implied a vague consciousness that standing his ground was a longer affair than he had counted upon. By the end of the first week in August his funds were exhausted. "I am afraid I must get you to pay the postage on this, for I am down to my last penny." Two days later, acknowledging the first half of a note his father had sent him, he says: "I am still without a penny in my pocket, and as I shall not get your letter containing the other half of the note until after post time to-morrow. . . . I must send off this letter in the same predicament as its predecessor." The offer of a tutorship had been declined, the temporary engineering engagement being more remunerative and more likely "to lead to something else, if it should turn out that I am not able to get any literary employment by the time that it has expired. . . . The fact is that I have made up my mind to continue, if possible, my exertions to make my way in the literary world, and it will be nothing but real necessity that will induce me to make another change."

To his Father.

28 October, 1843.

I am somewhat in a predicament. At the time that I formed the engagement with Mr. Prichard I was beginning to get rather awkwardly situated with regard to my wardrobe; so much so that my only coat was too shabby to serve decently for Sundays. Under the impression that the employment then commenced would be of some duration I had a new coat made, believing that I should very shortly be able to pay for it. In consequence, however, of the engagement terminating sooner than I had anticipated I was not able to do so, and the little money that I had saved during its continuance is now about exhausted; and just at this juncture I have received the enclosed letter from the tailor's solicitor requesting to know why I do not discharge the bill. [As for re-employment in connexion with the Southampton docks] I find that the matter is likely to be so long delayed that there is no likelihood of my being able to wait for it. I have been waiting, too, in the fond hope that I might receive a remittance from *Tait*, but have been disappointed. So that I am rather in a fix. I am even now somewhat put to it in the article of clothes, and have been obliged to remain at home for the last four or five Sundays in consequence of my not having a pair of trousers fit to go out in. I do not see that I can for the present do anything else than

return home. It is impossible for me to remain here doing nothing. I do not see any likelihood of my getting anything to do in the literary way immediately, although there might be an opening by and by. I am still as confident as ever that I could make my way as a literary character if I could once get a start, and I think you will agree with me in that belief.

These extracts tell their own tale as to the extreme poverty to which he was reduced. To enable him to reach home his father sent him £5, on receipt of which he writes:—

I am exceedingly sorry that I should put you to any inconvenience in consequence of my want of success. I had quite hoped to have been by this time able to have refunded you what you have already kindly advanced. To be obliged to again draw upon you, and that, too, when you are yourself somewhat short, I feel extremely annoyed. I wish I could have avoided it, and am sure you will give me credit for the will to do so had I had the means. . . . I have never received anything from Mr. Miall for my articles, nor did I ever expect to do so, for I always felt that he had acted kindly towards me, and I was desirous to do what I could to oblige him. . . . The only remuneration I have yet received for my literary endeavours has been the 7s. 6d. that was paid me by Mr. Prichard for correcting his MS. . . . The printer's account must stand over for the present.

Early in November he returned home. He immediately set about the publication of the article on Imitation and Benevolence which had been declined by the *Phrenological Journal*. A place was found for it in the *Zoist* of January, 1844. Another on Amativeness appeared in July, and a third on Wonder in October.[1] An article on Reciprocal Dependence in the Animal and Vegetable Creations appeared in the *Philosophical Magazine* for February.[2]

Before he left London he had promised to make his father's Shorthand ready for publication. For this he was not ill-prepared, having sedulously practised it: only one letter to his father from London having been written in long hand. He drew up an exposition of the system, hoping that

---

[1] *Autobiography*, i., 246.
[2] *Ibid.*, i., 245 and 533, Appendix F.

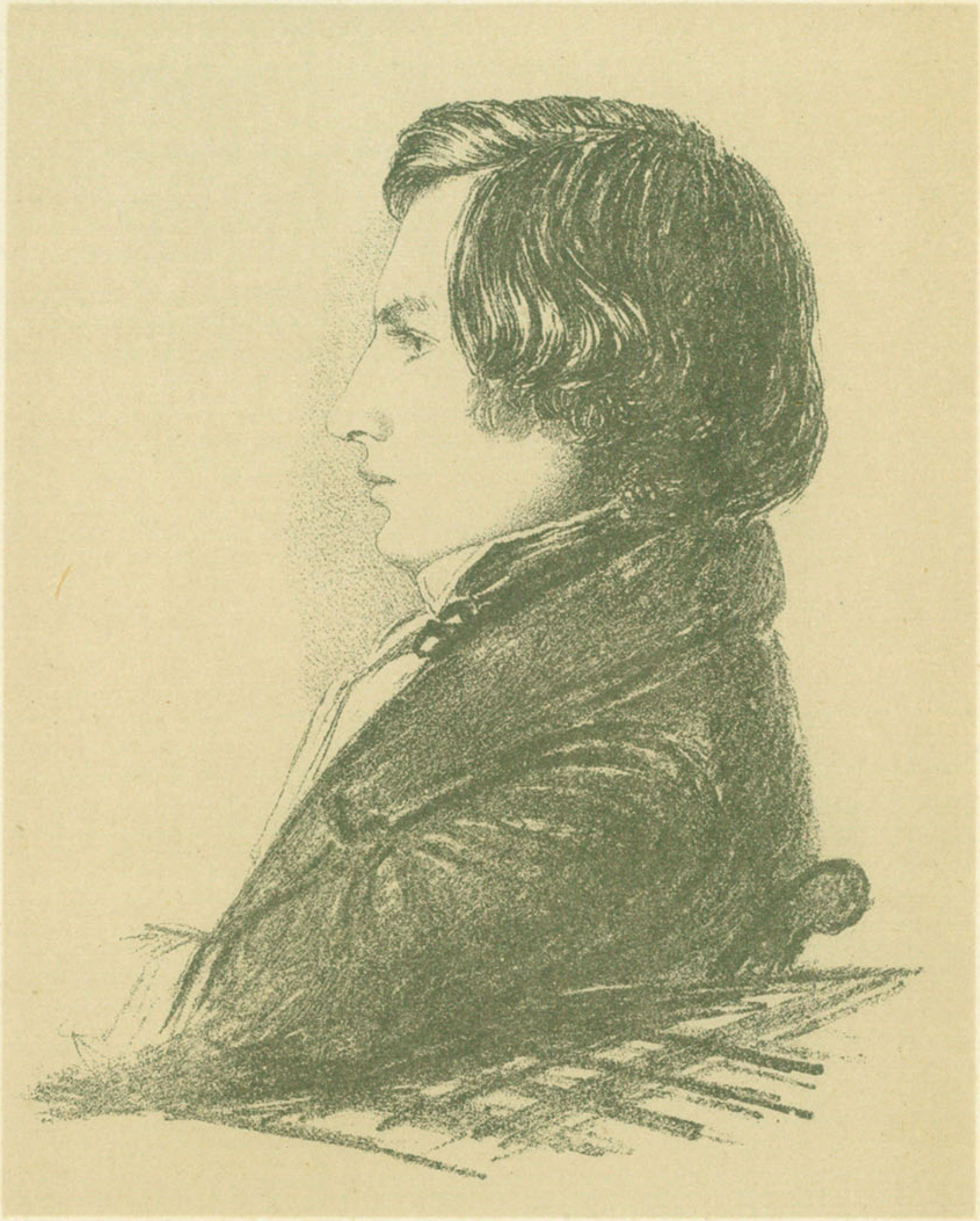
the book would be issued in 1844. But his father's lack of decision when a final step had to be taken could not be overcome. Fifty years had to run their course before the booklet appeared.

A periodical to be called *The Philosopher* was projected, January 3, 1844, being fixed for the first issue. What looks like a statement of "Our Objects" runs as follows :—

> The signs of the times are indicating the near approach of that era of civilization when men shall have shaken off the soul-debasing shackles of prejudice. The human race is not for ever to be misruled by the random dictates of unbridled passion. The long acknowledged rationality of man and the obvious corollary that he is to be guided by his reason rather than by his feelings, is at length obtaining a practical recognition. On every hand and from every rank is springing up that healthful spirit of enquiry which brooks not the control of mere antiquated authority, and something more than the absolute dicta of the learned will henceforth be required to satisfy the minds of the people. Respect for precedent is on the wane, and that veneration heretofore bestowed upon unmeaning custom is now being rapidly transferred to objects more worthy its regard — here manifesting itself in an increased zeal for the discovery of TRUTH, and there in that deep appreciation of PRINCIPLES which characterizes the real reformers of the day.

The buoyant hopefulness of these utterances have their pathetic contrast in his description, half a century later, of the moral and intellectual progress achieved, and in his outlook on the social and political horizon at the time when his labours and his life were drawing towards their close.

The idea of starting such a periodical shows how much the young man was influenced by the desire to possess a medium for the dissemination of his ideas. For a living, his hopes were centred on a type-founding invention which was expected to realize a fortune, if only he could find the necessary capital, estimated at from £5,000 to £7,000. On the advice of his uncle Thomas, he wrote to Mr. Lawrence Heyworth "to enquire whether, amongst your mercantile friends, there are any of enterprizing characters who are seeking investments for their capital." The correspondence with Mr. Heyworth which ensued led



EDWARD LOTT,
from a Sketch made by Herbert Spencer,
between 1841 and 1844.

to nothing from a financial point of view. In another respect it led to something he valued more than money —the friendship of Mr. and Mrs. Potter and their children and grandchildren, which brightened the whole of his future life.

Teaching, never lost sight of altogether, was again forcing itself upon his attention. His uncle's suggestion that he should take pupils independently of his father he thought "a very hazardous experiment," and a private tutorship would lead to nothing permanent. His own plan was that his father should continue as at present, he himself taking pupils who would board with his parents. If this succeeded, his father could, after a time, "relinquish private tuition and devote all his attention to his boarders." A draft prospectus was drawn up and sent to Hinton, where it was objected to as being "too ambitious."

