

the contrary, when it first came before him he recoiled from it and denounced it. Against Colenso's book he made the extraordinary protest that it should have been written in Latin, so that only the leisured clergy should read it. The demand was childish at best, for if Colenso had written in Latin he would inevitably have been translated and popularised all the same; but even in Latin he would have just as much outraged those capricious sensibilities which were the beginning and the end of Arnold's judgments. He never attempted to estimate the real significance of what Colenso did; he could only disparage it, with as much heat as he ever allowed himself. "It is really," he wrote, "the strongest possible proof of the low ebb at which in England the critical spirit is, that while the critical hit in the religious literature of Germany is Dr. Strauss's book, in that of France M. Renan's book, the book of Bishop Colenso is the critical hit in the religious literature of England. Bishop Colenso's book reposes on a total misconception of the essential elements of the religious problem, as the problem is now presented for solution."¹ That is to say, Colenso was interested in historical facts which Arnold was not interested in, though he made a parade of admitting the vital importance of a knowledge of these;² and he saw that Colenso's criticism was shaking the sacrosanct prestige of his beloved Bible. He goes on to make some dubious concessions to Renan's book, by way of setting it at least above Colenso's; but, significantly enough, he does not proceed to describe or define Strauss's. In point of fact, his objections to Colenso, such as they were, must logically strike equally at Strauss; and, since Colenso and the English public must for the purpose of the moment be put below Strauss and the German, Strauss's book is discreetly left unanalysed. And in the end he stultifies his own objection to Colenso. "There is truth of science," he sums up, "and truth of religion; truth of science does not become truth of religion till it is made religious. . . . Let us have all the science there is from the men of science; from the men of religion let us have religion."³ Then is an English

¹ *Essays in Criticism*, 3rd. ed., p. 35.

² *Literature and Dogma*, pref., p. xxiii. ³ *Essays in Criticism*, p. 33, note.

bishop to be professionally devoid of science? Colenso brought some truth of science, and Arnold scouted it, though it left him theoretically free to go on framing his truth of religion. But the established practice is to make so-called truth of religion out of falsehood in science; and this it was Arnold's predilection to go on doing in some main matters while he was against it in others.¹

We can see him, as it were, inwardly determining, like a clever child, that he will make out his case by hook or by crook. He cannot help hearing it said that the Hebrew ideal of righteousness was a very poor affair; and when he comes to the point he cannot deny it. "Evil, for them, did not take in all faults whatever of heart and conduct, but meant chiefly oppression, graspingness, a violent mendacious tongue, insolent and riotous excess. True; their conception of righteousness *was* much of this kind, and it was narrow."² That is to say, Hebrew ethics were much the same as those of any other primitive people, ancient or modern. On this the thesis is recast for the purpose of the moment thus: "Whoever sincerely attends to *conduct*, along however limited a line, is on his way to bring under the eye of conscience all conduct whatever."³ Now, that proposition is, for candid disputants, an admission that the Jews were not otherwise moral or righteous than any other people; for nothing is more certain than that every people has sincerely attended to conduct, if you allow the restriction "along however limited a line." But Arnold, having surrendered his case, goes on with his exposition as if no-

¹ Very significant is his admission, in a late report to the Education Department ("On certain points connected with Elementary Education in Germany, Switzerland, and France," 1886), as to how "languidly" he listened to the moral instruction in the French schools, having made up his mind that it must be ineffective because non-religious.

² *Literature and Dogma*, p. 56; cf. pp. 84, 87; and *Last Essays*, pref. p. xviii.

³ Compare this with the fling at the conscientious Dissenter, as "not knowing that with conscience he has done nothing until he has got to the bottom of conscience, and made it tell him *right*" (work cited, p. 223). A formula for every emergency! Contrast again the admissions in the *Discourses in America*, pp. 105-7.

thing had happened. Nay, he claims that he has made his position stronger. "It is objected, finally, that even their own narrow conception of righteousness this people could not follow, but were perpetually oppressive, grasping, slanderous, sensual; why, the very interest and importance of their witness to righteousness lies in their having *felt so deeply the necessity of what they were so little able to accomplish*" !!!

The "they" here is characteristic of the book. The historic fact is that certain isolated Hebrews, at long intervals, testified against Hebrew misconduct, as Roman writers did against the vices of Romans, and as English and French writers do against those of their countrymen. On Arnold's principle, the prevalence of a love of strict morality among the Romans is proved by the writings of Juvenal and Tacitus; and the works of Carlyle and Ruskin testify to the modern English passion for righteousness and refinement of life. The fallacy is beneath refutation; and yet Arnold was to the last its dupe; seeing in the protests of Plato and Socrates the witnesses to Greek imperfection, and in the invective of the Hebrew prophets a proof that the Hebrews in general had a genius for morals. And in order to enforce his criticism of Free Love as "fatal to progress" (a view which did not affect his admiration of George Sand), he gives the Jews credit for an innate rightness of view on sexual matters, while admitting their polygamy.¹

On such a system of interpretation it matters little whether you have or have not any sound knowledge of your subject-matter to start with; your conclusions will be worthless either way. Arnold, following the chimerical traditional view, confesses that "the Israelites, when they lost their *primary intuition* and the deep feeling which went with it, were perpetually idolatrous;"² though nothing is better established than that Judaism rose in pure polytheism and idolatry, and that only after the exile did the priesthood effectually repress idolatry, after Persian example. But if he had been as well informed as he was ignorant of the

¹ *God and the Bible*, pp. 153-5. Cf. *Literature and Dogma*, p. 38.

² *Ib.*, p. 86. Cf., p. 192, *etc.*

historic facts, his lawless self-will would have made him an untrustworthy guide. Whatever his data, he would have made out just what he had a mind to. His hope for himself in religious matters was that "minds with small aptitude for abstruse reasoning may yet, through letters, gain some hold on sound judgment and useful knowledge, and may even clear up blunders committed, out of their very excess of talent, by the athletes of logic."¹ That suggestion that men can err by being too logical, carries in it the promise of all his own fallacies and failures.

When he comes down to the New Testament and Jesus, his genial method becomes so transparent as almost to supersede hostile criticism. He has an imaginary Jesus as he had an imaginary Israel. Jesus must be for him the incarnation of sweet reasonableness,² and there is to be a "consummate justness in what he said, perfect balance, unerring felicity."³ The critic, he knows, will point out that Jesus in the Gospels is often a very different person from this, often grossly unreasonable, bitter, unjust, unbalanced, infelicitous. But the answer is as simple as usual: all these awkward passages are set aside by Mr. Arnold, and ought to be set aside by other people. "It is felt that anything exaggerated, distorted, false, *cannot be from Jesus*; that it must be human (*sic*) perversion."⁴ In fine, we have one more fairy tale in place of the old ones. M. Renan's book, according to Dr. Pusey, is an agreeable romance; but Mr. Arnold did not appreciate it—his taste in romance, oddly enough, was for George Sand. So, not being disposed to write another romance, he wrote an agreeable treatise, embodying didactically his own dream on the subject; and, instead of the fairy tale of the three Lord Shaftesburys, as he calls the doctrine of the Trinity, we have the fairy tale of, shall we say, one Matthew Arnold?

It is impossible to doubt that this dream and doctrine will disappear from the philosophy of the civilised world; though Arnold's winning and noiselessly persistent way of expounding them has certainly given them much vogue, in a form which grows inevit-

¹ *Literature and Dogma*, Introd., p. 9. ² *Literature and Dogma*, *passim*.
³ *Last Essays*, *pref.*, p. xxiv. ⁴ *Ib.*; *cf. Literature and Dogma*, ch. vi.

ably less refined than his. After his graceful tenacity we have the forcible feebleness of hysterical rhetoricians and eclectics infirm of purpose, who are not the sort of converts he wanted to make. Like the typical selectors of sweetness, he did not labour for himself. The men and women of balance and earnestness, whom he wanted to persuade, he did, indeed, often lead with irresistible attraction out of their dead dogmatic beliefs, but not to find a continuing city in his personal equation. As he so often says, with a pathetic unconsciousness of the full force of his words, our business in our intellectual life is to see the thing as it is, so far as may be. "In the end," he says again, "the victory belongs to facts, and he who contradicts them finds that he runs his head against a wall."¹ Only that can survive, he says again, which is verified or verifiable. Well, his Judaism and his Jesuism are alike unverifiable: nay, they are alike disproved.

V.

Taking Arnold's career, then, as a whole, we find it to conform somewhat remarkably, in what we may call its formula, to that of Carlyle, who was so different from Arnold in temper and tastes. Both men came to the criticism of life with views which their early culture carried a considerable way ahead of those of their fathers; but after their period of receptive culture was over, having had no preparation therein for the application of right intellectual methods to their problems, their work consisted in giving literary effect to their predilections by processes which might persuade, but could never prove. Reducing all facts to their personal equation, and attempting no correction of their intuitions by the test of universal consistency, they figure as prophets, men with a mission, not as thinkers, or demonstrators of truth. And though Arnold's happier disposition and better balance made his intellectual egoism attractive where Carlyle's was repellent, he too furnishes a memorable example of the retro-

¹ *Last Essays*, pref., p. xv.

gressive tendency of a life of mere obedience, however considerate, to inherited emotional bias. As the Carlyle of later life is much nearer the intellectual sphere of his father than the Carlyle of the studious and receptive period, so Matthew Arnold comes visibly nearer the positions of Dr. Arnold as he grows older. Nay, more, we shall see that in his politics, without absolutely gainsaying his best teachings, he came to put forward doctrines, some of which shock and repel the civilised spirit, and some of which his father would have denounced as heartless. One of Arnold's last performances as a religionist was his tractate on Isaiah, and in that he is seen in a stage that may almost be described as intellectual ossification. Hebraists admit the almost hopeless corruption of the passage of Isaiah which in the Authorised Version is translated: "Every battle of the warrior is with confused noise and garments rolled in blood." The one thing certain about the passage is that this translation is quite wrong. But Arnold, who had begun by arguing that we cannot give up the Bible as a stay of morals, now feels that he cannot give up a mistranslation of an entirely non-moral and indeed meaningless sentence in Isaiah, because the verbal movement and rhetorical effect of the mistranslation are so satisfying; and he votes for the old version, however far it may be from the true meaning. That is what the predilection for the Scriptural ultimately comes to, the old lady's affection for "that blessed word Mesopotamia," as I think was observed by every critic who reviewed the essay on its publication. It is quite a sequent development. The notion that on one ancient literature alone can modern civilisation find a moral stay—this is already on the way to superstition, to a species of fetichism akin to that which worships the Bible as a sort of amulet; and the belief in the magical virtue of meaningless sentences and cadences, as a stay of the literary sense and the spirit of culture, is a strict consequence. And since all this is a subservience to instinct and habit, after the manner of periods in which we can see the human mind to have weakened and stiffened for lack of the food of new truth, it is the reverse of surprising that with the intellectual there is found to go on a moral retrogression, a return to certain

passions and instincts and ideals which belong to earlier and lower culture planes. The mature Arnold is a Chauvinist as well as a Scripturalist.

VI.

I have said that Arnold caught in part from his father his mission of warning his countrymen against their insular shortcomings. Dr. Arnold learned to compare England with the Continent from his travels as well as from his reading, and the young Matthew, travelling with his parents and brothers, would early learn to see things with his father's eyes. In both the bias of criticism had to struggle with the bias of patriotism. Dr. Arnold, travelling in 1830, comments in his journal on Guizot's claim that France produced more advanced and enlarged individual minds than England.

"Many Englishmen will sneer at this notion, but I think it is in a certain degree well founded, and that our intellectual eminence in modern times by no means keeps pace with our advances in all the comforts and effectiveness of society. And I have no doubt that our miserable system of education has a great deal to do with it. I maintain that our historians ought to be twice as good as those of any other nation, because our social civilisation is perfect Then, again, our habits of active life give our minds an enormous advantage, if we would work; but we do not, and therefore the history of our own country is at this day a thing to be done, as well as the histories of Greece and Rome. Foreigners say that our insular situation cramps and narrows our minds; and this is not mere nonsense either. If we were not physically a very active people, our disunion from the Continent would make us pretty nearly as bad as the Chinese."¹

Not satisfied with assuring himself that all the while "our social civilisation is perfect," Dr. Arnold goes on to declare that "A thorough English gentleman—Christian, manly, and enlightened, is more, I believe, than Guizot or Sismondi could comprehend; it is a finer sentiment of human nature than any other country, I believe, could furnish. Still," he again concedes, "it is not a

¹ *Life*, Appendix D., Tour vi., extract 8.

perfect specimen by a great deal." And yet again he complains that "our travellers and our exquisites imitate the outsides of foreign customs without discrimination, just as in the absurd fashion of not eating fish with a knife, borrowed from the French, who do it because they have no knives fit to use." And again, nine years later, comparing France with England, he avows that it seems to him "that according to the ordinary laws of God's Providence, the state of France is more hopeful for the future;" and that its "society in its main points is more stable;" and that thus "religious and moral truth" may there work beneficent results "whenever it shall please God." "Whereas, in England, what moral power, without a direct and manifest interposition of God, can overcome the physical difficulties of our state of population and property?" But at the same time he declares that if England perishes, "there perishes the most active and noble life which the world has ever yet seen;" and, however great may be the evils of her state as compared with that of France, "yet one cannot but see also, that the English are a greater people than these—more like, that is, one of the chosen peoples of history, who are appointed to do a great work for mankind."¹ And so on, with much vain repetition of the words God and Providence. In these ebbings and flowings of sentiment, unreconciled by any wider generalisation, we have a singularly complete outline of the much more prolonged and elaborated criticism of the son on English and European conditions and prospects.

In his youth, while his æsthetic bent predominated and his moral convictions were comparatively latent, we find him chiefly awake to the shortcomings of his countrymen; and it is as a foe to the patriotic bias, and a representative of what Mr. Spencer calls the anti-patriotic bias, that he first comes into general notice as a prose writer. Far from thinking that "our social civilisation is perfect," he assailed it at a hundred points with satire, with irony, with banter, with argument; and if the argument is incomplex, the banter is excellent. Even where he most flagrantly generalises from random particulars, his shot often tells. Who will ever for-

¹ *Life*, Tour ix., extracts 2 and 7.

get the capital made of the name of the infanticidal girl Wragg, and of the official formula, "Wragg is in custody"? As an argument, the thing might serve for a typical case of fallacy in a logic manual; and yet somehow it makes its point. And with all the transparent superficiality of the reasoning, the audacious substitution of particulars for generals, the jaunty assumption of non-existent knowledge, there can be no doubt that Arnold did excellent work by his gibes and flings at British self-sufficiency, just as he did excellent work by his urbane crusade against dogmatic unreason; because the majority of orthodox and complacently nationalistic people are not exact or habitual reasoners, and primarily need unsettling and awaking, not precise science, which would mostly glance off them in that stage. In his delicately breezy way, Arnold set them all doubting and fidgetting, and their first tart rejoinders left him unruffled and undiscouraged. Some of the rejoinders of better-informed people, indeed, might have sufficed to nonplus any man less perfectly satisfied with his intuitions. There is a dreadful air of completeness in Mr. Spencer's calm demonstration that Arnold did not know what he was talking about when he declared the English to be deficient in ideas in comparison with the French. And yet there remains a truth in Arnold's contention which Mr. Spencer did not exactly deal with; and we shall see hereafter that in that very connection Mr. Spencer was led to commit himself to a proposition about ideas and practice which later he is moved to deny in his conflict with Comte. There remains a sense in which it is true that large numbers of Englishmen scout ideas, while Frenchmen commonly welcome them—the ideas in question being those which systematise facts in general and history in particular. And one could wish that Arnold were alive to-day to impress once more on his countrymen—if only he would now see it¹—how far they remain behind

¹ In the Educational Report of 1886, before cited, he lays it down that the ideal of Comenius "to train generally all who are born men to all which is human," "does in some considerable degree govern the proceedings of popular schools in German countries, and now in France also, but in England hardly at all."

France in their cultivation of important branches of historical research. In what we clumsily call Comparative Religion, for instance, but especially in the rational analysis of Christian origins, the French have for twenty years been doing a great deal more of good work than we, and are now far on the way to distancing the Germans. And the multiplication of French universities once more proves the openness of the French mind to ideas which here find slow and difficult acceptance. But in his latter days, Arnold's eye had come to be able to miss these things.

VII.

Certainly it is vain to look to Arnold for either a consistent analysis or a connected explanation of our national tendencies, good or bad. As Mr. Harrison put it long ago, in a phrase which his antagonist frequently quotes in his smiling way, we look in vain to him for a set of principles "interdependent, subordinate, derivative;" and in the same smiling way he tells us how "philosophy has always been getting me into trouble," and how he has been taunted with his lack of faculty for abstruse reasoning. When he goes about a classification it is sure to be catching, but as sure to be superficial. Such a classification is his famous one of his countrymen, "an upper class materialised, a middle class vulgarised, a lower class brutalised;" or in the other formula, Barbarians, Philistines, and Populace. Clearly there is nothing scientific here; no real study of the effects of different conditions in producing class types; and yet how clever the naming is, and how near it comes in places to hitting off those effects. If you ask whether the middle class is not just as much materialised as vulgarised, and whether the upper class has not in a high degree the quality attributed to the populace, that of longing to crush opposition by brute force, the looseness of the discrimination appears clearly enough. Arnold admitted that the Philistine approximates to the Barbarian and to the Populace but that will not save his classification. "Every time," he says,

"that we snatch up a vehement opinion in ignorance and passion, every time that we long to crush an adversary by sheer violence, every time that we are envious, every time that we are brutal," we have found in our own bosom "the eternal spirit of the populace."¹ Now, these are not the characteristics of our industrial populace collectively: they are much more obviously the characteristics of the upper and middle classes in political affairs. They were the characteristics of the Roman and the Greek populace, which was in large part enslaved and disdained; but Arnold forgot that our very different industrial system, with all its evils, must have altered the political tendencies of the people. With us it is not in general the advocate or the supporter of violence and coercion: these are the tastes of the upper class in especial, and of the middle class next. And yet it remains true that our industrial conditions have the effect of keeping our masses crude and undeveloped; that our middle classes are largely vulgar in the sense of cherishing ideals not higher than those of the lower, but only more expensive, in terms of their larger incomes; and that our upper or idle classes, with all their opportunities, are not in the mass any higher in their ideals; are essentially materialised, in Arnold's phrase; and are only on the material side and on the surface more refined than the others. We may say, in fine, that our whole civilisation is materialised, and that the classes in the lump vary only in their polish and manners and plane of material indulgence. In all classes alike there rages the rude passion for what they call sport, for the crudest excitements that the law will permit; and among the highest as among the lowest the ideal of such excitement is a murderous prize fight. Horse-racing, which may be termed the national recreation, is supported by all; and Lord Hartington and Lord Rosebery and Lord Randolph Churchill are as sincerely interested in these matters, after their different fashions, as their grooms. Thus, as Arnold put it in his chastened way, our upper class in the main is "a little inaccessible to ideas and light," though Lord Rosebery is certainly an exception.

¹ *Culture and Anarchy*, pp. 107-8

These deficiencies it is Arnold's service to have pressed on his countrymen with an amiable implacability. In plans for social reconstruction, certainly, he was not rife: his function was to impugn and satirise, to awaken those sunk in orthodoxy and insularity, not to show them how to make a new society. But it was much to have begun the crusade, not with Carlyle, in the name merely of a too well-known God, but in the name of human civilisation and culture. If only Arnold had been as much superior to Carlyle in consistency and science, and therefore in genuine lucidity, as he was in temper and literary limpidity, he would have been not merely a great, but the greatest of our modern social reformers. But when we name consistency, we name the quality which will always be lacking to the men of mere intuition, who begin and end with the inward augury.

Let us take first some of his own prescriptions in practical politics. In his *Culture and Anarchy*, in one of many references to Mr. Bradlaugh as a leader and representative of the populace, he recommends to his reflection this maxim from his own favourite Bishop Wilson: "Intemperance in talk makes a dreadful havot in the heart."¹ This citation was made *à propos* of Mr. Bradlaugh's early protests against misrule in general, and, apparently, in particular against his action in connection with the closing of Hyde Park to public meetings in 1866. Now, how does Arnold himself deliberately propose to deal with public disturbances such as those in connection with that attempt to suppress the right of public meeting? In cold blood, not in a public speech, but in a calmly-penned essay, he tells us that in an unpublished letter of his father's, written long ago, when the country was very ill-governed, and there were riots in many places—in this letter, while insisting strongly on the folly and badness of the Government, Dr. Arnold had concluded thus:—"As for rioting, the old Roman way of dealing with *that* is always the right one; flog the rank and file, and fling the ringleaders from the Tarpeian Rock." "And this opinion," adds his son, "we can never forsake."² And this is the man who warns a democratic leader against having his heart

¹ *Culture and Anarchy*, p. 87.

² *Ib.* p. 258.

hardened by intemperate talk. So gross is the brutality, and so suave is the manner of its utterance, that we hesitate whether we shall take it seriously. But there can be no reasonable doubt that both father and son meant what they said, and would have pressed their counsel in practice, joining their voices with those of the most insensate haters of the populace, if the issue could have been seriously raised. And I invite your attention to this as one more result of the ethical bias which takes its cues from ancient Scriptures, and the inward light that is given by the spirit of inherited barbarism. The most odiously irrational advice ever given to a modern British Government in a time of perturbation comes from a professed cultivator of sweetness and light, echoing a dictum which, even in the darkened time when it was first pronounced, was stupidly, insanely cruel. Need I say that Mr. Bradlaugh would have recoiled with horror from such a political counsel under any circumstances; and that never in his whole career, under the extremest provocation and excitement, did he say anything that could be compared for intemperance with that smooth atrocity of his critic? And need I repeat that the promulgation of this precept about the lash and the Tarpeian Rock is a proof that the so-called spirit of the populace, the spirit which seeks to crush opposition by violence, is essentially the spirit of the English upper-class, justly termed barbarian? Rioting is indeed a serious matter, but as a sign of hardness of heart it is to these Arnoldian maxims precisely what passion is to cold malignity. The "riot" in question was grossly exaggerated; but at worst those concerned had acted on Arnold's own maxim, of "Force till Right is Ready;" and, what is more, their action had the right results. They had given his maxim its only legitimate application.

Arnold, in his smiling way, avowed that he was by rights a Philistine, though he had broken with his class; but that every time he took a gun or rod in his hand he felt that he had in him something of the barbarian; and that if he had had a large estate he too might have been "a little inaccessible to ideas and light." It is to be feared that a middle-class income will not save a man from being inaccessible to certain ideas, and

from being a bit of a barbarian in a larger sense than that of a cultivator of field sports. For as Arnold grew older he conformed more and not less to the ideals of the barbarian class, till he came to present a strange mixture of gospels indeed. It is in one of his late political essays that he jeers at that English Government which, after the defeat of Majuba Hill, had the courage to refrain from further "blood-guiltiness" in what it recognised to have been an unjust war. For Arnold, the proper policy was to continue the war, right or wrong, and crush the Boers who had had the audacity to resist and beat us.¹ And it is in the same essay that, after bantering Mr. Harrison about having "in the exuberance of youthful energy weighted himself for the race of life by taking up a grotesque old French pedant upon his shoulders," and then "in middle age taking up the Protestant Dissenters too," he goes on: "And now, when he is becoming elderly, it seems as if nothing would serve him but he must add the Peace Society to his load."² This *flaneur*, remember, who gibes at a Government that recoils from blood-guiltiness, and jeers at the aims of the Peace Society, is the same moralist who observed that "Dissent, as a religious movement of our day, would be almost droll, if it were not, from the tempers and actions it excites, so extremely irreligious,"³ and that our Dissenters' temper is "profoundly unchristian;" the moralist who exhorts us to "attend to conduct" and guard against letting our lusts rule us.⁴

What are we to say of this spectacle of combined pietism and barbarism, this parade of the sweet reasonableness of Jesus in one book and this flaunting of the gospel of bloodshed and hate in another? It is hard to maintain respect for the pietist, for the moralist, when you see how worthless is his ethic as a means of rightly controlling his own conduct in the gravest crises of public life. It is hard to think of him otherwise than as the "well-preserved Ariel, tripping from flower to flower," the preacher whose religion is a pose, and whose humanitarianism is a veneer

¹ "A Word more about America," in *Nineteenth Century*, Feb., 1885, p. 230.

² *Ib.*, p. 229. ³ *Literature and Dogma*, Pref., p. xi. ⁴ *Ib.*, p. 370.

of urbanity over the tastes of the mess-room. Who, after that consummation of neo-Judaism and neo-Jesuism, can doubt that the developed instincts of civilisation and science are better guides than the religion of sentimentalism which, for these fifteen hundred years, under one guise or another, has allied itself with all the worst leanings of the human heart, while claiming to be the one means of casting out sin?

VIII.

