DARWINISM AND POLITICS
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BY

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"Opinions are stronger than armies."

LORD PALMERSTON.

"Evolution is not a force, but a process; not a cause, but a law."


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DARWINISM AND POLITICS.

CHARLES DARWIN himself has told us† that it was Malthus’s Essay on Population which suggested to him the theory of Natural Selection. The constant tendency of population to outrun the means of subsistence and the consequent struggle for existence were ideas that only needed to be extended from human beings to the whole realm of organic nature in order to explain why certain inherited variations become fixed as the characteristics of definite types or species. Thus an economic treatise suggested the answer to the great biological problem; and it is therefore fitting

that the biological formulae should, in their turn, be applied to the explanation of social conditions. It is felt, rightly enough, that the problems of human society cannot be fairly studied, if we do not make use of all the light to be found in the scientific investigation of nature; and the conception of the struggle for existence comes back to the explanation of human society with all the added force of its triumph in the solution of the greatest question with which natural science has hitherto successfully dealt. Our sociologists look back with contempt on older phrases, such as "Social Contract" or "Natural Rights," and think that they have gained, not only a more accurate view of what is, but a rule available in practical ethics and politics. Evolution has become not merely a theory but a creed, not merely a conception by which to understand the universe, but a guide to direct us how to order our lives.
The phrase "struggle for existence," as it came from the pages of Malthus, had a dreary enough sound; but, when this struggle for existence is shown to lead to the "survival of the fittest," and when it is seen to be the explanation of all the marvellous adaptations and of all the beauty of the living things in the world, it seems to gain a force and even a sanctity which makes it a very formidable opponent to have to reckon with in any political or ethical controversy. It is easy to see how the evolutionary watch-word can be applied. In Malthus the idea of struggle for existence was a very uncomfortable one; but, when it comes back to economics after passing through biology, it makes a very comfortable doctrine indeed for all those who are quite satisfied with things as they are. The support of scientific opinion can be plausibly claimed for the defence of the inequalities in the social organism: these
inequalities, it can be urged, are only part of what exist inevitably throughout the physical world. The creed of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity can be discarded as a metaphysical fiction of the unscientific eighteenth century. The aspirations of socialism can be put aside as the foolish denial of the everlasting economic competition which is sanctioned by nature as only one phase of the general struggle for existence.

Let us suppose for a moment that our biological politicians are correct in their view of social evolution: they ought, at least, to cease talking to us of "the beneficent working of the survival of the fittest," or "the beneficent private war, which makes one man strive to climb on the shoulders of another." This talk of "beneficence" is itself but a survival, not of

1 H. Spencer *The Man versus the State*, p. 69; Maine *Popular Government*, p. 50.
the fittest, but of the "theological" belief in a God who wills the happiness of his creatures—the attenuated creed of the English Deists—or of the "metaphysical" belief in a Nature which, if only left to itself, leads to better results than can be secured by any interference of man. That was the type of thinking in the days of Rousseau and Adam Smith: and our evolutionary enthusiasts, when they talk of beneficence, are, after all, only repeating the creed of the despised eighteenth century, or else they are only disguising under a hypocritical phrase the triumphant crowing of the successful fighting-cock, aloft on his own dung-heap, while his vanquished opponent slinks away battered and bleeding. From natural selection there have resulted wonderful adaptations, but how much of suffering by the way, how much of horrid cruelty in these adaptations themselves? The great Darwin himself speaks in a very different
tone from that of his jubilant disciples. Things do not look so clear to him. He marvels at this wonderful universe, and especially at the nature of man, but "I cannot see," he says, "as plainly as others do, and as I should wish to do, evidence of design and beneficence on all sides of us. There seems to me too much misery in the world."*

"If plagues or earthquakes break not Heav'n's design, Why then a Borgia or a Catiline?"

asks Pope with the contented optimism of his easy-going age. And if the fratricidal morality of the bee-hive and the fiendish cunning of the Sphex are to be admired, is there not a similar justification for military despotism and tyrannical cruelty, or for the ingenious device of the sweating system?

"We dined, as a rule, on each other. What matter? the toughest survived."*

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1 From a letter to Dr. Asa Gray in Life and Letters, II. 312.
2 May Kendall, Dreams to Sell, "Ballad of the Ichthyosaurus."
This is a sufficient morality in the mesozoic epoch for the ichthyosaurus, to whom the sentiment is ascribed by the poet; and it is a convenient morality for some human animals in London to-day. Admirable, doubtless—this scheme of salvation for the elect by the damnation of the vast majority; but, pray, do not let us hear anything more about its "beneficence."

I am not speaking at random about these ethical applications of the conception of struggle for existence. Darwin himself, as always, is most cautious and guarded in his reference to anything that lies outside his own special sphere of observation. He looks forward to the elimination of the lower races by the higher civilised races throughout the world. He points out how "a struggle for existence consequent on his rapid multiplication," has advanced man to his present high condition;

1 Life and Letters, 1, p. 316.
“and, if he is to advance still higher, it is to be feared that he must remain subject to a severe struggle. Otherwise he would sink into indolence, and the more gifted men would not be more successful in the battle of life than the less gifted.” This, doubtless, includes the old objection which Aristotle brought against Plato’s communism, that man needs a stimulus to exertion and industry. But there is no jubilation, no exaltation of a natural law into an ethical ideal. And let us note how Darwin modifies this very statement in the words that follow:—

“Important as the struggle for existence has been and even still is, yet as far as the highest part of man’s nature is concerned there are other agencies more important. For the moral qualities are advanced, either directly or indirectly, much more through the effects of habit, the reasoning powers, instruction, religion, etc, than through natural selection; though to this latter agency may be

1 Descent of Man, p. 618.
safely attributed the social instincts which afforded the basis for the development of the moral sense.

Darwin disclaims the connexion, which had been alleged in Germany, between the doctrine of natural selection and socialism. He sees clearly enough that his theory gives a *prima facie* support not to socialism, but to industrial competition. Yet he is amused at the idea of *The Origin of Species* having turned Sir Joseph Hooker into "a jolly old Tory." "Primogeniture," he says, "is dreadfully opposed to selection: suppose the first-born bull was necessarily made by each farmer the begetter of his stock!" Still, he admits that English peers have an advantage in the selection of "beautiful and charming women out of the lower ranks" and thus get some benefit from the principle. In answering Mr. Galton's questions, Darwin describes his

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2. *Ib. II*, 385.
own politics as "Liberal or Radical:" and this was in 1873, by which time Radicalism was no longer bound to out and out laissez faire.

Evolution, as applied to the whole of the universe, means a great deal more than the principle of natural selection. In the wider sense it is professedly applied to the guidance of life by Strauss in his famous book *The Old Faith and the New*, where military conquest and social inequalities are expressly defended as right, because natural; and nothing but contempt is reserved for those who venture to hope for the abolition of war, who look beyond the limits of the nation or who dream of a better social order.\(^2\) It might be objected that in these passages we do not hear the voice of German science and philosophy but of that reactionary military spirit which has infected the

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1 ib. III. 178.

2 See esp. secs. 78, 79, 82, 83, 84 in German (ed. 8. 1875) = secs. 74, 75, 78, 79, 80 in Eng. Tr. (ed. 3. 1874).
new German nation; and I think it could be shown that such sentiments are inconsistent with admissions that Strauss himself makes, although he and most German savants with him believe that they are a necessary consequence of the Evolutionist creed.

Let us turn, however, to our English philosopher who is always protesting against everything that can on any pretext be ascribed to the revived militancy of the present day. In the name of Evolution and on behalf of the survival of the fittest Mr. Herbert Spencer cries out against "The Sins of Legislators" in interfering with the beneficent operation of the pitiless discipline which kills off the unsuccessful members of society, and against "The Coming Slavery" of socialistic attempts to diminish the misery of the world.¹ Now, just as in Strauss's case the military spirit, so in

¹ See The Man v. the State, esp. the two essays named.
Spencer's the old-fashioned individualistic radicalism of his early days might be assigned as the true source of such opinions; but there can be no doubt that the formulæ of Evolution do supply an apparent justification to the defenders of unrestricted *laissez faire* and to the champions, more or less consistent and thorough-going, of existing inequalities of race, class and sex, and a plausible weapon of attack against those who look to something better than slavery or competition as the basis of human society. Thus Spencer rejoices over the Liberty and Property Defence League, "largely consisting of Conservatives," and the late Sir Henry Maine in the congenial pages of the *Quarterly Review* rejoice over Mr. Herbert Spencer and glorified "the beneficent private war" of economical competition, which

1 *The Man versus the State*, p. 17.
he considered the only alternative to "the daily task, enforced by the prison or the scourge." "So far," he says, "as we have any experience to teach us, we are driven to the conclusion that every society of men must adopt one system or the other, or it will pass through penury to starvation."

