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When one considers how great and how close to us the _problem of existence_ is,--this equivocal, tormented, fleeting, dream-like existence--so great and so close that as soon as one perceives it, it overshadows and conceals all other problems and aims;--and when one sees how all men--with a few and rare exceptions--are not clearly conscious of the problem, nay, do not even seem to see it, but trouble themselves about everything else rather than this, and live on taking thought only for the present day and the scarcely longer span of their own personal future, while they either expressly give the problem up or are ready to agree with it, by the aid of some system of popular metaphysics, and are satisfied with this;--when one, I say, reflects upon this, so may one be of the opinion that man is a _thinking being_ only in a very remote sense, and not feel any special surprise at any trait of thoughtlessness or folly; but know, rather, that the intellectual outlook of the normal man indeed surpasses that of the brute,--whose whole existence resembles a continual present without any consciousness of the future or the past--but, however, not to such an extent as one is wont to suppose.