

would be as if we should ask, what were the Laws of Rome, and should have read to us a tabulated list of the laws of that remarkable State. In either case the reply could scarcely be called untrue, or even incorrect, but it would be very defective as regards giving us true and correct conceptions.

Instead of this method of reply, another, with no wearying catalogued collection, might make answer to us, telling how the fabric of Roman Law was the outgrowth of centuries of Roman life, actions, thoughts, passions, environments, institutions, morals; or, again, how it reacted on all these. So we should see that not a list of verbal statements, but a product of the life and mind of a wonderful people; the formed and vital power that, receiving its character from the creating people, carried on and controlled the activities of the nation, and we should know the makers of Roman Law.

In like manner as by the larger and better method of studying the laws of Rome we come to know the people that made that system, and to know the institutions and life that grew under its guidance and control, so by the more comprehensive and the truer method of studying the Laws of Nature we may learn not merely a catalogue of facts, however useful or grand, but the character and thoughts of the power that made this system of laws. For it is very unphilosophical to stop, as some do, with the laws, confounding them in our thoughts with the originating power, and attributing power to them. Let us clearly understand that as the laws of a nation are but rules that guide the actions of its people, but have power neither of origin nor of action themselves, so the Laws of Nature are but the methods according to which the actions of nature are performed, but the power in exercise in these actions is not in or of the laws.

We cannot here present a systematic study of the character of the power that made the

laws of nature as that character, and the acts of that power may be derived from the system of laws. A few desultory points, at most, can be suggested, leaving the interesting study to those who appreciate the delight it affords.

Three or four things are so manifest that it is difficult to say which would first fix the attention of one turning his thoughts to the study of the character of this power, its infinity, its constancy, its wisdom, or its eternity. From the multitude and vastness of the objects, for the actions of which methods are to be prescribed, the unlimited, or infinite, nature of the ordaining power is most evident.

Then a glance along the centuries of the records of science, and the experience of our race, makes equally patent another element in the character of that power, its unchangeableness. It has neither variableness nor shadow of change, from the beginning of actions in the nebulous mists to the latest hour come forth into time.

Nor is it possible to look in the laws of nature for the character of the power that made them without immediately perceiving its transcendent intelligence, its infinite wisdom. Nothing less, amid such multitudinous and vast complexity, could comprehend all in enduring stability and harmony. Less than an infinite degree, of what in ourselves we call intelligence, or some higher quality of like kind, could not avert speedy disaster and irremediable confusion.

Alike conspicuous with those elements already named is the attribute of persistence, of indestructibility, of eternity. This is characteristic of every manifestation of the power that ordered the universe, alike in the indestructibility of matter that man has known for generations, and in the conservation of energy that he has but just now thoroughly learned.

Other elements of the character of the law-maker of nature are almost as evident in laws of nature; benevolence, justice, verity—