Even those, who are more full of hope for the future and more full of sympathy for human beings, are apt to adopt a similar mode of speaking. Thus, in his interesting little book, *The Story of Creation*, Mr. Edward Clodd, though he looks forward to "a goal, where might shall be subdued by right," still speaks as follows:—

"When the weeding process has done its utmost, there remains a sharp struggle for life between the survivors. Man's normal state is therefore one of conflict; further back than we can trace, it impelled the defenceless bipeds from whom he sprang to unity, and the more so because of their relative inferiority in physique to many other animals. The range of that unity continued narrow long after he had
gained lordship over the brute; outside the small combinations for securing the primal needs of life the struggle was ferocious, and, under one form or another, rages along the line to this day. 'There is no discharge in that war.' It may change its tactics and its weapons: among advanced nations the military method may be more or less superseded by the industrial, a man may be mercilessly starved instead of being mercilessly slain; but be it war of camp or markets, the ultimate appeal is to force of brain or muscle, and the hardiest or craftiest win. In some respects the struggle is waged more fiercely than in olden times, while it is unredeemed by any element of chivalry." (pp. 211, 212.)

It is thus of the extremest practical importance to see what is the real bearing of Evolution on social problems. We must examine the relation between biological laws and social faiths and hopes, if we would make our opinions self-consistent: and self-consistency is the negative test of truth. Such an examination is especially incumbent on those who profess to keep their minds open to all that science can teach, and at the same time to have at heart the cause of social reformation. We
ought to have a reason for the faith that is in us. To test our scattered opinions and beliefs by bringing them together is the main function of a sound philosophy.

The phrase "survival of the fittest" is very apt to mislead, for it suggests the fittest or best in every sense or in the highest sense, whereas it only means, as Prof. Huxley has pointed out, those "best fitted to cope with their circumstances"; in order to survive and transmit offspring. Now when we come to consider society, we have to deal with a very complex set of phenomena, and what is fittest in one aspect may not be fittest in another. But natural selection implies no further morality than "Nothing succeeds like success." If the struggle for food and mates be carried on on its lowest terms, the strongest and the strongest

only would be selected. But cunning can do a great deal against strength. Now we cannot be sure that a good combination of strength and cunning will be selected: strength in some cases, cunning in others is what we find by comparing different species of animals and different races of men. Again, the strongest and largest and in many ways finest animals are not necessarily those most capable of adapting themselves to changed circumstances. The insignificant may more easily find food and escape enemies. We cannot be sure that Evolution will always lead to what we should regard as the greatest perfection of any species. Degeneration enters in as well as progress. The latest theory about the Aryan race makes the Aryans come from the north of Europe, conquer the feeblter races of the south, and, having proved its fitness in this way, prove its unfitness in another by being less capable of
surviving in a warm climate than they; so that an Aryan language may be spoken, where there remains little or no Aryan blood.¹ Are we entitled to maintain, with regard to human races and human individuals, that the fittest always survive, except in the sense in which the proposition is a truism, that those survive who are most capable of surviving?

Further, we must emphasize the fact that the struggle goes on not merely between individual and individual, but between race and race. The struggle among plants and the lower animals is mainly between members of the same species; and the individual competition between human beings, which is so much admired by Mr. Herbert Spencer, is of this primitive kind. When we come to the struggle between kinds, it is to be noticed that

it is fiercest between allied kinds; and so, as has been pointed out, the economic struggle between Great Britain and the United States is fiercer than elsewhere between nations. But, so soon as we pass to the struggle between race and race, we find new elements coming in. The race which is fittest to survive, \textit{i.e.} most capable of surviving, will survive; but it does not therefore follow that the individuals thereby preserved will be the fittest, either in the sense of being those who in a struggle between individual and individual would have survived, or in the sense of being those whom we should regard as the finest specimens of their kind.

\textbf{A race or a nation may succeed by crushing out the chances of the great majority of its individual members. The cruel polity of the bees, the slave-holding propensities of certain species of ants have their analogues in human societies. The success of Sparta in the Hellenic world
was obtained at the cost of a frightful oppression of her subject classes and with the result that Sparta never produced one really great man. How much more does the world owe to Athens which failed, than to Sparta which succeeded in the physical struggle for existence?

But human beings are not merely, like plants and animals, grouped into natural species or varieties. They have come to group themselves in very various ways. Thus an individual may conceivably belong by descent to one group, by political allegiance to another, by language, and all that language carries with it of tradition and culture, to a third, by religion to a fourth, by occupation to a fifth—though in most cases two or more of these will coincide. Now between each of these groups and similar groups there are, as the doctrine of Evolution teaches us if we need to be
taught, struggles constantly proceeding. Race struggles with race, nation with nation, language with language, religion with religion, and social castes based on occupation and on economic status struggle with one another for pre-eminence, apart from the struggle going on between individuals and groups of individuals within each of them. Now, if in each of these cases the struggle were not complicated by the other struggles, we might contentedly assert that natural selection leads to the fittest always succeeding. But a defeated and subject race may impose its language, its civilisation or its religion upon its conquerors; and the apparent failure of a race or a nation does not entitle us at once to pronounce it inferior or less fit, because its failure in warfare may be the prelude to a greater and more lasting success in peace.

On the other hand it is easy to see how the pre-eminence of a caste, based either on race or
on occupation, may be maintained at the cost of the physical and intellectual advance of its members. Where noble may marry only noble and where marriages are "arranged," as the phrase runs (more truthful than most of those current in the fashionable world), the interests of the health and of the intelligence of the race may be sacrificed to the maintenance of a closely coherent class with large estates and social predominance. Such a type of nobility will in the long run inevitably lose power owing to its own internal decay; but superficially plausible arguments from the doctrine of heredity are occasionally brought forward in its favour. The democrat is often told that he is very unscientific; but the evolutionist who points to the aristocratic preferences of history, errs greatly if he thinks the undoubted pre-eminence of a few great individuals and even of a few famous families any sound argument in favour of a hered-
itary aristocratic caste. Darwin, as we have already seen, admits that the nobility in this country have a certain advantage in being able to select their wives more freely than most other men: yet, allowing their superiority in this matter to the nobilities of other countries and rejoicing that the institution of the peerage has saved us from the worse calamity of a "nobility" in the proper sense, we may be permitted to regret that these highly privileged persons, the peers and the peers' eldest sons do not always think sufficiently of their responsibility to the future in the selection of their mates. Darwin, as we have also seen, inveighs against the folly of primogeniture: so that, after all, even the English nobility do not get much countenance from the theory of natural selection. It is strange to find the doctrine of heredity invoked by the defenders of the House of Lords: one would suspect that they have never looked into Mr,
Galton's interesting book. It is instructive to notice the way in which half-understood scientific theories are misapplied to practical matters. Mr. Galton declares most emphatically that he looks upon the peerage "as a disastrous institution owing to its destructive effects on our valuable races." If an eminent man is elevated to the House of Lords, his eldest son is tempted to marry a wealthy heiress, in order to keep up the show required of a hereditary legislator; but wealthy heiresses usually tend to be sterile, being the last representatives of dwindling families. On the other hand owing to the beautiful British custom of primogeniture, the younger sons are induced to remain unmarried: and thus the peerage appears to be an ingenious device for hindering the propagation of talent. Further Mr. Galton shows clearly enough the absurdity of expecting to find

1, See Galton's Hereditary Genius p. 140.
ability transmitted through a long line of descent: the older a man's family, therefore, the less likely is he to have inherited any of the ability of its founder. I suppose there is still a pious Conservative superstition that "our old nobility" can boast of its "Norman blood"—a belief which a critical examination of a recent copy of the "Peerage" would do a good deal to weaken. But even supposing the Norman blood were there, does it follow that it is now particularly worth having? "It is curious to remark," says Mr. Galton, "how unimportant to modern civilisation has become the once famous and thoroughbred looking Norman. The type of his features, which is, probably, in some degree correlated with his peculiar form of adventurous disposition, is no longer characteristic of our rulers, and is rarely found among celebrities of the present day; it is more often met with among the undistinguished members of
highly-born families, and especially among the less conspicuous officers of the army." I have not yet raised the question as to what kind of characteristics can be transmitted from generation to generation and in what way: I have only tried to show that the scientific doctrine of heredity is a very treacherous ally of the defenders of aristocratic privilege.