It becomes a serious necessity to dwell on these miscarriages of the ethics of mere literary taste and literary sanction. To an ingenuous mind, few things are more captivating or compulsive than the tone of Arnold in his character of moralist, speaking with benign gravity of the Hebrew passion for righteousness, and of the secret of Jesus; and admonishing his race in an improved rendering of Paul: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are elevated, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are amiable, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, have these in your mind; let your thoughts run upon these."¹ It seems the very accent of sweet reasonableness, of the teacher with a genius for morals. But what are all these counsels but a string of empty shibboleths if you do not clearly know what the words connote? Righteousness and truth! yes, in the name of humanity let us have them: the world is perishing for lack of them. But what *are* righteousness and truth; and how are we to determine what deserves to be of good report? If "whatsoever things are amiable" is to include the Tarpeian Rock and the lash for men exasperated into transient riot by tyrannous denial of their ancient rights, what is the worth of the air of benignity and the sanctified intonation? If truth is to mean inspired mistranslation and the systematic falsifying of religious history in the interests of sentiment; and if righteousness is to mean the cold-blooded urging of

¹ *Discourses in America*, p. 30.

iniquitous wars in the name of national prestige, what better is all this mellifluous morality than the tender mercies of the wicked? Yet so docile are our minds to the mere verbiage of morality and the mere odour of sanctity, that I doubt not this impeachment will sound as unregenerate brawling to some who have come under the Arnoldian spell. And the likelihood is the more, because Arnold is at times really on the side of a sympathetic as against a barbarian ethic. It must always be remembered to his honour that his tastes and instincts led him from the first to appeal for justice for Ireland; and kept him almost to the last an advocate of equality, alive to what he termed the "idolatrous work" in the social system built and conserved by our middle and upper classes. And, as we have acknowledged, his indictments of our civilisation have again and again convinced the educated sense. It results from all this that when such an authority is seen to go astray even grossly, men are slow to call its unrighteousness by that name, and indisposed to believe that the habit of mind which ended so can be fundamentally untrustworthy, seeing that it had so often a happier outcome. The more need that the "devil's advocate" should callously insist. I give you this saying: that what we term a primary instinct for righteousness is only the personal or tribal idiosyncrasy chancing to seem righteous in our eyes; and that you only begin to have some measure of security for a consistent righteousness, when every instinct, every feeling, every impulse, is checked by that further qualifying instinct, feeling, or impulse, which stipulates for consistency and for the correlative feelings of all others concerned in the case. Reason, remember, is only the comparison of our feeling, so-called, with other feelings which prompt differently from the first, to the end of acting on the general view and not on the first impulse. Moral progress is established by the promotion of certain results of this habit of comparison, as it were, to the primary stage of being a matter of course; and thus it can be that men who do not themselves cultivate the habit of checking impulse by consideration, feeling by feeling, may yet present a set of impulses in large part social and beneficent. But the eternal conflict from which issues moral

advance is always being set up anew when such men act as confidently on an unsocial and maleficent bias as on what they and others agree to be a good one. Then their life-long habit of confident moral dogmatism, strong in manifold sanction, makes them the very bulwarks of evil, just because they cannot conceive that they and evil can ever be associated. We thus come once more to the old discovery that the past can never lay down the morality of the present; that the morality of the past is always becoming in some particulars the immorality of the present, just as the faith of the past is always becoming a present incredibility. And if any idealist, hearing this, remains loth to listen to what seems a desolating gospel, I will repeat it in the words of an idealist:—"He who would gather immortal palms must not be dismayed by the name of goodness, but must explore if it be goodness. Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind." Sacred, that is, to you, as being the last standard. And if by a hard fate your standard is refuted by later and better ones, yours must just be discredited, and if need be, denounced. Science can have no leniencies, save that all-embracing tolerance which enfolds alike the good and the bad, the sane and the insane.

For there is such a scientific tolerance, as we acknowledged before, over the spectacle of Carlyle. It should come into play the moment that critical demonstration is over. And here, be it noted, the tolerance of science will embrace Arnold in his own despite. When we say that science can have no leniencies, we mean that it cannot call evil anything but evil, though the man who does it be in general a doer of good. The purpose of moral science being to eliminate evil, it is folly to disguise any of its phenomena. But when the elimination is provided for, so to speak, by diagnosis, prescription and precaution, moral science has no more a mission of vengeance than has the physician in regard to his patient. But your apriorist, who, as we tend illogically to say, has so much to gain from being thus treated, is oftener than not zealous to set up a principle which allows of no final tolerance. Take Arnold's own words:—

"Medical science has never gauged—never, perhaps, enough set itself

to gauge—the intimate connection between moral fault and disease. To what extent, or in how many cases, what is called *illness* is due to moral springs having been used amiss, whether by being over-used or by not being used sufficiently, we *hardly at all know*, and we too little inquire. *Certainly* it is due to this very much more than we commonly think.”¹

Observe here the characteristic looseness of the thought: “we hardly at all know,” but yet “certainly” we know the thing happens far oftener “than we commonly think.” But see next the shallowness of the reasoning. Illness, we are told, often comes of moral springs being misused or neglected. Then, is that the end? How comes it that A to begin with tends to misuse or neglect his moral springs oftener than B? Is not that very tendency an “ill-ness,” a constitutional flaw? Obviously it is, but it is strangely hard for the transcendentalist of any stage to forego the luxury of holding that men’s unconditioned wills, souls *in vacuo*, are wont to set up evil in themselves by their own uncaused perversity, the soul being its own mover, lever, fulcrum, and object, in one. Arnold goes on to say, with apparent practicality, that on the view he sets forth, “moral therapeutics rise in possibility and importance.” In possibility, how? His prescription is that “the bringer of light and happiness, the calmer and pacifier, the invigorator and stimulator, is one of the chiefest of doctors”; and the typical doctor, once more, is Jesus—Mr. Arnold’s fairy Jesus, who did not say anything he is said to have said, if he should not have said it. But how much better are we here? Jesus is thus only a moral spring, and that unconditioned thing, the soul, is capable of causelessly misusing and neglecting its moral springs; and what then is finally left for it but damnation? There is where transcendentalism always has its root—in the very darkest animal instinct, which takes absolute and unconditioned free-will for granted, and, therefore, cannot finally forgive even the acknowledged madman without winking hard, while over the apparently sane it cannot wink. At best it may fall back on theories like Mr. Browning’s,² about

¹ *Literature and Dogma*, p. 147.

² *The Ring and the Book*, x., end.

“ That sad obscure sequestered state
Where God unmakes but to remake the soul
He else made first in vain ”—

Mr. Browning's God being thus unexpectedly found to be Mr. Mill's, a God who does not get his own way, being the victim of circumstances and intractable materials. But that is only one way out of the dilemma, and one which, as it leads to a worse, few people can comfortably take; and we oftener see the spectacle presented by Mr. Gladstone, who, naturally a very forgiving man in practical affairs (as indeed he had need be, if he would be forgiven), is yet found, under the sting of theology, accusing unbelievers of immorality in not sufficiently cultivating their faculty of belief—forgetting that every Irish peasant has greatly the start of himself in that line of culture.

IX.

Well, the upshot of all this is, that men's minds are the outcome of their bodies, which are more or less extensive modifications of the bodies of their parents or ancestors; and when we have decided that Arnold, a man of first instincts, little given to having second instincts, had some very bad instincts in his capacity of prophet, our hostile function is at an end. We may tranquilly allow ourselves the satisfaction of sketching an explanation in terms of heredity and physiology. Arnold, his father, and his grandfather, all died of sudden heart disease; and men tend to have more of their fathers in them than the centre muscle. We have already seen some of his heredities, and we may plausibly posit another. That unreasoning taste for war, we can see, is inherited like the pietism, and in a less modified form, having been but half-latent in the father. In Dr. Arnold's inaugural *Lecture on History*, there is a passage about the attractiveness of descriptions of battles, which ends:—“ He who can read these without interest, differs, I am inclined to think, from the mass of mankind rather for the worse than for the better: he rather wants some

noble qualities which other men have, than possesses some which other men want."¹ Now, it is true that descriptions of battles are extremely interesting to many of us; but it is a flagrant example of the method of prejudice to claim that because we are thus interested we are nobler than those who are not. Certainly Dr. Arnold in his letters expresses horror of European war; but this and other passages of his show that he had in him much of the militarist; and his son, always cultivating his tastes and his emotions rather than a morality of reason, developed rather than corrected that. What it is due to the father to say is, that he really had in him what the son had but little of, a sincere passion for justice, however ill-enlightened; and that if he was capable of proposing the flogging of rioters and the execution of their leaders, he was also capable of justifying the French Revolution of 1830 as a "most blessed one," and "the most glorious instance of a royal rebellion against society promptly and energetically repressed that the world has yet seen."² The trouble is that the father's passion for justice and the son's urbanity alike co-exist with such a fitful instinct for barbarity; and the combination in each case would be disheartening indeed if we did not remember that both alike were idealists or apriorists, for whom morality was something alien to science.

Naturally, it is not merely in matters of morality that Arnold illustrates by documentary inconsistency the resurgence of physiological bias after the period of youthful openness to new ideas. Once the question of moral evil has been disposed of, it is perhaps more an entertaining than a melancholy proceeding to trace through his books the train of self-contradiction which marks his line of development. At the outset, as we have seen, he is the enlightened young Englishman, touched by foreign culture and foreign ideas, and keenly alive to the miscalculations of patriotism. The great defect of Englishmen, he sees, is the lack of the critical spirit, and of the sane practice of criticism. An Englishman only asks if a book or a play pleases him; a Frenchman asks if

¹ *Lectures on Modern History*, 4th ed., pp. 8-9.

² *Life*, Ch. V., Letter 21.

he was right in being pleased by it. Consequently, an Englishman thinks it no objection whatever to anything that it is an anomaly. "1789 asked of a thing, Is it rational? 1642 asked of a thing, Is it legal? or, when it went furthest, Is it according to conscience? That is the English fashion."¹ In fine, he thinks it peculiarly uncommon for Englishmen to be on their guard against delusion and self-deception; and he singles out as a rare and shining exception the case of Burke's "return upon himself" as to the French Revolution in his late-written *Thoughts on French Affairs*. Burke there showed, vaguely enough it must be said, an uneasy suspicion that he might after all have been wrong; observing theistically that it is possible for a man blindly and vainly to resist the decrees of Providence, thinking them "the mere design of men." On this Arnold enthusiastically observes: "I know nothing more striking, and I must add that I know nothing more un-English."² And he warns his countrymen by sarcasm and precept to get rid of their too good conceit of themselves.

Now, turn to a late volume, the *Last Essays on Church and Religion*, and read there the now too well-known extract from Bishop Butler and the comment thereon. Arnold is here dwelling on the English Church, no longer conscious of a prevailing want of rationality in Englishmen, though he can still see some ecclesiastical and other faults:—

"I know of no other Establishment so reasonable. Churches are characterised, I have said, by their great men. Show me any other great Church of which a chief actor and luminary has a sentence like this sentence, *splendide verax*, of Butler's:—'Things are what they are, and the consequences of them will be what they will be; why then should we wish to be deceived?' To take in and digest such a sentence as that is an education in moral and intellectual activity. And, after all, intensely Butlerian as the sentence is, yet Butler came to it because he is *English*; because at the bottom of his nature lay such a fund of integrity."³

Well, did ever Sir Charles Adderley, or the *Daily Telegraph*, or

¹ *Essays in Criticism*, p. 12.

² *Ib.* p. 18.

³ *Last Essays*, p. 178 ("The Church of England")

Mr. Roebuck, say anything half so fatuously patriotic as that! Did anyone else ever ask Englishmen to believe that Pascal, and Bossuet, and Neander, and Döllinger were incapable of rising to the splendid moral and intellectual height of not wishing to be deceived, and of saying so? I am not going to hunt in the literature of other Establishments for "a sentence like that sentence." I will merely say, in the words of the critic of the "Jumping Frog," that "I don't see no p'int about that frog that's any better'n any other frog"—of the ecclesiastical order. For really, when one remembers that Arnold uttered that magnificent fustian before an audience of English clergymen, one feels one is near the plane of farce.

And that is only one item. Not only has the un-English attitude of Burke become the peculiarly English attitude of Butler; but the foreign gift of criticism and the English lack of it turn out to matter nothing. The English Establishment, without criticism, is eminently reasonable. Foreign criticism is against it; foreign criticism pulls the Bible to pieces and is disposed to do without it; well, then, foreign criticism is finally all wrong; and in England the "unlearned belletristic trifier," as Arnold once described himself,¹ can set them all right. Strauss is unspiritual; Baur is all astray and is incurably German; the accomplished Gubernatis, though not German, is sunk in error. As for the French, are not they now sunk in something worse—in Lubricity? The anti-Trinitarian humorist and the most reasonable of Establishments have alone, somehow, got the right end of the stick, and they hold it fraternally between them. *Honi soit qui mal y pense*; neither is going to beat the other with it.

And then the anomalies. "Perhaps," wrote the Arnold of the early essays, "in fifty years' time it will in the English House of Commons be an objection to an institution that it is an anomaly, and my friend, the Member of Parliament, will shudder in his grave. But let us in the meanwhile rather endeavour that in twenty years' time it may, in English literature, be an objection to a proposition that it is absurd. That would be a change so

¹ In the *Essay on the Study of Celtic Literature*.

vast that the imagination almost fails to grasp it.”¹ Now, even at that time, Arnold was himself upholding anomalies, and representing the demonstration of absurdities. Colenso had exhibited the absurdity of the story of the life of the Israelites in the wilderness, and Arnold was as hostile to him as were the general run of the clergy. But he was yet to distinguish himself by his championship of the English Church, a flagrant anomaly in itself, and one defended by him on the most anomalous grounds, as an institution for the promotion of righteousness. Historically, we know that that Church, in the words of Mr. Morley, has been “the ally of tyranny, the organ of social oppression, the champion of intellectual bondage.” To this Arnold hardly makes answer that “every church is to be judged by its great men.”² The position is monstrous. You might as reasonably urge that the institution of monarchy is to be historically and politically judged by its great men; and you would as plausibly justify that by dwelling on Marcus Aurelius and Alfred and Joseph of Austria, as prove the general beneficence of the Church of England by a few passages from Barrow and Butler. But Arnold’s support of the Church is anomalous in every detail. With his beliefs as to deity and immortality, he had no more honest business with the worship of the English Church than with those of the Chinese, but he was ready to go through all the mummeries of Christian ceremonial for the sake of having his æsthetic tastes propitiated. His whole religion was itself an anomaly. He made it a weakness in Judaism that its religion was too much a national and social, and too little an individual affair; and he makes it a merit in the English Church to be national and social; and a demerit in the Dissenter to be busied with the affairs of his church. And in politics he gave the very pattest illustration of the English tendency, which he had impeached, to regard it as no objection to a law that it was anomalous. The law against marriage with a deceased wife’s sister rests wholly upon an obviously false construction of one Hebrew text; and many good citizens have urged its abolition on serious practical grounds. These citizens, no doubt,

¹ *Essays in Criticism*, p. 42.

² *Last Essays*, p. 167.

fall into anomaly in so far as they would still forbid marriage with a deceased brother's widow ; but most of them simply ask for what they feel to be necessary, and what they think they might get. Arnold always opposed them, on the sole ground that the marriages they wanted to legalise were in bad taste. Well, taste is a delicate matter ; and when Arnold allows himself to say of Liberal Dissenters that they themselves all wanted to marry their deceased wives' sisters, he makes other people in turn raise their eyebrows. "He has his eye on his deceased wife's sister," is Arnold's description of the Liberal who supports the agitation for abolition of the law ; if you vote for it you are doing it for your own private ends. On which one is moved to say what Madame de Broglie said of Madame de Balbi, that "it is only the perfection of 'good form' that could teach such bad manners."

X.

Taste may lead a man to strange conclusions. It may be doubted whether Arnold's most ardent admirers were quite at ease in their minds about his latter-day gospel of "Numbers," proclaimed by him in the strange discourse under that title which he framed for his American audiences ; but which it would seem they were unable to hear. In that lecture, after all his vindications of Equality, his ideas of Christianising the masses, his impeachments of the idolatrous work of the middle and upper classes, he falls back on the doctrine that it is impossible to have a whole civilised nation ; that nations live by virtue of their "remnant" of superior people ; and that the people of the United States are fortunate in that they are at once so Germanic and so numerous, because they may thus have the biggest remnant of good quality on record. In Athens, with its three hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants, even a remnant of one in ten—thirty-five thousand—was insufficient to save the State ; and similarly the population of Israel could not yield remnant enough ; but in a country like the United States, with its population of fifty millions of the Germanic stock, prepared by the Puritan dis-

cipline, even a remnant of one in a hundred would represent five hundred thousand and this would probably be sufficient for saving purposes. A more dismally fantastic doctrine will not readily be found in secular literature. The whole thesis is from the start so entirely in the air that we never come within sight of its practical application. Arnold makes the assumption, first, that as States have fallen in the past, they must fall in the future; and next, that when States fall it is always because of the "unsoundness" of the majority. Athens, Jewry, Assyria, Rome, are all cited in turn. Now, every one of these States fell before the violence of military conquest, and there is nothing to show that but for such conquest they would not have subsisted continuously till this day. Arnold's argument is meaningless unless it be implied that as these ancient States fell before violence, so any modern State may fall; but he does not offer a hint of the possible form of such a contingency, and there is no reason to suppose he really contemplated it. What was lacking in Athens, and Jewry, and Assyria, and Rome, successively, was a sufficiently firm military and political organisation. It is the merest dogmatising, however, to assume that such organisations would be identical with a sound "remnant" in the sense in which Arnold defined it. The American "remnant," we learn, will consist of all the people who cultivate the Pauline "whatsoevers;" and they are to preserve the unsound majority from ruin. But what is ruin? France, we learn, runs risk of ruin because of the French worship of Lubricity, or the goddess Aselgeia—a stigma which the latter-day Arnold is always fastening on the whole French nation, on the strength of the outspokenness of French fiction, without asking whether Berlin and Vienna do not exhibit precisely the tendencies of Paris, or whether Zola's Paris is not really sounder than the Paris of Molière, or whether the London of Shakspeare did not display just the tastes of the Paris of Zola. One wearies of this inveterate superficiality, and asks again, more pressingly, How then is France likely to be ruined? By military conquest? Then if France beats Germany in another war, as she did before, by means of a great general, will Germany have been ruined by

want of a sufficient sound remnant? And yet again, if modern conquest ceases to mean political and material destruction, like the destruction of Assyria and Rome; if there are no more barbarous races capable of overthrowing a civilisation; *what* does ruin mean? Is there more lubricity in Paris to-day than there was in the Middle Ages; and is there less in Berlin than there was a hundred years ago? And if numbers give safety, how comes it that lubricity seems more dangerous in a France of thirty-five millions than in a France of ten millions?

It is idle to question. There is no sociological or philosophical conception behind the doctrine of Numbers: there is only a mood: a recoil of a jaded taste from the crudities of large populations and democratic culture. A habit of phrasing and formulating yields us the semblances of generalisation, and so we come by the fantastic proposition that thirty-five thousand sound people cannot save a State of three hundred and fifty thousand from its unsound majority, but that five hundred thousand may somehow save a State of fifty millions from the ruinous tendencies of the other forty-nine and a half millions. And this is our demonstration of the truth of the old vaunt of Dr. Arnold, made without the fear of the coming Matthew Arnold before his eyes, that the Germanic peoples are the best: given a Germanic stock and a Puritan discipline, you may haply have half a million sound in the "whatsoevers," to forty-nine and a half millions of unsound. It is hard to say whether we ought to laugh or to weep; but at least there is no need to ask whether this glad tidings of great joy will give rest to the souls of the Germanic or any other stock, with or without the Puritan discipline. It is not found that even the most select American citizens exult at the prospect of saving their souls alive in Mr. Arnold's Remnant Warehouse. Whereunto shall we liken it? Irresistibly does the mind go back to a certain passage in a certain essay on Spinoza:—

"Fra Angelico, the sweetest and most inspired of devout souls, has given us, in his great picture of the Last Judgment, his conception of beatitude. The elect are going round in a ring on long grass under laden fruit trees; two of them, more restless than the others, are flying up a battlemented

street—a street blank with all the ennui of the Middle Ages. Across a gulf is visible, for the delectation of the saints, a blazing cauldron in which Beelzebub is sousing the damned.”¹

If you call the saints the remnant, and the others the unsound majority—why, these things are an allegory.

XI.

But it is scarcely amusing, this Apocalypse to the new creed. Once more we are led to, I will not say a pessimistic, but an unsanguine view of the possibilities of right judgment in social science being arrived at by mere good-will, even joined with good-temper, in the absence of scientific patience and precision. Once more we have come to the sombre conclusion that the prophet who professes to speak with inspiration of righteousness and the way of life is apt to be an unsafe or helpless guide. Certainly Arnold is an improvement on the customary type. A prophet, as you have him in ancient history, and more recently in Carlyle, may be defined as a person whose language is strong and whose theory is wrong; for such in the main, if you will look into the matter, were most of the prophets of Jewry, though they were canonised by a posterity which had lost the power of estimating the value of their prescriptions. Arnold, certainly, opens a new era of prophecy by his urbanity and amenity; but still he has the badge of his tribe: he is very apt to be wrong. Like Carlyle, Arnold ends in being at points, though not at so many points, behind the best thought of his time, after having set out with ideas and aspirations notably better than those in the ascendant. It is a disheartening conclusion, and you who listen to me, feeling as much, may be disposed to ask whether it is worth while thus to pull prophets to pieces, only to preserve their fallacies, as it were, in spirits. It is indeed more cheerful to dwell on their personal virtues, and to think of their aims rather than of their errors. But what is the use of our going about our own aims unless we clearly realise how so many other aims miscarried?

¹ *Essays in Criticism*, p. 267.

Why allege peace when there is no peace? The soldier must study the campaigns of his predecessors if he would know the art of war; the reformer must know the charts of the sea of life if he would avoid the ancient shoals and reefs, and guard against perturbation of his compass. It is sad to read of past shipwreck and failure, but it is sadder to fail once more for lack of thought. It has been mostly all failure hitherto, and our utmost vigilance will verily not secure us from disaster. Sternly vigilant, then, let us be.

And in that spirit, when all is said, we find that we are in reality at peace with those from whose errors we have learned caution, and that the memory even of the errors has become, not troublous, but pathetic; since in so far as they have warned us they wrought better than they knew, and furthered that which often they resisted. And in Arnold's case, if ever, the adjustment is easy. Even in error his, after all, is a benign figure, bearing itself in the stress of life with a serene grace that is a monition even to an adversary, and a benediction to us all when, as so often chances, he is for all of us, whether as poet or teacher, a minister of beauty, a helper, a sustainer, and a friend. Of Carlyle we could at least say that he roused and provoked the slumbering consciences of men. Of Arnold we can say not only that he did this with far more of amenity and temperance, and much less of repellent violence than Carlyle, but that in a hundred things his first call was so far right and wise that at once there was gain and amendment when it was heard. Against an occasional reinforcement of barbarism we have to set many a service to liberalism, to culture, to the very spirit of civilisation. If he wrought unwittingly against reason in seeking to undermine the extremest forms of unreason, let us not forget that he did that with a persuasiveness which in all probability wrought much more widely and effectively, up to a certain point, than the most consistently scientific advocacy could have done. And this service, withal, he rendered with such moderation and such search for rational tests, so far as his prepossessions would let him carry and apply them, that he taught men to value reason more than he did, and to

carry further the principles he had sought to apply. Perhaps no writer of his time has led a larger number of conventionally trained people of moderate thinking powers to give up their more irrational traditional opinions. And not only do his urbanity and his culture, the while, secure him distinction and dignity as a publicist, with all his scientific inadequacy, but there stands ever behind the figure of the publicist the more shadowy yet more fascinating figure of the poet, whose song so often turns to a sigh the confident doctrine and cheerful mockeries of the propagandist. And who, in the act of passing judgment on the propagandist, can forget the melancholy undertone of his song, which sadly avows his inner diffidences as to truth:—

“ Ah ! let us make no claim,
On life's incognisable sea,
To too exact a steering of our way ;
Let us not fret and fear to miss our aim,
If some fair coast has lured us to make stay,
Or some friend hailed us to keep company.”¹

¹ *Human Life.*

JOHN RUSKIN.

I.

It is nearly thirty-three years since George Eliot wrote privately of Ruskin :—"His little book on the 'Political Economy of Art' contains some magnificent passages, mixed up with stupendous specimens of arrogant absurdity on some economical points ; but I venerate him as one of the great teachers of the day."¹ That judgment curiously sums up the average run of opinion about Ruskin now, among the readers who are sympathetic enough to feel his power, and independent enough to admire without total self-surrender. Like Carlyle and Arnold, he himself has put it on record that he has failed in his effort to influence his generation—an instructive and memorable avowal, coming from such different men. Carlyle made it despairingly,² Arnold resignedly and half-humorously,³ Ruskin bitterly and passionately.⁴ If they could say so, it must be true, for their minds are the measure of their failure, in terms of their aspiration ; but the avowal sets us asking : What are the objective facts ; how far have these men really failed to influence their generation in the direction in which they strove ? Mill and Emerson made no such confession or complaint : was it that they had been less aspiring, or were more easily satisfied ? In effect, their ideals were as high, and they were far enough from a smug contentment with things as they are. Was it not that they, in their very different ways, were less egoistic than the others, temperamentally more ready to believe that the world might work its salvation by other light than

¹ Mr. Cross's *Life*, ii., 7. It is instructive to compare the temper in which Ruskin later criticised George Eliot, in his essay on *Fiction, Fair and Foul*.

