

THE RIDDLE OF THE UNIVERSE

began on a small scale to select a number of these beautiful forms for more popular description in my *Art Forms in Nature* (1899).

However, there is now no need for long voyages and costly works to appreciate the beauties of this world. A man needs only to keep his eyes open and his mind disciplined. Surrounding nature offers us everywhere a marvellous wealth of lovely and interesting objects of all kinds. In every bit of moss and blade of grass, in every beetle and butterfly, we find, when we examine it carefully, beauties which are usually overlooked. Above all, when we examine them with a powerful glass or, better still, with a good microscope, we find everywhere in nature a new world of inexhaustible charms.

But the nineteenth century has not only opened our eyes to the æsthetic enjoyment of the microscopic world; it has shown us the beauty of the greater objects in nature. Even at its commencement it was the fashion to regard the mountains as magnificent but forbidding, and the sea as sublime but dreaded. At its close the majority of educated people—especially they who dwell in the great cities—are delighted to enjoy the glories of the Alps and the crystal splendor of the glacier world for a fortnight every year, or to drink in the majesty of the ocean and the lovely scenery of its coasts. All these sources of the keenest enjoyment of nature have only recently been revealed to us in all their splendor, and the remarkable progress we have made in facility and rapidity of conveyance has given even the less wealthy an opportunity of approaching them. All this progress in the æsthetic enjoyment of nature—and, proportionately, in the scientific understanding of nature—implies an equal advance in higher mental development and, consequently, in the direction of our monistic religion.