The doctrine of Evolution gives little support to the aristocratic Conservative. It may seem to give more to the "laissez faire" Radical. The evolutionist politician is more likely to adopt the view that in the interests of the race we ought to remove every artificial restriction on the operation of natural and sexual selection. But the difficulty is—where are we to find a line between "natural" and "artificial," if all the phenomena of society are, as the evolutionist is bound to hold, subject to the same laws of

1. Ib. p. 348,
nature? If we are content to remove only some artificial restrictions, on what principle can we justify ourselves? If we are to remove every artificial restriction that hampers the struggle for existence, are we not going back to Rousseau’s “State of Nature,” the primitive, uncivilised pre-social condition of mankind? If we expect the “State of Nature” to be better than the present condition, which is one of at least mitigated or inconsistent anarchy, are we not falling back into the “metaphysical” conception of Nature and ignoring the scientific conception of society? The “State of Nature,” i.e., the unsocial state, is more correctly described by Hobbes as “the war of all against all.” On the other hand, when we find the more tender-hearted preacher of evolutionist morality pointing out that, though the physical well-being of the race may have suffered through the mitigation of the primitive struggle and the con-
sequent preservation of weaklings, we have
gained some intellectual advance through the
occasional chance of a Newton and a moral
advance through the cultivation of sympathy
and tenderness, in such a position is there not
some inconsistency, some sacrifice of natural
selection in favour of human selection con-
sciously or half-consciously directed to other
ends than those of mere nature? Our attention
is thus called to another factor in that universal
strife which is the story of the universe. So
soon as a sufficient social development and a
sufficiently advanced type of language make it
possible, there begins a competition between
ideas. The age of conflict is, in Bagehot's
phrase, succeeded by "the age of discussion,"
and the ideas, which rise in the minds of men
with the same tendency to variation that we find
throughout nature, compete with one another

1 E. Clodd *Story of Creation*, p. 211.  2 *Physics and Politics*,
for sustenance and support. The conception of natural selection may be applied here also to explain how certain ideas come to obtain that relatively fixed and definite character which belongs, for instance, to the moral principles currently accepted within a community at any given time. Thus such ideas as patriotism, respect of human life as such, self-control in regard to the bodily appetites, have won their way so as to become factors in the struggle and to conflict with the operation of natural selection as this prevails among the mere animals. Why then may not such ideas as Equality and Fraternity claim to have a fair chance in the struggle for existence? If they can win possession of more and more minds in the world, they will become actual influences on conduct and will from being mere ideals tend to bring about their own realisation.1 “Opinions,” said

1 Cp. Fouillée La Science Sociale Contemporaine, p. xii., &c.
Lord Palmerston, "are stronger than armies."
One of the first conditions of any institution being altered is that people should come to imagine it as conceivably altered. The great difficulty of the reformer is to get people to exert their imagination to that extent.

Now what does all this amount to except to a recognition of the difference introduced into natural evolution by the appearance of consciousness? I shall not now attempt to work out all the philosophical implications involved in this recognition of consciousness: nor, in order to show how through consciousness man becomes free from the tyranny of nature, shall I quote the words of any one whose evidence might be suspected because he might be called a mere metaphysician. I shall quote the words of a witness whom no scientific man would reject—

Prof. Huxley:—
“Society like art is a part of nature. But it is convenient to distinguish those parts of nature in which man plays the part of immediate cause as something apart; and, therefore, society, like art, is usefully to be considered as distinct from nature. It is the more desirable, and even necessary, to make this distinction, since society differs from nature in having a definite moral object; whence it comes about that the course shaped by the ethical man—the member of society or citizen—necessarily runs counter to that which the non-ethical man—the primitive savage, or man as a mere member of the animal kingdom—tends to adopt. The latter fights out the struggle for existence to the bitter end, like any other animal; the former devotes his best energies to the object of setting limits to the struggle.

“The history of civilisation—that is of society—is the record of the attempts which the human race has made to escape from this position [i.e., the struggle for existence in which those who were best fitted to cope with their circumstances, but not the best in any other sense, survived]. The first men who substituted the state of mutual peace for that of mutual war, whatever the motive which impelled them to take that step, created society. But in establishing peace, they obviously put a limit upon the struggle for existence. Between the members of that society, at any rate, it was not to be pursued à outrance. And of all the successive shapes which society has taken, that most nearly approaches
perfection in which war of individual against individual is most strictly limited."  

Professor Huxley then goes on to show how the struggle for existence appears in a new form through the zealous fulfilment of what we are told was the first commandment given to man—"Be fruitful and multiply." But, instead of arguing, as before, that the further history of civilisation must consist in putting a limit to this new economic struggle, he avoids drawing any such inference, and very lamely concludes that we must establish technical schools. These are most desirable and necessary institutions, but they might fulfil some better purpose than what he proposes—which is simply to sharpen our claws that we may fight our neighbours the more fiercely and destroy them the more successfully. Let us be grateful, however, to Professor Huxley for the scientific conclusions

which he has drawn. As practical premises they will serve us for a wider syllogism than he ventures to construct. It is the same with Strauss. In spite of his excessive conservatism in practical matters, this is the way in which he formulates in general terms the "Rule of Life":

"Ever remember that thou art human, not merely a natural production; ever remember that all others are human also, and, with all individual differences, the same as thou, having the same needs and claims as thyself: this is the sum and substance of morality."

"In man Nature endeavoured not merely to exalt, but to transcend herself. He must not therefore be merely an animal repeated; he must be something more, something better."

"Man not only can and should know Nature, but rule both external Nature, so far as his powers admit, and the natural within himself."1

It is unnecessary to raise the question how consciousness makes its appearance. It is

1 *The Old Faith and the New*. Eng. Transl. ii. pp. 54, 57, 58, (secs. 70, 71 = secs. 74, 75 in German edit. 1875.)
enough that human beings are not only engaged in the struggle for existence, but know that they are so engaged, are capable of looking round on what they are doing, of reflecting, of comparing results and considering some good, some bad, some to be desired and others to be avoided. If we distinguish—as Professor Huxley says it is convenient to do—between man and nature, then it is of extreme importance to us to discover the natural laws which operate in society, but it does not follow that we owe them any allegiance. They are “laws” simply in the sense of being generalisations from experience of facts or hypotheses by which we find it possible to make the facts more intelligible to ourselves: and it is the merest ambiguity of language that leads to the argument that what can be called “an economic law” has any claim upon our reverence. It may tell us something convenient or something in-
convenient; but of itself it is, like nature, absolutely non-moral.

On the other hand if we use Nature (with a very big N) to include all that goes on in human society, human institutions and human ideas must be included in this conception of Nature: else the scientific sociologist is assuming a supernatural, or infranatural, region outside human society. Governments are natural products and it is inconsistent in Mr. Herbert Spencer, while telling us that the maxim "Constitutions are not made but grow" has become a truism, to go on to blame governments simply because they "interfere" with natural laws. Why, such "interferences" would on his own principles amount to a miracle! The real and significant distinction is not that between "State-interference" and "laissez faire," but between intelligent and scientific, i.e. systematic and far-sighted State-
action on the one side and that peddling kind of playing at an occasional and condescending providence in small matters, which is often much worse than doing nothing at all. The State which "protects" a few industries and doles out its alms to a multitude of paupers is only yet half conscious of its functions and may be doing unmitigated evil, except in so far as it is performing some interesting but rather cruel experiments for the benefit of sociological students. "Protection" and a bad poor-law (i.e. any mode of relief which breeds pauperism instead of diminishing it) are just the kinds of State-action which have brought all State-action into disrepute and make the arguments against it plausible. There are, however, many cases where the arguments against a partial State-action cease to hold against the same action if made more thoroughgoing, e.g., giving free education to some children may be objected
to as pauperising: free education as the right of all would make none paupers. Yet even a partial State-action may be gladly accepted, as a recognition that the State has duties towards its weaker members, however inefficiently it may discharge them.

The capacity for thinking constitutes man's freedom. It is by thinking alone that he can rise above the position of nature's slave. This does not amount to asserting the foolish dogma of arbitrary "free will"—as if every human being were always equally capable of choosing between any given course and its opposite—a dogma which is not only foolish, but mischievous, for it leads to the neglect of the way in which individual characters depend on their environment, and to the consequent neglect of the moral importance of political and social institutions. Ideas are themselves the outcome of institutions: and yet they constitute a
factor that must be taken account of, if we are to form an adequate conception of social evolution.

What is effected by conscious effort is not necessarily in antagonism to what was going on in the unconscious stage. More often it is a continuation, an extension, an acceleration of a process already begun. In the higher organisms, even apart from consciousness, there is, at least according to Mr. Spencer's generalisation, less waste than in the lower. Thus the plants that are fertilised by insects produce fewer pollen grains than those which have no conspicuous flowers. Those which have fruits that are attractive to birds produce fewer seeds than cryptogamous plants whose germs fill the air in countless myriads. The great mortality of savage life and the prevalence of infanticide are similar instances of waste which disappear more or less at higher stages in social evolu-
tion. It is very easy for the historian to show how much service has been rendered to mankind by fierce struggles, by war, civil dissension, economic competition. But does it therefore follow that equally good ends can never be attained at less cost? Strauss insists that it is as impossible to abolish war, as to abolish thunder-storms. To argue thus is to proceed like certain Indians who are said to cut down the fruit tree when they wish to pluck the fruit, or like Charles Lamb's Chinaman who burnt down his house every time he wanted to enjoy the luxury of roast pig. Are we to have so much more faith in the blind passions of human nature than in what can be done by conscious effort? With these blind passions we must reckon, as with other forces in nature; but there is no reason why we should accord to them any special prestige, simply because they are natural. They are to
be used or to be defeated according as our thinking decides.

