

CONCLUSION

enigmatic "thing in itself" when we have no means of investigating it, when we do not even clearly know whether it exists or not? Let us, then, leave the fruitless brooding over this ideal phantom to the "pure metaphysician," and let us instead, as "real physicists," rejoice in the immense progress which has been actually made by our monistic philosophy of nature.

Towering above all the achievements and discoveries of the century we have the great, comprehensive "law of substance," the fundamental law of the constancy of matter and force. The fact that substance is everywhere subject to eternal movement and transformation gives it the character also of the universal law of evolution. As this supreme law has been firmly established, and all others are subordinate to it, we arrive at a conviction of the universal unity of nature and the eternal validity of its laws. From the gloomy *problem* of substance we have evolved the clear *law* of substance. The monism of the cosmos which we establish thereon proclaims the absolute dominion of "the great eternal iron laws" throughout the universe. It thus shatters, at the same time, the three central dogmas of the dualistic philosophy—the personality of God, the immortality of the soul, and the freedom of the will.

Many of us certainly view with sharp regret, or even with a profound sorrow, the death of the gods that were so much to our parents and ancestors. We must console ourselves in the words of the poet:

"The times are changed, old systems fall,
And new life o'er their ruins dawns."

The older view of idealistic dualism is breaking up with all its mystic and anthropistic dogmas; but upon