² Froude, *First Forty Years*, ii., 478.

³ *Discourses in America*, p. 3.

⁴ *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 84, and others.

theirs? In the contrast they make with Carlyle, that explanation, I think, is not unacceptable; and if it seems less suitable in relation to Arnold, it is probably because, despite the ostensible fanaticism of his conviction that the legality of marriage with a deceased wife's sister is incompatible with a sound remnant, and his dogma that nothing is righteousness but the method and secret of Jesus Christ¹—despite those primitive bigotries Arnold had some safeguard in his temperament against maniacal self-absorption, and thus is not typically at strife with his age. But whether the same explanation of baffled and embittered egoism will serve to explain the confessed defeatedness of Ruskin, we must not attempt to decide until we have investigated his case.

Of the men we have studied in this series, he, perhaps, is the one who is least elucidated by the light of heredity. In that connection he strikes us from the first as an abnormal product, not, of course, at all subversive of the doctrine of heredity, but very suggestive of the limitations of our knowledge, and of the subtlety of the process by which one human organism is proximately compounded out of two. The son of a hard-working and undemonstrative wine-merchant, notably intellectual only on the side of his artistic tastes, and of an evangelical Scotchwoman of tenacious character, but contracted mind and temperament, develops into one of the most eloquent prose writers of any age or literature, whose feeling for art is not a taste but a kind of passion; whose character is wayward and, save in literary and artistic pertinacity, weak; and who is readily admitted by all men to be a genius, in virtue of that evident capacity of high-pressure brain action, which is the condition precedent of all eminent human accomplishment, whether in a self-controlled or in an ill-balanced organism. What is clear is that his faculty mainly reposes on an extraordinary power of observation, which we broadly assume to be the basis of artist-craft; and yet he is essentially not an artist in form or colour, though he trained himself to be a faithful and finished draughtsman. He has spent half a lifetime of strenuous if fitful labour on the study and

¹ *Literature and Dogma*, p. 386. *God and the Bible*, p. 9.

analysis of artistic phenomena, of which he has written with a fire and an earnestness that were quite new in critical literature; and yet the men of real genius for art often deride his judgments, as being those of one who sees beauty with ethical eyes. Again, he has an almost unparalleled command of language, and in that has carried both art and energy to unsurpassed lengths; and yet in verse, which is the flower of verbal art, he has confessedly failed, lacking evidently a certain essential part of the poet's outfit. And in the end, after an assiduous preparation for the philosophy of æsthetics, he has made himself one of the most stringent and stirring of modern critics of life, attaining in that function to an intensity if not a breadth of impressiveness and of influence reached by none of his contemporaries. Yet here, too, his mastering eloquence and startling insight are flawed by a passion for the irrational and the irrelevant which leaves the dispassionate judge in doubt whether his unreason does not balance, as it certainly discredits, his wisdom.

II.

It is part of the paradox of Ruskin's personality that his nominal rank in English literature is still determined for society by his first ambitious work, which he long refused to reprint, because of his maturer dissatisfaction in it. And this is not wholly unreasonable, for, ill-considered as is much of the thinking, and unchastened as is much of the style of "*Modern Painters*," it is certainly, for eloquence and energy, one of the most remarkable books ever produced by a youth in his twenties. Born in 1819, he published the first volume at twenty-four. And, further, that work is in many respects the key to his development, since it exhibits him as proceeding habitually from æsthetic observation to moral doctrine, thus reaching his artistic and ethical judgments alike directly from his impressions, and using his reasoning powers always primarily to support, and rarely later to check, his intuitions. And yet so vivid is this very faculty of

observation and impressibility, that to him is due the credit of anticipating criticism on those vices of excess which, for a sensitive taste to-day, disfigure his early writing, apart from the question of the justice of his views. He has been the first to say how overcharged often was his own youthful style. "I am more and more grieved," he wrote in 1874, on one of the extracts then published with his consent, "as I re-read this and other portions of the most affected and weak of all my books (written in a moulting time of my life)—the second volume of 'Modern Painters'—at its morbid violence of passion and narrowness of thought. Yet, at heart, the book was, like my others, honest, and in substance it is mostly good, but all boiled to rags."¹

But this is not the only light cast by his later on his earliest self. In "Modern Painters" he roundly asserted that none of the histories or heroes of the Bible have ever been well painted; and in 1874 he writes on this: "I knew nothing, when I wrote this passage, of Luini, Filippo Lippi, or Sandro Botticelli, and had not capacity to enter into the deeper feelings even of the men whom I was chiefly studying—Tintoret and Fra Angelico. But the British public is at present as little acquainted with the greater Florentines as I was then, and the passage, for *them*, remained true."² Observe here, in addition to the candour of the self-criticism as to Tintoret and Fra Angelico, the force of the admission as to the presumption with which the young art-critic made sweeping generalisations on the strength of his knowledge of a few painters; and take, again, the late comment on the passage in which the youth had magisterially set Scott above Wordsworth and Tennyson as a poet, and above Goethe and Balzac "as the great representative of the mind of the age in literature." "I knew nothing of Goethe," he confesses again, "when I put him with Balzac;"³ but in this case, apparently unabashed, he goes on to justify his ignorant verdict on the strength of his later knowledge—badly enough, it must be said. These confessions will probably hold good of more of Ruskin's works than he himself connects them with. Headlong dogmatism on matters on which his thought

¹ *Fronde Agrestes*, p. 148, note. ² *Ib.*, p. 9, note. ³ *Ib.*, p. 17, note.

had never gone further or deeper than his first vivid prejudice, is to the last as much a characteristic of his works as the sudden and penetrating analysis of social and other phenomena, of which his first burning glance has pierced the heart.

III.

I have said that his character is a perplexing one on the side of heredity; and yet it might be plausibly said that it is only that in him some peculiarity of nervous and circulatory structure, some speciality of heart and brain action, carries to a greatly higher power, on a basis of wider culture, at once the spontaneous artistic taste of the father, who taught his son to admire Turner, and the intense and irrational pietism of the mother, who instilled into her child her creed and religious habit.¹ If we carefully consider his work from first to last, we shall see that he is above all things a perceiver, a seer, in the strict sense; one who, in art, detects intentions and significances where other eyes miss them; who too often, indeed, sees intentions and significances in art and nature, words and books, which are unreal and wholly created by his own fancy; but who does really also detect vital relations among real phenomena which the dull eye of the average man wholly misses, just as he searches out every hint of plan and purpose in a mediæval picture, or in the manifold imagery of a Gothic cathedral. Some early words of his own, perhaps unconsciously, set forth the special nature of his gift:—

“The more I think of it, I find this conclusion more impressed upon me, that the greatest thing a human soul ever does in this world is to *see* something, and tell what it *saw* in a plain way. Hundreds of people can talk for one who can think, but thousands can think for one who can see. To see clearly is poetry, prophecy, and religion—all in one.”²

¹ See *Fors Clavigera*, Letters 10, p. 5; 42, p. 129; 53, p. 119, and *Præterita*.

² *Modern Painters*, iii., pt. iv., ch. xvi., sec. 23.

For him it has always been so; and the frequent discovery that he sees things altogether differently at different times, seems never to have impaired his habitual, his constitutional confidence in the necessary rightness of his impressions. In "Modern Painters" and "The Seven Lamps of Architecture," he wrote of things Protestant and Catholic entirely in the spirit of his mother's Evangelicalism, bringing to the inflated and rhetorical English fanaticism of that day, so often exemplified by Dr. Arnold, his own wealth of language and volume of sound, but no thinking worth speaking of. And as his Protestantism was essentially English, nay parochial, and was capable of being confuted even through his æsthetic impressions, he duly dropped it when a sufficiently vivid and deep impression reached him. He has given it to us in the picture of the little "Waldensian Chapel, where a little squeaking idiot was preaching to an audience of seventeen old women and three louts, that they were the only children of God in Turin."¹ From that moment the nullity of sectarian pretensions was a part of his customary thought. Now observe how he came by the idea. Any reflecting man who simply considered the general facts of religion in Christendom, without the stimulus of a squeaking Waldensian in a Little Bethel in Turin, might readily realise the folly of the mutual damnation of Catholic and Protestant. But Ruskin lived to be over thirty,² and the author of several elaborate and ambitious volumes, before that particular experience in Turin brought the truth home to him through the medium of eye and ear. Here, perhaps, we have some clue to his failure as an artist. His imagination, apparently so rich when it is at work, would seem to function only on the immediate stimulus of actual sensory impressions. Give him these, and so far as the association of visual images can carry him, his mind will evolve a train of thought at white heat, flashing at once into burning words. Thus the sight of a stupid little enclosure of untended and useless ground within iron rail-

¹ *Fers Clavigera*, vol. vii., 1887, Letter 76, April, p. 104.

² See the rhetorical Protestant note appended to the *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, 1849.

ings in front of a new public-house, in a suburb he used to visit, will lead him into a whole panorama of inward realisation of the purposeless and mindless working of our industrial and capitalistic system as a whole, and its outcome in ugliness, apathy, and degradation.¹ Of such stimuli the world is full, and Ruskin is endlessly alive to them; but if he turns to deal with some problem where they cannot help him, where the path to truth lies through mazes that can be threaded only by the undropped clue of patiently continuous thought, the product of the method of consistency, he is a grotesque guide indeed. Thus it comes that, where sensory impressions cannot sting him into clear vision, his religion remains as arbitrary and irrational as it was when instilled into him by his mother, his Scripturalism as mediæval, his philosophy as childish. He puts it all categorically in one of his early deliverances, in reply to the charge of lowering sacred things by dragging them into secular questions, such as those of art now are for a Puritan public:—

“We treat God with irreverence by banishing Him from our thoughts, not by referring to His will on slight occasions. His is not the finite authority or intelligence which cannot be troubled with small things. There is nothing so small but that we may honour God by asking His guidance of it, or insult Him by taking it into our own hands; and what is true of the Deity is equally true of His Revelation. We use it most reverently when most habitually: our insolence is in ever acting without reference to it, our true honouring of it is in its universal application.”²

In that spirit, of simple theistic anthropomorphism, yielding of course very different results in his different moods, he has always written, contradicting himself with the inspired industry of the prophet of all ages. In later years, when he would express his wrath at the pollution and choking up of once beautiful springs, he declares that God “meant” these springs to flow properly, being no more able than the theist of everyday life to believe that his God really governs the universe. It is the old story of childish anthropomorphism and childish inconsequence which meets us

¹ See *The Crown of Wild Olive*, ed. 1882, pp. 4-10.

² *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, 2nd ed., p. 5.

wherever we look into theism. To himself, Ruskin probably seems a revealer of divine law and purpose in all things; and in his youth he brought a pretentious criticism to bear on Coleridge's early Ode to France, by way of expressing his superiority to the vulgar love of liberty. With lofty irrelevance, he reminds the poet, who had been singing the eternal human revolt against human despotism, that the whole universe exhibits the reign of law.¹ Natural law is, on the whole, little clearer to him in his prophetic old age than in his evangelical youth, when he saw divine design in all inanimate things; and oftener than not he is asserting that mankind are transgressing universal law and resisting Omnipotence. Just as his mother would see in a public calamity or in national error the punishing or blinding hand of a vengeful Deity, so to the last he falls into the mediæval attitude whenever he is weary of exhortation or hopeless of obedience.

"If there be any truth in the vital doctrines of Christianity whatever—and assuredly there is more than most of us recognise, or than any of us believe—the offences committed in this century by all the nations of Christendom against the law of Christ have been so great, and insolent, that they cannot but be punished by the withdrawal of spiritual guidance from them, and the especial paralysis of efforts intelligently made for their good."²

That is to say, God is, in the interests of divine justice, deliberately preventing the British public from listening to Mr. Ruskin, just as He prevented Pharaoh from listening to Moses; and yet somehow Mr. Ruskin, like Moses, while knowing all about it, is very imperfectly resigned.

In other moods, by way of offering express defiance to what he calls idiotic Atheism, he will produce a demonstration, to which I will apply no adjective, of the nature of his own faith, the effect of which is to make out that there is no tangible practical difference between Atheism and Theism:—

"All my first books," he writes in *Fors Clavigera*, "to the end of the *Stones of Venice*, were written in the simple belief I had been taught as

¹ *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, pp. 183-4.

² *Fors Clavigera*, vol. vi.; Letter 61, Jan. 1876, pp. 6-7.

a child: and especially the second volume of *Modern Painters* was an outcry of enthusiastic praise of religious painting, in which you will find me placing Fra Angelico (see the closing paragraph of the book) above all other painters. But during my work at Venice, I discovered the gigantic power of Tintoret, and found that there was a quite different spirit in that from the spirit of Angelico: and analysing Venetian work carefully, I found—and told fearlessly in spite of my love for the masters—that there was ‘no religion whatever in any work of Titian’s; and that Tintoret only occasionally forgot himself into religion.’”

A proposition which he repeats, with the addition “that only when Tintoret forgets himself does he truly find himself”—a characteristic sophism. But, then, Titian had been given in all his art teaching after the *Stones of Venice* as a “standard of perfection;” and he continues:—

“Conceive the weight of this problem, then, on my inner mind—how the most perfect work I knew, in my special business, could be done ‘wholly without religion!’ I set myself to work out that problem thoroughly in 1858, and arrived at the conclusion—which is an entirely sound one, and which did, indeed, alter from that time forward the tone and method of my teaching—that human work must be done honourably and thoroughly because we now are men;—whether we ever expect to be angels, or ever were slugs, being practically no matter. . . . Further, I found, and have always since taught, and do teach, and shall teach, I doubt not, till I die, that in resolving to do our work well, is the only sound foundation of any religion whatever; and that by that resolution only, and what we have done, and not by our belief, Christ will judge us, as He has plainly told us He will (though nobody believes Him) in the Resurrection.”¹

So that the “vital doctrines of Christianity” turn out to be, under a little disguise, the vital doctrines of universal ethics, common to all men and invented by none.

And in one place, half realising this, he turns for a moment to the Atheists as his only hope:—

“If you address any average, modern English company as believing in an Eternal life, and then endeavour to draw any conclusion from this assumed belief, as to their present business, they will forthwith tell you that ‘what you say is very beautiful, but it is not practical.’ If, on the contrary, you frankly address them as unbelievers in Eternal life, and try to

¹ *Fors Clavigera*, Vol. vii., Letter 76, April, 1877, pp. 101-3.

draw any consequences from that unbelief, they immediately hold you for an accursed person, and shake off the dust from their feet at you."¹

And he proceeds to declare that the "so-called Infidel," whom he dubs in his fantastic verbalist way a "believer in death," may be a very decent sort of person.

"A brave belief in life is, indeed, an enviable frame of mind, but, as far as I can discern, an unusual one. I know few Christians so convinced of the splendour of the rooms in their Father's house, as to be happier when their friends are called to these mansions, than they would have been if the Queen had sent for them to live at Court: nor has the Church's most ardent 'desire to depart, and be with Christ,' ever cured it of the singular habit of putting on mourning for every person summoned to such departure. On the contrary, a brave belief in death has been assuredly held by many not ignoble persons; and it is a sign of the last depravity of the Church itself, when it assumes that such a belief is inconsistent with either purity of character, or energy of hand."²

Which is really a very handsome testimonial from Mr. Ruskin, coming so entirely unsolicited; though I am not sure that what he calls the last depravity of the Church was not an early depravity of his own. However that may be, it is clearly true, as he further says, that—

"The shortness of life is not, to any rational person, a conclusive reason for wasting the space of it which may be granted him; nor does the anticipation of death to-morrow suggest, to any one but a drunkard, the expediency of drunkenness to-day. To teach that there is no device in the grave may, indeed, make the deviceless person more contented in his dulness; but it will make the deviser only more earnest in devising: nor is human conduct likely, in every case, to be purer, under the conviction that all its evil may in a moment be pardoned, and all its wrong-doing in a moment redeemed."

To a man of genius who approaches us occasionally in that style and spirit, however benighted may be his own scheme of philosophy or theosophy, it is worth our while to listen, even if he proceeds to describe us as "men for whom feebleness of sight, or bitterness of soul, or the offence given by the conduct of those who claim higher hope" has rendered our "painful creed the only possible

¹ *Crown of Wild Olive*, p. 11. ² *Ib.* p. 15.

one." We reflect that in bitterness of soul Mr. Ruskin can, as a rule, give points to most of us; and that he is about as much offended as most of us with the conduct of his fellow-Christians;¹ and we have our own opinions about his range of vision. And, finally, he is good enough to say that to us "there is an appeal to be made, more secure than any which can be addressed to happier persons,"—the happier persons being the happy Christian recipients of Mr. Ruskin's most biting invective.

IV.

I have said that Ruskin, as a social teacher, wields a more intense and impressive influence than any of his contemporaries. He does this by virtue of his two great qualifications of literary style and luminousness of exposition, within the range of his accurate vision. His prose, which from the first had a boundless wealth of power and colour, has in his latter years grown more and more direct and electric without losing any of its eloquence, seeming to be burned ever purer in the fire of his passion. As a writer he is to Carlyle as Apollo to a Titan, a born consummate master² where the other is a gigantic wrestler; and he can reach effects of which Carlyle never dreamed. Arnold, quoting with admiration one of his most marvellous descriptive passages, remarks of it with gentle deprecation that the style seeks to do more than prose can really accomplish. Certainly Arnold's own style never tried that: the breath of that spirit never moves on the smooth surface of his clear waters. But to see Ruskin even exhausting language is a literary experience worth having from any standpoint.

¹ "Even out of the rotten mob of money-begotten traitors calling itself a 'people' in England, I do believe I shall be able to extricate, by slow degrees, some faithful and true persons, hating covetousness, and fearing God." (*Fors Clavigera*, Letter 72, Feb., 1876, p. 46.)

² It is not meant by this, of course, that he was not a hard student. He confesses to imitation of Hooker (*Frondees Agrestes*, p. 147), and has told of how he would once spend hours polishing paragraphs.

And just as he transcends Carlyle in word-magic, so does he transcend him in the blazing force of his criticism of modern English life, where he sees true and aims straight. His preparation, in the close study of relations in the department of æsthetics, seems to give him an abnormal power of seeing and representing in groups and masses the connections of our industrial life, which Carlyle only saw under a few ethical headings, though he too had the pictorial eye. Carlyle, at bottom a Puritan, is always running into ethical metaphor, where Ruskin, tingling under a primary æsthetic stimulus, gives us in a flash the actual facts. Thus he is in these matters by far the more "inevitable" critic, to use Wordsworth's phrase; and indeed I must confess to a certain want of proportion in the scheme of these lectures, in that Ruskin is treated in only one, while Carlyle and Arnold each occupy two. It is only the fitfulness of his intense light that can in any degree justify the briefer treatment of him; for in respect of certain of his views and visions of our social system he brings us, with all his passion and divagation, closer to the factual bases of dynamic sociology than any of the other teachers we have studied. Of all previous writers he especially recalls Rousseau, resembling him alike in temperament,¹ in instability, in passionate insight, in literary genius, and in his social ideals and aspirations. And it may well be that he shall have a not dissimilar influence over the generation which follows him.

To read Ruskin is to acquire new perceptions of what our life actually means, in terms of human sensation and the resulting possibilities of future sensation. He has set up against himself an incalculable amount of solid disregard by his outcries against machinery; and in so far as he estimates the results of machinery by fantastic absolute standards and false comparative standards, as by contrasting an unreal past with our present, this disregard is justified. But, on the other hand, he has written some of the finest passages in all literature in praise of machinery—of the

¹ Very like a hallucination of Rousseau's is the story of Ruskin's wild perversion of a remark of Carlyle's as to how he was treated in his walks in London. See it in Mr. Shepherd's *Life of Carlyle*, ii., 248-252.

locomotive, for instance;¹ and for the rest, his protests against the conditions under which we use machinery, and the ends to which we turn it, are often unanswerable. And even where he overstrains a case and takes a special illustration which rather enforces his protest than really typifies the facts in the mass, his way of seeing and putting it is often strangely suggestive, and may lend itself to a sounder general statement than he has offered. Take for instance his justification of his phrase "infernal means of locomotion" as a general description of railway travelling. He at once reproduces, in vivid detail, a staggering picture of what he has actually seen railway travelling to mean with his own eyes.

"For instance: the town of Ulverstone is twelve miles from me, by four miles of mountain road beside Coniston Lake, three through a pastoral valley, five by the seaside. A healthier or lovelier walk would be difficult to find. In old times, if a Coniston peasant had any business at Ulverstone, he walked to Ulverstone, spent nothing but shoe-leather on the road, drank at the streams, and if he spent a couple of batz when he got to Ulverstone, "it was the end of the world." But now, he would never think of doing such a thing! He first walks three miles in a contrary direction to a railroad station, and then travels by railroad twenty-four miles to Ulverstone, paying two shillings fare. During the twenty-four miles' transit he is idle, dusty, stupid, and either more hot or cold than is pleasant to him. In either case he drinks beer at two or three of the stations, passes his time between them with anybody he can find, in talking, without having anything to talk of; and such talk always becomes vicious. He arrives at Ulverstone, jaded, half drunk, and otherwise demoralised, and three shillings, at least, poorer than in the morning. Of that sum, a shilling has gone for beer, threepence to a railway shareholder, threepence in coals, and eighteenpence has been spent in employing strong men in the vile mechanical work of making and driving a machine, instead of his own legs, to carry the drunken lout. The results, absolute loss and demoralisation to the poor, on all sides, and iniquitous gain to the rich. Fancy, if you saw the railway officials actually employed in carrying the countryman bodily on their backs to Ulverstone, what you would think of

¹ See the passage quoted in Professor Geddes' essay, *John Ruskin*, in the *Round Table* series, p. 20. But Mr. Geddes is wrong when he goes on to say that the passage proves those to be wrong who say that Ruskin recommends the disuse of all machinery. He actually has done so—see below. It is one of his countless self-contradictions.

the business ! And because they waste ever so much iron and fuel besides to do it, you think it a profitable one ! ”¹

Now, that is clearly not a fair sample case of railway travelling ; and the choice of contrast between a roadside walk and a train journey, instead of between the train journey and an old stage-coach ride or waggon journey, almost suggests an incapacity for justice of comparison. But still it is a case which most people would overlook. And now turn to a picture which gives a much more comprehensive view of a sociological case—the case of the relation of the English land system to its town industrial system, and the æsthetic upshot of the whole. As usual he sees things in the concrete, and begins with the position and practice of the typical landlord or squire, in person :—

“ The action of the squire for the last fifty years has been, broadly, to take the food from the ground of his estate, and carry it to London, where he feeds with it a vast number of builders, upholsterers (one of them charged me five pounds for a footstool the other day), carriage and harness makers, dressmakers, grooms, footmen, bad musicians, bad painters, gamblers, and harlots, and in supply of the wants of these main classes, a vast number of shopkeepers of minor useless articles. The muscles and the time of this enormous population being wholly unproductive—(for, of course, time spent in the mere process of sale is unproductive, and much more that of the footman and groom, while that of the vulgar upholsterer, jeweller, fiddler, and painter, etc., etc., is not only unproductive but mischievous)—the entire mass of this London population do nothing whatever either to feed or clothe themselves ; and their vile life preventing them from all rational entertainment, they are compelled to seek some pastime in a vile literature, the demand for which again occupies another enormous class, who do nothing to feed or dress themselves ; finally, the vain disputes of the vicious population give employment to the vast industry of the lawyers and their clerks, who similarly do nothing to feed or dress themselves. Now the peasant might still be able to supply this enormous town population with food (in the form of the squire’s rent), but it cannot, without machinery, supply the flimsy dresses, toys, metal work, and other rubbish belonging to their accursed life. Hence over the whole country the sky is blackened and the air made pestilent to supply London and other such towns with their iron railings, vulgar upholstery, jewels, toys, liveries, lace, and other means of dissipation and dishonour of life. Gradually the

¹ *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 44, August, 1874, vol. iv., pp. 166-7.

country people cannot even supply food to the voracity of the vicious centre ; and it is necessary to import food from other countries, giving in exchange any kind of commodity we can attract their itching desires for, and produce by machinery. The tendency of the entire national energy is, therefore, to approximate more and more to the state of a squirrel in a cage, or a turnspit in a wheel, fed by foreign masters with nuts and dog's meat."¹

And then follows a bird's-eye view of central London, swift, mordant, unforgettable, unanswerable. Here too, of course, there is exaggeration, just as there is exaggeration in Arnold's classification of his countrymen, which takes no ostensible account of the multitudes of more or less refined and humane persons in all classes. As all men are not in actual fact Barbarians, Philistines, and Populace, so all industrial and commercial lives are not ignoble and mindless, but are often lit up by art and culture, and unselfish good feeling. But take the allegations of Ruskin in the lump, and who can deny their force and point?

