all men's. Not for that will I adopt their petulance or folly, even to the extent of being ashamed of it. But your isolation must not be mechanical, but spiritual, that is, must be elevation. At times the whole world seems to be in conspiracy to importune you with emphatic trifles. Friend, client, child, sickness, fear, want, charity, all knock at once at thy closet door and say, — 'Come out unto us.' But keep thy state; come not into their confusion. The power men possess to annoy me I give them by a weak curiosity. No man can come near me but through my act. 'What we love that we have, but by desire we bereave ourselves of the love.'

If we cannot at once rise to the sanctities of obedience and faith, let us at least resist our temptations; let us enter into the state of war and wake Thor and Woden, courage and

constancy, in our Saxon breasts. This is to be done in our smooth times by speaking the truth. Check this lying hospitality and lying affection. Live no longer to the expectation of these deceived and deceiving people with whom we converse. Say to them, 'O father, O mother, O wife, O brother, O friend, I have lived with you after appearances hitherto. Henceforward I am the truth's. Be it known unto you that henceforward I obey no law less than the eternal law. I will have no covenants but proximities. I shall endeavor to nourish my parents, to support my family, to be the chaste husband of one wife, — but these relations I must fill after a new and unprecedented way. I appeal from your customs. I must be myself. I cannot break myself any longer for you, or you. If you can love me for what I am, we shall be the happier. If you cannot, I will still seek to deserve that you should. I will not hide my tastes or aversions. I will so trust that what is deep is holy, that I will do strongly before the sun and moon whatever inly rejoices me and

the heart appoints. If you are noble, I will love you; if you are not, I will not hurt you and myself by hypocritical attentions. If you are true, but not in the same truth with me, cleave to your companions; I will seek my own. I do this not selfishly but humbly and truly. It is alike your interest, and mine, and all men's, however long we have dwelt in lies, to live in truth. Does this sound harsh to-day? You will soon love what is dictated by your nature as well as mine, and if we follow the truth it will bring us out safe at last.' — But so may you give these friends pain. Yes, but I cannot sell my liberty and my power, to save their sensibility. Besides, all persons have their moments of reason, when they look out into the region of absolute truth; then will they justify me and do the same thing.

The populace think that your rejection of popular standards is a rejection of all standard, and mere antinomianism; and the bold sensualist will use the name of philosophy to gild his crimes. But the law of consciousness

abides. There are two confessionals, in one or the other of which we must be shriven. You may fulfil your round of duties by clearing yourself in the direct, or in the reflex way. Consider whether you have satisfied your relations to father, mother, cousin, neighbor, town, cat and dog — whether any of these can upbraid you. But I may also neglect this reflex standard and absolve me to myself. I have my own stern claims and perfect circle. It denies the name of duty to many offices that are called duties. But if I can discharge its debts it enables me to dispense with the popular code. If any one imagines that this law is lax, let him keep its commandment one day.

And truly it demands something godlike in him who has cast off the common motives of humanity and has ventured to trust himself for a taskmaster. High be his heart, faithful his will, clear his sight, that he may in good earnest be doctrine, society, law, to himself, that a simple purpose may be to him as strong as iron necessity is to others!

If any man consider the present aspects of what is called by distinction society, he will see the need of these ethics. The sinew and heart of man seem to be drawn out, and we are become timorous, desponding whimperers. We are afraid of truth, afraid of fortune, afraid of death, and afraid of each other. Our age yields no great and perfect persons. We want men and women who shall renovate life and our social state, but we see that most natures are insolvent, cannot satisfy their own wants, have an ambition out of all proportion to their practical force and do lean and beg day and night continually. Our housekeeping is mendicant, our arts, our occupations, our marriages, our religion we have not chosen, but society has chosen for us. We are parlor soldiers. We shun the rugged battle of fate, where strength is born.

If our young men miscarry in their first enterprises they lose all heart. If the young merchant fails, men say he is ruined. If the finest genius studies at one of our colleges and

is not installed in an office within one year afterwards in the cities or suburbs of Boston or New York, it seems to his friends and to himself that he is right in being disheartened and in complaining the rest of his life. A sturdy lad from New Hampshire or Vermont, who in turn tries all the professions, who teams it, farms it, peddles, keeps a school, preaches, edits a newspaper, goes to Congress, buys a township, and so forth, in successive years, and always like a cat falls on his feet, is worth a hundred of these city dolls. He walks abreast with his days and feels no shame in not 'studying a profession,' for he does not postpone his life, but lives already. He has not one chance, but a hundred chances. Let a Stoic open the resources of man and tell men they are not leaning willows, but can and must detach themselves; that with the exercise of self-trust, new powers shall appear; that a man is the word made flesh, born to shed healing to the nations; that he should be ashamed of our compassion, and that the moment he acts

from himself, tossing the laws, the books, idolatries and customs out of the window, we pity him no more but thank and revere him; — and that teacher shall restore the life of man to splendor and make his name dear to all history.

