

**NATURAL  
CAUSATION; AN  
ESSAY IN FOUR PARTS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649655113

Natural Causation; An Essay in four Parts by C. E. Plumtre

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**C. E. PLUMPTRE**

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# NATURAL CAUSATION

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An Essay in Four Parts

BY

C. E. PLUMPTRE

AUTHOR OF "GENERAL SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF PANTHEISM," "GIORDANO BRUNO, A  
TALE OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY," ETC.

*"Know, so far as is permitted thee, that Nature is in all things uniform."*  
—Quoted from the Pythagorean Scriptures by Professor Clifford.

London

T. FISHER UNWIN  
20, PATERNOSTER SQUARE.

MDCCLXXXVIII

B. D.  
T. L.

To  
the Memory of  
my Father,  
who was Unfailing in his Encouragement and Sympathy,  
and in  
his Interest in my previous Works,  
I dedicate this Volume.

MARCH 29TH, 1855.

*Pollocksmith 3-25-1855 - Pictor.*

430584

## PREFATORY NOTE.

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I HAVE grouped together the four Essays in this volume under the one title, "Natural Causation," because they all pertain to one great subject—Natural Law. But they were not all written at the same time. The second Essay, that on "Philosophical Necessity," has been the longest written, and originally appeared in the October number of *The Modern Review*, 1880. It is reprinted here with alterations so slight as hardly to require mention. The other three, though written at some intervals, appear in print here for the first time.



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# NATURAL CAUSATION.



## I.

### THE DOCTRINE OF DESIGN AS VIEWED FROM THE STAND- POINT OF EVOLUTION.

"I seek after Truth, by which no man ever yet was injured."

*Marcus Aurelius Antoninus.*

It was, I think, the Italian philosopher Giordano Bruno, who was the first to point to a fact that even now is scarcely sufficiently recognised; namely, that what are called the olden ages, the ancient times, are in reality the early ages, the youthful times; and conversely, that what in modern parlance are spoken of as recent ages, are in reality the elder ages. The world in this latter part of the nineteenth century, for instance, is older by three centuries than when Bruno made the remark; and he, a somewhat violent opponent of Aristotle, made it because he was rebuked for his presumption in venturing to question the authority of one who had lived so many centuries before himself—the implication of course being that because Aristotle had lived