An offer of more congenial employment put a stop to the carrying out of these plans.[1] Through the instrumentality of Mr. Sturge he received the offer of the subeditorship of a paper it was proposed to start in Birmingham. He joined the *Pilot*, as the new venture was called, early in September, but the first number did not appear till the end of the month, by which date his position seemed so insecure that his father, as well as Mr. Sturge, advised him to accept a tutorship. As was his wont when in the early stages of a new enterprise, he himself was full of confidence. "Wilson and I are at present engaged in coming to a definite arrangement." His uncle Thomas was extremely dissatisfied with the unbusinesslike way in which the duties had been undertaken. "Surely Herbert has managed more wisely than to enter upon a matter first and make his terms afterwards. . . . This I know, that I gave my plain advice to Herbert by letter not to engage in such an offer except with a fixed salary." Mr. Sturge made clear how far he had been a party to the arrangement. "I have no interest in the paper in the common acceptation of the term, and it has no connexion with the Complete Suffrage Union, but I am one of the contributors to a fund for starting it, with the understanding that it advocates certain principles."

---

[1] *Autobiography*, i., 247-55.

TO EDWARD LOTT.

1 *October*, 1844.

You ask how I like Wilson.[1] . . . We agree tolerably—I may say very well in our political principles, and he is more liberal than most on religious questions. I cannot say, however, that there is that thorough cordiality of feeling between us that constitutes the basis of close friendship. We do not *sympathize* with each other. . . . Simple and ordinary matters he manages with great success. He composes rapidly. . . . But where, as in the business of getting out our first number, a matter of considerable magnitude and complication has to be transacted and a great amount of management and direction is required, he appears to become comparatively powerless, paralyzed and confused. . . . Having the larger head of the two I seem tacitly to take the lead.

Fortunately for Spencer in his precarious position, an offer of temporary railway work came in his way, and for some weeks he divided his time between that and his sub-editorial duties. The articles he wrote bear evidence that the "indignation phase" had not yet been outlived. Here are a few samples.

Good government can only be secured by basing our political institutions on principle. The party distinctions of Whig and Tory must perish. Radicalism will have done its work when it has uprooted the deadly upas tree, when it has razed to the foundation the great citadel of legislative corruption in which our rulers now dwell; and when a superstructure of truth and righteousness shall have been erected in its stead.

The day is fast coming when mankind shall no longer blunder on in the darkness of expediency—when they shall cease to walk in the ways of their own fallibility, and shall follow those which the Creator says are best; when they shall bow down the stiff neck of their worldly wisdom to the practical embodiment of divine laws; when they shall find that the sense of right which God has implanted in man is meant to be obeyed—that it is the only true guide to general happiness, and that our disobedience to it ever has brought and ever will bring its own punishment.

Englishmen have long ceased to venerate their system of government—it is some time since they left off admiring it—they have now given up respecting it—and it seems that they will by and by despise it. Ere long, then, the existing order of things must pass away.

---

[1] Rev. Dr. James Wilson. To be distinguished from Mr. James Wilson, proprietor and editor of the *Economist*. See *Autobiography*, i., 255, 329, 334.

In these articles unfailing optimism concerning the future goes hand in hand with unqualified denunciation of the past and the present. Small wonder is there that Mr. Lott should remonstrate: "Though by your title you ought to be able to steer clear of all rocks and dangers, yet there is one which I will tell you of. . . . Do not use such terms as 'swindling aristocracy.' They do no good, but only serve to enflame the passions of one class of men against the other."

CHAPTER V.

ENGINEERING ONCE MORE.

January, 1845—*December*, 1848.

NEARLY four years had elapsed since he gave up his profession, strong in the hope that by the exercise of his inventive faculties he would realise such a competence as would afford him the leisure and the means of developing and giving to the world the ideas which had been fermenting in his mind. During those years he had courted literature to little or no purpose. And now, at the opening of 1845, a settled career seemed as far off as ever. Had he been able to lift the veil that hid the future and look through the vista extending over four more years of fruitless endeavour—of trial and failure, of hope deferred and anticipations unfulfilled—he might have lost heart and given up the contest. For that indomitable will, which, in after years even unto the end, kept him true to the great aim of his life, had not yet acquired its matured strength. He was now to revert for a time to engineering without getting any nearer success than when he left the profession in 1841. His inventiveness, whatever gratification it might bring as an exercise of power, was not to add much to his material resources. Behind these, in moments when the outlook was most obscured, there always loomed teaching, "the ancestral profession."

The survey of the proposed branch line to Wolverhampton, which was expected to take him away from the *Pilot* for about a month, was prolonged to several months, his sub-editorial engagement coming to an end without formal notice. April found him in London, sauntering about the lobbies of the House of Commons and tasting

---

NOTE.—*Autobiography*, i., chaps. xix., xx., xxi., xxii., xxiii.

some of the pleasures of London life. The withdrawal of the Bill left him about the middle of May again out of employment. At this juncture Mr. Fox offered him a post. "This work," he tells his father, "will involve an agreeable mixture of in-door and out-of-door work—will give occasion to expeditions into various parts of the kingdom, and will afford plenty of scope for the exercise of my inventive faculty. . . . I am to begin at a salary of £130 per annum, which, Mr. Fox says, I may increase to almost any extent if I manage the work well." The engagement lasted only a few weeks, owing to his refusal to perform duties not included in the agreement. One would have thought that repeated failures to find remunerative work would have inclined him to act less upon the strict interpretation of his rights and to follow the rule of give and take. Writing about this in after life he says that the result "was one which naturally grew out of my tendency to rebel against anything like injustice, at whatever risks." Very opportunely Mr. Prichard offered him work on a projected line between Aberystwith and Crewe. Presently he was put in charge of the office "and all the draughtsmen employed in it until the 30th November at the rate of £4 per day." "Here I am in a new position and have the opportunity of trying my hand at the management of considerable undertakings. So far I have done very well. The office was in a state of utter confusion when I came to it, without the remotest sign of organisation, and I have now put it in order, and made all the necessary arrangements, and all goes on smoothly." During 1846 he was taken up with lawsuits arising out of Mr. Prichard's operations—disputes which were continued into the latter half of 1847.

What leisure he had was spent in "inventing and castle-building." He "devised a pair of skates made wholly of steel and iron in such a manner that there was nothing beyond the depth of the skate blade between the ice and the sole of the boot, the result being to give a greater power over the edge of the skate." Another invention was a means of locomotion "uniting terrestrial traction with aerial suspension," which, however, came to nothing. But he continued to be "very sanguine" as to his invention in the manufacture of boots and shoes.

TO HIS FATHER.

DAVENTRY, 16 *September*, 1845.

I expect to make as much money this autumn as will serve to take out a patent, and if I can do this, and if, as I have heard, you can put as many inventions into one patent as you like, I think I am safe to make something out [of them]; for I am pretty certain that *all* my inventions will not fail. By the way, I have made several new inventions since I saw you, two of which (a new kind of division for levelling staves and a new off-set scale apparatus) I have put in practice and they are highly approved of by all who have seen them. Another is a new hand-printing press, which is both simpler and more powerful than the old kind.

18 *September*, 1846.—I find I am a day after the fair in my invention for raising water. It has just been patented.

23 *October*.—Upon a close search into the late patents I find that there is nothing approaching to my roofing invention, so that in that case I think I am safe in point of priority.

He was more successful with a binding pin,[1] which was in the market in April, 1847, and by May 8 his profits were £45. But about the beginning of the following year the sales fell off, and soon ceased. A more important invention was a machine for planing wood by the substitution "of a circular revolving cutting blade for the straight fixed cutting blade now used in such machines." In this enterprise his friend Jackson joined him. During the whole of 1847 it occupied more of his attention than anything else. The model was tried "and considering everything, the result is very satisfactory." "The only serious impediment is the formation of circular marks across the wood. In other respects there is no doubt about success." Experiments were carried on in Derby, alterations from time to time being made to meet unexpected difficulties. His partner was beginning to have doubts. "If you do not see any improvement, I would rather wind up the business and pay you my share of expenses and understand the matter settled, than leave it open without any hope." Spencer's remonstrances against this decision were unavailing, and, soon after, Mr. Jackson went to India. Thus

---

[1] *Autobiography*, i., 544.

ended the enterprise. Mention is also made of a "type-composing engine, on which I think of trying some experiments when I get to Derby."

From incidental remarks one gains some idea of his miscellaneous reading and literary tastes. Shelley was his favourite poet.

To Edward Lott.

London, 1 *August*, 1845.

They [Shelley's essays and letters] do not give any indication of the genius that shines through his poetry. Of this last I have become a more and more devoted admirer. I cannot but think his "Prometheus Unbound" the finest composition in the language.[1]

30 *October*.—I have just been reading Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, with which I cannot say I am much pleased. It is in some respects natural, and pourtrays with considerable skill the changeable conditions of a mind in process of development, but it is extremely defective in point of plot, and anything but profound in much of its philosophy.

10 *March*, 1846.—[Of Carlyle's *Cromwell* he had a poor opinion.] The "showman," as you call him, I think somewhat impertinent upon occasion. The editorial remarks and exclamations with which he interpolates the letters are not at all in good taste, and *I* think anything but respectful to his hero.

The dying moments of 1846. — Have you seen Dickens's Christmas tale yet? . . . It is a poor affair, and the moral is so extra-philanthropic as to be absurd. It goes to the extent of not only loving your neighbour as yourself—but even loving him better than yourself.

