

Ancient Landmarks

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One of the greatest achievements of the last century, indeed of the whole intellectual development of the world, is the recognition of the universal reign of law. Even in his primitive state man believed in a certain regularity in nature, but only in recent years has he realized that there is no space, no place, no condition, where there is exemption from law's imperial domain; that there is one sublime force, one all-inclusive movement, whose record lies plainly written in the history of man and of nature.

With an accumulating experience and an increasing freedom from the bonds of superstitious tradition, man has gone forth in search of truth and wrung from earth the secret of her being. He has learned that all progress in nature has been a slow, incessant evolution. He believes that from a nebulous mass, through an infinity of years, the earth has become the home and maintenance if not the parent of mankind. And in evidence he points to the flatness of the polar regions and reads to us the story of the world's development in the strata of its eternal hills.

Science and experience both tell us there is no exception to the established order, no chance, no caprice, no special providences. In all nature we find a force that is constant, reliable, ever striving to do its work; a force whose ancient landmarks tell the tale of never ceasing change. The snow-clad mountains bear the sediment and shells of the sea. A few coral islands out in the Pacific mark the burial place of a submerged continent. Unknown planets come into view, brighten, wane, and, controlled by an invisible power, sweep onward into unexplored infinity.

Because an inherent force is less obvious in themselves and in their institutions than in nature, men often deny its existence; and since they can not discern the exact working of its laws, they think to transgress them with impunity. But gradually men are discovering that they live, think and develop by law; and that