War is "natural" only in the sense of being the primitive form of the struggle between races and nations, not in the sense of something which ought to be. It has indeed contributed greatly to nation-making and to the development of the primitive virtues of courage and fidelity. Those tribes that were the bravest and the most coherent have been the most successful in the struggle for existence, and so these virtues have come to receive special respect. But let us notice with what limitations—courage was limited to the courage shown in the battle field, fidelity was limited to fidelity towards one's own tribe. When reflection begins, and when imagination is developed, the sphere of courage and fidelity comes to be extended, at least in the minds of some of the more reflective and sympathetic
individuals. It is precisely in this way that moral ideas, which are the product of social evolution, come to be capable of advance and progress. Customs—and customs are laws in their primitive form—are habits regarded as right, because, having been adopted, they have proved conducive to the welfare and success of the tribe or nation; but customs tend to survive long after the circumstances which called them into being have changed. If they become very hurtful, the people maintaining them will in the long run suffer in the struggle with nature or with other nations which have better customs, *i.e.* customs more favourable to success; but it is a gain to a people if its more far-sighted members discern the hurtfulness of a custom in time, and persuade or force their fellows to discard it before it is too late. This is in all ages the function of the political, religious, or social reformer—to save his people
from destruction or decay by inducing them to change a custom which, however beneficial once, and in some respects, has now become mischievous. Such attempts imply no contradiction to the principle of modification by natural selection, but are themselves an illustration of it. Suppose an animal, whose ancestors lived on the land, takes to the water (or \textit{vice versa}) because circumstances have changed, or in order to escape from excessive competition; it may succeed better. When Themistocles made the Athenians into a naval power, this change was a quite analogous phenomenon. The difference is, that what Darwin called (confessedly as a mode of expressing ignorance) the "spontaneous" variation in the habits of the animal is supplanted by the deliberate adoption of a new habit among human beings.

Now among all the more advanced societies we find this conscious, deliberate adaptation
supplanting the unconscious and spontaneous, though in the beginnings of the most successful institutions there is generally a very large element of unconsciousness in the procedure. Thus the great discovery of representative government, which constitutes the chief difference between ancient and modern politics, which has made it possible for democracy to exist without slavery, and which has made it possible for large states to possess free institutions, came about mainly because Englishmen felt it inconvenient to attend personally when the King wished to raise money; an irksome duty was readily transferred to others.¹ But representative government, as maintained by civil war in the seventeenth century, and representative government as imitated in all the most advanced nations of the world, is something consciously and deliberately chosen. It is a farther and

more complex application of the convenient principle of "counting heads to save the trouble of breaking them." Federation, in its modern sense,¹ is a still farther and still more complex application of the same principle, though Strauss, with the prejudices of a German monarchist, thinks a federal state inferior to a nation. We may feel dissatisfied enough with what representative institutions still are, even at their best and when honestly worked; but we should be indulging in a foolish paradox if we did not see that any such institutions are better than their absence, because of the possibilities they contain. Yet could any political thinker of the ancient world have believed such institutions possible? Would he have believed it possible for free citizens to delegate their functions, even for a

¹ I add this qualification, because the Federations of ancient history appear not to have recognised, except in rudimentary form, the principle of representation, and thus belonged to a lower, not a higher, type of society than the city-state.
time, without surrendering their democratic freedom. One can see in Strauss's book how little understanding the culted German may still have of this great condition of political advance.

Does not this introduction of representative government, which has solved and will solve many problems, however many it leaves unsolved, hold out the promise that similar good may be done by the substitution of some more intelligent methods for military and industrial competition? International arbitration and economic co-operation are as yet small beginnings, but not smaller than the first germs of representative government. So far as we

1 In enumerating the different kinds of oligarchy, Aristotle gives what is practically a definition of representative government (Pol. IV. 14 § 8, 1298 a 40); but this is merely put forward as a logical possibility. At least he gives no example, and this slight naming is the clearest proof of the absence of the idea from the mind of the greatest political thinker of antiquity.

2 The Old Faith and the New, sec. 81 (German ed. 1875)= sec. 77 Eng. Tr.
have yet got, neither arbitration nor co-operation have done for society what their advocates hoped, but they may be the first "variations," which, if they prove their fitness, will bring into being a new species of civilised society.

Mr. Herbert Spencer considers that there are only two main types of society, the militant and the industrial: and in industrialism he comprehends an absolute system of laissez faire, the extreme of individualism. It is strange that he should not see that the economic struggle is only a phase of the oldest form of the struggle for existence—the struggle between individuals for subsistence, and that it therefore belongs to a lower type than the struggles between organised communities, where a strict organisation mitigates the internal strife. It is difficult to see whence Mr. Spencer and his followers derive their ardent faith in a beneficent result from this struggle, unless it be, as already
suggested, from an inconsistent survival of the old theological optimism or the metaphysical idea of Nature.

But, it might be objected, the economic struggle is not unmitigated, for industrial competition is carried on amongst enlightened and educated people, who will consider one another and develop their altruistic tendencies, though not in excess. Yet so fearful is Mr. Spencer of the interference of the State with his social aggregate of warring atoms, that he will not hear of any education except what each family provides for its own members—a return to the patriarchal or "Cyclopian" type of society—or what can be provided by free competition between private teachers, who will run the educational business on strict commercial principles. Thus I am afraid the educational influences to which he looks will not operate rapidly. But why, it will be said, not trust to the
spread of kindlier feelings among individuals to mitigate the harshness of inevitable natural laws? Why bring in the ponderous machinery of legislation? Why crystallise customs into codes, voluntary associations into definite political institutions?

I have already referred to the mischief and danger that may arise from customs which have outlived their use; but fixed customs, as Bagehot has so admirably pointed out,¹ are essential in keeping society together, and, as all scientific students of ethics have come to see, morality is dependent upon institutions. We may have to fight against custom to get a hearing for new ideas; but we must make use of custom to get them realised. Ideas can only be productive of their full benefit, if they are fixed in institutions. We cannot build up anything on a mere shifting basis of opinion. This principle is equally

¹ *Physics and Politics*, p. 25 ff.
applicable to the removal of old wrongs and to the introduction of new rights. Many kindly and enlightened persons here and there felt the evil of slavery, but their views were mere isolated private opinions till slavery was abolished by legal enactment in one country after another throughout the civilised world. Highly respectable and pious people in the last century had no objection even to the slave-trade. Now that slavery has been officially buried, it has not many friends left to shed tears over its grave. Certain eccentric individuals were disposed to favour religious toleration in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. But even those who, being inclined to heresy themselves, like John Milton and John Locke, extended the bounds of liberty pretty far, had very distinct limits beyond which they would not go. There is always the risk of an outburst of the persecuting spirit, even in communities that are not as a rule fiercely
fanatical. Hence a great step is gained when in any country it is expressly and officially declared that distinctions of creed shall make no difference in the rights of citizens. It is often argued that the possession of the suffrage is of very infinitesimal value to the poor man and will do very little good to the poor woman when she gets it. What is a vote to those who are in want of bread? A vote is not merely an occasional and indirect means of exerting a small fraction of political influence, but, what is much more important, it is a stamp of full citizenship, of dignity and of responsibility. It is a distinct mark that the possessors of it can no longer be systematically ignored by governments and can no longer shirk the duty of thinking about public and common interests. The slaves of a kindly master, the subjects of a kindly tyrant or ruling caste may be very comfortable animals: but the master or tyrant may
become unkindly or impotent, and the poor wretches who have been dependent on him suffer without being able to help themselves. It is always much easier to ignore an unuttered or feebly uttered claim than to revoke a right once granted. The same remark applies to the acquisition of representative institutions by a country or a locality: it marks a step gained which is not likely to be lost. Few persons, at least in this country, care so very much for the abstract advantage of a republic over a monarchy. A nominal republic may be less democratic than a nominal monarchy: and to change a state into a republic might in some cases be grasping the shadow and letting the substance go. But a republic has at least this advantage, that it does not call the sovereign power by the name of a person or dynasty, but proclaims it before all the world "the commonwealth." "Noblesse oblige:" and a republic sets
up a higher standard of political morality and thus deserves to be more harshly judged, if it falls short even of a monarchy and imitates in any way the follies and vices that are hardly avoidable where there is a royal court.