In a letter to his father in March, 1845, the *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* is mentioned as a book just out, but not yet read. In January of the following year he is about to read Humboldt's *Kosmos*.

---

[1] *Autobiography*, i., 261, 295. His youthful enthusiasm for Shelley must have been brought back to him in 1888 on receipt of a copy of Mr. Kineton Parkes' *Shelley's Revolt of Islam and Mr. Herbert Spencer's Ecclesiastical Institutions*. In this paper it is contended that the "Revolt of Islam" is a vehement protest, "Ecclesiastical Institutions" a calm, logical statement. Though differing in form, the fundamental idea is the same.

The want of society was frequently deplored. But in 1846 or 1847 he became acquainted with Mr. Chapman, the publisher, and through him with others of note. About this he says :—

> A generation ago the only liberal publisher in London was Green, the unitarian publisher who had a shop in Newgate Street. My uncle published sundry of his pamphlets with Green. I fancy it was to fulfil some commission from him concerning them that about 1846 I called at the shop, and instead of finding the name Green, found it changed to Chapman. Green had retired, and Chapman had bought his business. . . . I continued still in those days to have no circle of London friends, and hence remember the more vividly any exception to my usual solitary life. Such an exception resulted from this interview. Chapman lived out at Clapton, and in 1846, or possibly it may have been 1847, I went out to an evening party there. I am led to recall the fact because among other guests there was Miss Eliza Lynn, who afterwards became well known as Mrs. Lynn Linton, the novelist. . . . Another of those present was Miss Sara Hennel. . . . William and Mary Howitt, too, whose names were at that day familiar to the reading public, were among the guests either then or on a subsequent occasion.

Only occasionally do we meet with indications of an interest in current politics. Measures, not parties, were what he cared for. To forward Mr. Heyworth's candidature for the representation of Derby in Parliament he wrote a skit headed—"Why you should vote for Freshfield and Lord—," in which he ironically advises the electors to vote for lawyers. Passive resisters may quote him as on their side. He would like to see "some vigorous resistance to the proposed Militia. . . . I for one have made up my mind neither to serve nor to find a substitute."

To his Father.

3 September, 1846.

I have no objection to a whole host of Churchmen and Protectionists getting into the next Parliament—in fact, I rather wish they may. The great thing to be wished is the crippling of Lord John Russell to disable him from carrying his educational and endowment measures. . . . It will do him and the Whigs generally good to be made to feel the determination of the Nonconformists.

In the many arguments he had on religious questions he usually stood alone, his heterodoxy being so pronounced. He has told us in the *Autobiography* (i., 275) how this cost him the loss of one friendship. But with most of his friends it led to no estrangement, nor to any weakening of sympathy with him in his intellectual and social aims. The unpalatableness of many of his opinions was counter-balanced by the attractiveness of his character, in which absolute straightforwardness shone conspicuously. To "the open sincerity that is to me the best part of you," Mr. Lott traced the liking women had for him.

Beyond an article for the *Nonconformist* in December, 1846, on "Justice before Generosity," he does not appear to have published anything. During this year he entered upon a course of reading in preparation for the book he had long wished to write, and by April he had collected "a large mass of matter." He had for some time been dissatisfied with the want of depth and precision in the general argument of the letters "On the Proper Sphere of Government." Hence his desire to write a book in which the views set forth in the pamphlet should be affiliated to general moral principles. Here is a letter which throws unexpected light upon the method by which he sought to form his style.

To his Father.

16 *June*, 1847.

I am prosecuting my studies on style (which I am doing with the intention of shortly commencing my "Moral Philosophy"), and am adopting the plan of copying out specimen sentences. Whenever I meet with any that are peculiar either by their clearness, harmony, force, brevity, novelty, or distinguished by any peculiarity, I copy it out. I wish to collect samples of all possible arrangements and effects that have anything good in them.

If you meet with any particularly worthy of note, perhaps you will be good enough to copy them out for me.

30 *September*.—For the purpose of getting information requisite for my book, I have obtained access to the library of the British Museum. I did this by writing to Mr. Bright, M.P., for a recommendation.

The writing of a book went, however, but a little way towards answering the persistent question about a livelihood,

which seemed no nearer solution in 1848 than it was in 1841. Migration to New Zealand was thought of, and teaching came up once more, and, as it proved, for the last time, as a possible way of meeting sordid cares.

TO HIS UNCLE THOMAS.

DERBY, 10 *April*, 1848.

Were there any likelihood of its answering I should be inclined to join my father in his teaching, but as he has not a sufficiency of engagements to occupy his own time, there is no inducement to take such a step. Do you think there is room for a mathematical teacher in Bath? and would there be anything objectionable in my taking such a position? Perhaps by giving lessons in Perspective, Mechanical Drawing, and Natural Philosophy, in addition to Mathematics, I might be able to make it answer, . . . and with a fair start I do not much doubt my ultimate success.

A few weeks at Bath, whither he went to consult with his uncle and spy out the land, convinced him that nothing was to be found in that direction.

TO HIS FATHER.

LONDON, 22 *May*, 1848.

Perhaps you have before this heard from Bath that I had left them for London to take another look round and see whether anything was to be done. . . . I have good hope of getting something to do here in the literary way.

10 *June*.—I am likely to make an engagement to write leading articles for this new paper, *The Standard of Freedom*, and if the negociation ends as it appears likely to do I am to furnish an article weekly at a guinea each.[1]

Engagements merely pending could not support him in London, so he returned home, though not without hope, arising from a conversation with Mr. Wilson of the *Economist*. It was not till November, however, that he received the offer of the post of sub-editor of the *Economist*. "Thus an end was at last put to the seemingly futile part" of his life, which had lasted for over seven and a half years.

---

[1] *Autobiography*, i., 329, 331.

CHAPTER VI.

HIS FIRST BOOK.

(*December*, 1848, *to July*, 1853).

SOON after taking up his sub-editorial duties in the Strand he tells his mother : " I manage my work very well so far, and have given satisfaction to Mr. Wilson—indeed, I have been complimented by him upon the improvement the paper has undergone, more particularly in the news department, under my administration." The situation left him with considerable leisure to get on with the book which was to embody the leading ideas that had been taking shape since the time he lived at Powick. But he complained of making slow progress. " Moreover, what I have written I have not written to my satisfaction, at which I am even more annoyed than at having made but little progress."

TO HIS FATHER.

1 *April*, 1849.

I have now entered upon . . . the political part of the work and am executing it to my satisfaction so far. The chapter that has least pleased me is the one I have lately finished on the Rights of Children. It is mannered in style. I shall have to remodel it when I make my final revision. . . . I do not think there will be any need to fear taking upon myself the responsibility of publication, seeing that the work is so popular in its aspirations, so well fitted to the time, and written in a style that is likely to commend it to the general reader.

24 *August*.—I am still not satisfied with the style, though I am with the matter.

With a view to suggestions, the manuscript was being sent to his father, who wrote : " The chapter on National

---

NOTE.—*Autobiography*, i., chaps. xxiv., xxv., xxvi., xxvii., xxviii.

Education pleased me the most, and that on Sanitary Regulation the next. There are some points in the chapter on established religions that I don't think you have proved, but assumed. . . . Then there appears in other places an unnecessary amount of bitterness." Again: "Your mother says she fears you make by your style unnecessary enemies. That you should not have introduced the name of Voltaire into your work at all." On this he remarks: "I had suppressed Voltaire's name on a previous occasion, and I will do it on this."

The question of a title, which had been held in abeyance till the spring of 1850, could no longer be put off. For some six months the point was discussed with relatives and literary friends, first one and then another title being suggested before he finally made up his mind to adopt "Social Statics," notwithstanding the objection raised by his uncle Thomas and Mr. Chapman to the word "Statics."[1]

When he wrote chapter xxv. of the *Autobiography* he could not recall the feelings with which he looked for reviews of the book, nor could he remember whether he was disappointed with their superficial character when they did appear. The correspondence helps to make up for the failure of memory. One of the earliest notices was in his own paper (8 February, 1851). "I am quite satisfied with it; for though the high praise is qualified with some blame, there is not more of this than is needful to prevent the suspicion that I had written the review myself." Several of the notices elicit the remark that "the reviewer has not read the book." The review in the *Nonconformist* (March 12) "was not so well written as it might have been. The reviewer apologized on the score of having a bad headache; so Charles Miall told me." The *Leader*, from which he had expected "flaming reviews," devoted three articles to it.[2] The title, it was remarked, had "led some persons to suppose it to be a work on Socialism"; but as regards property, the author "separates himself from Proudhon and the Communists whom he seemed to be upholding." The chapter on the "Right Use of the Earth" is described as

---

[1] *Autobiography*, i., 358.

[2] *Leader*, 15 and 22 March, and 12 April, 1851.

a "terrible chapter," which "places landlords in an unhappy predicament." He was prepared for adverse criticism. "I am rather surprised that I do not get some virulent attacks from the expediency school. Perhaps I may get them in the *Spectator* or *Examiner*. I have written to remind them that the book has been sent; and if they do not now review it I shall assume that, not liking it, and yet not knowing how to pull it to pieces, they think best to let it alone." Of articles in the *North British* and the *British Quarterly* he says: "On the whole, I am as well treated in these two Reviews as I could expect, considering the official character of them—indeed, I may say better than I could expect. For, though both criticize unfairly and distort my views, they do not do this so much as party bias frequently leads men to do." In December Mr. Richard Hutton intimated that he was preparing an article on *Social Statics*. "I shall do my best to demolish what I think, in hands so able as yours, may prove to be very misleading errors, but I fear, with far less success in exposition of my own views than you have shown." This article (*Prospective Review* for January, 1852), under the title "Ethics of the Voluntary System," embodied a criticism which Spencer had again and again to rebut in later years. "If a consequence of his theory is absurd, impracticable, unsupported by a shadow of argument, moral or otherwise, he has a theory ready to account for the failure of his theory," namely, "that it only states the rights and duties of perfect man." Of the article generally Spencer says: "There is only one fair criticism in it. All the rest is merely misunderstanding or misrepresentation. I do not like being identified with the 'Ethics of the Voluntary System' either."

