

OUR MONISTIC RELIGION

the human imagination could picture to itself the ambrosial banquets of the Olympic gods above or the laden tables of the happy dwellers in Valhalla. But now all these deities and the immortal souls that sat at their tables are "houseless and homeless," as David Strauss has so ably described; for we know from astrophysical science that the immeasurable depths of space are filled with a prosaic ether, and that millions of heavenly bodies, ruled by eternal laws of iron, rush hither and thither in the great ocean, in their eternal rhythm of life and death.

The places of devotion, in which men seek the satisfaction of their religious emotions and worship the objects of their reverence, are regarded as sacred "churches." The pagodas of Buddhistic Asia, the Greek temples of classical antiquity, the synagogues of Palestine, the mosques of Egypt, the Catholic cathedrals of the south, and the Protestant cathedrals of the north, of Europe—all these "houses of God" serve to raise man above the misery and the prose of daily life, to lift him into the sacred, poetic atmosphere of a higher, ideal world. They attain this end in a thousand different ways, according to their various forms of worship and their age. The modern man who "has science and art"—and, therefore, "religion"—needs no special church, no narrow, enclosed portion of space. For through the length and breadth of free nature, wherever he turns his gaze, to the whole universe or to any single part of it, he finds, indeed, the grim "struggle for life," but by its side are ever "the good, the true, and the beautiful"; his church is commensurate with the whole of glorious nature. Still, there will always be men of special temperament who will desire to have decorated temples or churches as places of devotion