And take next another of his sociological generalisations which comes still closer to the truth, and see what you will make of that :

"Observe what the real fact is, respecting loans to foreign military governments, and how strange it is. If your little boy came to you to ask for money to spend in squibs and crackers, you would think twice before you gave it him ; and you would have some idea that it was wasted, when you saw it fly off in fireworks, even though he did no mischief with it. But the Russian children and Austrian children come to you borrowing money, not to spend in innocent squibs, but in cartridges and bayonets to attack you in India with, and to keep down all noble life in Italy with, and to murder Polish women and children with ; and *that* you will give at once, because they pay you interest for it. Now, in order to pay you that interest they must tax every working peasant in their dominions ; and on that work you live. You, therefore, at once rob the Austrian peasant, assassinate or banish the Polish peasant, and you live on the produce of the theft, and the bribe for the assassination ! That is the broad fact—that is the practical meaning of your foreign loans, and of most large interest of money ; and then you quarrel with Bishop Colenso, forsooth, as if *he* denied the Bible, and you believed it ! though every deliberate act of your lives is a new defiance of its primary orders."²

¹ Letter 44, Aug., 1874, vol. iv., pp. 173-175.

² *Crown of Wild Olive*, pp. 41-2. Cf. *Fors Clavigera*, as indexed under "National Debt."

Alter here a few of the phrases, substitute something else for the Jingo nightmare of Russian designs on India, and you have a vivid, dramatic diagram of a large part of the significance of national debts, in terms of life and conduct. But that line of argument goes far; and in another place, on another stimulus—for Ruskin is simply an irregular series of lightning zig-zags, never combined into continuous light—you find him following it up to its most intimate conclusions:—

“There is nothing really more monstrous *in* any recorded savagery or absurdity of mankind, than that governments should be able to get money for any folly they choose to commit, by selling to capitalists the right of taxing future generations to the end of time. All the cruellest wars inflicted, all the basest luxuries grasped by the idle classes, are thus paid for by the poor a hundred times over. And yet I am obliged to keep my money in the funds or the bank, because I know no other mode of keeping it safe; and if I refused to take the interest, I should only throw it into the hands of the very people who would use it for these evil purposes, or, at all events, for less good than I can. Nevertheless it is daily becoming a more grave question with me what it may presently be right to do. It may be better to diminish private charities, and much more, my own luxury of life, than to comply in any sort with a national sin. But I am not agitated or anxious in the matter: content to know my principle, and to work steadily towards better fulfilment of it.”¹

Here we have Ruskin's answer to the challenge, often thrown at him, as to how he can decently denounce usury, after having lived most of his life on it. The answer is a sufficient one. All that can be urged against it is that had he early made up his mind to earn his living by his works, as he might have done long ago, and as he more than does now by reason of his revenue from his books, he might have used his father's laboriously amassed wealth to found institutions which would have wrought for his purposes. But then even institutions, in our commercial world, must mostly subsist upon interest; and, on the other hand, those who know how rarely an independent thinker can do the best work he is capable of in the process of earning his bread and

¹ *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 44, pp. 178-9, vol. iv., 1874.

butter, will be slow to say that Ruskin chose ill, even in the light of his own ideals. Certainly he has had a good deal of "luxury of life;" but he has probably suffered for it, and for the rest he has not been much of an idler, as brain industry goes.

V.

Nor does his sociological work end with tracing the moral connections and consequences of institutions; he has brought his faculty to bear on scientific economics with some remarkable results. At once he put his finger on the time-honoured fallacy of saving, and formulated the fact as it really is:—

"Men nearly always speak and write as if riches" [that is, money wealth] "were absolute, and it were possible, by following certain scientific precepts, for everybody to be rich. Whereas riches are a power like that of electricity, acting only through inequalities or negations of itself. The force of the guinea you have in your pocket depends wholly on the default of a guinea in your neighbour's pocket. If he did not want it, it would be of no use to you."¹

That is entirely true doctrine, striking at the root of the established economic optimism, of which the so-called political economy is, as Ruskin justly says, not a political or national, but merely a mercantile economy:—

"Mercantile economy, the economy of 'merces' or of 'pay,' signifies the accumulation in the hands of individuals, of legal or moral claim upon, or power over, the labour of others; every such claim implying precisely as much poverty or debt on one side, as it implies riches or right on the other."²

And whereas the mercantile economist is always thinking of the mere machinery of production and exchange, producing blind-fold to undersell, Ruskin rightly insists that the study and regulation of consumption is clearly the master problem for the true political economist.

¹ *Unto this Last*, p. 40.

² *Ib.* p. 42.

"Economists usually speak as if there were no good in consumption absolute.¹ So far from this being so, consumption absolute is the end, crown, and perfection of production; and wise consumption is a far more difficult art than wise production. Twenty people can gain money for one who can use it; and the vital question, for individual and for nation, is, never 'how much do they make?' but 'to what purpose do they spend?'"²

I suspect that if another man had written that, Mr. Ruskin might have vehemently protested that the "end, crown, and perfection of production" is not the consumption but the life which it sustains; but in terms of economics the doctrine is thoroughly valid, and its incorporation in the science is inevitable. To which end various writers, some inspired by Ruskin and some not, have been steadily working for a number of years back. And if only Ruskin could always or in general have written with science and logic, could have given us a work of connected economic thought without the irrelevances and irrationalities which are not science but merely personal perversity and caprice, the recasting of economics might have gone on a great deal faster. But truth in Ruskin is never far from error, and his is not the temper which pursues truth with serene delight. Arrogance is always driving him to condemn even before he has comprehended; and when he has found out the economists in some errors, he makes up his mind that their every formula is false:—

"The writings of our vulgar political economists, calling money only a 'medium of exchange,' blind the foolish public conveniently to all the practical actions of the machinery of the currency. Money is not a medium of exchange, but a token of right. I have, suppose, at this moment, ten, twenty, or thirty thousand pounds. That signifies that, as compared with a man who has only ten pounds, I can claim possession of, call for, and do what I like with a thousand, or two thousand, or three thousand times as much of the valuable things existing in the country."³

The term "vulgar" may fitly be applied to a contemptuous

¹ When Mr. Mill speaks of productive consumption, he only means consumption which results in increase of capital, or material wealth. See I. iii. 4, and I. iii. 5. *Ruskin's Note*.

² *Ib.* p. 144.

³ *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 44, Aug., 1874, vol. iv., p. 173, note.

assault on a doctrine which the critic has not properly studied. It is perfectly true that money is a token of right; but it is also perfectly true that it is a medium of exchange, and it is as a medium of exchange that it is typically important, since the sum of actual money is very much less than the total of credits. The token of right may take a dozen other shapes than money. An entry in a banker's book is a token of right; so is an I O U, or a promissory note, or a commercial warrant; and a man with thirty thousand pounds never dreams of having it in money. But the great extensions of commerce began in the facility of exchange which money supplied, and to-day that is its main function. The criticism is reckless and misdirected. And worse than reckless is Ruskin's preliminary attack upon the technical method of economics, which he simply misrepresents, by way of making it seem as morally offensive to others as it is alien to his own habits of thought. He has, perhaps, misled more weak heads by his words on that point than he has helped strong ones by his better judgments.

"Among the delusions which at different periods have possessed themselves of the minds of large masses of the human race, perhaps the most curious—certainly the least creditable—is the modern *soi-disant* science of political economy, based on the idea that an advantageous code of social action may be determined irrespectively of the influence of social affection." ¹

Now, that is an explicit calumny to begin with: economists never professed to reach an advantageous "code of social action," but only to set forth the laws or tendencies of normal commerce. And from calumny the critic proceeds to absurdity:—

"I neither impugn nor doubt the conclusions of the science, if its terms are accepted. I am simply uninterested in them, as I should be in those of a science of gymnastics which assumed that men had no skeletons Modern political economy stands on a precisely similar basis." ²

After that I cannot wonder that economists turn from Ruskin in contempt or irritation. His analogy is pure nonsense, and might

¹ *Unto this Last*, p. 1. ² *Ib.* pp. 3-4.

as reasonably be used against mechanics, in so far as that proceeds on the first law of motion. Ruskin is here only repeating an old and vulgar fallacy; and when a book on economics begins so, it is not strange if expert readers, who also have their prejudices, throw it aside and deride it. If they go on, they will find other displays of which it is hardly possible to speak in the language of normal controversy. Ruskin passes on Ricardo one criticism in particular which is worthy of an Old Bailey practitioner. He quotes Ricardo's proposition,¹ that if the implements of the primitive hunter and fisher were of equal value and durability, and were the produce of the same amount of labour, "the value of the deer, the produce of the day's labour, would be *exactly* equal to the value of the fish, the produce of the fisherman's day's labour. The comparative value of the fish and game would be *entirely* regulated by the quantity of labour realised in each." Ruskin puts the italics, and exclaims:—

"Indeed! Therefore, if the fisherman catches one sprat, and the huntsman one deer, one sprat will be equal in value to one deer; but if the fisherman catches no sprat and the huntsman two deer, no sprat will be equal in value to two deer."²

The merest beginner can see that this is a nefarious quibble. Ricardo is clearly arguing of averages; and if *on an average* the fisherman's day's labour yielded only one fish, that fish would be worth the average of the hunter's bag, whatever that might be. The principle is a permanent part of economic science. No doubt, Ricardo should have quantified his statement more precisely; but he wrote for men who would want to understand him; not for those who would want to juggle with him. And the economist who knew Ricardo's value and integrity would be much disposed to write Ruskin down, on the strength of that discreditable passage, an unscrupulous sophist.³

¹ *Principles of Political Economy*, ch. i., sect. 3. ² *Unto this Last*, p. 115.

³ At times, again, he resorts to the most amazing scurrility. Of Adam Smith he writes: "It is true that the half-bred and half-witted Scotchman had not gift enough in him to carve so much as his own calf's head on a whinstone with his own hand" (*Fors Clavigera*, Letter 72, Feb., 1876, p. 47). To Mill, he has been invariably insolent.

And this outcome is in a way typical of Ruskin's achievement in many directions. For want of patience and temper, and, alas! want of continuous sanity, he has set against him alike economists, artists, democrats, rationalists, scientists; and the luxury of all-round vituperation is dearly bought at that price by a man who wants to make proselytes. Proselytes Ruskin has indeed made, often proselytes of a good type, sensitive, refined, sincere, sympathetic, cultured, wanting apparently in nothing but the power to set up an energetic movement. He has thousands of readers, and he bitterly complains that he has written in vain.

VI.

Nobody, all the while, makes a more thrilling appeal to the individual conscience, a more direct demand for individual action. In the most unlikely places, in the heart of the darkened and bedevilled factory life which infuriates him, in Sheffield and in Glasgow, he sets up eddies of revolt against the prevailing course of things. One who has once intelligently listened to him may turn hopeless of betterment, but cannot well grow dull again to the nature of his surroundings. His impeachments flash on the perceptive sense as lightning on the eye.

"Your present system of education is to get a rascal of an architect to order a rascal of a clerk-of-the-works to order a parcel of rascally bricklayers to build you a bestially stupid building in the middle of the town, poisoned with gas, and with an iron floor which will drop you all through it some frosty evening; wherein you will bring a puppet of a cockney lecturer in a dress-coat and a white tie to tell you smugly there's no God, and how many messes he can make of a lump of sugar. Much the better you are for all that, aren't you?"¹

Is it the very vehemence, the bitterness, that repels or paralyses; or is it that the wild Irrationalism of the outcry against the non-æsthetic forces of civilisation hardens men's hearts against the æsthetic criticism? It may well be so; and yet, the æsthete

can be winningly earnest, pathetically impressive in his address to the individual listener.

"If the present state of this so-called rich England is so essentially miserable and poverty-stricken that honest men must always live from hand-to-mouth, while speculators make fortunes by cheating them out of their labour; and if, therefore, no sum can be set aside for charity, the paralysed honest man can certainly do little for the present. But, with what can be spared for charity, if *anything*, do this; buy ever so small a bit of ground, in the midst of the worst back deserts of our manufacturing towns; six feet square, if no more can be had, nay, the size of a grave, if you will, but buy it *freehold*, and make a garden of it by hand-labour; a garden visible to all men, and cultivated for all men of that place. If absolutely nothing will grow in it, then have herbs carried there in pots. Force the bit of ground into order, cleanliness, *green* or *coloured* aspect. What difficulties you have in doing this are your best subjects of thought; the good you will do in doing this the best in your present power."¹

This is surely an improvement on the Carlylean roar that you must do something, but God knows what. And yet, what hope does it hold out that the prescribed transformation will be made? The note wavers, swells, and sinks again:—

"What are you to do, having got into this mechanical line of life? You must persevere in it and do the best you can for the present, but resolve to get out of it as soon as may be. The one essential point is to know thoroughly that it is wrong; how to get out of it you can decide afterwards at your leisure."

And yet we get precise prescription enough:—

"Whatever machinery is needful for human purposes can be driven by wind or water; the Thames alone could drive mills enough to weave velvet and silk for all England. But even mechanical occupation not involving pollution of the atmosphere must be as limited as possible, for it invariably degrades. . . . You must not, eventually, for no purpose or motive whatsoever, live amidst smoke and filth, or allow others to do so; you must see that your slaves are as comfortable as their employment permits, and that they are paid wages high enough to allow them to leave it often for redemption and rest."

But in the end we find at best a sombre and unconfident fortitude, the half-despairing calm of the prophet who feels he has cast his bread on the waters:—

¹ *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 44, Aug., 1874, vol. iv., p. 180.

"Eventually, I say ; how fast events may move, none of us know ; in our compliance with them, let us at least be intelligently patient—if at all ; not blindly patient."¹

And at times the composure lapses to a despair to which the only offset is its own vehemence. For this organism must voice its every mood as if the moment's inspiration were the crowning one. The finely poised needle of feeling veers this way and that, shaken by the vessel's motion, drawn by surrounding things, perturbed by passing electricities ; and the spirit which patiently calculates out all is something alien to the prophet. Therefore is it that the prophet, of all men, can never really predict.

VII.

Has all Ruskin's criticism of life, then, really failed, as he frequently says it has, to influence the action of his age ? He says men read and praise his books, but do not obey them ; women do him homage, but do not join his Society of St. George. That is true ; and if nothing will satisfy him but such visible obedience and such adhesion to his personally conducted Society, he may well go to his grave broken-hearted. Society will never be changed by being filtered through private institutions : it must modify its own ; and that can never be done save slowly, and will never be done wisely and consciously save on a wide knowledge and a comprehensive plan. But such plan and knowledge necessarily exclude the sway of egoism ; and the teacher who cherishes the poor ambition to rule over a society of disciples who call him master, rather than the pure ambition of seeing men increasingly able to be their own masters, so as to make feudal masterhood as impossible as it is barbarous—such a teacher is doomed to end in bitterness, unless his ideal narrows with his powers. He has lost what vestige of rational significance lay under the theistic formula of resignation to the will of God. For him

¹ *Fors Clavigera*, pp. 177-8.

there can be no comfort save in the realisation of his own will; and the will of the egoist is, in the terms of the case, as narrow as his own life. Doubtless every reformer is so, primarily, because it is essential to his peace of mind to see things go in a certain direction. But let him beware how he makes his predilection narrower than the possibilities; or how he sets his heart on more than the necessary conditions of forward movement. Let him carefully think out these and strive for them, and let him cheerfully leave the rest to the unmeasured instinct and aspiration of mankind. So will he best have his part in them. To aspire to play Confucius for Europe, and to fix an eternal order in the light of certain ancient and dead orders, is to sink philanthropy in egoism; and he who would not see Europe ape Cathay, must rejoice that his fellows refuse to be hypnotised by their prophets.

Now, it lies on the face of all Ruskin's work, that in him an intense egoism is the condition of his eloquence and energy. At times, certainly, it seems to disappear, in homage to some one of his masters, Carlyle or another; but even then he identifies his prejudice with theirs, and never does he long abide in the attitude of impersonal concern for simple truth. In all his polemic, even at its best and justest, is visible his normal inability to conceive, or even suspect, how any life or opinion can be right or good which clashes with his tastes and convictions. He lays down binding principles for the regulation of all life in terms of his sentiments for the time being. Professing at times a transcendental reverence for women, he lays down the lines on which they are to live and think, and this in the very act of denouncing the masculine notion that men ought to think for women. Men must not, but Mr. Ruskin may. And the law laid down varies according as Mr. Ruskin happens last to have been stimulated. One day it is that women are to govern the house: "The woman's power is for rule, . . . and her intellect is not for invention or creation, but for sweet ordering, arrangement, and decision."¹ Another day, things are different. "You fancy, perhaps, as you have been told so often, that a wife's rule should only be over her

¹ *Sesame and Lilies*, 5th ed., p. 136.

husband's house, not over his mind. Ah, no! the true rule is just the reverse of that; a true wife, in her husband's house, is his servant; it is in his heart that she is queen."¹ Mind here appears to be identical with heart. But in the other book we had been told this: "Speaking broadly, a man ought to know any language or science he learns, thoroughly—while a woman ought to know the same language, or science, only in so far as may enable her to sympathise in her husband's pleasures, and in those of his best friends."² Then follows some sophistry about the difference between limited knowledge and superficial knowledge: the woman is to know "with exquisite accuracy so far as she reaches," which means, I suppose, that she is to know the Greek alphabet, or the conjugations, with exquisite accuracy, in order to sympathise with her husband's views on corrupt passages in Æschylus; and to know a botany primer with exquisite accuracy, in order to share in discussions on the relations of fossil flora. To these sentimental follies the answer lies ready in Mill: it is a gross presumption on the part of any man, nay, on the part of any woman, to lay down what is forever to be done, and what not to be done, by all women. Who are you, forsooth, that the human race is to live by your directions? And if your directions, moreover, are admittedly always changing, who can be sure that any one of them is ever right for anybody?

Ruskin is, so far as my reading goes, the most self-contradictory writer who ever lived. He stultifies himself as vehemently as Carlyle, and for the same fundamental reason, that he is just a talking temperament; but he meddles with far more matters than Carlyle did, and dogmatizes proportionally. In his art criticism he has a first principle for every day of the year and every hour of the day: pictures and practices are for ever being praised or blamed under general laws set up for that occasion only. At one time he will denounce as unworthy all writing for money: at another he will present as model lives those of Shakspeare and Scott, who systematically wrote to make money. In the earlier *Lectures on Art* he lays it down that the highest subject for the artist is

¹ *Crown of Wild Olive*, p. 143. ² *Sesame and Lilies*, p. 149.

the human face and figure : in a later lecture he pooh-poohs figure-painting as being within the reach of anybody, and sets up landscape as the really difficult and noble work. But he contradicts himself in the same book sometimes in the same chapter, sometimes in the same page.

One result of his temper is that his criticisms of individuals are often outrageously unjust. He forbids Harriet Martineau's books to the pupils who surrender to him their docile judgments, "not because she is an infidel"—he admits Voltaire freely because "his voice is mighty among the ages"—"but because she is a vulgar and foolish one." Yet he goes on to admit that some of her writing in "Deerbrook" is entirely admirable ; and he proceeds thus to excuse his abuse :—

"I use the word vulgar here in its first (!) sense of egoism, not of selfishness, but of not seeing one's own relations to the universe. Miss Martineau plans a book, afterwards popular, and goes to breakfast, 'not knowing what a great thing had been done.' So Mr. Buckle dying, thinks only—he shall not finish *his* book. Not at all whether God will ever make up *His*." ¹

The memory of Harriet Martineau, who, whatever might be his natural exultations over her successes, was one of the sanest of writers in her self-estimate, will survive such an attack, from a man whose notions of his "own relation to the universe" have reached heights of extravagance seldom attained in black-on-white. But the attack on Buckle calls for a warmer reprobation. Had I read it without knowing its author, without knowing it was made by a mouthpiece of passionate caprice, I should have been disposed to call it the most meanly ungenerous impeachment I ever saw in secular literature. And the most malignant of priests, one would think, would have scrupled so to handle the pathetic cry of the dying scholar who left his work undone.

It all comes of lack of patience and lack of care for consistency, which two lacks are correlative to the prophetic temper of overweening self-confidence and the self-worship which poses as Theism.

¹ *Fors Clavigera*, New Series, Letter 3, vol. viii., 1878, p. 76, n.

The worst of it all is that the genius seems to be correlative with the unwisdom ; that the man has his eloquence and his dazzling flashes of insight on condition of a prophetic fury which will not stay to reconsider ; that the command of language rests on an over-balance of that faculty, which keeps him chronically at the mercy of verbal allurements, leading him into those etymological mysticisms over which Arnold shrugged his shoulders ; and that the burning moral earnestness is bound up with the primitive habit of theosophy which he acquired at his mother's knee, so keeping him to the last a possessed Scripturalist, turning to the old Hebrew literature, genuine and forged, for principles of present conduct, as Cromwell's pikemen did. With such an all-round lack of security for good judgment, no child of impulse can miss giving men occasional stones for bread and occasional poison for medicine. At times Ruskin seems to have triumphed over the darker human passions, and to have attained to hating war and judicial murder ; but anon he warms with the old evil fires, and presents you with an execrable homily on the nobleness of true war as a means of deciding which is the best man—save the mark !—which has “the strongest arm and the steadiest heart,” as if these meant the best heart or the wisest head ; and again you will have pæans to the hangman that might have made Carlyle feel his occupation gone.

VIII.

The name of Carlyle brings us to a final and comparative summing-up of these friends. They greatly admired each other, Carlyle mixing his admiration with criticism, Ruskin mostly observing the discipular attitude. What had they then in common ? Nothing at all of the love of art which was Ruskin's point of departure. Carlyle contemned art,¹ and derided its devotees, while Ruskin's doctrine is well summed up by himself in the admirable

¹ *Life of Sterling*, part ii., ch. vii. ; *Carlyle-Emerson Correspondence*, i., 148 ; *Emerson's English Traits*, ch. xvi.

formula: "Life without Industry is Guilt; Industry without Art is Brutality." And Ruskin has written of Mr. Froude, Carlyle's other leading disciple, that one of his "deadly disadvantages" is that he has "no knowledge of art nor care for it."¹ The main bond of union between the two writers, as we said before, in studying Carlyle, is just the spirit of hostility to modern developments, which in both of them led to a profoundly fallacious exaltation of the Middle Ages. This being so, we must say of Ruskin, somewhat as we said of Carlyle, that his value lies in his stimulant energy, his power of disturbing vulgar complacency, and confronting human selfishness with higher motives and urgent menaces. Both men do this while themselves wilful egoists and prone to egregious error; whence the Nemesis of disregard and refutation which follows them. But if we compare the amounts of their really effective criticism of the life around them, the penetrating power of their exposition, and above all, the range of their active relation to life, we must, I repeat, give Ruskin the higher place. He could not possibly go more profoundly wrong than Carlyle, though he might commit himself oftener; and if in some respects Carlyle sees human things more truly, his hold of that which lay immediately under his eyes is less prehensile than Ruskin's. In fine, the disciple has improved on the master as regards the task of awakening the age to its practical needs; and if the result exhibits itself too slowly to satisfy his passionate insistence, it is none the less in process. When the spirit of science comes to grapple resolutely with the tasks which have hitherto been undertaken by the enthusiasts, the prophets, the zealots, it will be found that none of them all has more potently prepared the way than this wayward genius, with his thunderbolts of eloquence and scorn, and his undying passion for the better life. He will not live to see the transformation he has thus furthered, but his name and his work shall not be forgotten.

¹ *Fors Clavigera*, New Series, Letter 4, March 21, 1880, p. 114.

HERBERT SPENCER.

I.

IN all the criticisms of life we have surveyed thus far, with the exception of Mill's, it has lain on the face of the matter that the critics have passed large judgments on relatively little knowledge, and have been much more prone to sum up the universe than to ascertain what it consists of. Carlyle not only abominated the scientific study of human affairs, but, with a presumption hard to associate with real superiority of mind, cast senseless scorn at those ideas in natural science which were revolutionising human thought under his eyes. Emerson, far more sanely receptive to new knowledge, was himself, as we saw, one of the most discontinuous, or, as Mr. Birrell calls him, "non-sequacious," of thinkers; and helped us rather with tonic sentences and bracing elevation of spirit than with connected views of human affairs. Arnold, again, though he did not achieve that extremity of scientific ignorance which his father was willing to see combined with a proper zeal for Christian and political philosophy, was influenced by science only so far as a man of liberal culture in these days cannot help being; and continued to the end, with obstinate suavity, to see life with the eyes of a man of letters, finding the best culture to lie in "the best that has been thought and said" by writers whose thinking had not been very hard, and remaining convinced that only the talismanic virtue of certain ancient sayings and examples can keep mankind on the right road in conduct.¹ Finally, Ruskin, though he has flashed his electric light into natural as into social science, is, as we have seen, essentially a man of

¹ It should be noted to Arnold's credit, however, that he plainly preached, at least once, the doctrine of control of population. See *Culture and Anarchy*, p. 246.

visions, often true, often false, with no principle of synthesis save a Theism which merely presents the universe in terms of his wayward temperament. It is only in Mill that we have found a right or steady perception of the very simple truth that since all feeling, so-called, proceeds upon perceptions or notions, those feelings are likeliest to be right which come of the fullest knowledge and the most careful reflection, reflection being simply the process of comparing and checking one feeling with another.