Mr. Hutton was not the only one who thought him too ready to take shelter behind the rampart of absolute morality. Mr. Lott urged the same objections, which Spencer tried to meet.

You compare me to a physician "who was perpetually announcing that he only prescribed for man in a normal state of constitution," and say that I "dwell too constantly in the normal state and consequently am disgusted and impatient with the abnormal one." Either you have not read *Social*

Statics, or have forgotten a good part of it. So repeatedly have I there insisted that it is impossible to act out the abstract law and impossible to reach a normal state save by the slow process of growth, that I am charged with teaching that we ought to sit still and do nothing. You will find that I constantly recognize the necessity of existing institutions, and that all social forms have their uses.

In justification of the use of the ordinary language of theology, which, knowing his religious opinions, his father could not understand, he wrote: "I have always felt some difficulty, but have concluded that the usual expressions were as good as any others. Some words to signify the ultimate essence, or principle or cause of things, I was obliged to use, and thinking the current ones as good as any others, I thought best to use them rather than cause needless opposition."

The chapter on "National Education" was a theme of controversy from the beginning. He was invited to lecture on it, but declined. "I should damage my influence by lecturing. Very few men fulfil personally the promise of their books." He mentions to his father that "the National Public School Association are falling foul of me." On the other hand, the Congregational Board of Education re-printed the chapter at Mr. Samuel Morley's expense, under the title "State Education Self-defeating." A second edition being called for, a postscript of six pages was added.

Among those to whom the pamphlet was sent was Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, who wrote about its contents that "he had been much struck with their boldness, originality and absence of all false thinking and rhetorical varnish." Still, he could not arrive at the same conclusion as Spencer with regard to absolute non-interference with education, which he thought was a "somewhat chilling result." "Perhaps there is a difference between them at starting. Mr. Spencer seems to dislike forming and fitting the mind into national idiosyncrasies. Sir Edward, on the contrary. holds such formation to be essential to the vitality and permanence of States."

As an indication of growing appreciation he mentions, with evident satisfaction, that his name was being coupled with that of Mr. J. S. Mill. "I have had a third application

for my autograph," is the first intimation of a familiar experience of later years. The frequent mention of *Social Statics* leads him to say, with an optimism not yet chastened by experience: "If the book is so interesting as this there can be no doubt about its paying."

To his Father.

25 *March*, 1852.

Mrs. Chapman told me . . . . they had recently had a letter from a working stonemason, stating that their family monument was much out of repair, and offering to put it in good condition if they would let him have a copy of a work called *Social Statics*. . . . I called the other day on Charles Knight, the publisher, in company with Chapman, when he took the opportunity of thanking me for the great amount of information he had gained from my book. This giving me personal thanks has been quite frequent of late.

All this raised his hopes that a new edition would soon be called for. As early as March, 1851, he had begun to revise it, paying much attention to style. "I am surprised to find so many defects." "I have been subjecting Macaulay's style to the same minute criticism that I am now giving my own, and I find that it will not stand it at all."

When he joined the *Economist* there was little of the cheery optimism that was so marked on his going to London in 1843. His uncertainty as to the future may be gathered from the fact that emigration to New Zealand was again being discussed. "What should you say to our all going out together?" he asks his mother. The risks to his parents of such a long voyage and his reluctance to leave them behind, led to the idea being given up. Emigration was, moreover, gradually losing its attractiveness as interest in his book became more engrossing and the prospects of a literary career improved.

About his general reading during these years little is known. He had decided views as to what was worth reading. Carpenter's *Principles of Physiology* was deemed "considerably more useful and vastly more entertaining" than books about "fights and despatches and protocols." He did not think that gossip about current events "would at all help me in learning how to live healthily and happily,

or that it would give me any further insight into the nature of things." Nor did he care for what is called history.

To Edward Lott.

23 April, 1852.

My position, stated briefly, is that until you have got a true theory of humanity, you cannot interpret history; and when you have got a true theory of humanity *you do not want history*. You can draw no inference from the facts and alleged facts of history without your conceptions of human nature entering into that inference: and unless your conceptions of human nature are true your inference will be vicious. But if your conceptions of human nature be true you need none of the inferences drawn from history for your guidance. If you ask how is one to get a true theory of humanity, I reply—study it in the facts you see around you and in the general laws of life. For myself, looking as I do at humanity as the highest result yet of the evolution of life on the earth, I prefer to take in the whole series of phenomena from the beginning as far as they are ascertainable. I, too, am a lover of history; but it is the history of the Cosmos as a whole. I believe that you might as reasonably expect to understand the nature of an adult man by watching him for an hour (being in ignorance of all his antecedents), as to suppose that you can fathom humanity by studying the last few thousand years of its evolution.

In the spring of 1850 he had ceased to live at the office of the *Economist*, and took lodgings in Paddington along with Mr. Jackson, whom he had joined in trying vegetarianism. Of this experiment he tells his mother (whom, by the way, he reproves for her "dietetic habits," and "constitutional Toryism"): "I am getting quite learned in cooking and am daily scheming new combinations, some of which have been very successful. I will by and by send you our diet table, which, I doubt not, will in time be sufficiently varied and palatable, as well as nutritious." Vegetarianism, not coming up to expectations, was given up before the end of the second month.

The year 1851 witnessed the inevitable reaction after the strenuous efforts of the two previous years. As regards visible results it may deserve the title "An Idle Year," given it in the *Autobiography*, but in reality the ground was being prepared for the fertile productiveness that was to follow. It was the year of the Great Exhibition, which "passes all expectation." He was particularly anxious that his mother,

"with her passion for sight-seeing," should not miss coming up, and advised his father and uncle William to come up separately, as he could give them more help and attention than if they came together. That his former professional interests had not given place entirely to his newer literary interests was shown by an article on "A Solution of the Water Question" (*Economist*, 20 December), in which he made suggestions for the supply of pure water to London and the improvement of the Thames. A scheme similar to one of the suggestions has been recently before the public, Gravesend taking the place of Greenwich as the site of the proposed dam.

"The early years of the fifties were fertile in friendships commenced." *Social Statics* was instrumental in bringing about an introduction to Mr. Octavius Smith. Acquaintance speedily ripened into intimate friendship, which in due course brought him, in manifold ways, some of the greatest pleasures of his life. The weekly evenings at Mr. Chapman's brought him other friends, one of the earliest being Mr. G. H. Lewes, whom he got to know in the spring of 1850; but with whom there was little intimacy till the following year.

To his Father

22 September, 1851.

I had a very pleasant walking excursion with Lewes on Saturday, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday last, up the valley of the Thames. We began about Slough, and got as far as Abingdon. It did us much good, and we enjoyed it immensely. I mentioned to Lewes my notion about the law of vegetable development, and the carrying out the idea in the examination of various plants added much to the interest of the walk. He was greatly delighted with the doctrine.

3 *October*.—Lewes is about 34 or 35, of middle height, with light brown long hair, deeply marked with small-pox, and rather worn-looking. He is very versatile. He is a successful novelist and dramatist, writes poems occasionally, is an actor, a good linguist, writes for the reviews, translates for the stage, is a musical critic, and is, as you may suppose, deeply read in philosophy. He is a very pleasant companion. He is married and has three children.

About the middle of 1851, Spencer first met Miss Marian Evans, who was on a visit to the Chapman's. Later in the

same year he took Mr. Lewes to call on her. In 1852 he made the acquaintance of Mr. David Masson and Mr. T. H. Huxley. To the latter he introduced himself when seeking information bearing on a theory of population he had entertained as far back as 1847. Regarding this he told his father in September, 1851: "I have commenced drawing out a skeleton plan of my book on population and shall send it to you by and by. I think it will be beautifully complete and perfectly conclusive." Intending it to form a book of some twenty odd chapters, he at first declined Mr. Chapman's request that he should make it the subject of an article. Eventually he agreed to give an outline of it in the *Westminster Review*, and on his return from a Christmas visit to Mr. and Mrs. Potter he set to work on it.

To his Father.

April, 1852.

You have not given me any opinion of the Population article yet. . . . I met Robert Chambers the other night and he complimented me highly upon it. Mr. Greg disapproves and has narrated to Chapman various objections, but they are easily answerable.

May.—You will be pleased to hear that Professor Owen has nothing to say against the Theory of Population. Chapman asked his opinion of it. He said it was a very good article. Chapman then pressed him to say what he thought of the theory. This he declined to do, stating that he had read it rapidly and was not prepared to give a decisive opinion. His known caution as to new views is sufficient to account for this; and the fact that he raises no objection may be taken as satisfactory. Professor Forbes, an authority who, on such a point, stands perhaps next to Owen, says he "thinks there is some grounds for the theory." He is a cautious Scotchman, and hence probably thinks more than he says.

28 *May*.—I met Professor Forbes on Sunday. He told me that he had read the population article twice and was about to read it a third time. He said he should like to have some talk with me about it.

