

LI. THE METHOD OF CREATION.

THE QUESTION OF EVOLUTION.

LET us suppose Matter, Energy, and Law in existence. This stupendous system of things which we have been contemplating implies the reality of some substance which is the underlying ground of its being. It is a system of *things*, not of names. It implies the exercise of power, or force; for out of matter, something has been formed, and the forms of matter have been changed. It implies the existence of method; for forms exist in certain fixed relations to each other, and changes occur in some regular order of succession; and an ordained and established correlation of forms or order of succession is a law. Matter, energy, and method (law) came into existence somehow; let us grant that—but we need not here inquire *how* they came to exist. It is only the *nature of the method or law*, in accordance with which energy shapes matter and determines successions of forms and events, that we are to consider. What is Nature's fundamental method?

Allow me first to enunciate the method. I will then proceed to cite facts which will both illustrate and establish the proposition. *Nature's fundamental method is a procedure, through continuity, from the general to the particular.* Do not be alarmed at the form of the phrase which conciseness and accuracy of statement necessitate. The idea is very simple, and you will soon perceive it so. By "continuity," I mean that Nature retains *the same matter* in bringing into existence many modifications in succession; she does not drop and abandon the matter of one conformation when she proceeds to another; but she retains the same matter, and modifies it into the new conformation. The frog, for instance, is the tadpole modified. An apple is a full-grown element which existed in the flower, and in the bud. By proceeding "from the general to the particular," I mean that each modification of matter, in a series of modifications, contains some added features, together with a clearer exhibition of the older features. As when a house is to be built, the rough frame is first constructed—