But Mill, for one thing, was not wholly vowed to science, half his life being spent in official work, honourable and beneficent but obscure; and for another thing he came too soon to gather up a sufficient store of modern science, even in history and sociology, for a comprehensive criticism of life, even if he had had the range of faculty, of appreciation and coördinating power, for the work. On various lines he carried human knowledge perceptibly forward. In logic he advanced all analysis by at least one stage; in economics, even in recasting old fallacies, he visibly disintegrated them, and he brought the science within full view of a truly political as distinguished from a merely commercial economy, doing especial service by his enforcement of the master principle of control of population; while in practical politics he gave reasoned and convincing demonstrations of the value of those yearnings for freedom in men and women, which so often exhibit themselves in unrectified emotion, and so become a favourite target for the somewhat cheap criticism of the philosophic Conservative, and the cheaper sneers of his less pretentious comrades, who hate all sentiment, save the worst sorts. With all this, however, Mill leaves immense lacunæ in his philosophy; and in particular he represents, save in his practical grasp of the population question, the defect of valid biology which has underlain all political and moral philosophy down till almost our own day, and which is indeed glaring in much of the sociological writing of the moment, after Spencer has shown the true path. It is even since Spencer began his undertaking that anthropology has been reduced to something like scientific form, so that he has not only profited by material which was not available for Mill's early culture, but

must have greatly enlarged his own horizon, since he first planned his life's performance. It is to Spencer, then, among English writers, that we look for what unification of human knowledge is yet possible. After Comte, he is the first modern who has attempted such a synthesis; and he has had the immense advantage over Comte of working on the lines of a theory of evolution, in large part projected by himself before Darwin, and since rounded by Darwinian biology.

II.

And there is one personal difference between Mill and Spencer which is very significant in this connection. Of Mill we know, from his friend and biographer, that

"He was absolutely without any feeling of rivalry, or jealousy of other men's success. His originality and fecundity of ideas would not have exempted him so completely from the dread of being anticipated in his discoveries, or baulked of his credit, had he not possessed a fund of generosity of character, for which sympathy is another name. He poured himself out in conversation, and his ideas were caught up and used, with or without acknowledgment; but he never disturbed himself one way or other. Of this part of his character," adds Dr. Bain, still more emphatically, "I can speak absolutely, and not by a figure of speech, under which we may turn a part into a whole. In other virtues, he had his limits, but in this he had none."¹

I do not think the most thorough-going admirer of Mr. Spencer would attempt to apply such an eulogy to him. He has been noticeably careful of his credit: he has disputed over his alleged debts, and been more careful, on the whole, to affirm his rights of reputation than to apportion to his predecessors their share in his doctrines. A certain avarice of ideas, an enduring thirst for fame, seems to have been needful to keep at the top of his speed the undertaker of such a task as his. It should be taken as a datum rather than as a blemish in his personality. When

¹ Prof. Bain, *J. S. Mill*, pp. 155-6.

Magellan's ship came home from that first voyage round the world, with only the immortal memory of the heroic heart which had wrought the triumph, and which now lay mouldering in a nameless Pacific isle, did men honour that heart the less because an intense egoism, a boundless ambition, had borne it up through the long stress of toil and frustration, against mutiny, and strife, and inward doubt? With such overcharges of self-will are men's frail bodies fitted for great things, for vast schemes of thought, or for swift flights of force, according as the cerebral machine is framed. And that figure of Magellan's ship is not inapt in another sense; for as the crew who first circumnavigated the planet came home captainless, sorely worn and tried, so has the voyage round the sphere of human knowledge borne hardly on the thinker who has planned it; so hardly that indeed it may not be he who will complete the scheme. But even if he had not fully revealed the course; even if he had only sought heroically to achieve the impossible, the spectacle of the effort would be none the less inspiring. Even when the baffled explorer's ship comes home from the search for the north-west passage, with riven timbers and tattered sails, and with the faces over the bulwarks showing wan and weary, do men cheer the less because the pole has not been won? And shall we give less honour to the thinker who greatly planned and toilsomely conducted, through a whole generation, the immense survey of knowledge of which the sifted results now stand secure for us in the volumes of the *Synthetic Philosophy*? If we knew aright how to value the rarest manifestations of energy, we should honour this shattered circumnavigator as no explorer has been honoured for his few years of effort.

And why do we not? Because, for one thing, of the prevailing tendency to estimate genius in terms of brilliancy and the show of excitement. Ruskin has somewhere remarked how, if a man only wear his hair long and look animated, we are at once ready to credit him with peculiar powers, while if he look ordinary we presume he is commonplace. So with books; if they tingle with passion and rhetoric, like Ruskin's own, we say: Here is inspira-

tion, here is genius; and often enough we may be right; but where we find noiseless persistence of thought and unruffled sobriety of speech, even if the thought be obviously beyond our depth, we use some other word than genius, as if we thought great thinking power were less rare than literary brilliancy. Now, it is assuredly not so. And when the mass of men are trained to appreciate relative intellectual values—their lack of which training is the rest of the cause of Spencer's moderate share of public honour—they will recognise that a great analytic and synthetic thinker is one of the crowning products of literature and science.

Emerson well described the main part of Carlyle's literary gift in his phrase about the "devouring eyes and pourtraying hand;" but is it only the "portrait-painting eye" that is to command our interest and admiration? Here is an eye that devours in turn, with patient hunger, whole provinces of knowledge, whole kingdoms of nature, not merely cataloguing their contents, but working out their laws and relating them with passionless care to the whole scheme of things. The primal energy, the awful periodicity of the universe, the variations of forces, the transition from what we merely call energy to what we specially call life, the laws of that, the next development in consciousness, the laws of that, from the simplest to the most complex phases, the beginnings of conscious and formulated morals, the rise of religion, the principles of social cohesion, of rise and fall—all these come alike to this insatiable intelligence, which seeks to make them all its own, taking no man's reasoning on trust, but seeking to recast and rectify at every step, and to link all truth together in an unbroken chain of consistency. What a task, what a patience, what a power! Are we to put these lower than the passionate outbursts of wilful men of letters who work a while and idle a while, and lash themselves up on the same themes from time to time without bringing to the business an atom of decisive new knowledge or any notion of new or deeper analysis? There are readers and writers who classify so. For Matthew Arnold, even, Spencer is a formal and didactic writer, to be named with Benjamin Franklin and Jeremy Bentham as a producer of drily instructive

and uninspiring prose. Well, there is a tendency to justice in things, a "something not ourselves"—the total of other people's selves, in fact—"which makes for righteousness;" and one day, when Matthew Arnold is paragraphed in culture history in small type as a fine poet, some of whose pieces endure, and a writer of graceful and limpid essays, interesting to the specialist in criticism as illustrating an early stage in that art, the name of Spencer will perhaps be one in the bead-roll of the great intelligences which from age to age, with various good fortune, came forward to the greatest of tasks, and make the vow that underlies the vaunt, "I take all knowledge to be my province." In literature and science there arise from time to time, what old histories vainly fabled of societies, men who become fathers of great tribes; and if there be one in England in our day it is Spencer.

In the words of Mr. Lester Ward:—

"Strictly speaking, only three comprehensive cosmical principles have yet been enunciated, only one of which is yet universally accepted. These are: 1, the law of gravitation; 2, the nebular hypothesis; and, 3, the development theory. The attempt of Herbert Spencer to combine the two latter in connection with the first into a universal theory of evolution approaches nearer to the complete unification of science than has ever before been done. In fact, the idea embraced in the word evolution as employed by him is by far the nearest approach ever yet made to the conception of an absolutely universal and cosmical law."¹

And if, recoiling from the attempt to realise the truth of this by a study of the *Synthetic Philosophy*, you master only a single minor work of its author, *The Study of Sociology*, or even the still smaller book on *Education*, you will find yourself faced by a range of practical observation and a degree of generalising power which, had there been no other manifestations of them, would have sufficed to reveal an original and commanding intellect.² And this holds true of the former book, in despite of its errors and fallacies—for I am going to try to prove to you that some of the

¹ *Dynamic Sociology*, New York, 1883, i., 8.

² *Education* has been translated into thirteen languages, including Chinese and Japanese.

final doctrines in *The Study of Sociology* are fallacious as conclusions; however instructively led up to. It would be the extremity of presumption to think of critically estimating the *Synthetic Philosophy* in one or two lectures; and the bulk of our discussion will turn on that and one or two other books.

III.

Of the man who has achieved this performance we know little. He has not been publicly gossiped about as Carlyle and Emerson were in their lifetime; and what one has heard privately it is not now in good taste to publish. What is common property is that he was born at Derby in 1820, of a cultured stock, his father being a teacher of mathematics, and his uncle a philanthropic clergyman of the Established Church.¹ From these two relatives he received, it would appear, the bulk of his education, which, however, conformed little to the conventional practice. He was trained to be a civil engineer, and practised his profession from the age of seventeen till twenty-five, when the decline of the railway mania, which in that period had reached its height, left him, as it left Dr. Tyndall, under the necessity of finding some other avocation. Then it was that he turned to literature. He had already tried his hand on professional themes in professional journals; and there is reason to believe that if civil-engineering had remained for him a lucrative employment, the *Synthetic Philosophy* would never have been written. But even at two-and-twenty he had contributed to the *Nonconformist* newspaper a series of letters, later republished as a pamphlet, on *The Proper Sphere of Government*, in which the key-note of his future practical sociology, it would seem, was already struck. To practical sociology, accordingly, he now turned, beginning it, like so many others, as a journalist. From 1848 till 1853 he acted as sub-editor of the *Economist*, of which he had become a standing

¹ See an interesting biographical passage on this uncle in *The Man versus the State*, p. 20.

contributor, as he was of the *Westminster* and other reviews; and it was in 1851 that he produced his first considerable work, *Social Statics: or the conditions essential to human happiness*. His culture had been eminently practical and scientific. We learn from his note on Arnold in *The Study of Sociology*,¹ that he had, "when young, effectually resisted that classical culture which Mr. Arnold thinks needful," and that he knows "absolutely nothing of the masterpieces of ancient literature in the original, and very little in translation." On reading which, we may be sure, Arnold shrugged his shoulders with conscious superiority, though the avowal was made in a passage which convicted him of having praised as perfect a sample of Addison's style which was flabby and feeble to a surprising degree. And yet who can doubt that Spencer's culture, though it is needlessly defective on the side of ancient literature, is as a whole far more efficient for the comprehension of life than Arnold's, of which ancient literature was a main part? One such test case outweighs all Arnold's easy arguments.

It is a remarkable circumstance, this determinedly scientific preparation of Spencer at a time when no one in England seemed, on the surface of literature, to dream of approaching mental science on any save literary lines; and it is encouraging, as reminding us that at this moment, in our midst, there may be growing up minds which will one day cast in shadow and oblivion all the loud welter of pietistic platitude which just now seems like to overbear reason. When the second half of the century had just begun, there lived in London a group of three friends, Spencer, George Henry Lewes, and Marian Evans, all of them then little known, who may be said to typify in their different ways the master-forces of a new intellectual age; Spencer, as co-ordinating thinker; Lewes, as literary man turned scientific investigator; and George Eliot, as introducing the scientific spirit into fictional art, thus representing at once the new factor of intellectual womanhood and the new destiny of science. And it is interesting further to note that while the leading critics of life then before

¹ Ed. 1873, p. 415.

the English world—Carlyle, Mill, Macaulay, Ruskin—were all of Scotch stock, these three are distinctly English, as English as Hallam—unless Mr. Grant Allen should prove that the Evanses and the Leweses are Welsh. They present a virtually new tendency in English affairs; and it is yet further noteworthy that while Lewes, as being originally literary, had intercourse with Carlyle, as had Mill, and Emerson, and Ruskin, Spencer seems never to have had any leaning that way. We can imagine what Carlyle would have said of him, and what he thought of Carlyle. "Sawdustish," would doubtless have been one of the elder sage's epithets. And yet Spencer's talk can hardly have been that for anybody. George Eliot's chosen friends could not well have been dull;¹ and you will find in Spencer's books little correspondences with things in hers which suggest remembered conversations of theirs. In the *Social Statics*, for instance, there is this passage:—

"There are people who hate everything in the shape of exact conclusions. . . . Ifs, and buts, and excepts, are their delight. . . . They have so great a faith in 'the judicious mean' that they would scarcely believe an oracle if it uttered a full-length principle. Were you to enquire of them whether the earth turns on its axis from East to West or from West to East, you might almost expect the reply—'A little of both,' or 'Not exactly either.'"²

You will find that passage closely paralleled in George Eliot's *Impressions of Theophrastus Such*, and in her essay on Lecky's

¹ Lewes wrote of Spencer in his journal, January, 1859:—"I owe him a debt of gratitude. My acquaintance with him was the brightest ray in a very dreary, wasted period of my life. I had given up all ambition whatever, lived from hand to mouth, and thought the evil of each day sufficient." [On this compare Lord Acton's citation of Varnhagen von Ense, in his article on George Eliot, *Nineteenth Century*, March, 1885.] "The stimulus of his intellect, especially during our long walks, roused my energy once more, and revived my dormant love of science. His intense theorising tendency was contagious, and it was only the stimulus of a theory which could then have induced me to work. I owe Spencer another and a deeper debt. It was through him I learned to know Marian . . ." Mr. Cross's *Life of George Eliot*, ii., 76.

² *Social Statics*, ch. ix., pp. 120-1.

Rise and Influence of Rationalism; and the crisp, pictorial beginnings of most of the chapters in *The Study of Sociology* recall much of George Eliot's method.

IV.

All alike, the three friends had outgrown the popular religious creed; but their thought for a time exhibited somewhat different stages. In the *Social Statics* Spencer is still vaguely theistic, with a touch of Fichte. In the chapter entitled "The Divine Idea and the Conditions of its Realisation," he assumes the greatest happiness of mankind to be "the creative purpose;" and in this harmless form the "Divine Idea" recurs in the book. How long this phase lasted is not clear. *First Principles*, projected in 1860, is definitely agnostic; but *Education*, published in 1861, has many theistic expressions. In *The Study of Sociology*, published in 1873, there is frequent satire of conventional theism, of phrases about "The Great Artificer," "The Master Builder," "the hand of the Almighty," "the strategy of Providence," and so forth;¹ but in *Education* we have a passage on "that grand epic written by the finger of God upon the strata of the earth;"² and on the thesis that play is better for children than gymnastics, we learn that whoever forbids their play "forbids the divinely appointed means to physical development."³ The presumption is that *Education* was written some time before its publication; for since *First Principles*, Spencer's vocabulary has always been sanely scientific.

The *Principles of Psychology* had been published as early as 1855, and soon won a high standing;⁴ but *First Principles* began the issue of *The Synthetic Philosophy* in parts to subscribers. This form of publication its author continued for a number of years, during which time his financial experience

¹ Pp. 29, 33, 298, &c.

² Small ed., p. 41.

³ P. 155.

⁴ See the early praise of Mill, *Logic*, B. ii. c. 7, and *Auguste Comte and Positivism*, p. 72.

in the matter of defaulters led him to the conclusion that the Secularists and the clergy were nearly on a par; which, it must be confessed, is severe on the Secularists.¹ There is evidence that at once the power and importance of the new philosopher were fully recognised by capable readers, Buckle² being among the first to bestow warm praise. And when we consider what that book does for enquiring minds in the way of reducing a miscellany of ideas to luminous order, it is not easy to find any praise for it that is too high. How many a young intelligence has entered as it were a new sphere of order and coherence at the contact of Spencer's generalising thought, as the sand scattered at random on the surface of the demonstrator's disc trembles and divides into rhythmic lines at the touch of the vibration-giving bow, under a law mysterious as life itself.

The attention of the general public in England and America has been unprofitably fastened for the most part on a mere side issue of the book, by the controversy set up in the name of Positivism by Mr. Frederic Harrison on the significance of the word Religion. It is difficult to get further from true Positivism than is done in that controversy, which really turns on nothing but the question whether the word Religion is to mean your moral and practical relation to your fellow-creatures, or your final generalisation as to the nature of the universe. Spencer, taking Religion in its historic sense to signify the total of cosmological and theological beliefs, undertakes to establish a final reconciliation between Religion and Science by showing that in the end both rest on the conviction that the Universe is an Incomprehensible Mystery. "A permanent peace," he says, "will be reached when science becomes fully convinced that its explanations are proximate and relative; while Religion becomes fully

¹ *Study of Sociology*, Note 3 to ch. xv. It would be interesting, by the way, to know how Mr. Spencer identified his Secularists. Did they describe themselves as such in subscribing?

² In the "List of Authors Quoted," prefixed to his first volume, and in note 145 to his chapter on "The Scotch Intellect during the Eighteenth Century" (3-vol. ed., iii., 364).

convinced that the mystery it contemplates is ultimate and absolute."¹

Now that is certainly, to start with, a sufficiently hollow and verbalist proposition; so much so that it almost calls for modification of the statement that at this stage Spencer's vocabulary has become sanely scientific. The so-called reconciliation borders very closely on the grotesque. Religion and Science are to be finally reconciled, observe, when Religion has abandoned every dogma and every positive belief, and takes the shape of a final negative proposition that Science never rejected, and has long affirmed. For I venture to say that Spencer, while accurate in saying that Science has repeatedly "stopped short with superficial solutions,"² is wrong in representing these failings as "all along a part cause of its conflict with Religion," and in implying that Religion has forced Science forward. For, as he himself shows, these very superficial solutions were one and all solutions in terms of Religion, and constituted religious victories, not intrusions on the religious sphere which Religion repelled. It never was and never could be Religion that forced men to give them up. When men said that "Nature abhorred a vacuum," and called that Science, they were, in the terms of Spencer's own definition, speaking religiously. Where then was the conflict there between Religion and Science? Religion never complained of these things: it was new critical Science that complained of old uncritical or religious Science. The whole argument collapses; for in the terms of the case it is the sound Science and not the unsound that conflicts with Religion. Then what good has Religion, as such, ever done to Science? Forced it to admit the final mystery of things? Why, Science never denied that at any stage, and has been affirming it for centuries. Saying that Nature abhorred a vacuum was not denying mystery but asserting it, and vetoing analytic research as vain. The constant bane of Science has plainly been the submissive falling back on religious solutions after a little had been done to invalidate and discredit these; and Mr. Spencer completely obscures the real nature of the case when he

¹ *First Principles*, 3rd. ed., p. 107. ² *Ib.* p. 105.

represents those acts of submission to Religion as acts of "trespass on the province of Religion." The breakdown of the argument is here shrouded in a metaphor which covers two contrary significations. The act of *submission* is figuratively and unwarrantably described as an act of *trespass*: two processes of absolutely contrary significance, submission and opposition, are confounded; and the act of passage into captivity is identified with invasion, under a metaphor about Science entering on the territory of its rival. Into such snares, or such devices, can great thinkers at times fall in their devotion to a pet verbal theorem. Even in stating that Religion has helped to force Science out of unscientific because religious positions, Mr. Spencer indicates a partial perception that the facts are otherwise:—

"Partly," he writes, "by the criticisms of Religion, which have *occasionally*" [not habitually, observe, as the main argument would require] "called in question its assumptions, and *partly as a consequence of spontaneous growth*, Science has been obliged to abandon" its "attempts to include within the boundaries of knowledge that which cannot be known; and has so yielded up to Religion that which of right belonged to it."¹

Here is worse confusion than before. "An attempt to include within the boundaries of knowledge that which cannot be known" is a meaningless description of such a doctrine as that Nature abhors a vacuum, and that the attributes of gold are due to a principle of aureity. These are simply verbal pretences of knowledge beyond what is known, and amount to saying, "That which is, is," in a roundabout way which tends to disguise the nullity of the proposition. The phrase, "attempt to include within the boundaries of knowledge that which cannot be known," would much more plausibly describe Mr. Spencer's own proposition about the Infinite and Unknowable Energy, though I do not want to object to that as a final formula on the boundary line of knowledge. And what, in the next place, is the meaning of the statement that in abandoning a meaningless phrase Science has "yielded up to Religion that which of right belonged to it"? Mr. Spencer can not have been joking in *First Principles*: he can-

¹ *First Principles*, p. 107.

not have meant merely to insinuate that meaningless phrases rightly belong to Religion ; that it is the function of Religion to talk about the aureity of gold and the horology of clocks. What then did he mean ? Why, nothing ; for again he has lost himself in equivocal metaphor, thus showing vividly enough the danger of discussing philosophical issues in metaphors. While he was looking down on the philosophers who posited the aureity of gold and the vital principle in organisms, he was himself falling into exactly the same snare. For in what sense is Religion more real than aureity, or Science than the vital principle ? What are these, as he has used them, but verbal metaphors ? There are only, in scientific fact, religious persons and scientific persons, who more or less mix up their religious and their scientific notions, or rather, who call certain of their notions religious, and others scientific, for no better reason, as a rule, than that they take the former wholly on trust, and the latter more or less on intelligent comprehension. To talk of the strife of the religious and the scientific people, or of the conflict of the religious bias with the scientific bias, as a conflict between Religion and Science, is to use a metaphor that is helpful by its brevity only so long as you remember what the concrete facts are ;¹ and you really lose all hold of these facts when you talk of Science "yielding up to Religion that which of right belonged to it." To say that Religion has any right of possession in even a true proposition is really much more idle than to talk of the dormitive virtue of opium,² for that phrase symbolises the real fact that when you take opium you are likely to sleep, whereas there is no objec-

¹ Thus, Dr. Draper's work on the *Conflict between Religion and Science* is sound, because he is always historically tracing the conflicts of opinion among religious and scientific men. It is the generalising philosopher who falls into assumptions of unreal entities.

² It is surely time to admit that after all these phrases had a certain restricted use as metaphors, or rather as symbols. The scientific derision of them has grown very stale, having been made a philosophical commonplace at least a hundred years ago by Hume, after being set agoing by Molière ; and I hardly know a single writer that repeats it who does not himself frequently use equipollent phrases in all unconsciousness.

tive fact whatever symbolised by saying that any truth rightly belongs to Religion. And doubly idle, worse than idle, does the phrase become when you are using it in regard to a set of propositions which are admittedly false.

For Spencer himself finally destroys these metaphorical positions of his with all possible completeness. His final consolation to the religious people is that there is only one of all their notions that is valid, and this solitary notion is one that turns out to be at bottom strictly scientific—the notion, namely, that the Universe is finally incomprehensible. What, then, is the meaning of saying that Religion has any “right” in any proposition whatever? The one thing left to it is identification of itself with the final negative proposition of Science. That is to say, the “reconciliation” of Religion and Science consists in Religion, as such, disappearing: the “permanent peace” is attained when one combatant has eaten the other up, leaving not even the tail. All that ever constituted concrete or affirmative Religion has been consumed, while concrete or affirmative Science goes on continuously extending its limits. I do not know whether many people continue to call themselves religious who take satisfaction in that singular reconciliation. A clergyman lately professed to find himself, as a religionist, in substantial harmony with Spencer, and so opened up a new vista of the possibilities of dishonest clerical maintenance of meaningless dogma and ceremonial. But I may here point out that, on the face of Spencer's own reasoning, his predicted reconciliation will simply mean that the word Religion will finally cease to have any present application, and will signify only “old-world superstition,” or “ancient cosmogony and legend.” To which some of us have not the least objection. But we object to adopting consciously the grim irony of the Spencerian formula to the effect that Religion thus reduced to the mummy state has been blissfully “reconciled” with its surviving rival. The phrase recalls the rhyme about the

“young lady of Riga
Who went for a ride on a tiger :
They returned from that ride

With the lady inside,
And a smile on the face of the tiger."

You would hardly say in her epitaph—if you set up a symbolic gravestone—that the lady and the tiger were reconciled.

7.

But if Spencer's theorem of the final "reconciliation" of Religion with Science be thus nugatory, how much better is Mr. Frederic Harrison's strenuous vindication of the perpetuity of Religion, by the process of transferring the name to public morality, in other words, to moral science? If you can get people in general to agree to that transfer, well and good: a word is merely a counter whose value is determined by agreement; and you may make Religion mean astronomy if only you can persuade your fellows to accept and use it in that sense. But if they do not so accept it, what social harm has been done? If the generality of men, by force of habit, finally decide that the word Religion shall mean the body of irrational beliefs which it mostly covered in the past, and that morals and public spirit shall just be called morals, or civism, or anything you please, what can it finally matter? The practical question is not what Mr. Spencer calls his religion, or whether his religion and his morals are in contact, but what his morality or his practical sociology is, whatever name it be called by. And the position of Mr. Harrison simply amounts to this, that it is essential to our proper progress that the altruistic and social zeal which is to reconstitute society, though purified of all supernaturalism, shall be called Religion, and shall be accompanied by certain customary practices that shall take the place of the customary practices of the old supernaturalist systems. Here are two issues. First, is the retention of the name Religion as a name for one's scheme of civism or practical morality necessary to the healthy development of that morality? I do not see how positive Science, properly so called, can endorse Mr. Harrison's verbalism any more than Mr. Spencer's.