A notice of the population article in the *Leader* gave rise to a misunderstanding between Mr. Lewes and Spencer. The chief biographical interest of the lengthy correspondence that ensued lies in the fact that it is the first of many instances exemplifying Spencer's extreme sensitiveness about

his rights as an original thinker. Mr. Lewes had used expressions which, in Spencer's opinion, "will lead all who read them to suppose that your ideas on the subject were not derived from me, and that the formula just quoted is one originating with yourself." While pained to think that he should be supposed to have denied Spencer's priority, Mr. Lewes maintained that he had arrived at his conclusions by an independent path, though acknowledging that it was Spencer that had put him on the track in the course of their country rambles. The misunderstanding was cleared up to Spencer's satisfaction, and led to no diminution in their friendship. The article out of which the difference had arisen was, as already stated, the means of initiating a new friendship, the first step towards which was a note dated 25 September, 1852—"the politest note you ever sent me" was Profeesor Huxley's description of it more than forty years after. "Mr. Herbert Spencer presents his compliments to Mr. Huxley, and would be obliged if Mr. Huxley would inform him *when* and *where* his paper on the Ascidians, just read before the British Association, is likely to be published in full. The contents of the enclosed pamphlet will sufficiently explain Mr. Spencer's reason for asking this information." The friendship thus initiated paved the way to another. In the following year, in the rooms of the Royal Society, Somerset House, Mr. Huxley introduced him to Mr. Tyndall, describing him by a line from Faust as "Ein Kerl der speculirt."

A series of papers in the *Leader* under the head "Travel and Talk" was projected, in which expression was to be given to "the overwhelming accumulation of thoughts" that bothered him. "The Haythorne Papers"—the title finally adopted (*Autobiography*, i., 386)—were to be unsigned, because he "did not wish to be publicly identified with the *Leader's* Socialism." The first, "Use and Beauty," appeared on 3rd January, 1852. The second, "The Development Hypothesis," on 20th March. This was the outcome of several years of thought.

To his Father.

25 *March*, 1852.

The Haythorne Paper, No. II., has created a sensation. I have had many people complimenting me about it. Copies

of the paper containing it have been sent to Owen, Lyell, Sedgwick, and others. My consent has been asked to reprint it in the *Reasoner;* and Robert Chambers, after expressing to Lewes his admiration of it, said that he meant to write to Lyell about it.

If things go on in this way my contributions will be getting in demand.

. He exerted himself to meet the anticipated demand. Other papers of the series published during the year were "A Theory of Tears and Laughter," "The Sources of Architectural Types," "Gracefulness," and in the middle of the following year "The Valuation of Evidence."

The importance of a clear and forcible style had been impressed on him in season and out of season by his father, and memoranda on the subject had been accumulating for years. In the *Autobiography* he mentions a paper on "Force of Expression" (written for *Tait's Magazine* some nine years before, but declined), as forming the basis of an article now to be written for the *Westminster Review*. In August, 1852, he set to work on it.

To his Father.

1 *October*, 1852.

The article is entitled "The Philosophy of Style." It is good, but a little too scientific. You will find it a great improvement upon the original essay, if you have any recollection of that.

20 *October*.—The article is a good deal praised, both in the press and in private. . . . I shall probably expand it a good deal eventually when I come to republish it along with other "Essays and Critiques." All the articles I write I mean to be of that solid kind that will be worthy of republication; and when my name has risen to the position that it will by and by do, such a republication will pay.

Among the private commendations was one from Alexander Smith, of Edinburgh, who was flattered by the recognition given him in the article, the author of which he was ignorant of until Spencer wrote to him.

To Edward Lott.

10 *September*, 1852.

Did I mention to you when in Derby last the new poet Alexander Smith? I consider him unquestionably *the* poet

of the age. Though a Scotchman (and I have no partiality for the race) I am strongly inclined to rank him as the greatest poet since Shakespeare. I know no poetry that I read over and over again with such delight.

In a letter to his father of 3rd September, 1851, a hint had been given of a new departure. "I have been much absorbed of late in metaphysics, and believe I have made a great discovery." The following up of the "great discovery" was probably hindered by the writing of the earlier of the Haythorne Papers and the article on "Population"; but in a letter of 12th March, 1852, he says of it: "I mean to produce a sensation." To get time for this he had begun to think of resigning his post on the *Economist*, making up for the loss of salary by writing for the Quarterlies. His mother urged caution.

To his Mother.

27 October, 1852.

Do not fear that I shall take the step that alarms you unless I see it safe to do so. . . .

Your objection to the risk is an objection that would apply to every change. . . . But be assured I shall not change until I have well tested the propriety of the step.

The book-selling agitation, initiated by Chapman's article on the "Commerce of Literature" in the *Westminster Review* for April, 1852, at once claimed his active interest. In a letter signed, "An Author," in the *Times* of April 5, he related his experience in connexion with *Social Statics*. A deputation of persons connected with the bookselling trade waited upon Lord Campbell, Dean Milman and Mr. Grote, who had been chosen as arbitrators. The Booksellers' Association failed to establish its case, the result being a decision against it.[1] In 1853 he joined the society formed for promoting the repeal of the taxes on knowledge.

The amount of work he accomplished during 1852 and the first half of 1853 is surprising when one considers the claims upon him arising out of the ill-health of his father and the illness and death of his uncle Thomas. Both father and uncle were proof against warnings. Here is a sample

---

[1] *Times* 15 and 16 April, 1852.

of his letters to his father, giving advice which in after years he might well have followed himself. "I was sorry to find that your nervousness made you, as usual, expect the worst result conceivable. It is a pity, when inclined to take such gloomy views, you cannot call to mind how many times you have prophesied dreadful results and have been mistaken. But I suppose some mental idiosyncrasy prevents this." Again and again did he remonstrate with his uncle. Early in 1852 he wrote a paper on the "Value of Physiology," intended for the *National Temperance Chronicle*, edited by his uncle, who, however, "did not publish it when it was written, being offended by an apparent (but unintended) allusion to himself." The illness of his uncle required his frequent attendance at Notting Hill, his aunt being "quite touched by his affectionate interest": she "never saw anything more heartfelt than his grief."

Under the terms of the Will of his uncle, who died in January, 1853, his aunt and he were left executors. This work, which fell mainly on his shoulders, was transacted in what his aunt describes as "a prompt, business-like, satisfactory manner." Legacies were left to his father, his uncle William, and himself. Through all the negociations he showed an entire absence of a desire to force his views upon his co-executor or co-legatees. Only one matter gave rise to friction. At a meeting held four days after the funeral, "it was agreed that several persons should give a small sketch of Thomas," for consideration at a subsequent meeting, with a view to its publication in the *Temperance Chronicle*.

To his Uncle William.

21 *February*, 1853.

What I had written was received somewhat coolly, not being uniformly eulogistic. It was not, however, objected to at the time. But next day my aunt came to me at the Strand (after Newcombe had gone off with the MS. to Leicester), wishing modification of it, and expressing her dissatisfaction with its tone. Our conversation ended in my offering to withdraw it, which was agreed to, and a letter was written to that effect at once. It is in type, however, and I have asked Newcombe to have some proofs struck off for me so that you will see what I wrote.

TO HIS FATHER.

2 March, 1853.

I was very much vexed to see yesterday . . . that the sub-secretary, Newcombe, had embodied extracts from it. He was not authorised to do it, and has just defeated me. I wished to say *all* I thought or *none*. I dislike insincere, one-sided statements, and am provoked that what I wrote should have been turned into one.

7 March.—I am glad you like the sketch of my uncle Thomas. I almost began afterwards to doubt, when I saw the dissatisfaction it gave, whether I had done him justice. But the fact is, people cannot bear the truth in these matters.

In preparation for the time when he would be thrown entirely upon the proceeds of his pen, he completed his article on "The Universal Postulate," and sketched one on "Over-Legislation."

TO HIS FATHER.

28 *April*, 1853.

I am busy with the article on "Over-Legislation," which is two-thirds done. I am about to get a letter of introduction for the *North British Review*, so that I may have an article in hand for them by the time I leave the *Economist*.

17 *May*.—I am extremely busy writing. . . . This arises from the fact that both the article on "Over-Legislation" and the one on the "Universal Postulate" are to be published in the *Westminster*. The first is already done and going to the printer. It is much approved. The other is working out to my full satisfaction.

24 *May*.—I do not think you need feel any nervousness as to my change of position. With the two articles in the next *Westminster*, in addition to all I have written, I do not fear having quite enough demand. I have already taken steps for contributing to the *North British*, as you will see by the enclosed note from Masson, who is one of the chief writers for it. . . . I shall obtain an introduction to Cornewall Lewis, the editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, as soon as the next *Westminster* is published.

7 *June*.—I have just been writing to the editor of the *North British*, and have named five articles for him to choose from. I have two-thirds done the "Universal Postulate," which works out quite to my satisfaction.

15 *June*.—The paper on the "Universal Postulate" will not after all go into the next *Westminster*. Editorial exigencies have necessitated its postponement till the succeeding number. However, Chapman proposes to put it into type at once, so that I may send proof sheets to each of the leading thinkers forthwith.

The article on "Over-Legislation" appeared in the *Westminster* for July. The same month he severed his connexion with the *Economist*.

CHAPTER VII.

A NEW PSYCHOLOGY.

(*July* 1853—*December* 1857.)

BEFORE settling down to those literary enterprises, that, with the youthful optimism which in those days seldom failed him, were expected to compensate for the loss of a sub-editor's salary, Spencer had resolved to take a holiday in Switzerland along with Mr. Lewes and Mr. Lott, the legacy of £500 from his uncle putting him at ease with respect to finances. From Standish, where he was paying the first of many visits to Mr. and Mrs. Potter, he wrote to his mother with a view to set her anxious mind at rest: "I daresay before I leave this I shall be quite right again, and that my Swiss journey will make me stronger than I have been for years. . . . Do not fear that I shall run into danger in Switzerland, or that I shall over-exert myself. I am too cautious for that."

