

taught it to him. Nay, there is an older authority still, in the personage (as near to an abstraction as a traditional human being can be) Moschus (not he of the Idyls). But the fact is that the notion of THE ATOM—the *indivisible*, the *thing* that has *place*, *being*, and *power*—is an absolute necessity of the human thinking mind, and is of all ages and nations. It underlies all our notions of being, and starts up, *per se*, whenever we come to look closely at the intimate objective nature of things, as much as space and time do in the subjective. You have dabbled in German metaphysics, and know the distinction I refer to.

*Hermione.*—You don't mean to say that we are nothing but ATOMS?—Place! being! power! Why, that is I, it is you, it is all of us. Nay, nay. This is going too fast.

*Hermogenes.*—Perhaps it is.—(You have forgot thought, by-the-by, and will.)—But I am not going to make a single hop quite so far. We shall divide that into two or three jumps, and loiter a little in the intermediate resting-places. But, to go back to your atoms and a vacuum. What does a vacuum mean?

*Hermione.*—Vacuum? Why, emptiness, to be sure! I mean empty space. Space where *no thing* is. I am not so very sure that I can realize that notion. It is like the abstract idea of a lord mayor that Pope and Atterbury talk about; and in getting rid of the *man*, the gold chain and the custard are apt to start up and vindicate their claim to a place in the world of ideas. And yet I do mean something by empty space. I mean *dis-*