Another reason, why ideas should be embodied in institutions, is that institutions exert so great an influence upon human character—an influence sometimes ignored on professedly scientific grounds. Perhaps the most popularly accepted part of the evolution theory is the doctrine of heredity; but it may be questioned how far the popular view, nay even the view of many who have been trained in science, is not in reality the survival of a very ancient superstition, the belief in an inherited family destiny, a belief which was the natural product of a time when the family or tribe was the social and moral unit. Plato in the Laws (ix. 854) professes to regard robbers of temples as persons
suffering from an incurable malady, "a madness begotten in a man from ancient and unexpiated crimes of his race, destroying him when his time is come." Aristotle uses the idea to make a quiet professorial joke, when he is speaking about certain abnormal moral tendencies: he tells of the man who excused himself for beating his father by saying that it was an inherited practice in his family for the son to beat the father, and of another family in which the sons used to drag their father to the door but no further. (*Eth. Nic.* vii. 6 § 2). There is indeed a singular fascination, horrible at times as it may be, in the idea that the experiences of ancestors survive as the feelings of the descendants; but a great part of the prevalent opinion about heredity seems to be only mythology or fiction masquerading as science. Of course one who is not a biologist has no right to a private opinion in a biological controversy. But one
must feel a keen interest in the discussion at present going on, as to whether acquired characteristics are transmitted or not. The negative opinion is certainly on the increase, \textit{i.e.} the Lamarckian doctrine is tending to disappear from the evolution theory and the Darwinian principle of natural selection acting upon "spontaneous" variations is coming to be accepted as the sole factor in organic evolution. "Use and disuse" seem at first sight so much easier to understand than "natural selection," that it will probably be some time before they lose their hold on the imagination. The temptation undoubtedly is to discuss the question at once in its application to human beings, but it can be more safely discussed with regard to the lower animals, both because the opportunities of experiment are better and because there is less risk of bias in forming inferences. In the case of human beings it is so
very difficult to distinguish what is due to inheritance in the restricted sense of race-influence from what is due to imitation, early training, &c., which constitute inheritance certainly—but in a wider and a sociological, not a merely biological, sense. When people point to the remarkable way in which children resemble their parents, they are apt to forget that children as a rule are not merely the children of their parents but spend all their earliest years with their parents. Even where a parent is dead, the child is told of his or her habits and ways of thought, and unconscious imitation of a father or mother, whose memory is regarded as something sacred, may account for a great deal. Mr. Galton in his work on *Hereditary Genius* admits that his investigations altogether suffer from the defect that there is so great a "lack of reliable information" about the peculiarities of females (p. 63). We shall have to wait till public
careers are more abundantly open to women before much can be learnt from family pedigrees. It is certainly striking that, in the two sets of cases where Mr. Galton considers the maternal influence to be strong, viz., in the case of scientific men and in the case of pious divines, (pp. 196, 276) his own explanation turns upon influence in early years and not upon mere birth. The clever mother encourages and does not discourage the inquiring child; the pious mother, if she manages to influence her son at all, directs all his thoughts and emotions into one channel. It seems very doubtful whether, except in fairy tales or romances, the child brought up away from its parents and in complete ignorance of them (for this also is essential to a fair experiment) would present any of their moral characteristics in a definite form. May we say that a certain amount of psychical energy is inherited but the direction it takes is mostly
determined by circumstances?—though we must admit that it may be of a kind which more readily takes to certain occupations than to others. Individuals start with inherited tendencies or capacities (φυσικαὶ δυνάμεις, ὀρμαὶ), not with fully-formed habits (ἀφορμημέναι ἔξεσι). An energetic or an apathetic temperament, a cool or a nervous temperament is transmitted; but it seems very doubtful how far mere inheritance goes beyond that, apart from the external influences in early life, which generally act along with it. As we see so often, the son of people, who have pushed themselves up in the world and made their fortune, may inherit the energy of his ancestors but not their business habits and so he may only go to the devil more vehemently than others, who come of a race longer accustomed to prosperity and who get an early training in the more elegant squandering of wealth.

On this subject of heredity, though Darwin
was too modest to urge his own discovery of natural selection to its full length, he is much more cautious in his statements than many who are fond of using his name. In his Autobiography, it is true, he says:—"I am inclined to agree with Francis Galton in believing that education and environment produce only a small effect on the mind of any one, and that most of our qualities are innate." But in the Descent of Man his position is much more guarded and he seems generally to allow early influence to account for more than inheritance, in respect of virtuous habits, &c. With regard to himself he says that he owed his "humanity" to the instruction and example of his sisters.\footnote{Life and Letters I. p. 22.}

\footnote{\textit{e.g.} pp. 122—125. On p. 123 he says:—"There is not the least inherent improbability, it seems to me, in virtuous tendencies being more or less strongly inherited." This is a very negative and cautious position.}

\footnote{Life and Letters I. p. 29. "I doubt indeed whether humanity is a natural or innate quality."}
His statement that “hand-writing is certainly inherited” seems a very doubtful one. In his *Life of Erasmus Darwin* he says that his uncle Charles Darwin “inherited stammering” from his father, Erasmus. “With the hope of curing him his father sent him to France, when about eight years old, with a private tutor, thinking that if he was not allowed to speak English for a time, the habit of stammering might be lost; and it is a curious fact, that in after years, when speaking French, he never stammered.” Is not this “curious fact” an *instantia crucis* which proves that his stammering was *not* inherited? If it had been, he must have stammered in every language.

The lower down we go in the scale of animal intelligence the more seems due to inherited instincts: the higher we go the more is due

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4 p. 82, quoted in *Life and Letters*, I. p. 7.
to imitation and to the training rendered possible by the greater size and complexity of the brain and necessary by the prolongation of infancy. In the lower animals any habit which is useful to the preservation of the species can only be transmitted as an instinct. In the higher animals much can be done by imitation and instruction. Among human beings language and social institutions make it possible to transmit experience quite independently of the continuity of race, so that even if a family or a race dies out altogether, its intellectual and moral acquirements and culture are not necessarily lost to the world. An individual or a nation may do more for mankind by handing on ideas and a great example than by leaving numerous offspring. Darwin himself fully admits this:

"A man who was not impelled by any deep instinctive feeling to sacrifice his life for the good of others, yet was
roused to such action by a sense of glory, would by his example excite the same wish for glory in other men, and would strengthen by exercise the noble feeling of admiration. He might thus do far more good to his tribe than by begetting offspring with a tendency to inherit his own high character." (Descent of Man, p. 132).

"Great lawgivers, the founders of beneficent religions, great philosophers and discoverers in science, aid the progress of mankind in a far higher degree by their works than by leaving a numerous progeny." (ib. p. 136).

What Darwin says here of the greatest of men is also in a less degree true of men generally. Most certainly we "inherit" from those who have gone before us: but the "inheritance" in any advanced civilisation is far more in the intellectual and moral environment—in the spiritual air we breathe, rather than in the blood that runs in our veins.

Mr. Galton's investigations on heredity do not seem to commit him to the Lamarckian or Spencerian view that acquired intellectual or moral characteristics are inherited; and, as we
have already seen, he in some cases fully recognises how much the environment of the individual in early years affects his course in life. But it cannot be denied that Mr. Galton seems to lend countenance to a sort of fatalism about the influence of race, and to a too contented acquiescence in existing social arrangements. I said advisedly "seems," because I do not think Mr. Galton's book is quite as comforting to the opponents of change, if they come to read it carefully instead of merely claiming its authority on their side. Let us consider a few passages in detail. "It is in the most unqualified manner that I object to pretensions of natural equality. . . . I acknowledge freely the great power of education and social influences in developing the active powers of the mind, just as I acknowledge the effect of use in developing the muscles of a blacksmith's arm, and no further." There is a definite limit to the
muscular [and intellectual] power of every man, which he cannot by any education or exertion overpass. \textit{(Hereditary Genius}, p. 14). If this is the \textit{dictum} of science, it might seem for a moment to deal a fatal blow to the aspirations of democracy. But does it? Equality, we need to be reminded, is not a fact, but an ideal—something at which we have to aim. And one of the main things we may hope for in a better organised society is that the world will not lose or waste so much of the intellectual genius in its midst. We need all the eminence, intellectual, moral, artistic, that we can get—not that the eminent individual may amass a fortune or receive the fatal gift of the peerage (as for those that care for such things—verily they have their reward), but that he may exercise his gifts, as all the world’s greatest men would wish to exercise them, for the benefit of his fellow-men. Mr. Galton seems indeed to
suggest that eminent men generally do come to the front as it is; but his statement is a little rash, and he hardly counts the cost of the struggle.

"If the 'eminent' men of any period, had been changelings when babies, a very fair proportion [what does he consider such?] of those who survived and retained their health up to fifty years of age, would, notwithstanding their altered circumstances, have equally risen to eminence. Thus—to take a strong case—it is incredible that any combination of circumstances, could have repressed Lord Brougham to the level of undistinguished mediocrity." (p. 38).