A list of projected articles had been sent, along with a copy of "The Universal Postulate," to the editor of the *North British Review*.

TO A. CAMPBELL FRASER.

LONDON, 29 *July*, 1853.

The article on "Method in Education" which, I infer from your expressions, is the one most likely to suit your present purposes, is also the one which (of the three you mention) I am best prepared to write. . . . I propose therefore to get the article ready in time for your February number.

30 *July*.—Your note of the 25th requested me to mention any other subject I had in contemplation. Though I had one which I felt would be suitable to you I did not make any rejoinder in my note of yesterday, from the belief that in pro-

---

NOTE.—*Autobiography*, i., chaps. xxix., xxx., xxxi., xxxii., xxxiii.

posing it I should probably clash with my friend Masson, which I am anxious to avoid doing. I have since seen him, however, and find that he has no intentions in the direction I supposed.

The topic to which I refer is the "Positive Philsophy." Miss Martineau's translation of Comte will be out probably by Christmas; and having much to say on his system—mainly in antagonism to it—I am desirous of reviewing this forthcoming English edition of his works.

On the same day he tells his father that he had agreed to write an article on "Manners and Fashion" for the *Westminster*. "Moreover, I have been *twice pressed* within these few days by the proprietor of the *Leader* to write him a number of Haythorne papers. . . . So you see I shall have as much to do as I want; and all of it on topics of my own choosing. No fear of becoming a hack."

Owing to Mr. Lewes being unable to join and Mr. Lott having to delay starting for some days, he set out alone on the 1st August to begin his acquaintance with foreign countries.

TO HIS FATHER.

ZURICH, 12 *August*, 1853.

I had a few hours to spend at Antwerp which I devoted to seeing the churches. . . . The outside [of the Cologne Cathedral] I admire extremely, and when finished. . . . there will be no such sample of Gothic in the world. The inside, however, I do not admire, save in the grandeur arising from its great size. The architecture is by no means equal to that of the outside, and it is quite spoilt by the chromatic decorations. There is a strange mixture in it of magnificence, tawdriness, and meanness. . . . [Frankfort] is much to be admired. The houses are fine, the streets clean and well paved, and everything looks likely and attractive. On the whole, these continental towns make one feel quite ashamed of ours. . . . Certainly in respect of many things I felt inclined to question our boasted superiority.

In the matter of colouring he thought Switzerland inferior to Scotland. Of this he wrote to Mr. Potter: "I remember being astonished when ascending Loch Lomond at the splendid assemblage of bright purples, reds and blues of various intensities, which the mountains towards the head of the lake presented. I saw nothing to compare with this

in Switzerland. Mainly in consequence of this superiority of colouring, I think the view from Ben Nevis quite equal to the view from the Righi."

He had set out with great hopes of benefit to health and with excellent resolutions not to over-exert himself. On his return he wrote: "Although I did not gain as much benefit whilst there as I hoped—though to my surprise I experienced no exhilaration from the mountain air—yet I think the change in constitutional condition is pretty sure to be advantageous." In this he was grievously mistaken. He began to be troubled by his heart. His opinion that this was due to over-exertion will not appear improbable to one who knows what hill-climbing, such as he and his friend accomplished, means to a person not in training. In reply to enquiries Mr. Frank E. Lott writes:

I never remember my father referring to that holiday or warning me against over-walking, though I believe that he did so on one or two occasions without quoting his own case. My aunt [Mrs. Glover] remembers his return from the 1853 Swiss holiday, and he looked as if he had overdone it, and told them that such was the case. To such an extent had they *both* overstrained themselves that the noise of the river Aar in the valley beside which they were walking on one occasion became unbearable; so that the nervous systems were decidedly strained, and my father was far from naturally a nervous subject.

For many years before his death my father's heart was far from normal, and the more I think the matter over the more I agree with Mr. Spencer that the over-straining of the constitution in 1853 seriously affected both of them.[1]

Before going away he had distributed copies of "The Universal Postulate," one being sent to Sir William Hamilton.

From Sir William Hamilton.

Largo, Fifeshire, 12 *September*, 1853.

But though I admired the talent with which the paper is written, you will excuse me, I am assured, when I say that I by no means coincide with your views upon the points in question. But to enter upon these in detail would engage me in a dis-

[1] *Autobiography*, i., 431-3.

cussion which, I am afraid, would not be agreeable to you, and for which, in fact, I feel myself at present unable.

Those familiar with the great Scotch philosopher's controversial style will appreciate the force of the remark that his criticisms would not have been agreeable to the youthful essayist.

"I am making further important discoveries in psychology," he tells his father in October, "and accummulating memoranda. I am getting anxious to begin the book." But before he could take up the projected work on Psychology he had to fulfil the engagements entered into. At home, in November, he worked hard at the article on "Education." On returning to town he set about getting "Manners and Fashions" ready. In March he mentions a Haythorne Paper which had "been standing in type these two months." One on "The Use of Anthropomorphism" had appeared in the *Leader* of November 5. The paper now referred to must be that on "Personal Beauty," the first part of which appeared on April 15, and the second on May 13. There were still two articles to write before he could turn to the *Psychology*, which was "growing into yet grander form in my mind." One was the paper on Comte. In fulfilment of a promise made to Professor Fraser before going to Switzerland, he now offered to send a sketch of the article, being "aware that the topic is one requiring some editorial caution."

To A. Campbell Fraser.

26 January, 1854.

The article on Comte would not at all touch on the theological aspect of his doctrine, but would be purely scientific. I propose to call it "The Genesis of Science." It would treat first of the relationships of science to common knowledge, including an important definition which M. Comte has overlooked; next of the incongruities in M. Comte's arrangement, showing that a theory of the very reverse nature might be founded on his own facts; next of the radical vice of all attempts at a *serial* classification of the sciences—such classification being altogether impossible, and finally of a sketch, partly psychological, partly historical, of what I believe to be the true process of evolution. I will forthwith write out my memoranda under these heads.

I fear that what I should write on the Sanitary Question

would be inadmissible in the *North British*. It would be in the same sense as my article on "Over-Legislation" in the *Westminster* for July last. I should endeavour to show that the evidence on which sanitary agitators are demanding more law is grossly garbled and one-sided; that the inferences drawn from local statistics of mortality are in many cases absurdly fallacious; that many of the evils about which the greatest outcry is raised have been themselves *produced* by previous sanitary regulations, and that current legislation will inevitably produce similar ones; further, that the agencies that have brought the drainage, &c., of our towns to its present state would effect all that is needed were *legislation obstructions* removed; with sundry other positions akin to these.

28 *January*.—Herewith I enclose the sketch of the first part, or *de*structive part, of the article on Comte. The second or *con*structive part cannot be represented in a sketch.

The article was not accepted for the *North British*, owing to an article on Comte in the same number having anticipated Spencer's offer. It appeared, however, in the *British Quarterly*.

Early in August he left town, intending to spend some months on the French coast and then to winter in Paris, devoting himself to the *Psychology*. But after a month at Tréport his restlessness drove him to Paris, where he had not been many days, when, owing to the heat, he regretted that he "did not stay another week at Tréport." "I am getting on very well with the *Psychology*, which goes on unfolding into more and more complete form as I advance. From time to time I keep making fresh discoveries which harmonise with and confirm the rest. My private opinion is that it will ultimately stand beside Newton's *Principia*." This opinion must have struck him as somewhat presumptuous, for twelve days after he tells his father that it will be well not to mention it lest it may be thought "a piece of vanity." Paris being too hot and too dull, by the middle of September he left for Jersey. He was "delighted with the island;" but "the cooking is not good." "They bake their meat instead of roasting it. However, by evading the questionable dishes I do pretty well, and as I do not think of staying more than a week longer it is not worth while to change." Early in October he was in Brighton. Taking

lodgings "some distance from the sea, but high up on the West Cliff, overlooking the town," he expected to get on with his work. But by the 19th he was back in town with the intention of settling there for the winter.

The following extracts give some of the impressions received from this first visit to France.[1]

To Edward Lott.

14 *November*, 1854.

Two dinners a day (and the French *régime* may be properly so described) strikes one at first as rather queer—especially the regiment of wine bottles at breakfast. But approval soon supplants surprise (at least it did with me) and I have come so far to prefer their system in respect of hours, that I have since adopted it. . . . Paris is a parasite, and considering how abnormal is its degree of development relatively to the rest of the body politic, and how disastrous to the nation at large is the perpetual abstraction of vitality by it, I do not feel in the least envious of its superiority in respect of the arts of life. Our efflorescence is to come ; and based as it will be on an abundant nutrition, on a well organised nutritive system now in course of development, it will be both more complete and permanent.

Leaving all reflections, however, Paris is certainly a wonderful place. [But] it soon satiates. As for the architectural beauty of the place, it certainly makes one feel ashamed of London. Not that I think the architecture itself is really of a very superior order. It is rather by the amount of it and by the general regard to appearance that the effect is produced. Analysis of the public buildings and the house fronts leaves my opinion of French taste much as it was—by no means a high one. There is a certain poverty of conception, a mechanicalness in the designs—a formality, a lack of poetry. And there is frequently in the French buildings what I have often noticed in the French furniture—a want of that massiveness, that substantiality, which is a requisite basis of true beauty. . . . On Sunday, I went to the fête of St. Cloud. . . . One thing I saw astounded me not a little, and, little squeamish as I am likely to be on such a matter, somewhat shocked me. Fancy a *tableau vivant* of the *crucifixion* performed by three children—two boys and a girl, on a little revolving table in the midst of holiday-makers.

The article on "Railway Morals and Railway Policy," appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* for October, 1854.

---

[1] Compare *Autobiography*, i., 455-9.