In Mr. Harrison's sense of the term, every one who has any political and moral principles has some religion, good or bad, the Atheist and the Agnostic equally with the Comtist. Then it is the merest pedantry to make out that the abstract name we give to our set of social principles counts for anything in itself. The notion can be made to look momentarily plausible only on the representation that something is gained by connecting in men's minds a name which formerly had the most impressive supernaturalist associations, with principles of human and social sympathy which formerly had but a partial connection with those. But here the claim is made good only by begging the question: by assuming that the word Religion retains its old impressiveness after the beliefs it mainly connoted have disappeared. Now, I for my part do not care in the least which way the decision finally goes: the vocable Religion may be ruled by usage to mean something widely different from its old meaning, as so many other words have been. That its leading connotation in human history has been supernaturalist beliefs, I do not see how any one can deny; and that it has meant, not so much sincere thinking about the universe and humanity, as the general tendency to fixation of traditional ideas about the universe and humanity, seems equally clear. But there is no more absolute reason in the nature of things against shifting its significance than against letting the word mystery, which once meant something revealed, come to mean something that remains secret or unintelligible. It is when you attribute talismanic virtue to the use of one vocable rather than another that absurdity begins: and the absurdity is equal on the two sides of a quarrel on such a point. I at least can get on perfectly well without applying the word Religion to my civism or social principles; and it is thus far a matter of convenience to me to apply the term to the supernaturalist beliefs of my neighbours, as distinct from their practical morality and politics. But it would be a perfectly simple matter to let the word apply to these if the majority came to wish it; and Professor Huxley, for instance, was really guilty of unscientific and unworthy quibbling when, a number of years ago, he professed to resist those

who sought to exclude religion from the schools, saying he wanted to exclude theology but retain religion. That talismanic use of the word was an affectation which would seem to have taken deep root a generation ago, for it appears in Spencer's *Education*¹ in a nugatory proposition, borrowed from Huxley, about scientific culture being more religious than non-scientific culture. Both writers were just talking like those earlier verbalists at whom they smiled for speaking of aureity and dormitiveness; and so closely does this vice of verbalism border on worse forms of error, that it is not surprising to find Professor Huxley quashing his own quibble about theology and religion, and going on to defend, in language of the most transparent inconsistency, the continued use of the Bible in the schools without comment, but with explanation, as if explanation were not comment. For which procedure, Mr. Huxley has paid the penalty in having in his old age to maintain against the voluble but primitive sophistries of Mr. Gladstone the most elementary positions of Biblical criticism, till the interminable garrulities of the combatants indirectly set up a new conviction that the Bible is not a book for the schools.

But if the professed men of science fall into verbalism, and from that into positive unreason, no less do the professed champions of the positive method in social science. Comte, who distanced both Mr. Spencer and Mr. Huxley in his strictures on the devotees of metaphysical ideas, of imaginary entities, falls himself into the same pit, and gives us volumes of allocutions on such metaphysical entities as Christianity, Protestantism and Catholicism, Chivalry, Woman, Humanity, the Proletariat, and the Spiritual Power, imagining all the while that he was giving us the science of these matters, when he had not even begun to apply the scientific method to them. And thus it comes about that, after Spencer and Comte—though Spencer has certainly improved in many ways upon Comte—our social science is in a multitude of points on a par with the physical science which posited aureity, phlogiston, and Nature's horror of a vacuum. Mr. Harrison, therefore, is only following his Master's lead when

¹ Small edition, p. 45.

he insists, first, on the indispensableness of Religion as a name for humanitarian zeal; and further on the need for a set of routine practices which shall take the place of those of supernaturalism. That is just the theory of talismans in another form, and is being sufficiently refuted in the practice of Rationalists, who in general leave the Comtist practices alone. The acted unreason follows on the lapse into verbalism and pseudo-science. Mr. Huxley, who also verbalises on Religion, pronounces Comtism to be Catholicism *minus* Christianity. The Comtists might very well retort that Mr. Huxley's Religion for the schools is the Bible *minus* belief in it. And in the public interest it becomes necessary to declare that the battles of elderly gentlemen for their favourite words and sentiments and definitions are growing to be just as much of a public nuisance, when they are fought in the name of science, as when they are fought in the name of theology.

VI.

As has been said, however, Spencer's share in these discussions raises none of the fundamental issues of his philosophy, and does not involve that general conception of universal evolution, which is his great contribution to modern thought and knowledge. I must, therefore, ask you to remember that some of the greatest qualities of his mind, and some of his most valuable services to science, are seen in analyses and demonstrations with which these lectures cannot deal, and with which, indeed, the greater part of the criticism passed upon him does not deal. The majority of us are interested in sociology, or in philosophy considered in relation or antagonism to theology; but only a few work at the problems of cosmic evolution and the principles of biology and psychology. And as Spencer's philosophy and sociology yield to many critics on analysis a good many flaws and fallacies of detail, and the few experts similarly pronounce his biology and psychology to be fallible, it may seem as if in general we make him out to be untrustworthy. But even if we did that, as regards the bulk of his details,

we should not have destroyed his title to pre-eminence in respect of the grasp and essential rightness of his scheme of thought. In point of fact, as the patient reader of any of his books knows, he abounds in happily-stated particular truths and generalisations; and the points on which criticism successfully fastens are never such that their correction overthrows or undermines the fabric. For instance, as we have gathered from his argument about religion and science, he is not a born metaphysician: he has not that alertness of insight into the intricacies of language which enables a thinker in general to avoid fallacy and carry forward the processes of mental analysis. He has not the serene security of Hume. Thus his treatment of the old question of the nature of knowledge lays him at times open even to the criticism of theologians; for men whose own positions are contradictory and irrational can at times detect inconsistencies in those of other men, and are wont to make such discoveries a pretext for reaffirming on their own side doctrines and dogmas that will not bear a moment's examination. A logical blunder of Spencer's is turned to the credit of the doctrine of the Trinity or of Predestination. Let us give no harbour to such logic in our criticism of his. Even the most flagrant fallacies of the Agnostic demonstration in *First Principles* do not invalidate its Agnosticism.

Take, for instance, the section of the chapter on "Ultimate Religious Ideas" in which he discusses in turn the Atheistic, the Theistic, and the Pantheistic formulas of the Universe. Of each in turn he contends that it is unthinkable, and fails to solve the problem. "The Atheistic theory," he says, meaning the formula of self-existence, "is not only absolutely unthinkable, but, even if it were thinkable, would not be a solution. The assertion that the Universe is self-existent does not really carry us a step beyond the cognition of its present existence; and so leaves us with a mere re-statement of the mystery."¹ Similarly he dismisses Pantheism; and of course he makes short work, though it might have been shorter, of the contradiction-in-terms that "the Universe is the result of an external agency," which is Theism proper.

¹ Ch. ii, sec. 11, pp. 31-2.

Now, in the two former cases he has, from his own Agnostic point of view, done nothing to invalidate the formulas he criticises. He can only make them seem invalid by making the assumption that Atheism and Pantheism profess to "explain" the Universe in a sense in which Agnosticism does not. Whatever pretext there may be for that assumption as regards Pantheism, there is none as regards Atheism. Atheism is just the negation of all Theisms, and is thus fundamentally on all fours with Agnosticism. Spencer's own final position is the assertion of an Infinite and Incomprehensible energy, which, all the while, he admits to be as unthinkable as the self-existence of the Universe. It is obviously just another form of the same proposition (which again becomes identical with Pantheism as soon as Pantheism is reduced to consistency), and so in the end we have the critic adopting exactly the doctrine which, under the title of Atheism, he had dismissed as unthinkable, and as being no solution. His final teaching is that there *is* no solution, and that the furthest reach of our thought takes the shape of affirming the unthinkable. And, in view of that other polemic about the word Religion, one is forced to conclude that again a prepossession in words, a touch of the passion for aureities and vital principles, led the philosopher to argue down a doctrine whose name he did not like, though it was scientifically identical with his own.

Here, we see, the fallacy, though not easily excusable, is not fundamental, since it is not a part of the main demonstration, and we have only to omit the passage in order to put matters right. So, again, in the chapter on "Ultimate Scientific Ideas," the superficial preliminary reasonings on Space and Time do not affect the final Agnosticism, though they are unsatisfactory enough in themselves. "To deny," says Mr. Spencer here, "that Space and Time are things, and so by implication to call them nothings, involves the absurdity that there are two kinds of nothing,"¹ which is, I think, quite the oddest argument ever framed on that subject. It is less reasonable than saying that when you declare Smith and Jones to be both dead or absent, you are alleging that

¹ P. 47.

there are two kinds of death or absence. What is "a nothing"? If Mr. Spencer had worked out that question at the start, he would have saved a good deal of mis-spent argumentation. But still these gratuitous errors of logic do not impair the value and importance of his analysis of knowledge, and still less his cosmic synthesis. And if, on the other hand, in his sociology the critical conflict with his doctrines is more serious, as involving opposition to his final prescriptions, it remains none the less true that even in regard to practical politics he has done more than any modern writer to co-ordinate the necessary knowledges. Indeed, just as in certain problems of economics Mill brought us, by his attempts to consolidate fallacies, within sight of true doctrines, so does Spencer, by his attempts to justify his negative or nihilist positions in sociology, bring us face to face with the pure science which annuls them. The history of his political development is itself a chapter in practical sociology.

VII.

At the outset we have him concerned, indeed, to define the sphere of government, but also concerned to secure that government shall proceed upon certain principles of justice, rigidly deduced from the Law of Equal Liberty, which is the golden rule of ethics. But here, inasmuch as his ethical had outrun his biological and sociological thinking, he committed himself to one position, that of the equal right of all to the land, which could only be made practically valid by the qualification that there should be communal restraint on the numbers of new claimants placed on the land by procreation. That difficulty Spencer entirely evaded in the *Social Statics*, though it had been distinctly pointed out by Mill; and though since then he has dealt specifically with the population problem, he has not sought to recast his early argument for the nationalisation of the land, but has at length explicitly repudiated it, after tacitly doing so for many years. He now affirms the impossibility of applying absolute

ethics to the case; and inasmuch as he has more and more stringently opposed the tendency to seek the political redress of social injustices, we are entitled to regard his repudiation of his early political ethics as arising from the same mental tendency as is revealed in his polemic against the sins of legislators. That that polemic is powerful, and often unanswerable, no candid judge will deny. But if it is part of a development which involves an acceptance of admitted social injustice, we are entitled to surmise that it may have a temperamental rather than a scientific basis.

And yet, when we turn to the companion case of Darwin, whose temperament was so nearly perfect, and note how he too misapplied the evolution principle, we ought perhaps to put it that every scientific method in turn will lead us into fallacy when we seek to carry it beyond a particular plane of phenomena. Darwin, after partly working out the origin of species and the descent of man, in terms of the law of struggle for existence and survival of the fittest, gently but explicitly opposed the proposal to restrain population, on the score that this would minimise the struggle which had created civilisation in the past, and which must needs carry it on in future.¹ That conception I put to you as a fall into the great snare of evolutionist sociology—the tendency to *read the law of evolution backwards*. Darwin did this precisely at the point where his biology connected with social ethics; and Spencer, I shall attempt to show, does the same thing in his application of sociological data to present practice. Both thinkers assumed that a generalisation which sums up the progressive forces of a collectively *unconscious* society, of a society *without* the conception of evolution and of a universal sociology, must equally sum up the progressive principles of a collectively *conscious* society, a society which has realised evolution and is constructing a universal sociology. Though they themselves are our greatest helpers towards such consciousness, they have failed to realise that our attainment of it must revolutionise human history. They have wrought out for us in the main the principle of past progress by

¹ See his letter to Mr. G. A. Gaskell, in appendix to Miss Clapperton's *Scientific Molierism*, p. 340; and Mrs. Besant's *Autobiography*, p. 136.

struggle for existence; they have, at the point of transition, failed to perceive aright that the master formula of future progress must of necessity be "the struggle *against* the struggle for existence."¹

In this, after all, there is nothing strange, nor need there be in it, for thoughtful students, anything disappointing. Spencer's own analysis of organic rhythm, of psychological and sociological progress, prepares us for stoppages and stages in all men's thought; for contraction after expansion, as in the motion of the worm; for the refusal of a mind to expand afresh, on a new career of innovation, after expending its energies in an effort of innovation through a whole cycle of its existence. If he lays down the torch, he does what others did before, what will be done after him by those who now insist on carrying it on when he would fix it. His arbitrary termination is obvious to us only because he has himself prepared us to proceed; and, remembering that, we shall not rail because he has rounded his period, but rather acclaim the magnificent sweep which he has compassed.

VIII.

In Spencer's philosophy, as its title implies, one unbroken process of law connects all phenomena, from the motion of molecules and the courses of the suns to the phenomena of human thought and the destinies of nations. The *Synthetic Philosophy* coincides with the formula of Professor Huxley, that "the molecular structure of the cosmic gas stands in the same relation to the phenomena of the world as the structure of the clock to its phenomena;"² if, that is, we add the proviso, not clearly put by Professor Huxley, that the infinite cosmic clock is one of perpetual motion, the infinite energy of the universe pervading it. This doctrine, which is Materialism proper,³ usually raises in the

¹ A phrase first used, I believe, by Lange. See the biographical sketch in the *History of Materialism*, Thomas's trans., p. xiii.

² *Critiques and Addresses*, p. 306.

³ Professor Huxley at times disavows Materialism as "positing only "matter and force and mechanism." It is idle to make such statements

mind of the student, at first approach, the everlasting question as to whether we are then in the position of mere factors in a chain of causation over which we have no control. That is one of the typical problems of philosophy, and according as we are or are not able to thread our way through the toils of language, we either answer it logically or remain for life entangled in theology. Clearly, in terms of Materialism, all our thoughts and actions are the outcome of all our antecedents, and it is literally true that what we do we cannot help doing. But inasmuch as all our conscious action is in terms of our thought processes, it lies in the terms of the case that we choose what we shall do—choice being simply the form or phase through which the cosmic energy becomes apparent in us to ourselves and each other. There is thus no possibility of circumventing the law of causation; for if we decide, with Schopenhauer, to mortify the Will to Live, on the score that we are merely its puppets, we shall be just the same the puppets of the Will to Die, and can no more transcend destiny in the one case than in the other. If the human race should ever come to the view that its existence is not worth maintaining, that view will be just as absolutely an outcome of thought and necessary choice as is at present the choice to do what seems best for promoting life.

Materialism, then, leaves us not less but more clear than does theology as to the indefeasibility of Will and Choice. To talk of a surrender of Volition is simple blundering, for any conceivable act of surrender *is* Volition. We are left then to the absolutely unclouded recognition of the play of Motive, Bias, and Persuasion, as the inevitable antecedents of choice; and what Materialism has done for us is to save us from those interpolations of spurious motive and spurious persuasion with which theology distracts

without explaining how the so-called Materialist defines the terms matter and force. Professor Huxley writes as if their connotations were perfectly certain and invariable. I know of no "Materialism" which is, so to say, *more* "materialistic" than his own. But, like too many of our English thinkers, he is more concerned to evade compromising names than to clear them up.

human affairs. Aspiration, Persuasion, Choice, are as much fulfilment of law as any natural process whatever; and the comparison and clash of different aspirations and choices is as strictly natural as the reactions of chemical substances and the life of the lower animals. Spencer has put the bearing of this on conduct with a somewhat noteworthy deprecatoriness:—

“Whoever hesitates to utter that which he thinks the highest truth, lest it should be too much in advance of the time, may reassure himself by looking at his acts from an impersonal point of view. Let him duly realise the fact that opinion is the agency through which character adapts external arrangements to itself—that his opinion rightly forms part of this agency—is a unit of force, constituting, with other such units, the general power which works out social changes; and he will perceive that he may properly give full utterance to his innermost conviction: leaving it to produce what effect it may. It is not for nothing that he has in him these sympathies with some principles and repugnance to others. He, with all his capacities, and aspirations, and beliefs, is not an accident, but a product of the time. He must remember that while he is a descendant of the past, he is a parent of the future; and that his thoughts are as children born to him, which he may not carelessly let die. He, like every other man, may properly consider himself as one of the myriad agencies through whom works the Unknown Cause; and when the Unknown Cause produces in him a certain belief, he is thereby authorised to profess and act out that belief. For, to render in their highest sense the words of the poet—

“ ‘Nature is made better by no mean,
But Nature makes that mean; over that art
Which you say adds to Nature, is an art
That Nature makes.’ ”

Not as adventitious therefore will the wise man regard the faith which is in him. The highest truth he sees he will fearlessly utter; knowing that, let what may come of it, he is thus playing his right part in the world: knowing that if he can effect the change he aims at—well: if not—well also; though not so well.”¹

It is, I take it, the measure of the influence of religion in stupefying the general intellect that these words should have needed to be written at this stage of civilisation. By religion, I mean not any one creed, but that spirit which conserves creeds,

¹ *First Principles*, end of Part I.; also in *Social Statics*.

and which establishes men in the notion that what Spencer loosely calls the Unknown Cause has only set up human opinions in particular cases in the distant past, or only does so now in occasional response to special invocation. The insane notion of "inspiration" fostered among us by Christianity has brought about the notion that Paul, say, was inspired, but that Clifford has escaped the control of Omnipotence, and represents human opinion wholly out of relation to the force or purpose of the universe. So overwhelming is the bias of the religious temper to intellectual atrophy (and this, remember, is like everything else a manifestation of universal law), that those sects which in modern Christendom sought to bring the notion of inspiration into practical and comparatively logical relation with life by aiming at inspiration in their own members' persons—an aim fully active in Cromwell and his soldiers—have one and all dwindled and virtually disappeared under the incubus of past-worship, which they illogically and fatally cherished. So potent is the spell that the would-be positive religion of Comtism is under our eyes crystallising into a fixed Church, dreaming over its quasi-inspired founder. And when a not very profound neo-theological professor broaches even the semi-rational conception that "all that is great and good is inspired,"¹ there is a start of surprise or a shudder of horror in English society, though five minutes' connected reasoning might have led even a theological professor to see that error must be just as much "inspired" as truth, whether on the more consistent theistic or on the non-theistic conception of the universe.

Observe, too, how even Spencer must fumble in his terms, tautologically announcing that a man's body of opinions is "not an accident," and "not adventitious," as if there could be any meaning in saying that it was. If even evolutionary philosophy is still in the stage of discovering that men's tendencies and aspirations may "properly" be given "full utterance" to, as being on the whole as much an outcome of cosmic force as the fall of an avalanche, or the leap of a tiger, we may expect to find even evolutionists slipping back at times into some form of the prepos-

¹ Professor Momerie, in *Wit and Wisdom*, Dec., 1890.

session against innovating effort, the more so because the innovating evolutionist is clearly bound by his principles to check his "inspirations" by logic and evidence—that is to say, by the test of consistency. We saw in studying Carlyle, and Emerson, and Ruskin, how the revived prophetic conviction of inspiration, guided only by the old prophetic notion of the process, means endless blusterous contradiction and unreason. The evolutionist may well seek to avoid these. But just as the humdrum modern religionist, in the sphere of pietism, was led by the follies and ineptitudes of the inspirationists to set his face against their doctrine of continuous inspiration, and thus to reduce his religion to inanition, so does the evolutionist, looking in experience for knowledge that will safeguard him from unwise impulses and tendencies in conduct, run the risk of repudiating new departures indiscriminately. Thus must evolutionist still battle with evolutionist, as theologian did with theologian, only more decently, and without the old resort to murder.

IX.

Now I, being in my turn a small scintilla of the cosmic force, am moved to persuade as far as I can those who will listen to me, that there are things to be done which our great evolutionist philosopher thinks are not to be done. The outcome of his practical teaching for society in his middle period, before he grew quite conservative, turns out to be this: That we mostly miscalculate in our attempts to control social affairs by systems of government, and that the part of wisdom for us is to limit our attempts to a few forms of primary protection of individuals against each other, making these protections much more efficient than they are, in the faith that by so doing the secondary protections we now so often vainly seek to effect will become unnecessary. This is, I think, a fair statement of that Spencerian doctrine of twenty years ago, which Professor Huxley then not very fairly styled "Administrative Nihilism."¹ Used comparatively,

¹ See the essay reprinted in Huxley's *Critiques and Addresses*.

the term may be justifiable; but there is so much of cogency in Spencer's argument, and so little has been done to carry out even what he prescribed, that our first duty is to note the positive and practical side of his position. It seems to me strictly true that, as he says, a great deal of modern philanthropic legislation has missed its mark, has failed to do what it was meant to, and has even done actual harm instead of good. And there is much force in his contention that a really efficient system of justice, "prompt, effective, and *costless to the aggrieved*," would preclude a great deal of suffering. But it is very significant that while such a system of justice might be supposed to be one of the first reforms for which Individualists would contend, there is no visible movement to that end. When I lately set about drawing up a plan¹ of such a reform, aiming at getting rid at once of the two ancient evils of costly law, and the insane frustration of jurisprudence involved in the system of setting hired sophists, called barristers, to confuse the mind of a judge, outwardly venerated in a revolting mediæval fashion, and in actual fact often infirm physically and by probable consequence enfeebled mentally—when I set about drawing up such a scheme I could not find any previous one to help me, though it may be taken for granted that some have been drawn up by individual reformers. What is more, Spencer himself has not agitated with any persistence for any such reform; and his last book is almost wholly devoted to exposing the miscalculations, or the burdensome tendencies, of attempted reforms of other kinds. A system of costless justice must clearly involve an apparent new burden to society; and Spencer's constant subsumption has latterly been that all apparent burdens in the form of new public outlay are real levies on all citizens' individual shares of property, making these shares less than they would otherwise have been, and in no way tending to promote the general wealth. Let us see then in detail how he relates to conduct in his applied sociology.

In his first book, *Social Statics*, as we saw, he maintained on grounds of absolute ethics the equal rights of all to the land: a

¹ Sketched in the *National Reformer*, May 11, 1890.

principle which, I repeat, is only valid under the qualification that those who are on the land at a given moment are collectively entitled to prescribe, if they see fit, limits to the number of children produced by individuals; since otherwise the most unconscientious are free to burden the rest to an indefinite extent with the maintenance of their superabundant offspring. But Spencer, always evading the question of deliberate prudence in procreation, is found twenty years later, in 1871, arguing explicitly that "the immense majority of the evils which government aid is invoked to remedy are evils which arise immediately or remotely, because it does not perform properly its negatively regulative function," and that "*everywhere . . . we shall find that were the restraining action of the State prompt, effective, and costless to those aggrieved, the pleas put in for positive regulation would nearly all disappear.*"¹ Here, there is the assumption that if, without any measure of land nationalisation, we thoroughly reformed our judicial system, social evils would so generally disappear that preventive legislation would hardly be called for. And here again the gravest error is fallen into through evasion of the population problem; for it can easily be demonstrated that no reform of the judicial system can possibly prevent the evils which arise under our industrial system from the blind multiplication of not only the proletariat but the other classes. The sociologist has given up his early ethical position on the right to the land; but he has not done so for the proper reason; and, missing or evading that reason, which would have led him to modify and not abandon the position, he takes up a new position equally untenable, and virtually claims that only certain negatively-regulative action, which he specifies, is needed to secure substantial social well-being. And now, after nearly twenty years more, he is found no longer even arguing that his proposed negatively-regulative action will minimise social evil, but explicitly laying it down that the miseries under our social system are "caused by the ill-working of human nature but partially adapted

¹ "Specialised Administration," *Fortnightly Review*, December, 1871, p. 652. *Essays*, iii., 165-6.

to the social state ;"¹ recognising no probability of that ill-working being appreciably obviated by any line of collective action ; but stringently insisting that most of the suffering of the poor is due to their own fault—though he still never once points to blind procreation as the central evil—and that we ought to leave them to their suffering, on the ground that that, and that alone, is curative.²

Now, it may freely be granted to Professor Huxley that this last development is, practically speaking, to be described as Administrative Nihilism. But what again is Professor Huxley's title to sit in judgment on such shortcoming? Certainly he has of late ostensibly recognised the pressure of the problem which Spencer and our legislators have evaded. "The political problem of problems," he declared the other day, "is how to deal with over-population ; and it faces us on all sides."³ But how then does he propose to deal with it? Let us hear his own words :—

"Over-population has two sources : one internal, by generation ; one external, by immigration. Theoretically, the elimination of Want is possible by the arrest of both. . . . This is substantially the plan of the 'Closed Industrial State' set forth by Fichte ; and, so far as I can see, there is no other social arrangement by which Want can be permanently eliminated. . . . *I offer no opinion whether Fichte's Utopia is practically realisable or not.*"⁴

And this is the end ! This after a life of sixty-five years, largely occupied in passing judgment on social questions and criticising other people's social proposals. There is Nihilism and Nihilism ; and to spend your life, on the side of your sociology, in pragmatically controverting other people's theories of action ; to get the length ultimately of repeating one positive principle which has been earnestly maintained by many others before you at the risk of social ostracism, while you stood silent ; and after all to announce that you have nothing to propose—this is, on the whole, about as disastrous a sort of Nihilism as any. What Professor Huxley has

¹ *The Man versus the State*, p. 39.

² *Ib.* pp. 18 19, 28, etc.

³ Art. on "Government, Anarchy, or Regimentation," *Nineteenth Century*, May, 1890, p. 865.

