

## THE UNITY OF NATURE

purpose of planetary motion, or a mineralogist to seek design in the structure of a crystal? Does the physicist investigate the purpose of electric force, or the chemist that of atomic weight? We may confidently answer in the negative—certainly not, in the sense that God, or a purposive natural force, had at some time created these fundamental laws of the mechanism of the universe with a definite design, and causes them to work daily in accordance with his rational will. The anthropomorphic notion of a deliberate architect and ruler of the world has gone forever from this field; the “eternal, iron laws of nature” have taken his place.

But the idea of design has a very great significance and application in the *organic* world. We do undeniably perceive a purpose in the structure and in the life of an organism. The plant and the animal seem to be controlled by a definite design in the combination of their several parts, just as clearly as we see in the machines which man invents and constructs; as long as life continues the functions of the several organs are directed to definite ends, just as is the operation of the various parts of a machine. Hence it was quite natural that the older naïve study of nature, in explaining the origin and activity of the living being, should postulate a creator who had “arranged all things with wisdom and understanding,” and had constructed each plant and animal according to the special purpose of its life. The conception of this “almighty creator of heaven and earth” was usually quite anthropomorphic; he created “everything after its kind.” As long as the creator seemed to man to be of human shape, to think with his brain, see with his eyes, and fashion with his hands, it was possible to form a definite pict-