

of development, — an idea which he identifies with discontinuity.<sup>1</sup>

We thus find that, at the end of the century, the problem of nature has become specified in a manner which points on the one side to the poetical and artistic, on the other side to the ethical and practical aspects as necessary complements to purely mechanical views such as have been elaborated and become fruitful in science. By a general consensus of opinion among the representatives of many schools of thought, the mechanical views of nature reveal to us only the necessary forms of thought by which we can acquire a mastery over natural things and processes; they do not reveal to us either the essence or the meaning—*i.e.*, the soul—of nature. Nevertheless, this latter term has a definite sense, and can as little be got rid of in any true philosophy of nature as the term Soul or Spirit can be permanently eliminated from a study and comprehension of the inner life.

The problem of nature has, in the course of the nineteenth century, met with a fate similar to that which has befallen other philosophical problems. It has been taken over by the exact and the natural sciences; and, so far as the deeper questions of the essence and meaning of things natural are concerned, the earlier philosophy

53.  
Transition  
to æsthetic  
and ethical  
aspects.

<sup>1</sup> The problem of the Contingent will occupy us again in later chapters. In the meantime I may mention that it forms the principal subject of discussion in Alfred Fouillée's critical account of the idealistic as opposed to the positivistic movement in modern French thought. He there ('Le Mouvement Idéaliste,' 2<sup>me</sup> ed., 1896, pp. 151-277) traces "la

théorie de la contingence, telle que l'ont soutenue Lotze, M. Renouvier, M. Boutroux, M. Bergson," into what he considers its ethical consequences, according to which it should be judged. The best discussion of this side of the subject in English literature is to be found in the 4th of Prof. Ward's second series of 'Gifford Lectures,' 1911.