⁴ *Ib.* pp. 865-6.

the courage and enthusiasm of his opinions about, is the unsoundness of the political theories of Rousseau, which nobody now reads; the theological absurdity of Mr. Henry George, who is followed only by untrained reformers; and the mental and physical inequality of men, which nobody ever denied. But when it comes to acting on the recognition of the "problem of problems," to counselling the people on how they may achieve the restraint of over-population, which is the one "social arrangement by which Want can be permanently eliminated," then the pragmatist has "no opinion to offer." It is the final expression of his essentially negative mind, which kept him denying evolution till the proofs were sufficient to stagger even bigots; set him controverting Spencer's so-called Nihilism without indicating a notion of what ought to be really done; and kept him opposing the exclusion of superstition from the schools, till he was fain himself to make a stand in order to exclude it from the forum. Thus may you contrive to have it formally on record that you were right, while the upshot of your career remains negation or practical nullity. I confess I have small thanks to offer to a publicist who at the eleventh hour announces his agreement with those who proclaim that increase of population is the problem of problems, and then contentedly leaves those who will to bell the cat and take the odium of educative propaganda; proceeding to concentrate his own polemical powers on endless and laboriously sarcastic controversy about the miracle of the devils and the swine, after its significance has become a standing commonplace for artisan Secularists. Professor Huxley affects to meet protests against his pragmatism by suggesting that the crossing-sweeper fulfils his function in clearing the path. Well, the figure was sufficiently unfortunate; for the London crossing-sweeper's labour is, as a rule, visibly a vain display, a factitious sweeping of the already-swept, while acres of mud lie around, or an officious show of cleansing where there is no dirt. And if Professor Huxley is satisfied to be a crossing-sweeper in sociology, he must be content to have the distinction of such an one.

X.

A criticism of Spencer in a constructive and not a pragmatic spirit, starting from the Neo-Malthusian position, will supply a practical and not merely a formal answer to his Nihilistic protests. It is true that our legislators have made multitudes of useless and even injurious laws, just because they have never honestly faced the population problem. As in Spencer's own excellent illustration, they have struck directly at the bulge in the iron plate.

"You see," he writes in *The Study of Sociology*, "that this wrought-iron plate is not quite flat: it sticks up a little here towards the left—'cockles,' as we say. How shall we flatten it? Obviously, you reply, by hitting down on the part that is prominent. Well, here is a hammer, and I give the plate a blow as you advise. Harder, you say. Still, no effect. Another stroke? Well, there is one, and another and another. The prominence remains, you see; the evil is as great as ever—greater, indeed. But this is not all. Look at the warp which the plate has got near the opposite edge. Where it was flat before it is now curved. A pretty bungle we have made of it. Instead of curing the original defect we have produced a second. Had we asked an artisan practised in 'planishing,' as it is called, he would have told us that no good was to be done, but only mischief, by hitting down on the projecting part. He would have taught us how to give variously-directed and specially-adjusted blows with a hammer elsewhere: so attacking the evil not by direct but by indirect actions. The required process is less simple than you thought. Even a sheet of metal is not to be successfully dealt with after those common-sense methods in which you have so much confidence. What, then, shall we say about a society? 'Do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe?' asks Hamlet. Is humanity more readily straightened than an iron plate?"¹

An excellent illustration, indeed. But observe its significance. There *is*, on this admission, a way of straightening humanity, if you can find it. But where in Mr. Spencer's latter-day doctrine is that way hinted at? Why, even in *The Study of Sociology* we are as good as told that we must leave our crooked iron plate to the action of the atmosphere and its own molecular forces. It is true that mere prohibitive legislation does next to nothing to

¹ As cited, pp. 270-1.

put down drunkenness; it is true that Building Acts have not stopped jerry-building; and that Acts regulating industry often become a dead letter, as an Eight Hours Law will be, if we get it. But is there no way of improving warped society: is there not a Social Dynamics as well as a Social Statics? The old notion of nationalisation of land: would that not be an efficient blow—if only we could at the same time control population? The reduction of the National Debt, to the end of removing a great burden from industry, would that not be a well-directed stroke? The socialisation of public monopoly profits, as those of railways, banks, gas-works, water-works, would that be a mere bungler's blow on the bulge? Yes, answers the latter-day Spencer; the socialisation of public monopoly profits, by any means whatever, is only a step towards "the coming slavery."¹

See now the ethical and social attitude to which the sociologist has progressed. He has formulated a doctrine of Absolute and Relative Ethics, which, applied to politics, seems to come to this: That Absolute Ethics prescribes imperatively certain primary functions, negatively regulative, on the part of the State—protections against murder, robbery, violence, fraud, and breach of contract—as being absolutely right; while beyond those protections we are in the sphere of Relative Ethics, which is a matter of choosing between different evils or inconveniences.² It is absolutely right, and cannot possibly do harm, to give those primary protections, as it is absolutely right for a mother to nourish her child even at a sacrifice to herself; but there is a point at which her self-sacrifice on behalf of the growing child might do more harm than it would prevent: and as this point is approached the question becomes one of Relative Ethics.

I submit that the use of the terms Absolute and Relative in this distinction is illicit, and a hindrance to right perception of

¹ See *The Man versus the State*, p. 38.

² I give this as what seems to me a fair practical statement of Mr. Spencer's doctrine of Absolute and Relative Ethics, which, however, it is almost impossible to reduce to a distinct proposition. See *The Data of Ethics*, ch. xv.—and compare Mr. Collins' valuable *Epitome of the Synthetic Philosophy*, pp. 541-3.

the issues. By Ethics we mean the co-ordinated rules for right social conduct, and either all of these rules are absolute or all are relative. When it is a case of choosing between two evils, there is as truly an absolute duty to take the best course as there is an absolute duty to do what is obviously right in any other. The terms are irrelevant: the distinction would properly be between immediate and contingent, or primary and secondary expediencies. Now, we know historically that the social or governmental functions which Mr. Spencer prescribes as absolute, though their necessity is more readily apparent than that of the functions he would disallow, were themselves only gradually assumed; and that civilisation has been a progress from merely mutual individual check on self-assertion to the establishment of certain collective checks, more or less efficiently carried out. For a long time even murder was not restrained by collective action; and the resort to collective action in that case was a process which would in Mr. Spencer's terminology come within the sphere of Relative Ethics, since it came of a gradual recognition that the evils of retaliation and feud were greater than the evils of judicial costs and the burdens of social machinery. That is the formula of all political movement. As Mr. Spencer sufficiently indicates, there is no true limit conceivable to the development of conviction as to the ethical necessity or expediency of a given collective function: the question is simply one of right choosing in successively perceived emergencies. And it is becoming very evident that in relation to many of us Mr. Spencer stands in the position which was doubtless taken up by early Conservatives in opposition to the reformers who sought to bring about the collective punishment of murder and theft. He has become reconciled to the private ownership of the land, which he once felt, and which we now feel, to be unjust and inexpedient. He is grown acutely conscious of the evils of mistaken legislation, and of regulative machinery which limits the freedom of a minority of the citizens; but he has now apparently no eye at all for such evils as the existence of an increasing idle class, who get the best of all things while doing nothing for them, and whose existence is thus a plain

limitation to the freedom and the well-being of the greater part of the community. He dwells on the burden of taxation laid on the ratepayers, but he would remain tolerant of the ultimate incidence of all burdens on labour, and of the allotment of the minimum ration to the man whose work is hardest.

Thousands of years ago, sociologists saw that social inequality, the amassing of wealth in the hands of the few, was fatal to the endurance of States, and many attempts were made to check the tendency. It is incredible that Mr. Spencer does not in theory recognise the evil; but when he now meets with even a well-considered attempt to obviate it, by the municipalisation of public monopolies, his one thought is, not satisfaction at the socialisation of income which otherwise enriched a few and helped to extend the idle class, but alarm at the limitation of freedom which he takes to be implied in the extension of social machinery—this without asking whether the freedom that is limited is not of the kind which "Absolute Ethics" would disallow. He has come to sympathise actively with the class who, under existing arrangements, get the plums in the cake, and only passively with the rest of the community; and when he is talking of the citizen and the ratepayer he is thinking not of the many but of the few. He actually applies to the mass of the poor the maxim: "He that will not work neither shall he eat," as if poverty mostly came of unwillingness to work; and as if the people with large incomes were usually the hardest workers.¹ Opposing those windy Socialists who propose instant confiscation of the railways, he speaks as if all the present shareholders were men who had originally risked their property to create the lines; and wholly evades the question whether it is expedient that the descendants and successors of these men

¹ *The Man versus the State*, p. 19. In this connection it is only fair to note that the philosopher has been angrily contemplating the tribe of loafers, and is not directly speaking of unemployed workers in general. But he has no right to generalise as he does even about the apparent loafers; and his talk about "the law that a creature not energetic enough to maintain itself must die," is a strange evasion of the plainest social facts. Thousands in the richest classes are "not energetic enough to maintain themselves" independently of their unearned endowments.

should draw a perpetual tribute from the industry of the nation for one particular act of service rendered in the past. He admits, presumably, that we ought not to be free to leave unfenced pits on our ground beside the public path, or to let our chimneys smoke into our neighbours' windows; but he never asks whether the unrestricted power of bequeathing wealth and endowing an idle posterity, whom, under our system, other people's posterity must perforce serve, whether this is not a mere freedom to injure society, which society ought to abolish. The Law of Equal Liberty seems wholly to have disappeared from his ethical system.

If we turn from cases which raise questions of calculation, or secondary feeling, to some which may be said to raise questions of primary feeling, the position becomes still clearer. Mr. Spencer, arguing that we must not separate pain from wrong-doing,¹ in which he includes improvidence—that we should leave certain suffering to go on, as being curative—complains as warmly of the State payment of poor children's school-fees, and of the proposal to give them public dinners, as he does of any other public act. Here, be it observed, we are virtually asked to regard the suffering of the helpless children as the proper punishment of their parents, and not to consider the children as individuals at all: a position which, there need be no hesitation in saying, is a step towards the destruction of all social ethics, which rests finally on the biological fact of sympathy. What was his own ethical argument against the practice of gambling? That "this kind of action is essentially anti-social—sears the sympathies, cultivates a hard egoism, and so produces a general deterioration of character and conduct."² What better description could be given of his own attitude towards the problem of the starving children?³

¹ *The Man versus the State*, pp. 19, 28.

² *The Study of Sociology*, p. 306.

³ Since this was written, it has been announced that Mr. Spencer has joined the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, the Secretary of which had, just before, circulated a gross aspersion against the holders of views on religion similar to those of Mr. Spencer. But it does not follow that Mr. Spencer wants to save the children of the poor from elimination by distress.

Needless to say, this attitude towards the suffering of children is becoming more and more nearly impossible for civilised people who stop to think of the matter; and here we reach a biological statement of our difference from Mr. Spencer, namely, that a sympathetically-cognised evil which to an ever-increasing number of us is intolerable, is to him tolerable. Oddly enough, our great sociologist, admirably equipped in so many ways, at length turns out to be in one way temperamentally ill-adapted—to use one of his own words—to the social state now developing. And who shall say how far the maladaptation is the result of the stress of intellectual preparation for the sociological task?

XI.

Dealing with that case of the suffering children constructively or practically, we shall find in it a typical case for applied or dynamic sociology. Spencer points back, not unplausibly, to the case of the old Poor Law, which so multiplied pauperism, and created a class of women who were sought in marriage on account of the number of their illegitimate children.¹ Without saying that the reformed Poor Law left these children at a given moment to starve, Mr. Spencer virtually tells us to leave the slum children of to-day to starve. Not a word even now of telling the wretched parents how to avoid having more children. Spencer's position on the population question is finally an enigma to me, for while exposing the hallucination of Doubleday, still shared, it would appear, by many Socialists and others, as to the effect of good feeding in checking fertility, he appears to rest simply on a dubiously optimistic hypothesis that a *very* high civilisation will one day lessen fertility irrespectively of any deliberate prudential restraint.² In point of fact, the desperate need for prudential

¹ *Study of Sociology*, pp. 103-4, 368-9.

² See the *Principles of Biology*, ii., 483 *et seq.* Cp. the present writer's pamphlet (Forder, Stonecutter Street) on *Over-Population*, p. 13; and a criticism of one of Mr. Spencer's recent utterances, in a paper in the *National Reformer*, Feb. 15, 1891, on "The late Constance Naden."

restraint *now* is demonstrated every day under his eyes; but still he breathes no whisper of the possibility of instructing the masses on the subject. Why, has he not committed himself to making light of the value of instruction, in order to establish his caveat against national education? If he recognises any means by which improvident parents can learn, it is the logic of suffering—suffering which involves the starvation of children. The one motive power on which he has any reliance is the whip of the fear of hell-upon-earth—which, in point of fact, never does drive men on the right path in this matter, and which is far more likely to goad to infanticide than to prudence. And now turn back to the book on *Education*, written thirty years ago, and see how the earlier Spencer delightedly embraced the truths that those juvenile criminals who have been whipped are those who most frequently return to prison,¹ and that the method of freedom and kindness in lunatic asylums is found to answer best. Measure the distance that the Sociologist has retrograded, when he is landed in the position that by kindness and sympathy you can manage the insane, but not the sane!

Why it is that the thinker who wrote the book on *Education*, with its insistence on the need of training the young for parenthood, should thus ignore the possibilities in regard to the spread of practical knowledge, is hard to divine. I can reach no explanation but this, that successive anxieties to maintain an original position against the views of others, and to enforce a particular theory against resistance, have led him in one direction to ignore and discountenance Neo-Malthusianism, and in another direction to depreciate National Education by belittling all education. The exigencies of this argument have led him into more than one flat contradiction. In repelling Matthew Arnold's old charge against the English, of being lacking in ideas, he reprehends the "notion that effectual practice does not depend on superiority of ideas. This," he says, "is an erroneous notion. Methods that answer are preceded by thoughts that are true."² In another chapter of the same book, criticising Comte, he writes thus:—

¹ As cited, p. 121. ² *The Study of Sociology*, p. 220.

"When, for instance, he (Comte) speaks of 'the intellectual anarchy which is the main source of our moral anarchy'—when he thus discloses the faith . . . that true theory would bring right practice; it becomes clear that the relation between the attributes of citizens and the phenomena of societies is incorrectly seen by him: the relation is far too deep a one to be changed by mere change of ideas."¹

Now, on this fallacy-breeding question of ideas and feelings, Comte contradicted himself often and grossly, not merely in one book as compared with another, but in different portions of his *Discours sur l'ensemble du Positivisme*, making sometimes ideas, and sometimes feelings, paramount. But here we find Spencer in one book falling into just such a contradiction, laying it down in one chapter that right or effectual practice results from true ideas, and in another that true ideas in no way ensure right practice. This last proposition he repeats at length in his *Reasons for Dissenting from the Philosophy of M. Comte*, urging that "the world is governed or overthrown by feelings, to which ideas only serve as guides"² And all the while the true and scientific solution of the dispute lies embodied in his own *Principles of Psychology*, in the declaration that

"There exists a unity of composition throughout all the phenomena of intelligence. . . . The most complex processes of reasoning are resolvable into intuitions of likeness and unlikeness between terms more or less involved. When regarded under its fundamental aspect, the highest reasoning is seen to be one with all the lower forms of human thought, and one with instinct and reflex action, even in their simplest manifestations."³

That is to say, the antithesis of feelings and ideas is spurious, and new knowledge is a basis of changed action, because feeling and reasoning are only earlier and later stages of a mental activity proceeding from perceptions.

¹ *The Study of Sociology*, p. 329.

² *Reasons*, p. 37; *Essays*, iii., 69. I have discussed this dispute at some length in an article, "Ideas versus Feelings; a Question of Definition," in the *National Reformer*, April 19 and 26, 1885.

³ *Principles of Psychology*, 3rd ed., ii., 291-9. The same conclusion was reached long ago by Destutt de Tracy, *Éléments d'Idéologie; Logique*, 2e édit. p. 185.

When, however, we turn to Spencer's most elaborate and dispassionate discussion of the principles of social action, we find a baffling and paralysing set of conclusions, which, while affirming endless progress, seems to veto every step in it. In *The Study of Sociology* we have an admirable set of chapters on the need for and the difficulties in the way of reaching a Social Science; on the various kinds of bias; and on the different kinds of discipline and scientific preparation needed—discipline in logic and mathematics, and preparation in biology and psychology. And what is to be the end of all this preparation? It is really the most singular upshot for such a treatise. Mr. Spencer does not hope, he tells us, to do more than influence a reader here and there,

"in his calmer moments, to remember how largely his beliefs about public matters have been made for him by circumstances, and how probable it is that they are either untrue or partially true. . . . Recollecting this, he may be induced to hold these convictions not quite so strongly; may see the need for criticism of them with a view to revision; and, above all, *may be somewhat less eager to act in pursuance of them.*"¹

So far as it goes, this might simply be the good old advice not to be hasty; but Mr. Spencer means more than that. He does not merely mean that social reformation must be slow: that is a lesson we all learn soon enough. He virtually lays down the suicidal doctrine that no change of ideas among men, no propagation of new opinions, can count for anything in hastening social development.

"The surface of the Earth," he tells us, "has been sculptured by forces which in the course of a year produce alterations scarcely anywhere visible. Its multitudes of different organic forms have arisen by processes so slow, that, during the periods our observations extend over, the results are in most cases inappreciable. We must be content to recognise these truths and conform our hopes to them. Light, falling upon a crystal, is capable of altering its molecular arrangements, but it can do this only by a repetition of impulses almost innumerable. . . . Similarly, before there arise in human nature and human institutions, changes having that permanence which makes them an acquired inheritance for the human race,

¹ *The Study of Sociology*, p. 391.

there must go innumerable recurrences of the thoughts, and feelings, and actions, conducive to such changes. *The process cannot be abridged; and must be gone through with due patience.*"¹

Now, I submit to you that fallacy pervades this proposition from first to last. We are asked first to conclude that social progress is necessarily about as slow as the course of geological and zoological change, which is an assumption totally opposed to all historical experience. Social progress is indeed slow relatively to all our hopes, but it is rapid in comparison with the transmutation of species; and to compare it with that, or with geological change, or with the action of light on crystals, is to obscure all the facts by a spurious analogy. What is more, social change varies very much at different times, the highest rates of motion being coincident with the highest developments of collective social consciousness. Now, the very existence of that legislation which Spencer girds at, the very existence of that sociological literature which he has done so much to extend, proves that the collective consciousness is in these days quickening throughout the world. What is it that most surely determines variation in species? Change of environment; and the true analogy is that as the mental environment changes, as our intellectual life changes, so will our social framework alter. But change of conditions goes on more and more rapidly, or becomes more and more possible, as we rise in the scale of consciousness. The face of the earth indeed changes slowly from age to age, save for catastrophic episodes, which are not to be overlooked. But organisms are capable of changing their environment by locomotion; and when they do, there is set up biological variation. Yet again, a human society, without changing its physical environment, can rapidly alter mentally on coming in contact with another society of different culture; and all the notable civilisations of which we have much knowledge represent this reaction of societies and cultures upon each other, a secondary civilisation growing rapidly on the stimulus of others which are primary to it—the Greek upon the Asian, the Phœnician, and the Egyptian, as the latter upon the Ethiopian; the Chal-

¹ *The Study of Sociology*, pp. 402-3.

dean upon the Akkadian ; the Aryan Hindu upon the Dravidian ; the pre-Spanish Mexican and Peruvian on those of previous races ; the Roman on all those of the Mediterranean ; the mediæval Italian on the Roman complex ; the European Renaissance on the Saracen, and on the stimulus of recovered antiquity ; the modern European and American on the increasingly general interaction of all states in both hemispheres, of which the latest phase is the influence of Europe on Japan, and of Japan on Europe. Mr. Spencer may be defied to square his formulas with the case of Japan, not to speak of those others in general. And if these changes happen in societies in the mass, from the mere primary reactions set up by the contact of unphilosophic minds, how much further may not modification be carried when philosophic minds, that is, minds of extended consciousness, multiply, and impress their generalised ideas on the hitherto unreflecting multitude ?

XII.

Mr. Spencer implies that this cannot happen : and certainly it will not if he could help it. But all the while he is fostering the development in his own despite, for his generalisations of the conflicting forces do but serve to extend that collective consciousness which furthers social evolution. His very polemic against *The Coming Slavery* is an admission that change of a kind is rapidly going on ;¹ and he must needs fall back on the doctrine that this change will not be permanent—a doctrine which, by the way, he

¹ Since this was written, there has been published a little book on *The Principles of State Interference*, by D. G. Ritchie, in which, among some criticisms which I cannot but think ill-considered, there is an unanswerable confutation of Mr. Spencer on his own ground, as set forth in *The Man versus the State*, in this matter of actual political change. In the same breath he protests that societies *cannot* be changed by purposive action, and that modern legislators are really making such changes. See Mr. Ritchie's book, p. 47. Mr. Spencer's adherents may be defied to meet that criticism ; the position must be shifted.

fails to relate to his analogies from physics and zoology. It is true that revolutions are followed by reactions ; but where has he formulated the points at which evolution passes into revolution ? The knowledge of the dangers of revolution is becoming part of the consciousness of those who seek for change ; and the new perception newly conditions activity.

Mr. Spencer, indeed, is striving to set up another new condition by philosophising reactionism, for that is what he ostensibly does in *The Study of Sociology*. If his advice to all men to be "less eager to act in pursuance" of their convictions were equally taken all round, it would leave matters very much as they are, for in the terms of the case the Conservative would be less eagerly Conservative, while the innovator would be less eager to innovate. But, observe, Mr. Spencer is not a whit less eager to act on *his* convictions ; and that is a hint of what will happen all round. Men whose consciousness has been extended will be less spasmodic than they were, as the civilised man is less spasmodic than the savage ; but they will not be less persistent. What Mr. Spencer is really trying to do is to modify the enthusiasm of the Liberal and strengthen the inertia of the Conservative. Hear his conclusion :—

"Thus, admitting that for the fanatic some wild anticipation is needful as a stimulus, and recognising the usefulness of his delusion as adapted to his particular nature and his particular function, the man of higher type must be content with greatly-moderated expectations, while he perseveres with undiminished efforts. He has to see how comparatively little can be done, and yet to find it worth while to do that little ; so uniting philanthropic energy with philosophic calm."

Just see to what thoroughly unsound psychology we have finally come. The fanatic's "wild anticipation," that is to say, his fanaticism, is called useful as being "adapted to his particular nature," when it is his particular nature ; and his "particular function," which is here made identical with his nature, had been previously made out to be the counteraction of the contrary type, which has no hopes or anticipations whatever. That is to say, the fanatic is really useful as counteracting "the man of higher type," repre-

sented by Mr. Spencer; for to this relation things must come, despite the philosopher's attempt to make out that he is neither Radical nor Conservative, but both, or rather something superior to either. In his chapters on the Theological Bias and the Political Bias, he re-introduces the Reconciliation of Religion and Science, and from that stepping-stone mounts to a species of reconciliation of Radicalism and Conservatism. The sentiment which is "alone properly called religious," we are told, is that "awakened by that which is behind Humanity and behind all other things;"¹ and this, we learn once more, is indestructible. And to such lengths can our Sociologist go on behalf of a formula, that he assumes and alleges that persons with an anti-theological bias are yearning for the abolition of this sentiment. "In presence of the theological thaw going on so fast on all sides, there is on the part of many a fear, and on the part of some a hope, that nothing will remain."² That is to say, the anti-theologers hope that in time people will cease to admit the admittedly scientific principle that an infinite Universe is inscrutable—which is as fantastic a misrepresentation as fanaticism itself could accomplish. "The hopes and the fears," Mr. Spencer goes on, "are alike groundless; and must be dissipated before balanced judgments in Social Science can be formed." Knowing something of the anti-theological bias, I am at a loss to know where that particular hope is cherished. My own bias will be glutted to satiety when the public gets the length of simply saying, with Science, that the Universe is inscrutable, and abandoning the mass of superstitions which now constitute Religion. And I have hitherto failed to meet a religious person whose sole fear was that Science would abandon the Agnostic basis. In point of fact, Mr. Spencer's ostensible superiority to both kinds of bias is nugatory: and his final quasi-practical proposition, that it is a good thing that a Liberal leader like Mr. Gladstone should be an Irrationalist,³ is a stultification of his own earlier ethics of propaganda, and a plain fallacy in itself; for if the Liberal party in the mass were enlightened to the point of preferring a Rationalist leader, he would *not* be, as Mr. Spencer says, "out of harmony

¹ P. 311.² P. 313.³ P. 395.

with our present social state ;" and while the Liberal party is *not* enlightened to that point, it clearly cannot have such a leader. The formula here is simple verbalism. Mr. Spencer has merely reaffirmed the ancient proposition that "whatever is, is right," with the somewhat vacuous corollary "more or less."

So with the equation between Radicalism and Conservatism. The Radical, says Mr. Spencer, cannot see that the Tory is a wholesome check on his impracticable enthusiasm ; the Tory cannot see that the established order is but relatively good, and that he simply prevents premature change.¹ Here we have a double argument-in-a-circle. The alleged change is "premature" only because the Tory is Tory ; were there no Tory there would be no premature change. There might be mistakes, but that is not what is meant by "premature" change. "Neither," says Mr. Spencer, "fully understands his own function or the function of his opponent ; and by as much as he falls short of understanding it, he is disabled from understanding social phenomena." What then would happen if they *did* understand social phenomena and their own functions ? What does Mr. Spencer do, who thinks he understands them ; and what do we do who have followed his demonstration ? Simply carry on respectively, happily with rather more circumspection, our Toryism and our Radicalism ! For Mr. Spencer is now to all intents and purposes a Tory, resisting all change, not as premature, but as being absolutely a change for the worse ; and a very efficient Tory he is. His advice about being slower to act on conviction is clearly meant for the Radical, not for the Tory. The "man of higher type," we saw, is finally to moderate greatly his expectations, "*while he perseveres with undiminished efforts*"—an eminently practicable attitude, all will admit. He has to see that very little can be done, and yet to "find it worth while to do that little : so uniting philanthropic energy"—energy in doing very little—"with philosophic calm." In fine, he is to put his faith in Cosmos, and his hands in his pockets—for a strictly negative purpose. He is to form himself on the model of the good old nobility of Mr. Gilbert's rhyme, who,

¹ P. 290.