It is easy to see that a greater self-reliance must work a revolution in all the offices and relations of men; in their religion; in their education; in their pursuits; their modes of living; their association; in their property; in their speculative views.

1. In what prayers do men allow themselves! That which they call a holy office is not so much as brave and manly. Prayer looks abroad and asks for some foreign addition to come through some foreign virtue, and loses itself in endless mazes of natural and supernatural, and mediatorial and miraculous. Prayer that craves a particular commodity, anything less than all good, is vicious. Prayer is the contemplation of the facts of life from the highest point of view. It is the soliloquy of a beholding and jubilant soul. It is the spirit of

God pronouncing his works good. But prayer as a means to effect a private end is meanness and theft. It supposes dualism and not unity in nature and consciousness. As soon as the man is at one with God, he will not beg. He will then see prayer in all action. The prayer of the farmer kneeling in his field to weed it, the prayer of the rower kneeling with the stroke of his oar, are true prayers heard throughout nature, though for cheap ends. Caratach, in Fletcher's 'Bonduca,' when admonished to inquire the mind of the god Audate, replies, —

> His hidden meaning lies in our endeavors;
> Our valors are our best gods.

Another sort of false prayers are our regrets. Discontent is the want of self-reliance: it is infirmity of will. Regret calamities if you can thereby help the sufferer; if not, attend your own work and already the evil begins to be repaired. Our sympathy is just as base. We come to them who weep foolishly and sit down

and cry for company, instead of imparting to them truth and health in rough electric shocks, putting them once more in communication with their own reason. The secret of fortune is joy in our hands. Welcome evermore to gods and men is the self-helping man. For him all doors are flung wide; him all tongues greet, all honors crown, all eyes follow with desire. Our love goes out to him and embraces him because he did not need it. We solicitously and apologetically caress and celebrate him because he held on his way and scorned our disapprobation. The gods love him because men hated him. 'To the persevering mortal,' said Zoroaster, 'the blessed Immortals are swift.'

As men's prayers are a disease of the will, so are their creeds a disease of the intellect. They say with those foolish Israelites, 'Let not God speak to us, lest we die. Speak thou, speak any man with us, and we will obey.' Everywhere I am hindered of meeting God in my brother, because he has shut his own temple doors and

recites fables merely of his brother's, or his brother's brother's God. Every new mind is a new classification. If it prove a mind of uncommon activity and power, a Locke, a Lavoisier, a Hutton, a Bentham, a Fourier, it imposes its classification on other men, and lo! a new system. In proportion to the depth of the thought, and so to the number of the objects it touches and brings within reach of the pupil, is his complacency. But chiefly is this apparent in creeds and churches, which are also classifications of some powerful mind acting on the elemental thought of duty and man's relation to the Highest. Such is Calvinism, Quakerism, Swedenborgism. The pupil takes the same delight in subordinating every thing to the new terminology as a girl who has just learned botany in seeing a new earth and new seasons thereby. It will happen for a time that the pupil will find his intellectual power has grown by the study of his master's mind. But in all unbalanced minds the classification is idolized, passes for the end and

not for a speedily exhaustible means, so that the walls of the system blend to their eye in the remote horizon with the walls of the universe; the luminaries of heaven seem to them hung on the arch their master built. They cannot imagine how you aliens have any right to see, — how you can see; 'It must be somehow that you stole the light from us.' They do not yet perceive that light, unsystematic, indomitable, will break into any cabin, even into theirs. Let them chirp awhile and call it their own. If they are honest and do well, presently their neat new pinfold will be too strait and low, will crack, will lean, will rot and vanish, and the immortal light, all young and joyful, million-orbed, million-colored, will beam over the universe as on the first morning.