Mr. Galton's example is well chosen for his purpose. Lord Brougham was just the kind of man who would anywhere have pushed himself into notoriety of some kind. But those social hindrances, which "form a system of natural selection," may allow a great many Lord Broughams to come to the front in different disguises and yet may repress some who might do the world more service than an indefinite
array of Lord Broughams. Supposing Mr. Darwin had had to pass his life as an over-worked and over-worried country surgeon or had been a factory hand in a huge manufacturing town, he might conceivably have been a noted man in a small naturalists' club and been laughed at by his neighbours for collecting beetles; but would he have discovered the origin of species and proved his discovery? It is perfectly true that “social hindrances cannot impede men of high ability from eminence,” and that “social advantages are incompetent to give that status to a man of moderate ability.” But “social hindrances” may exhaust all the energy of the ablest in the bare struggle for existence and may direct the energy of those who do succeed into wrong and mischievous channels. We cannot invent a social machine for manufacturing genius, but we might do something to eliminate the waste and misap
plication of genius that goes on at present. Consider the temptations which commercial competition and the fight for social pre-eminence offer to the scientific worker, the writer of books, the artist.

Mr. Galton himself proposes what would amount to a very considerable reorganisation of society and suggests some principles which consistency or practical necessities might oblige us to carry a little further:—

"The best form of civilisation in respect to the improvement of the race, would be one in which society was not costly; where incomes were chiefly derived from professional sources, and not much through inheritance; where every lad had a chance of showing his abilities, and, if highly gifted, was enabled to achieve a first-class education and entrance into professional life, by the liberal help of the exhibitions and scholarships which he had gained in his early youth; where marriage was held in as high honour as in ancient Jewish times; where the pride of race was encouraged (of course I do not refer to the nonsensical sentiment of the present day, that goes under that name); where the weak could find a welcome and a refuge in
celibate monasteries or sisterhoods, and lastly, where the better sort of emigrants and refugees from other lands were invited and welcomed, and their descendants naturalized." (p. 364).

On almost the last page of Mr. Galton's book we have these words:—"The human race can gradually modify its own nature." (p. 375.) Take along with this a conclusion of Darwin's *(Descent of Man* p. 174):—"It may be doubted whether any character can be named that is distinctive of a race and is constant," and I do not think there remains much excuse for the conclusions of fatalism and *laissez faire* that are often drawn from the doctrine of heredity. Especially, if we cannot trust to acquired habits being transmitted merely by descent, have we additional reason for surrounding each successive generation of individuals, from their youth upwards, with institutions and laws and customs that will pro-
mote good and hinder bad tendencies. The moral significance of the organisation of society can hardly be over estimated. It is little use preaching kindliness and consideration for others and hoping that sympathetic feelings will gradually become innate, if the society into which individuals are born be openly and confessedly a ceaseless struggle and competition. For eighteen centuries a gospel of peace and brotherhood has been preached and talked; but the child plays with a toy gun and the youth sees the successful millionaire held up as his model for imitation—the man who boasts that he is "self-made" and who, as the American remarked, has by that boast "taken a great responsibility off the Almighty." Not only education, but the very amusements and healthy exercises of school life are all infected and corrupted by this diseased spirit of competition. No wonder that those are scoffed at or denounced
who venture to think that a society of rational beings might proceed more rationally. From the fact that human societies, like natural organisms, grow and are not made, we have certainly to learn that every evil cannot be remedied in a day.

But from the other, at least equally important fact, that human societies do not merely grow but are consciously altered by human effort, we have also to learn that every evil is not to be accepted as inevitable. The spread of ideas regarding a better organisation of society is itself a factor in the attainment of that better organisation—not, of course, that we can make out a complete plan, like an architect, and then get it put into practice. Time and experience alone can suggest the details. But the teaching of evolutionary science, rightly understood, gives us no excuse for putting aside all schemes of social reorganisation as mere foolish and dreamy idealism. A fair study of social evolu-
tion will at least indicate the direction in which we have to move.

Hitherto in my argument I have accepted the formulae of "struggle for existence" and "natural selection" as quite sufficient to express the evolution of human society. They are quite accurate, if applied with a full recognition of the new elements which enter into the struggle over and above those operating in the biological sphere. But perhaps these formulae, though accurate, hardly express the whole truth. Mr. Spencer's recognition of only two great types of society—the militant and the industrial—and his theory that social evolution ends in complete individualism are scarcely consistent with his own insistence on the organic or super-organic nature of society. Sir Henry Maine has only one great formula—that society advances from status to contract—and sticks there or else goes backwards. Is there not a higher type of
society beyond and above each of these one-sided extremes—cohesion without individual liberty and individual liberty of the negative sort without social cohesion?

In human society thought or reflection, as we have seen, enters in as a factor, lifting it above the merely natural organism, and so perhaps we may look at the nature of thought in order to find out the way in which society progresses. On every subject we think about we begin with some rough opinion, either received from others or the result of hasty observation. If we go on to think about this opinion, we have to question it, to examine it, and unless we come to a standstill at the stage of doubt or criticism, we go on to form some more adequate opinion, which may indeed be only the old opinion in a better form or may be something very different. But this new opinion may in its turn be questioned in order to be corrected, and so on, for.
the truth always proves itself more complex than at first appeared: and, unless we lazily acquiesce in dogmatic solutions, we cannot cease from the labour of thinking. It might indeed be more prudent to avoid mentioning Hegel's name; but this very commonplace process is his "dialectic method" in its simplest and most familiar form. This "advance by negation" is the way we have to think about everything. And if we apply this dialectic method to society, what does it suggest? That we cannot rest in the critical or negative stage of modern individualism. But does that mean a return to the mediæval type of society? to "the good old days" of aristocratic and ecclesiastical domination? By no means. It implies an advance to a stage in which all that is most precious in individualism must be retained along with the stability of social condition which individualism has destroyed. And this new stage
can be best described by the word "Social-
ism."

By way of practical application, let us use the light gained in our study of the nature of social evolution generally to consider in detail three great parts of the social problem: (1) State interference with the condition of labour, (2) the position of women, (3) the population question, which is obviously connected with both the preceding.

(1) Strauss, to whom we have referred before as professedly applying the new faith of Evolution to the practical guidance of life, objects even to trade-unions agitating for a reduction of the hours of labour.\(^1\) He is so hot upon the point that his patriotism, which elsewhere seems to constitute the principal part of his morality, deserts him here, and he suggests that

\(^1\) The Old Faith and the New, sec. 83 in German edit. 1875 = sec. 79 (ii. p. 98) in Eng. Transl.
the employers of labour should "if necessary send to foreign countries for workmen and then let the refractory see who will be able to hold out longest." This is the struggle à outrance, though he makes no express reference to the evolutionary formula here. Few thoughtful Englishmen would now venture to go so far as that and deliberately to propose, as Strauss does, the complete suppression of the liberty of association among the workmen, however much they may envy autocratic methods and imitate them, when they get the chance, on a small scale and in a feeble way. But there are very many, even of our most Radical politicians, who, while allowing or encouraging trades-unions to struggle for higher wages and a reduction of the hours of labour, object to the State meddling at all in the matter, except in the case of women and children, or as J. S. Mill would have put it, except in the case of children only.
Adults are to be left to shift for themselves. Well, we know what that means. It is needless to use any vivid or picturesque language. Those who have eyes to see and ears to hear can see and hear for themselves. This system of unchecked competition—one cannot repeat it too often—means a prodigal and frightful waste. Some have to work too hard and too long; others cannot get any work to do at all or get it irregularly and uncertainly; others, who might work, do not and will not—the idlers at both ends of the social scale, the moral refuse produced by our economic system. This system is exactly what we find, in nature generally; but one would think that human beings might use their reason to discover some less wasteful scheme. Water will find its own level; but how much mischief may it cause in so doing?—mischief which can be avoided. We have beautiful flowers or miserable weeds in
our gardens according as a skilful gardener
"interferes" or not; and when he thins out an
overcrowded bed, he need not throw away the
plants: there are many who would be glad
to have them. It is all one great problem of
distribution. Here is so much work needing to
be done and so many persons to do it. The
organisation of labour is not an easy task; but
is it hopeless? At least we might diminish the
disorganisation, which is the system of mere
nature, as that appears to rational beings.
Cannot human societies imitate the higher
forms of nature, not the lower, so as to contrive
some scheme for the diminution of waste?