HERBERT SPENCER,
from a photograph taken in 1855.

To his Father.

24 *October*, 1854.

The railway article is quite a success. *The Economist* and *Spectator* of this week have both leading articles upon it, approving the principle enunciated, and hinting at an alteration of the law. . . . The *Railway Times*, too, notifies that it has more extracts in type. These things render it probable that some result may arise from the article in a public point of view ; and personally they will be very advantageous in putting me on a good footing with the *Edinburgh*.

19 *November*.—I have just been making such additions to the "Universal Postulate" and such divisions of it into parts as were needful to form it into the first part of my *Psychology*—the "General Analysis." I have made it clearer and stronger ; and have met such objections as had been raised.

11 *March*, 1855.—It is sufficiently clear, therefore, that be the ultimate arrangement [for publishing the *Psychology*] what it may I shall not be able to get any sum paid down, to be forthcoming on the completion of the MS.

Such being the state of the case, and the American dividends not having been paid in cash. I shall soon be "hard up" if I stay here ; and therefore propose, if you have no objection, to come down to Derby for a while, on the same terms as before.

15 *March*.—The printing is to commence forthwith. . . . Under this arrangement the printers will about overtake me by the time I get to the end, in June next, or thereabouts.

The next three months he spent at home, writing for five hours a day, with no relief from cogitation even during the hours devoted to walking. The portrait opposite shows that he was overworking himself. About the end of June he went to Wales to write the three concluding chapters. Pen-y-Gwyrid, at the foot of Snowdon, he calls (*Autobiography*, i., 466) "a place of sad memories to me ; for it was here that my nervous system finally gave way." From this time the finishing of the *Psychology* was done by little bits at a time, some of it in Wales and the last chapter at home. To expedite publication he went to London, and by the middle of August the book was out.

TO ALFRED TENNYSON.

1855.

I happened recently to be re-reading your Poem, "The Two Voices," and coming to the verse

"Or if thro' lower lives I came—
Tho' all experience past became
Consolidate in mind and frame—"

it occurred to me that you might like to glance through a book which applies to the elucidation of mental science the hypothesis to which you refer. I therefore beg your acceptance of *Psychology*, which I send by this post.

TO T. H. HUXLEY.

16 *August*, 1855.

Knowing as you must do how greatly I value your criticisms —much at my expense as they often are—I need hardly say how glad I shall be if when reading the book (or such portion of it as you have patience to read) you will jot down on the margin any remarks that occur to you, and will some day let me see them.

I have knocked myself up with hard work and am going to relax for six months. I start in the morning for Tréport on the French coast.

My best congratulations on the recent event [Professor Huxley's marriage] will be best conveyed by saying that I envy you.

Next morning he set out on that pursuit of health which was to last, not six months only, as he anticipated, but eighteen months, and which neither during that nor any future time was to be crowned with complete success. At Tréport, with Mr. Lott as companion, he made rapid progress; but, as usual, he soon tired of the place. He next tried Dover, but did not like it: "It is too much in a hole." Then Folkestone, where he "slept much better in consequence of having adopted a new course of regimen." He intended to move on to Hastings, but the next we hear of him (29 September) he is at Gloucester on his way to join Professor Huxley at Tenby, in the hope that "the going out with him dredging daily will do me good." It would be amusing, were it not so pathetic, to read how theory succeeded theory as to the abnormal condition of his brain, and remedy gave place to remedy; there being all

the time a hopefulness which adverse experiences seemed unable to quench.

To his Father.

29 *September*, 1855.

The fact is, I have been making blood faster than the weakened blood vessels of my brain will bear, and I see that I must live low a while.

10 *October*.—Dr. Ransome might be right were the present state of my brain one of excess of circulation. But it is the reverse. Conversation with Huxley, joined with my own observations and deductions, have proved to me that the cause of my sleeplessness is *defect* of blood in the brain. All modes that excite the cerebral circulation (thinking excepted) are beneficial —stimulants, smoking, and so forth.

23 *October*.—I have come to the conclusion that the fault is not in the vessels of the brain but in the nervous substance. . . . I have no unusual sensation in my head unless I excite myself.

30 *October*.—I have come to the conclusion from sundry experiments of different kinds that tonics of all kinds are unfit for me at present, and that sea-air has been doing me harm rather than good. . . . Derby air, will I think, be suitable for a time.

After some five weeks at home, he went to live on a farm at Ideford, in Devonshire, the neighbourhood being favourable for riding, to which form of exercise he now took. From Devonshire he migrated to Gloucestershire, going first to Cirencester, where he found the air "bracing enough—almost too bracing at present, it would seem, for I have not slept so well since I came. I miss the horse exercise, which gives me exposure without much exertion." By January 20 he had taken up his abode at a farmhouse at Brimsfield, near Painswick, in Gloucestershire. The receipt of £67 for work done on some of Mr. Prichard's railway schemes years before, was "a very opportune windfall. I had long ago ceased to expect it." On February 7 he tells his mother: "I am getting on quite satisfactorily. I now take a great deal of exercise every day—walking, riding, and thrashing, which I find a very beneficial exercise." Next day, owing to the wet weather making "every-

thing, indoors and out, insufferably damp," he resolved to go home. Home he went, but within three weeks he was back at Brimsfield. "By far the best exercise I have found yet is grubbing up tree-stumps and splitting them into pieces for burning. It is not simply exhausting exercise, but it is interesting, and fully occupies the attention." Mr. Lewes chaffs him about this: "And so you have become a hewer of wood and drawer of water! Is that the exodus of philosophy?"

Among the remedies recommended by his friends at Standish were marriage and the exercise of the emotions, more especially the religious emotions. Parts of his replies to these suggestions are given in the *Autobiography* (i., 477-9). The letter to Mrs. Potter goes on to say:—

> With respect to your special suggestion for the exercise of the feelings in default of a more direct means, I should say that it might be efficient in cases where the emotional part of the nature was already in a state of tolerable activity. But I have little faith in the effect of precept or example in a case like mine, where the feelings have been so long in an almost dormant state. Nothing but an actual presentation of the objects and circumstances to which they stand related will, I believe, suffice to excite them in any adequate manner. Moreover, there is in me a special hindrance to the production of any such effect as that you anticipate from reading the Gospels. Owing to the foolish pertinacity with which, as a child, I was weekly surfeited with religious teachings and observances, I have contracted a decided repugnance to the very forms in which they were conveyed. I cannot hear scriptural expressions without experiencing a certain disagreeable feeling; and I can no more escape this than I can the nausea produced in me by particular sweets that were commonly given me after medicine when a child. You will readily understand, therefore, that narrations clothed in language for which I have this distaste would fail in the desired result. Even were it otherwise I should doubt the practicability of efficiently arousing the *impersonal* emotions before the *personal* ones; the reverse is the natural order. And further, it is not as though your plan had never been tried. Up to seventeen I was constantly in the way of hearing the gospels.

Mr. and Mrs. Potter were more successful in inducing him to try another remedy—a visit to Standish—which he accepted, though not without misgivings as to the effect of "cultivated Society" on his brain. He enjoyed himself

greatly, participating especially in the amusements and recreations of the children. So great was the benefit that he thought of trying the effect of a visit to London. "I doubt not that rambling about London, sight-seeing, and occasionally calling on friends, will be just the thing for me."

He meant to economize during his stay in town, and not without reason: there being ground to fear that the *Psychology* would be a loss, and his pen had long been idle. The notices of the book, during the time he had been in retirement, did little to create a demand for it. The charge of "materialistic and atheistic," which the *Nonconformist* had brought against it, he repudiated. "Not only have I nowhere expressed any such conclusion, but I affirm that no such conclusion is deducible from the general tenor of the book. I hold, in common with most men who have studied the matter to the bottom, that the existence of a Deity can neither be proved nor disproved." The notice in the *National Review* he thought "decidedly dishonest. I am going to write a letter to the editor similar to that to the *Nonconformist*."

To his Father.

Standish, 9 *April*, 1856.

You have probably heard what a scurvy notice the *Athenæum* has got of the *Psychology*. . . . The *National Review* has declined to put in my letter. If I can get it back I shall publish it elsewhere.

I send you the *British and Foreign Medico-Chirurgical Review* with a very good notice of the *Psychology*. It is by Morell.

London, 13 *April*.—Huxley has lately been reading the latter part of the *Psychology*, *à propos* of his lectures. He says "there are grand ideas in it." I value his approval more than that of any one; as he is always so critical and sceptical, and so chary of his praise.

2 *May*.—Bain,[1] who was excessively civil the other night, told me that John Mill spoke highly of the *Psychology*, and that he was preparing a reply to my attack on him, which is to appear in the 4th edition of his *Logic*.

---

[1] This, his first meeting with Professor Bain, was at a party at Mrs. Masson's.

The summer of 1856 was memorable as being the date of the first of many holidays spent at Achranich (afterwards Ardtornish), the Argyllshire home of Mr. Octavius Smith. On his way north he stopped for a week at Beoch, on the shore of Loch Doon, in Ayrshire, and put to the test some of his conclusions on the psychology of fishes.

To his Father.

Achranich, 16 *August*, 1856.

I received the enclosed note a few days since and the volumes [Mill's *Logic*] have now reached me. There is nearly a whole chapter devoted to a reply to the Universal Postulate. I have glanced through it, and am not at all alarmed. Nor does his reply on another point at all stagger me.

9 *September*.—I think it probable that I shall soon be able to do a little work daily; especially if the Brighton air suits me, as I expect it will. I have not caught a salmon yet; but I have hooked two.

Brighton not coming up to expectations, he made up his mind to go to Paris, and asked his father to send his skates, his map of Paris, and Nugent's dictionary.