"throughout the war
Did nothing in particular,
And did it very well ;"

which I take to be the ideal of Toryism. But when the philanthropic energy on the other side is found to be growing too eager, too irreverent of Social Statics, the "man of higher type" receives a broad hint to join the Liberty and Property Defence League, and put his philosophic calm where he formerly kept his hands.

XIII.

And yet, while Mr. Spencer's ostensible political function has thus been to encourage the Conservative in Conservatism, and discourage the Liberal in Liberalism, it is probable that the actual effect of his teaching has been largely the reverse. What he has done for Radicalism has been to exhibit to it its mistakes: what he has done for Toryism, so far as Toryism reads the *Synthetic Philosophy*, is to shake its faith in permanence; for, as he himself indicates, the old Tory ideal did not cognise change as merely premature, but as sinful and ruinous. Toryism among evolutionists will remain: witness Mr. Spencer's own development; but it will never again be the purely primary instinct it was: the spell of the law of cosmic change is felt in its consciousness. He has sought to demonstrate that the evolution of a wholly conscious society can be no otherwise than as that of mainly unconscious societies; nay, that it can be no otherwise than as the mutations of absolutely unconscious matter, or of non-human species, unconscious as such. But that very theorem is itself an extension of consciousness; and the enlargement of mental boundary can never be undone, save by a social dissolution which lowers all the mental levels. There are clearly forces of social dissolution at work which, unchecked, might work such a degradation: forces of multiplication on the lower planes of social life which tend to swamp the higher life, and to re-establish religions and ideals

which we had before been outgrowing. And for all Mr. Spencer has directly taught, that ruinous process might continue. He has advised us to let the miserable multitude, young and old, die in its misery; he has urged us to discontinue that national education which is thus far our most comprehensive measure of self-defence against the deadly malaria of multiplying ignorance; and he would have us defy the still more menacing contagion of deepening discontent. He has, in fine, counselled us to harden our hearts, that so we may rise to a higher morality, which means a completer sympathy. But it is a vain counsel. Hearts will not harden to command: that too is a cosmic process, and depends on the sum total of conditions. Instead of obeying him, we grapple with the great biological problem which it is his supreme mistake to have evaded; deciding that there is a way to help our fellows without multiplying helplessness: the way of knowledge, and of *applied* social science. We finally range ourselves with the new school which adds to the study of Social Statics that of Social Dynamics; and we disallow the teaching of the first masters in sociology as being only a beginning where they think it is an end. In the words of the author of *Dynamic Sociology*, we say of them, and in particular of Spencer, the greatest of them, that they "fail to comprehend the true nature of *art* as applicable to all departments of science. Perceiving that natural processes are genetic, they erroneously conclude that Nature's ways should be man's ways. They thus confound the essential idea of fine art with that of useful art, the imitation of Nature with the control of Nature. They teach the natural as the proper human method, whereas the latter is necessarily an artificial method."¹ It might be added that even this discrimination between natural and artificial concedes too much to Spencer, inasmuch as the conscious effort to conform to a way of life deduced from study as the most truly "natural" is as essentially "artificial" as any attempt to innovate. In fine, Mr. Spencer's virtual implication that certain political action is not really "growth," amounts to a stultification of his own cosmic philosophy. He ends in a notion of the "order

¹ As cited, I., pref. p. vi.

of nature" which takes us back to a stage of thought before science.¹

And yet again, when all is said, how shall we measure our debt to the man whose wide achievement has laid the enduring foundation for this new art (which, let us never forget, is "an art which Nature makes"), and whose deeper and sounder teaching has given us the light which his mere temperamental bias would now fain shut out? Who has in our day widened and consolidated our knowledge as he has done? And what surer contribution is there than that to the reconstruction of our life? So imperishable is the service that our last words must contain the acknowledgment of it. In the name of those who endorse all the criticism we have passed on what we reckon the perishable part of the thinker's work, do we finally turn and say: Hail, spiritual Father and honoured Master, who first trained us to shape our path through the forest by the eternal guidance of sun and stars; though we now must needs turn against the barriers you have raised, the gymnastic you yourself have given, and the woodcraft you yourself have taught, yet would we claim to hold ourselves of your great lineage still; and when we in turn grow "wan with many memories," it is your name and not another's that we shall hand to our children as that of the foremost founder of the new line, the greatest herald of the new age.

¹ See *The Man versus the State*, p. 64.

EPILOGUE.

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OUTLINES OF SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION.

It cannot, I think, fairly be said of the foregoing criticisms, in so far as they deal with social problems, that they are "merely negative," as the phrase goes; but it may help towards a judgment on them to set forth finally and briefly such a scheme of socio-political action as they would justify. On the side of philosophy and religion, it may, perhaps, be said that I have offered negations without "putting something in the place" of the doctrines negated. Such an objection, if it be made, I must take leave to dismiss as a fallacy in terms. Really to show that any belief is unsound is, in the nature of the case, to substitute for it a true belief to a greater or less extent; and if there be no demonstration or persuasion, there has been no effectual negation to complain of. A refutation of supernaturalist morality means the positing of a better; and the refutation of a supernaturalist theory amounts to the establishment of another. What is virtually implied by many who complain of "negative" criticism in religious matters, is that new *institutions* ought to be proposed to take the place of those discredited; which is quite a new thesis, requiring separate proof, which is never given. But as to social reform, it may be justly demanded that he who proclaims the error or insufficiency of teachings before the world should indicate clearly what he himself proposes to do, whether to innovate or conserve, and why. The close of a series of studies such as the foregoing, is not the place for anything more than an outline of the kind; but some such outline is due both to approvers and antagonists.

And at a time when not only advanced Radicalism but so-called English Socialism seems to be swallowed up in the agitation for an Eight Hours Law, it seems specially fitting, if not profitable, to make an attempt to lay down a broader path for political reform. Individualists of all schools are united in opposing the Eight Hours move-

ment, which thus tends to become, for many onlookers, typical of the politics that aim at the prevention of poverty and the improvement of the status of the workers generally. There could be no more mischievous misconception. The cry for an Eight Hours Law represents, to begin with, merely the helpless acceptance, by the mass, of a proposal which offers a direct relief on such terms as to appeal to the weakest intelligence; and, beyond that, the adoption of that cry by some publicists for ulterior reasons, and by others because they fear to oppose it. Socialists are found asking for the Eight Hours Law as a means towards Socialism, when the whole of their professed economic and sociological doctrine commits them to the proposition that an Eight Hours Day can only be reached through Socialism. Radicals, who defend Free Trade on grounds of economic induction, accept this project in defiance of all economic induction. It only needs that the Tory party should adopt the cry, as they would fain have adopted that of Fair Trade, in order that it should be carried to the stage of legislation. After that, the consequences are easy of prediction. The measure will wholly fail to keep up the demand for labour, because the demand for goods will either slacken or be kept up by the cheapening action of new machinery, which will limit employment; and the cause of industrial and social reform will be discredited by the failure of a scheme which has gained a larger measure of popular support within a few years than any other now before us. At least let some of us try, whatever is to be the upshot, to keep a saner set of principles in the field.

1. All democratic political movements, the wise as well as the unwise, have in view the attainment of a greater measure of equality in material well-being. To the same end have been directed all the schemes of social reform, ancient and modern, which have ever won reputation among men. To prevent or limit inequality of wealth has been the hope of every Utopist, whether his ideal were one of Spartan simplicity or of ever-increasing fulness of life for the individual; and in inequality will be found the generalisation of the social evils which have provoked the protest of social reformers, as distinct from moralists, of nearly every school—the Carlyles, the Ruskins, the Owens, the

Fouriers, the Mills, the Marxes, the Lassalles. The iniquity of the state of things in which men can buy all sorts of service while doing none in return—this is the constant text of Ruskin, who has in some regards gone straighter to the roots of social evil than any other modern. Even Comte, who reacted violently against the democratic spirit, sought improved conditions for the workers while proposing to keep them always in tutelage.

2. The problem for democrats then is, how is inequality to be prevented or limited? How is the constant tendency to accumulation, and the endowment of idlers, to be checked by State or corporate action, without striking harmfully at those instincts of justice and self-love which hold societies together? Antiquity gives us plenty of illustrations of the extreme easiness of destroying the very possibilities of social progress by ignorant attempts to reach the desired end by short cuts. The French Revolution is the great modern illustration of the danger of attempting to establish a measure of social justice without a stable machinery. We, in this country, have a tolerably stable political machinery, which has thus far been made to yield a certain amount of reform, a certain measure of social justice. Cannot that machinery be made to do more? Our business here is to show that it can. The machinery itself, of course, needs much extension and improvement, to the end of making the franchise at once universal and effective. Among such improvements must be included the payment of Members of Parliament. It will here be assumed that such reforms will be secured either prior to or concurrently with those proposed below.

3. While many causes go to produce inequality of wealth, of which the extreme embodiment is an idle rich class, it is plain that certain actions of the body politic, through its present machinery, have this effect in a high degree. The institution of a National Debt, which, under the hands of each of the leading parties, suffers but a slight diminution from decade to decade, is in practice a means of maintaining a certain number of individuals and families in lifelong idleness. It also provides, of course, a means by which some industrious persons, engaged in lucrative pursuits, may provide for a comfortable repose in

their old age ; but its typical outcome may, for practical purposes, be defined as the maintenance of idlers in comfort. It ought, therefore, to be the first duty of political reformers to get rid of the debt as speedily as may be, seeing that the wealth which it thus secures to non-workers must needs be created from year to year by the workers. The establishment of a National Debt is a sin against the enlightened moral sense to begin with ; but all that can be done without grave danger to the stability of society is to pay it off with all possible speed.

4. As it is, the interest on the debt is met by means of taxation, raised by various means and on no consistent principle. The true principle of taxation, however, can be easily stated to the satisfaction of thinking men, and has been nominally current in a set of classic maxims, associated with the name of Adam Smith, for over a hundred years. Of these maxims the chief is that a just taxation would *involve equality of sacrifice*. This, plainly, is not even approximately attained at present ; since certain objects of general consumption, bought by all classes, such as tea, coffee, tobacco, and alcoholic drinks, are made to yield a large amount of revenue. Thus, since the individual power of consumption of these articles varies little as to quantity, the poorer classes pay on the average about as much *per head* on their food as the rich. Some reformers, who see no way of checking drunkenness save by making drink dear and, in that way, difficult to get, take satisfaction in these gross inequalities of taxation as regards liquors ; though it is known that low wages (and raised prices either of foods or liquors mean lowered wages) do not hinder men from undue drinking, but probably encourage it, by debarring them from dearer forms of entertainment. Even apart from the taxation of liquors, however, the taxation of admittedly or presumably innocuous foods represents a plain violation of the accepted maxim.

5. Equality of sacrifice, it is plain, can only be approached on a system of direct taxation—that is, by the taxation of incomes. In so far, however, as taxation of income is already enforced, it is fully admitted that equality of sacrifice cannot be secured by taxing all incomes even proportionally. The fixing of a limit below which none are taxed,

though the incomes of the workers are mostly below that limit, is an admission that a certain minimum of comfort should be allowed for before a citizen is asked to make any special sacrifice in the name of public action. No doubt, if indirect taxation were abolished, some reason would exist for proposing taxation of incomes below the present limit; but still the principle of a limit would be recognised. What is needed further, in order to secure a tolerable measure of equality of sacrifice, is a taxation of incomes at an increasing rate. Sixpence in the pound, for a man with £200 a year, means a much greater sacrifice than does the same rating for a man with £2,000 a year. The rate, to satisfy the developed sense of justice, as expressed in the classic maxim of economic science, should be *graduated*. Such a rate was actually enforced in Holland last century, and may be enforced again.¹

6. One object of a reformed taxation should clearly be to pay off more rapidly the debt which now constitutes a burden on the national industry. In no other way can the State so directly and so impartially act for the good of all; and the failure so to act means the maintenance of an obvious injustice. A perpetual debt is a perpetual iniquity, and a perpetual support to an idle class. Taxation should therefore be such as to yield an annual surplus.

7. But if we pay off the debt with all possible rapidity, one certain result will be a check to the consumption, that is, to the buying, of those who have their principal returned to them each year, and of the class of investors generally. The amount of capital seeking safe investments is now always in excess of the opportunities; and to throw a large extra amount on the market annually must needs lower the rate of interest all round, causing investors to restrict their buying proportionally; those without any investments being specially constrained to retrench. It matters not, from the point of view of trade, that such retrenchment implies lessened luxury among idlers: the righteousness of that in itself cannot hinder the depression of trade by reason of restricted demand. Thus, were no precautions taken, the first result of a righteous effort to remove an unjust burden from the shoulders of industry would be, under our commercial system, to plunge industry

¹ See the anonymous *Essay on Trade* variously attributed to Decker and Richardson, ed. 1756, pp. 17-18.

in distress. It will therefore be necessary to find preventives if we are to be justified in taking the proposed course.

8. It is conceivably possible to prevent, by one kind of public action, the evil results which would follow on a rapid liquidation of the National Debt. That action would be, the creation of a special demand for labour by the establishment of public works—that is, schemes which should not aim at doing work that is already being done, or meeting a demand already being supplied. Such works would be, the rebuilding of cities, the utilisation of sewage. Of course, the building of ironclads would have the same primary results, but in that case the ultimate gain to general happiness would be immeasurably smaller than that accruing from undertakings such as those before specified. And in undertaking such works the body politic would be interfering with no vested interests, and undertaking nothing that it can be pretended would be better done by private enterprise. Only those extreme Individualists could object who are prepared to face any amount of inequality, of private aggrandisement at the public expense, rather than see the State undertake any active functions whatever. And what would result would be this—that the demand for labour would increase the effective demand for many, if not for all, commodities, thus giving either direct or indirect relief to those industries which would otherwise suffer from the throwing of large sums of capital on the hands of the investing class.

9. Thus far we have seen how the State may do what it is bound in equity to do towards limiting the idle living that has hitherto been promoted by its own action—that is to say, by the corporate action of the citizens through their political machinery. But this action of the State, it is clear, will not make an end of idle living: it will leave a variety of sources of idle living unaffected, save in so far as its action has lowered interest all round. All interest-yielding concerns—notably the railways, banks, gas and water companies, and insurance offices—would continue to furnish a means whereby persons who amass fortunes in the course of trade or commercial gambling can endow an idle family in perpetuity. Further, the “unearned increment” of ground-rent must continue to maintain many in an idleness no less complete than

that of the inheritor of stocks. An agricultural landlord, indeed, is not typically an idle person ; he has a certain labour-function, which he may fulfil well or ill. Theoretically it is the "mere stock-holder" who is "the idlest person upon earth" (Essay before cited, p. 78) ; but the drawer of ground-rents in cities is practically on the same footing with society.

10. Now, we have laid down as a general principle of taxation the test of *equality of sacrifice* ; but in the case of the typically idle rent-drawer or dividend-drawer, it is plain that mere equivalence of money sacrifice will not equalise him with fellow-citizens who have their incomes in return for some service rendered to society. There should, therefore, be a fiscal discrimination against idly acquired incomes, in order to satisfy in some measure the principle laid down. It may, no doubt, be argued that many nominal services to society, such as stock-jobbing and gambling in buying and selling, are really processes of waste which impoverish rather than aid society. Discrimination of that sort, however, would be impracticable for fiscal purposes ; and we must make our machinery workable. What we *can* apply is a discrimination between (well or ill) earned and unearned incomes ; including in the latter all dividends (even when drawn by persons who "earned" the money they had invested) and all land-rents, as determined either by market-competition or (where necessary) special valuation. Such valuations can be made where landlords supervise or work their farm-lands, as where they hold lands idle ; and thus will be set up a discrimination between the idle and the working landowner, since the work of the latter will necessarily be allowed for. In this way there would be avoided the inequity led up to by those who urge the drawing of all taxation from land only, on the score that it is typically and naturally common property, while all other property may fairly be held privately. This distinction is plainly fallacious. Much of the "other property," as houses, plainly consists of removed portions of the land—stones, metals, bricks, etc. ; and there goes on thus at all times, to the end of private enrichment, a consumption of portions of that land which is declared to be inalienable common property. These removed portions should also in consistency be taxed. Merely to tax objects of property, however, would be to miss entirely the just

principles of taxation. The measure must be, not the nature of the objects individually possessed, but individual *command of wealth*, special regard being had to the distinction between idly acquired and other incomes. Command of wealth is command of services, and the principle of equality of sacrifice involves some regard to the giving or not giving of services in return. As regards the absolute destruction of land in the shape of coal, finally, there ought clearly to be an immediate provision that the State should receive the proceeds.

11. In this way, then, idle living may be still further limited, in strict conformity with the prescriptions of equity, the extra taxation thus obtained being devoted to the removal of State debt, and to the simultaneous creation of public works, as above provided for. And inasmuch as railways, tramways, gas-works, and water-works, are all of the nature of State-conferred monopolies, their very existence depending on special concessions from the body corporate, that body may with perfect justice proceed to take such concerns into its own hands, buying them up at a price fixed by an average of market prices for stock in a given number of previous years. In this way the profit hitherto made by the individual shareholders in such concerns may be municipalised or nationalised, and another source of idle living and inequality abolished. On the same principles, the facilities possessed by the State, in respect of its credit and resources, for carrying on the business of banking, should be utilised. At present the State makes banking a monopoly, by limiting competition, and thus establishing a specific source of profit. Plainly then it has the right to avail itself of that source of profit, by taking over the existing banking concerns or establishing a system which shall supersede them.

12. All this, it is obvious, must be a gradual process. Were it otherwise, the compensating system of public works could not keep pace with the withdrawal of demand for goods by the hitherto investing classes. In any case, that will represent a probable risk of industrial disorganisation. But while on the one hand the classes hitherto living on interest will be moved more and more to lessen their consumption, on the other hand the working classes will be less and less encouraged

to restrict their consumption to the end of "saving money" for investment on their own behalf. Provision for old age will have to be made in some other manner, to be separately considered. The progressive decline of interest will be such as to check, on their part, that "saving" which at present puts a limit to consumption and therefore to production and to employment. That is to say, the workers, assuming them to be employed, will not simply consume more of the easily supplied goods which they now consume, but will presumably be led to raise their standard of comfort, and to demand higher-class products, including those which specially necessitate hand-labour, and so involve employment which machinery cannot supersede. But such raising of the standard of comfort must be in terms, among other things, of limitation of the number of children born; for if increased incomes among the workers concur with not only a higher birth-rate but the much lower death-rate which would presumably result for a time, under the improved conditions supposed, then there will be increased consumption only of food and machine-made products, which last, in the terms of the case, do not involve an increasing demand for labour, but may be provided with relatively decreasing amounts of labour. The extra children born would thus speedily constitute an increasing unskilled proletariat, for which the State could not continue to provide labour or public works. The standard of house, for instance, could not go on rising. The material conditions of civilisation cannot conceivably go on long improving while there is no advance in the higher life; and there cannot be such an advance in the case supposed. What is more, since the higher forms of consumption formerly depending on the demand of the rich and idle classes would fall away, there would be a positive decline in the arts of civilisation. In fine, the Democratic State, aiming at the prevention of inequality, must limit its birth-rate if its civilisation is to progress.

13. If this be admitted, it becomes important to decide whether the State ought to promulgate from the outset the need of the prudential restraint. That lesson cannot be learned in a day, cannot be learned just at the moment that the new gains would be otherwise lost, as some Socialists seem to suppose. Ought not then the doctrine to be publicly laid down as soon as the State begins to take measures which will of

themselves encourage population? Theoretically, it ought; but this is just one of the matters in regard to which State action is most difficult; and on the other hand the desired end may be attained by a propaganda which combines the doctrine of family-limitation with those of political reform above set forth. Already the propaganda of Neo-Malthusianism has been carried to such an extent as to check the birth-rate, thus doing more to limit misery in our midst in recent years than any other agency which can be named. It seems reasonable to suppose that this propaganda, which already appeals so effectively to the majority of rational men and women when once they have thought out the problems of married life and society, will spread more and not less when an increasing number of the workers are put in the way of studying those problems in some degree of comfort. In the meantime, society as a whole owes it to the workers to take the steps before specified for the removal of unjust burdens and the checking of inequality. That duty is primary; and if once it is begun to be performed, all concerned will be more and more led to see the absolute necessity of intelligently limiting population at the same time that former social checks to rate of increase are removed.

14. When a State has, by a continuous process of democratic reform, extending over a considerable time, gradually and therefore permanently got rid of the more easily removed conditions of social inequality, it may conceivably proceed to remove the other conditions also. That is to say, it may nationalise or socialise one industry after another, as it has socialised one civic monopoly after another; and it may nationalise the entire cultivation of the land. But these are clearly not the measures which can come first; and it only confuses the problem of progress to put them forward on all fours with measures which are more or less immediately practicable. While we are getting rid of State debt, nationalising monopolies, checking inequality, and giving steadiness to industrial consumption, industries will be getting ready for nationalisation under the influence of those tendencies which are now seen to be organising so many on a comprehensive scale. A syndicated industry—to say nothing of what may be done by co-operation—will be incomparably easier to nationalise than one that is still

in a chaos of competition ; and it is folly to talk of the State's grappling with the most difficult problems of all while the simpler are untouched. Let the simpler be dealt with, and at once the whole conditions will begin to improve. It is painfully instructive, on the other hand, to see how the advocates of the most difficult and unprepared-for State interferences are ready to catch at the most trivial and superficial of immediate measures when these seem to catch the popular taste. The loudest advocates of such a futility as an Eight Hours Law are found to be those who have just before been proposing to take up the social system by the roots. So do the extremes of unwisdom meet. And all the while the workers, instead of being taught to use their enormous political power on scientific lines, so as radically and steadily to modify all the conditions of their life, are led one day to halloo for the impossible and on the next to shout for the insignificant, doing nothing the while to check the abuses under which they groan. If ever responsibilities in these matters come to be allotted, the prophets of Socialism will not go unstigmatised.

15. It cannot be overlooked that as the State approaches more and more to the democratic ideal of social equality, it must take upon it the provision of some substitute for those arrangements which under the previous regimen secured a certain amount of literature, science, and art, over and above what would be elicited by mere market demand. It may be that in time the normal demand of a cultured people will suffice to secure a constant literary and artistic advance. But in the stage in which idle life is being cut down, and the people is only beginning to move towards those higher forms of consumption which have been associated with idle or endowed life, there will be grave risk of retrogression. Hitherto our best literature, science, and art have largely depended on the accidental possession of inherited income, or family advantages, by persons of genius.¹ Even now, when the demand for some sorts of literature and art is extending more and more among the less leisured classes, it is found that the output increases much more on the side of inferiority than on that of excellence. Though the idle

¹ See the paper, "Our Drift: III.—Compensations," in the *National Reformer*, May 5th, 1889.

class also increases, it does not seem to yield an increasing number of highly gifted writers, thinkers, and scholars, though perhaps it produces more good pictorial artists. Science, on the other hand, is fostered to a considerable extent by the general development. It remains for democracy to provide such special encouragements as shall more than compensate for the random gains to literature and art that have arisen in the past from the chance endowments of genius and research. And when we consider the enormous mass of possible capacity from which a systematic organisation of culture may select—the mass, namely, of those who at present have no chance of self-development—there can be no question of the possibility of as great an advance on this as on any other lines. For illustrative precedent, Athens may serve.

16. For the rest, there are a hundred reforms which will naturally fall to be made by the spirit of enlightenment as the main structure of society is being gradually modified. The educational system, it may be hoped, will be bettered year after year, as the "torrent of children" is checked. The penal system, so blind, so unscientific, so wasteful, cannot long go unreformed; and the substitution of a decent system of civil justice for the present benighted method, under which the richer litigant buys the services of the more skilful sophist,¹ will probably be one of the steps towards the disappearance of litigation. In all respects, law will naturally be framed more and more considerately as it is more and more controlled by the general intelligence. The utilisation of sewage and the sanitary reconstruction of cities have been assumed as the first kinds of public undertaking which will be set up by way of preventing the industrial depression that would otherwise result from the liquidation of the National Debt. Provision for old age and sickness, finally, will have to be made by a system which may be termed either one of pensions or one of "national insurance"; the doing of work by every citizen while he has health and strength being his title to support from the common fund when he is sick or superannuated. Beyond that, these outlines of a systematic democracy may be filled up by the student for himself.

¹ See the papers, "The Reform of 'Justice,'" in the *National Reformer*, May 4th and 11th, 1890.

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Senses um interalle entre dos
 interalle - a esse tempo os
 sons e a vista) e o tempo
 (seu entre o interalle e o
 ephemer) Mas sem a fusão
 que o tempo e a vista se fazem
 + a fusão dos sons
 + outros fatores

Com a vista e o som
 Haveria a fusão dos sons
 entre o tempo e a vista

O fusão dos sons e a vista
 Mas a fusão dos sons e a vista
 e a fusão dos sons e a vista