Strauss is afraid, because of the interests of
civilisation. But the civilisation he thinks of is
that of the antique type of society, a civilisation
limited to the few—a cultured minority, consol-
ing themselves for the loss of old religious beliefs
by reading poetry and hearing concerts and
operas, amid a subject multitude treated with some consideration, like dependent and useful lower animals, but left to poverty and superstition. What can be worse for civilisation than that the more energetic and successful workers, managing to get constant employment, have, as at present, no sufficient leisure for the cultivation of their faculties? And when in the case of the greatest number all available energy is used up in the struggle to feed the body, what wonder that the soul is neglected—"where a soul can be discerned?" Leisure is necessary for culture: and a moderate amount of work is good for physical, mental and moral health—excess is bad for all three. Cannot leisure and work be better distributed, according to a rational instead of a hap-hazard system? In the attempt to substitute rational for non-rational methods there is no denial of the scientific truth of evolution, and there is an
application of the principle on which Strauss himself insists so strongly, that "man must not merely be an animal repeated, but must be something more, something better."

(2) The claim of women to an equal share with men in the advantages and responsibilities of education and citizenship is very frequently met by the objection that to grant this claim is to fly in the face of nature. And the objection, when it comes from the evolutionist, has a certain plausibility. He points out, perhaps, how advance in organic life goes along with increasing differentiation of sex—a rash assertion in biology, but I have heard it made by a biologist. And so, it is asked, are not the advocates of women's rights, trying to reverse all that, and to produce a morally asexual being? Again, if we limit ourselves to human society, it is pointed out that "the difference between the sexes, as regards the cranial cavity, increases
with the development of the race, so that the male European excels much more the female than the negro the negress” (quoted from Vogt by Darwin *Descent of Man* p. 566 n.; but it is admitted that more observations are yet requisite before the fact can be positively asserted). It is argued from this fact, if such it be, that the progress of society has brought with it a still greater differentiation of sex, and, this having proved beneficial for the human race, it is folly to seek to reverse it. Let us take the last argument first. Because a certain method has led us up to a certain point, it does not follow that the same method continued will carry us on further. Races that have reached a certain stage may be hindered by extreme conservatism from making any further progress—like the Chinese. Again, at what degree of differentiation between the habits and lives of the sexes are we to draw the line?
Englishmen, Frenchmen, Turks would draw it very differently. And the Turk ought to please the biological Conservative best, because he has pushed the differentiation of the sexes to a logical issue. The persons who use this kind of argument fancy that they are influenced by scientific considerations, but they are really influenced by what they happen to have grown accustomed to. Thirdly, if there is this greater difference between the cranial cavities of savage and civilised men than between those of savage and civilised women, to what must it be due?

(a). Those who believe that acquired characteristics (i.e. characteristics produced by agencies external to the organism) are transmitted, must explain this difference by the difference in institutions, laws and customs. Well, then—what these have done before in one direction they may do again in another.
And the *same* education and the *same* responsibilities will, in course of time, put the average woman on the same level with the average man. (b). If use and disuse are not allowed as explanations, then this alleged brain inferiority of women must be due either to natural or to sexual selection. (a). If to *natural* selection, this would mean that in the struggle for existence those races or tribes have succeeded best in which the males have on the average had better brains than the females. And this *may* have been so in times when constant fighting was necessary for existence, though in such a case it would be the greater superiority of the male and not the greater relative inferiority of the female that had been the real cause of success. But this affords no argument that, when many other conditions of success than fighting power become necessary, the process of natural selection will continue to
act in the same way. A people, all whose members become superior in mental qualities, will have the advantage over those peoples in which the development is partial and one-sided; for, certainly, it could not be argued that the (alleged) relatively greater inferiority of the civilised female brain had gone along with an increased capacity for the purely physical functions of maternity, as compared with what is found among savage races. (β). If, on the other hand, the alleged difference is due to sexual selection, this must mean, not merely that men as a rule have preferred women with inferior brain power to their own (which is likely enough), but women whose female children were also on the average inferior in this respect to their male children. Supposing such a kind of selection to be possible (one can only admit it for the sake of argument), then, if men's ideas about women come to be altered,
sexual selection will work in an opposite manner. With a new ideal of woman, the clever would be preferred to the stupid, and the mother of clever daughters to the mother of stupid daughters. Thus, even if the assertion of Carl Vogt were true, it offers no conclusive argument against the political and social equalisation of the sexes; because this equalisation would on any recognised principles of evolution, bring about ultimately a natural equality. On the whole, however, one may fairly retain the suspicion that this alleged difference is not a fact, and that the greater average eminence (in the past) of men than of women in intellectual pursuits is entirely due (as on any theory it must be mostly due) to the effect of institutions and customs and ideas operating within the lifetime of the individual and not to differences physically inherited. Little girls are certainly not on the average stupider than little boys:
and, if on the average men show more intellectual ability than women, this must be due to the way in which the two sexes are respectively treated in the interval.

But, even if there were an average mental superiority in men (we have really no right to make definite assertions on the subject, because women have never yet had a fair chance of showing their capacities on a sufficiently large scale), Plato’s argument would still hold that, though there may be a general superiority of men, yet there are many women superior to many men, and it is a pity that the State should lose the advantage of their services.

With regard to the argument from nature generally, even if we agreed to the generalisation that advance implies increasing differentiation of sex and not the very reverse, it must be insisted that difference is not the same thing as inequality (though the two are very apt to be confounded),
and that the very difference between the sexes is a reason why the State should not disregard the opinions and the feelings of half, or in old countries more than half, the population. But the main point is really this: that society has enabled man to rise above the mere animal and, as has been pointed out, to be influenced not merely by natural pressure but by ideas. The idea of equality has grown up—I shall not at present enquire how far it is due to the universal citizenship of the Roman Empire and to the widening conceptions of Roman Law, how far to the Stoic philosophy with its brotherhood of mankind, and how far to Christianity as an inter-national or non-national religion, declaring the equality of all before God, though carrying with it the Judaic supremacy of the male sex. When this idea of equality was proclaimed in the American revolution, the negro slaves were conveniently overlooked; when it was proclaimed
in the French revolution, the existence of a whole sex seemed to be forgotten by every one but Condorcet. And there are many old-fashioned Radicals still, who lack sufficient faith in their own creed to apply it in a thorough-going way. How often does one hear the argument, "Oh, but women are naturally Conservative, and if they had political power, we should be governed by the priests." It may rather be said that the instability of republican government in France has been very much due to its not having appealed to the sympathies of the mothers of the French people. If women are expressly and purposely kept in the patriarchal stage of social evolution, is it wonderful that their feelings and sympathies mostly correspond to an antique social type? It is hypocritical to deny the political capacity of women, simply because their political incapacity has through long centuries been
diligently cultivated; but this is always the
favourite sort of argument with the jealous
champions of privilege:—first to prevent a race
or class or sex from acquiring a capacity, and
then to justify the refusal of rights on the grounds
of this absence—to shut up a bird in a narrow
cage and then pretend to argue with it that it is
incapable of flying. What is the reason of the
power which the Catholic Church possesses over
the minds of women, except that the Church
alone offers them any escape into a larger circle
of interests than those of the patriarchal family?
They do not reflect that the Church brands them
with a stamp of inferiority,¹ that did not exist

¹ Even the cult of the Madonna, which is a revival of the
female element in deity, did not do away with the degradation
of the woman. There is a story (given in Grimm's Household
Tales, Note to Tale 139) of St. Bernard, that he once went
into a Cathedral to pay his devotions to the image of the Virgin.
He fell thrice on his knees before it, and full of fervour uttered
the words, “Oh, gracious, mild and highly favoured mother of
God!” Hereupon the image began to speak, and said
“Welcome, my Bernard!” But the saint, who was displeased
by this, reprimanded the Queen of Heaven for speaking, in these
in the old Aryan religions, which had their gods and goddesses, priests and priestesses. They do feel that the rule of the priest may be something higher than the rule of the household despot. Religious teachers have understood that their success must depend on their winning the mothers of the race. When will political leaders come to recognise the same?

words, "Silence! No woman is to speak in the congregation!"
This is an admirable illustration of the ecclesiastical and sentimental theory of womanhood—a worship that professes to exalt woman—whether the Madonna or das Ewig-Weibliche—above man, combined with a refusal of rationality that sinks her beneath him. The same thing appears in quarters where we should less expect it. Thus we find the late Mr. Laurence Oliphant, who with many protests against the corruption of the Churches, builds up on a strangely unscientific foundation what professes to be a new "scientific" religion, and who proclaims a higher code of morals, based mainly on the elevation of woman, yet denouncing, like a Catholic or a Comist priest, the agitation for "women's rights" and "the higher education of women," and maintaining the very retrograde and (in these days) immoral doctrine that women have no responsibility with regard to public affairs. (Scientific Religion pp. 316, 324.) In fact the "Divine Feminine" or "Woman"—with a very big capital—is one of the worst enemies that women have to contend with in their struggle towards recognition as complete and responsible human persons,
Mr. Herbert Spencer is afraid that women, if admitted now to political life, might do mischief by introducing the ethics of the family into the State. "Under the ethics of the family the greatest benefits must be given where the merits are smallest, under the ethics of the State the benefits must be proportioned to the merits." Mr. Spencer seems to have more confidence than most of us would in applying the strict principle of geometrical proportion to distributive justice. Do people get benefits in proportion to their merits in any society we have ever seen or are likely to see? And would those persons whose merits are greatest care most for the greatest rewards? Is it right to separate the ethics of the family, in Mr. Spencer's favourite antithetic fashion, from the ethics of the State? If something is right in a family, it is difficult to see why it is therefore, without any further

1 Sociology, pp. 793, 794.
reason, wrong in the State. If the participation of women in politics means that, as a good family educates all its members, so must a good State, what better issue could there be? The family ideal of the State may be difficult of attainment, but, as an ideal, it is better than the policeman theory. It would mean the moralisation of politics. The cultivation of separate sorts of virtues and separate ideals of duty in men and women has led to the whole social fabric being weaker and unhealthier than it need be.

