

Heat will again be gathered into central masses. Matter will dissolve into liquids—liquids burst into vapor, and fill again the vault of space—cohesive affinities will be sundered—chemical unions will be unlocked—electrical and gravitating forces will resume their play, and once more will begin the long series of activities which make up the lifetime of firmaments, and systems, and worlds. The matter of our solar system—or of a system like ours—will again be isolated; the endless whirl of fiery vapor will detach rings, in succession, which will consolidate into planets and satellites—another earth will spring up—another period of the reign of fire will ensue—and then another reign of water—and then another long line of organic creations will begin, and, in due time, in some distant future age, another intelligent race will populate another earth, and dream, as we now dream, of the beginning *whence*, and the goal *whither* the grand rush of events is carrying them. This is one of the Cycles of Matter.

In what light, then, are we to regard all the vicissitudes and activities of the lifetime of a universe? What are they but a brief agitation on the surface of the infinite ocean of matter—a momentary ripple raised by the presence of the Omnipotent hand—destined speedily to subside, and again to be raised by the breath of Omnific Power?

In the presence of such conceptions as these, what is man, and what are the works of his hands? What are fleets, and forts, and cities with their insect hum? What are temples, and pyramids, and Chinese walls? The agitation of particles of dust in a distant corner of the universe. The track of an insect on the ocean's shore. The breath of an infant in the tornado's blast.

But what is the spirit of man, whose thoughts thus wander through eternity? What is the intelligence of man which climbs the battlements of the palace of Omnipotence