

first choice. There can be no farther decompositions or recompositions. The forces of matter have spent themselves. After a fierce conflict, they lie mutually slain, upon a long-contested battle-field. The struggle is ended—nothing stirs—night comes down and casts her pall over the corse of matter.

From this exit of material existence we shrink back to the times in which we live, and inquire, What are all the myriad activities of the passing world—what are rolling tides, and surging waves, and ocean streams—what are mountain births, and volcanic eruptions, and continental throes—what are wasted lands, and Niagara gorges, and ocean sediments—what are worn-out continents, and extinguished populations, and terrestrial revolutions—what are all these vicissitudes through which the earth has passed, and all these phenomena which to-day are transpiring—what are they all but the *incidents* attending the progress of the active forces of Nature toward their destined equilibrium? In their restless and active lifetime they show themselves under myriads of guises, and work out their myriads of incidents; but the great law which is over them hurries them ever onward in but one direction, and the end of that is equilibrium, stagnation, death.

Is this, then, the end of matter? Is it for this that space has been populated with worlds innumerable? Was it for this brief ferment that a past eternity should brood over nothingness, and an eternity to come should ache with the recollection of creation foiled? The forces of matter can do no more. The machinery of the universe has run down. Beyond and above is only the Eternal Omnipotence. There is now no power in the universe but Deity. When he wills the resurrection of matter shall dawn. New life will thrill through every vein of the ancient corse. When he wills the forces of matter shall hie again from their hiding-places.