2. It is for want of self-culture that the superstition of Travelling, whose idols are Italy, England, Egypt, retains its fascination for all educated Americans. They who made England, Italy, or Greece venerable in the imagination,

did so by sticking fast where they were, like an axis of the earth. In manly hours we feel that duty is our place. The soul is no traveller; the wise man stays at home, and when his necessities, his duties, on any occasion call him from his house, or into foreign lands, he is at home still and shall make men sensible by the expression of his countenance that he goes, the missionary of wisdom and virtue, and visits cities and men like a sovereign and not like an interloper or a valet.

I have no churlish objection to the circumnavigation of the globe for the purposes of art, of study, and benevolence, so that the man is first domesticated, or does not go abroad with the hope of finding somewhat greater than he knows. He who travels to be amused, or to get somewhat which he does not carry, travels away from himself, and grows old even in youth among old things. In Thebes, in Palmyra, his will and mind have become old and dilapidated as they. He carries ruins to ruins.

Travelling is a fool's paradise. Our first journeys discover to us the indifference of places. At home I dream that at Naples, at Rome, I can be intoxicated with beauty and lose my sadness. I pack my trunk, embrace my friends, embark on the sea and at last wake up in Naples, and there beside me is the stern fact, the sad self, unrelenting, identical, that I fled from. I see the Vatican and the palaces. I affect to be intoxicated with sights and suggestions, but I am not intoxicated. My giant goes with me wherever I go.

3. But the rage of travelling is a symptom of a deeper unsoundness affecting the whole intellectual action. The intellect is vagabond, and our system of education fosters restlessness. Our minds travel when our bodies are forced to stay at home. We imitate; and what is imitation but the travelling of the mind? Our houses are built with foreign taste; our shelves are garnished with foreign ornaments; our opinions, our tastes, our faculties, lean, and follow the Past and the

Distant. The soul created the arts wherever they have flourished. It was in his own mind that the artist sought his model. It was an application of his own thought to the thing to be done and the conditions to be observed. And why need we copy the Doric or the Gothic model? Beauty, convenience, grandeur of thought and quaint expression are as near to us as to any, and if the American artist will study with hope and love the precise thing to be done by him, considering the climate, the soil, the length of the day, the wants of the people, the habit and form of the government, he will create a house in which all these will find themselves fitted, and taste and sentiment will be satisfied also.

Insist on yourself; never imitate. Your own gift you can present every moment with the cumulative force of a whole life's cultivation; but of the adopted talent of another you have only an extemporaneous half possession. That which each can do best, none but his Maker can teach him. No man yet knows what it is,

nor can, till that person has exhibited it. Where is the master who could have taught Shakspeare? Where is the master who could have instructed Franklin, or Washington, or Bacon, or Newton? Every great man is a unique. The Scipionism of Scipio is precisely that part he could not borrow. Shakspeare will never be made by the study of Shakspeare. Do that which is assigned you, and you cannot hope too much or dare too much. There is at this moment for you an utterance brave and grand as that of the colossal chisel of Phidias, or trowel of the Egyptians, or the pen of Moses or Dante, but different from all these. Not possibly will the soul, all rich, all eloquent, with thousand-cloven tongue, deign to repeat itself; but if you can hear what these patriarchs say, surely you can reply to them in the same pitch of voice; for the ear and the tongue are two organs of one nature. Abide in the simple and noble regions of thy life, obey thy heart, and thou shalt reproduce the Foreworld again.

4. As our Religion, our Education, our Art

look abroad, so does our spirit of society. All men plume themselves on the improvement of society, and no man improves.

Society never advances. It recedes as fast on one side as it gains on the other. It undergoes continual changes; it is barbarous, it is civilized, it is christianized, it is rich, it is scientific; but this change is not amelioration. For every thing that is given something is taken. Society acquires new arts and loses old instincts. What a contrast between the well-clad, reading, writing, thinking American, with a watch, a pencil and a bill of exchange in his pocket, and the naked New Zealander, whose property is a club, a spear, a mat and an undivided twentieth of a shed to sleep under! But compare the health of the two men and you shall see that the white man has lost his aboriginal strength. If the traveller tell us truly, strike the savage with a broad-axe and in a day or two the flesh shall unite and heal as if you struck the blow into soft pitch, and the same blow shall send the white to his grave.

The civilized man has built a coach, but has lost the use of his feet. He is supported on crutches, but lacks so much support of muscle. He has a fine Geneva watch, but he fails of the skill to tell the hour by the sun. A Greenwich nautical almanac he has, and so being sure of the information when he wants it, the man in the street does not know a star in the sky. The solstice he does not observe; the equinox he knows as little; and the whole bright calendar of the year is without a dial in his mind. His note-books impair his memory; his libraries overload his wit; the insurance-office increases the number of accidents; and it may be a question whether machinery does not encumber; whether we have not lost by refinement some energy, by a Christianity, entrenched in establishments and forms, some vigor of wild virtue. For every Stoic was a Stoic; but in Christendom where is the Christian?

