

When such a man wrote of the action of a strange force the matter is worth close examination.

Intrinsically, there is nothing improbable or unnatural in the idea. Individually, we all feel ourselves at times in the possession of some unknown power. We are often carried along by an irresistible impulse in spite of ourselves. Each of us must at some time or other in his life have felt that within him which will not let him rest, but impels to expression. Everyone must have experienced deep within him a great source of power which ever and anon comes welling up in forceful spiritual fountains. Some inner necessity compels us onward—longings, dreams, aspirations, greater than can ever be satisfied coming surging up from the inmost depths of our beings.

This internal force which probably most of us individually feel to be within ourselves we also feel must be working in others around us. And we have the further feeling that we are not each of us separate and isolated geysers, but are connected together and impelled by some common interior, hidden, urge and impulse. Each of us is a living centre of action, but we all draw from some one original source and spring of being. Deep in the heart of things, inherent in the very life itself, we feel there is an indwelling eternal energy or vital impulse—the “life-force” of Bernard Shaw; the “potent, felt, interior command” of Whitman; the “*élan vital*” of Bergson; the “impulse from the distance of our deepest, best existence” of Matthew Arnold; surging ever upward and outward, and straining to express itself through our personalities.

To many of the deepest thinkers this is of all things the most real—to some it is the only thing that is real. The solid mountains may be merely an aspect or appearance of the true reality behind. But to many this “great world-force, energizing through Nature”; this “creative and urging principle of the world”; this unseen cosmic impulse; this indwelling spirit pervading every human being, and ever striving to unfold itself; this pulse and motive, “the fibre and the breath,” is the one certainty, the one genuine reality.