The history of the position of women is much more complex than is often represented. It is not true to say that the status of women has always improved in direct ratio to the general advance. The patriarchal stage represents on the whole a higher type of civilisation than the matriarchal. But, it is to be observed those societies which have exaggerated the patriarchal type and built all their civilisation
upon it, seem to be incapable of advancing further. This is conspicuously the case with Mohammedan peoples. Just as war has fulfilled important functions in the progress of the human race, so the terrible powers of the house-father in certain ancient systems of law have had their use: but it does not follow that what once aided the race in its struggle with other races will continue to do so when the struggle becomes of a higher and more complex kind.¹

I have heard the objection made that, in countries where it is considered necessary to have compulsory military service for all males, it would be unjust and inexpedient that women should have a voice in political matters. This objection would be easily met by compelling all

¹ “Such is the nature of men that, when they have reached their ends by a certain road, they cannot understand that, the times being different, success may be won by other methods and the old ways are no longer of use.” These words represent the theme of the 9th chap. of Machiavelli's *Discourses on Livy*, Bk. iii,
women physically fit for it to undergo training as nurses and making them liable to be called upon to serve as such in time of war. And this training would be more useful to them and to the whole community in time of peace than his military training is to the peasant or artisan.

Of all the objections made to the equality of the sexes the only one that deserves very serious attention is that made by Sir James Fitzjames Stephen in his clever attack on J. S. Mill. He points out (in *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity*, p. 237) that women may suffer more than they have done, if plunged into a nominally equal but really unequal contest in the already overcrowded labour market. The conclusion usually drawn from this argument is a sentimental reaction in favour of the old family ideal (for instance in Mr. Besant’s books). There is another alternative and that is the socialistic. The elevation of the status of
women and the regulation of the conditions of labour are *ultimately* inseparable questions. On the basis of individualism I cannot see how it is possible to answer the objections of Sir J. Fitzjames Stephen.

(3) We began by referring to Malthus, and with Malthus we must end. Socialists have usually brushed aside the Malthusian precepts and somewhat too lightly neglected the Malthusian arguments. To some extent this has been due to a correct instinct. The "prudence" of the old school of political economy would mean that the most careful and intelligent part of the population should leave the continuance of the race mainly to the least careful and the least intelligent portion—thus bringing about a survival of the unfittest. And so the theory of natural selection, which was suggested to Darwin by Malthus's theory of population has come to be used as a refutation of Malthus's
practical suggestions.¹ Socialist views on the question have not always had so scientific a basis, but have often rested on nothing much better than the popular superstition that where God sends mouths he sends the food to feed them, though this may be disguised in a non-theological form, such as “the earth is capable of producing abundance of food for all its inhabitants.” Now what does this mean? That the earth at present may be made to bear more than it now does, and that therefore it will maintain more than its present number of inhabitants, is true enough. But only a complete failure to grasp the meaning of the struggle for existence, and the relation between increase of means of subsistence and increase of population could lead any one to maintain that, absolutely, the earth can be made capable of supporting an indefinitely increasing number of inhabitants.

If the checks on population supplied by famine, war, pestilence and vice be removed in any large measure, the increase would in time outrun any possible increase in the means of subsistence, even with all that improved appliances and diminished waste could do. Here, as elsewhere, human beings must raise themselves above unthinking animals and not trust to a kind Providence in which they take no part. The course of events, if left to itself, will act in the way that we do, when we dispose of superfluous puppies and kittens, but not quite so rapidly and mercifully. We must become provident for ourselves. But what then becomes of the Darwinian objection, the protest "against the higher races being encouraged to withdraw from the struggle for existence?" That would be a valid objection, if we suppose the present system of free competition in the labour market to continue for ever. If employers of
labour remain a separate class (instead of becoming directors of labour, acting solely on behalf of the whole community), and are free to import the labour of cheaper and more prolific races, as we have seen even the patriotic Strauss suggesting, there would certainly be a continuous degeneration of the species. But, most assuredly, the day will come and very soon, when the workers of all the more civilised nations will join together not to undersell each other: and by that time employers will not be absolutely free to import Chinese or Malays, who would be practically slaves of a new type.

It might, however, be objected that if the more civilised nations keep their numbers fairly on a level with the means of subsistence at home, there will no longer be the stream of emigrants pouring forth from our shores to civilise the world and develop the resources of new countries:
"the abler races" will be "withdrawing from the struggle for existence." There are some people who seem to think that an unlimited supply of what we call the Anglo-Saxon race is the best remedy for all the evils of the world. Well, without wishing to be needlessly unpatriotic, I do not think the unlimited Anglo-Saxon is an altogether unmitigated blessing. The filibuster, the mercantile adventurer and the missionary have not been so perfectly successful between them in dealing with the problem of the lower races; for the mere disappearance of lower races before the rum supplied by the trader and the clothes enjoined by the missionary (to the great profit of the Lancashire manufacturer) is not quite a satisfactory solution. What has been already said about the transmission of a type of culture, irrespective of the continuity of the race that first developed it, seems to help one here. We need have less
doubt of the excellence of our language and of our literature and of some of our institutions than of the supreme excellence of our race: and there is nothing to prevent distant tribes and nations regarding Europe, and Britain not least, as the school or university to which they shall send their most promising youth in order to adopt just as much of our civilisation as suits them, so that they may work out their own problems in their own manner. That would surely be a healthier way in which the higher might affect the lower races in the future, educating them instead of enslaving, demoralising or destroying them.

As to the adjustment of population to subsistence, Mr. H. Spencer has sufficient faith in the beneficence of nature to believe this will come about of itself through a biological law—that multiplication and individuation vary inversely, so that, as the physical and intellectual culture
of the individual is more and more attended to, the increase of the species will gradually diminish. This "law" is however as yet only a mere speculation of Mr. Spencer's. There does seem to be in the world a certain amount of what we may call natural adaptation, which leads the more cultured and the more settled nations to be less prolific than those of the same race or stock who are living in new countries with plenty of elbow-room. The English race in Western America or in Australia does seem to be more fruitful than in old England or in New England. But the whole theory is a very doubtful one. And a rational adaptation of means to ends seems requisite to obtain the desired result. This is pre-eminently a question which can only receive proper consideration and solution when women are admitted to full social and political responsibility. It is the woman who bears the suffering of maternity and has the care of the
very young and so the woman is more immediately interested than the man. So long as women were brought up to believe that their sole or main function in life was to bear children and were made to feel that there was something not only of disadvantage but of disgrace in being unmarried or childless, what wonder that population has been increased indefinitely and recklessly? Every inducement was in that direction, the ideas of a military society, the influence of the clergy (and, at least in Protestant countries, their example also), the employment of child-labour before the factory acts, the system of the old poor law—everything encouraged the natural tendency of the race to increase. With a change in the prevalent sentiment, a change in fact will certainly follow. When women have other interests in the world than those of maternity, things will not go on so blindly as before. And the race need not necessarily suffer there-
by, but the very reverse. Fewer children will be born, but fewer will die, fewer will be sickly. Those who are born will be better and more intelligently cared for. Two healthy well reared children will be more useful to the community than a dozen neglected waifs and strays. Here again we shall only be imitating by rational procedure the upward tendency of nature, which consists in the economy of production. Rational selection will take the place of the cruel process of natural selection.

If we are still reminded that only through struggle can mankind attain any good thing, let us remember that there is a struggle from which we can never altogether escape—the struggle against nature, including the blind forces of human passion. There will always be enough to do in this ceaseless struggle to call forth all the energies of which human nature at its very best is capable. At present how much of these ener-
gies, intellectual and moral as well as physical, is wasted in mutual destruction! May we not hope that by degrees this mutual conflict will be turned into mutual help? And, if it is pointed out that even at present mutual help does come about, even through mutual conflict, indirectly and with much loss on the way, may we not hope to make that mutual help conscious, rational, systematic, and so to eliminate more and more the suffering going on around us?

THE END.

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