There is no more deviation in the moral standard than in the standard of height or bulk. No greater men are now than ever were.

A singular equality may be observed between the great men of the first and of the last ages; nor can all the science, art, religion, and philosophy of the nineteenth century avail to educate greater men than Plutarch's heroes, three or four and twenty centuries ago. Not in time is the race progressive. Phocion, Socrates, Anaxagoras, Diogenes, are great men, but they leave no class. He who is really of their class will not be called by their name, but will be his own man, and in his turn the founder of a sect. The arts and inventions of each period are only its costume and do not invigorate men. The harm of the improved machinery may compensate its good. Hudson and Behring accomplished so much in their fishing-boats as to astonish Parry and Franklin, whose equipment exhausted the resources of science and art. Galileo, with an opera-glass, discovered a more splendid series of celestial phenomena than any one since. Columbus found the New World in an undecked boat. It is curious to see the periodical disuse and

perishing of means and machinery which were introduced with loud laudation a few years or centuries before. The great genius returns to essential man. We reckoned the improvements of the art of war among the triumphs of science, and yet Napoleon conquered Europe by the bivouac, which consisted of falling back on naked valor and disencumbering it of all aids. The Emperor held it impossible to make a perfect army, says Las Casas, 'without abolishing our arms, magazines, commissaries and carriages, until, in imitation of the Roman custom, the soldier should receive his supply of corn, grind it in his hand-mill and bake his bread himself.'

Society is a wave. The wave moves onward, but the water of which it is composed does not. The same particle does not rise from the valley to the ridge. Its unity is only phenomenal. The persons who make up a nation to-day, next year die, and their experience dies with them.

And so the reliance on Property, including

the reliance on governments which protect it, is the want of self-reliance. Men have looked away from themselves and at things so long that they have come to esteem the religious, learned and civil institutions as guards of property, and they deprecate assaults on these, because they feel them to be assaults on property. They measure their esteem of each other by what each has, and not by what each is. But a cultivated man becomes ashamed of his property, out of new respect for his nature. Especially he hates what he has if he sees that it is accidental, — came to him by inheritance, or gift, or crime; then he feels that it is not having; it does not belong to him, has no root in him and merely lies there because no revolution or no robber takes it away. But that which a man is, does always by necessity acquire; and what the man acquires, is living property, which does not wait the beck of rulers, or mobs, or revolutions, or fire, or storm, or bankruptcies, but perpetually renews itself wherever the man breathes. 'Thy lot or portion

of life,' said the Caliph Ali, 'is seeking after thee; therefore be at rest from seeking after it.' Our dependence on these foreign goods leads us to our slavish respect for numbers. The political parties meet in numerous conventions; the greater the concourse and with each new uproar of announcement, The delegation from Essex! The Democrats from New Hampshire! The Whigs of Maine! the young patriot feels himself stronger than before by a new thousand of eyes and arms. In like manner the reformers summon conventions and vote and resolve in multitude. Not so, O friends! will the God deign to enter and inhabit you, but by a method precisely the reverse. It is only as a man puts off all foreign support and stands alone that I see him to be strong and to prevail. He is weaker by every recruit to his banner. Is not a man better than a town? Ask nothing of men, and, in the endless mutation, thou only firm column must presently appear the upholder of all that surrounds thee. He who knows that power is inborn, that he is

weak because he has looked for good out of him and elsewhere, and, so perceiving throws himself unhesitatingly on his thought, instantly rights himself, stands in the erect position, commands his limbs, works miracles; just as a man who stands on his feet is stronger than a man who stands on his head.

So use all that is called Fortune. Most men gamble with her, and gain all, and lose all, as her wheel rolls. But do thou leave as unlawful these winnings, and deal with Cause and Effect, the chancellors of God. In the Will work and acquire, and thou hast chained the wheel of Chance, and shall sit hereafter out of fear from her rotations. A political victory, a rise of rents, the recovery of your sick or the return of your absent friend, or some other favorable event raises your spirits, and you think good days are preparing for you. Do not believe it. Nothing can bring you peace but yourself. Nothing can bring you peace but the triumph of principles.