To his Mother.

Paris, 20 *October*, 1856.

The weather here is bright and clear, and Paris looks more charming than ever.

I called on Comte yesterday to give him a remittance from Chapman. He is a very undignified little old man. My French sufficed me to carry on an argument with him in a very slip-shod style.

Albeit that Paris was "more charming than ever," within a week he was tired of it. The idea of inventing a smoke-consuming fireplace had taken possession of him. "It is extremely simple, will possess very many advantages, and can, I think, scarcely fail to succeed. Moreover, the bringing it to bear will be a very good occupation for me, as being alike new and interesting."

To his Father.

London, 4 *November*, 1856.

I am busy getting information about smoke-consuming grates. Arnott's does not act perfectly, though it is an immense

improvement. Moreover, it is liable to get out of order and difficult to manage. I am sanguine of success, and hope to combine many advantages besides smoke-consuming.

A day or two after this he went home, remaining till about Christmas. The smoke-consuming fire-place "ended in smoke" he tells us. "Smoke would not behave as I expected it to do."

New Year's Day, 1857, was noteworthy as being the first of a long series of New Years' Days on which he dined with the Huxleys. To be near them he took up his abode with a family at 7, Marlborough Gardens, St. John's Wood, hoping to do a little work. Two years before this he had promised an article for the *Westminster Review* on "The Cause of All Progress." He now set about redeeming that promise.

To his Father.

4 *February*, 1857.

I am attending a course of Huxley's lectures at the Royal Institution, to which he has given me a ticket. I was lately present at Dr. Tyndall's lecture on glaciers, in which he overturned sundry of the current theories.

23 *March*.—I finished my article on "Progress" on Saturday. I have been rather hard pressed for these ten days. . . . On the whole, I have decidedly progressed with this hard work.

The article was "very well received," he writes in May. "Huxley, whose criticism I value most, said he could not pick a hole in it, and that he meant to read it two or three times. He thought it would have great results on science." For the next few months he was engaged on an article for the *National Review* on "Transcendental Physiology," which appeared under the title "The Ultimate Laws of Physiology." Huxley told him that it had been ascribed to Huxley himself; "and that by no less a person than Dr. Hooker. I have heard Huxley say that there are but four philosophical naturalists in England—Darwin, Busk, Hooker, and himself. Thus the article has been ascribed *by* one of the four *to* another of the four."

The midsummer holiday of 1857 was spent in Kirkcud-

brightshire and Ayrshire. While there he elaborated into an article for *Fraser's Magazine* some notes previously made on "The Origin and Function of Music." Discovering on the way south that he would arrive at Derby on a Sunday evening, he wrote to his mother: "I believe there are no cabs at the Derby station on Sunday. Will you therefore please send one to the station to be there ready for me at 7.35. For with my fishing basket and rod, and my somewhat dilapidated costume, I shall hardly like walking up home." During the few weeks at home he began an article on "Representative Government," which was completed at Standish. He was back in town in time for its appearance in the *Westminster* in October.

To his Father.

London, 28 *November*, 1857.

I have undertaken to write a short article on this Banking Crisis—perhaps under the title of the Bunglings of State-banking—in which I propose showing the evils of meddling and the superiority of an unrestricted system. It is for the next *Westminster*.

I have also engaged to supply the April number of the *British Quarterly* with an essay on "The Moral Discipline of Children."

I have just revised the last sheet but one of the volume of *Essays*. It will be out, probably, by the end of this next week.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE UNIFICATION OF KNOWLEDGE.

(*January*, 1858—*May*, 1860.)

ONE of the reasons which weighed with Spencer in selecting 13, Loudoun Road, St. John's Wood, as his residence in the beginning of 1858 was its nearness to Professor Huxley. Henceforth their intercourse became more frequent, and whether or not they met during the week, the Sunday afternoon walk could be looked forward to for healthy exercise and mental stimulation.

The revision of the *Essays* towards the close of the previous year was doubtless the immediate cause of that synthesis of his thoughts which, to outward appearance, suddenly took place during the last days of 1857 and the first days of 1858. It would be a mistake, however, to assume that the scheme, dated January 6, 1858, which he forwarded to his father on the 9th, was hastily conceived. Towards such a synthesis his ideas had for years been tending, the general drift of thought in the scientific world being also in the direction of some unifying principle. In his writings, varied as they had been in subject-matter and treatment, there could be traced a fundamentally uniform method of looking at every problem, as well as many of the leading conceptions embodied in the scheme. The revision of the *Essays* was but the completing link in the chain of antecedents.

While thinking over his project he had to fulfil engagements already entered into, such as the article for the *British Quarterly* on the "Moral Discipline of Children." An article on "Physical Training" was proposed for the *Quarterly Review*, and one on the "Nebular Hypothesis" was begun.

NOTE.—*Autobiography*, ii., chaps. xxxiv., xxxv., xxxvi.

TO HIS FATHER.

1 *April*, 1858.

I am very well, and am going on satisfactorily with my article for the *Quarterly*. I think it will be interesting.

I happened to meet at Chapman's on Sunday a Captain Pelly [afterwards Sir Lewis Pelly], and through him received a most flattering and rather startling compliment. After expressing his own obligations to me for instruction derived from *Social Statics*, he went on to say that it was much read by the officers on the northern frontier of India—that they had a dozen copies in circulation among them—and that *Colonel Jacob, the Chief Commissioner in Scinde, who is in fact the Governor of Scinde, swears by it, and acts completely on its principles.* This Colonel Jacob has just written a book which his friend Captain Pelly has brought out for him in England, in which he gives his political experiences illustrating these doctrines to which he has been converted. I little thought that *Social Statics* was already regulating the government of some millions of people.

He had promised to accompany his father to France for the next midsummer holiday. But when the time drew near he hesitated owing to the warlike preparations going on across the channel.

TO HIS FATHER.

14 *June*, 1858.

What *do* all these enormous preparations mean? An attack on England seems improbable; but every other conceivable purpose seems equally improbable. As the preparations *must* mean something the question is, of the various improbabilities, which is the least improbable. Certainly nothing would delight the army more than to attack us. I saw not long since a copy of verses that are sung by the French soldiers, breathing most ferocious feelings against us. Louis Napoleon would not hesitate if he thought it politic; but can he think it politic? I do not know what to think.

18 *June*.—It seems very probable that I shall be prevented from joining you myself. There is an arbitration case of Prichard's just coming on, in which I am wanted as witness; and if I can get paid my last account for similar services, due now these five years, I must stay to give evidence. It is provoking that things should so happen as to hinder this long-arranged joint excursion.

The next three months were spent for the most part in his native county. With Derby as his headquarters he made excursions hither and thither in the vain hope

of getting fishing. At Matlock, "where the fishing is free there being no fish!" he made up for the want of his favourite pastime by attacking the theory of the vertebrate skeleton. His dissatisfaction with the Archetype theory dated from 1851, when he attended Owen's lectures. A lecture by Professor Huxley, showing the inadequacy of Owen's doctrine in so far as it concerns the skull, encouraged him to express his disbelief in the theory as a whole. "I am busy," says a letter (9 July) "with the onslaught on Owen. I find on reading, the 'Archetype and Homologies' is terrible bosh—far worse than I had thought. I shall make a tremendous smash of it, and lay the foundations of a true theory on its ruins." The month after the article appeared he writes to his father: "Huxley tells me that the article on Owen has created a sensation. He has had many questions put to him respecting the authorship—being himself suspected by some. The general opinion was that it was a settler."

On return to town in October he set about writing a promised article on "The Laws of Organic Forms." In view of another article he mentions that he was to "dine with Mr. Cross, of the great firm of Dennistoun, Cross and Co. He is to give me some information bearing on the morals of trade." An article on "Physical Training," declined for the *Quarterly*, had been accepted for the *British Quarterly*. He had been distributing a few volumes of the *Essays*. Two of the letters of acknowledgment are worth quoting, Mr. Darwin's being one to which Spencer attached great importance.

From Charles Darwin.

25 *November* [1858].

Your remarks on the general argument of the so-called Development Theory seem to me admirable. I am at present preparing an abstract of a larger work on the changes of species; but I treat the subject simply as a naturalist, and not from a general point of view; otherwise, in my opinion, your argument could not have been improved on, and might have been quoted by me with great advantage.[1]

---

[1] *Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, ii., 141. *Autobiography*, ii., 27.

FROM THOMAS HENRY BUCKLE.

3 *December*, 1858.

Rarely, very rarely, have I read a volume containing so much thought. Indeed, some of your views almost *trouble* me with their wealth—the ideas, in spite of their clearness, being so suggestive as to fatigue. But to oppress in this way is the highest proof of power. . . . The one on Progress interested me much; but you would doubtless be the first to allow that our knowledge is hardly ripe enough to verify the whole generalisation it contains.

While at home he had been turning over in his mind plans for securing a living while giving him leisure to carry on his literary work. The re-organisation of the Administration of India having suggested a possible solution, he wrote to Mr. J. S. Mill.[1] Application was also made for a post under the Education Commission. And, in addition, Mr. Octavius Smith had some plan which, if carried out, would give him a position in Mr. Chapman's firm. The letter to Mr. Mill, owing to the death of Mrs. Mill, did not reach its destination till November, when he was favoured with a reply which "though sympathetic, was disappointing," as far as prospect of employment was concerned.

TO J. S. MILL.

RICHMOND, 27 *November*, 1858.

I hardly know how adequately to thank you for your very generous letter; and my difficulty is increased by the remembrance of the sad circumstances under which it is written. . . .

I have scarcely any claim to express my sympathy with you. But I cannot refrain from saying that I hope, both on public and private grounds, that the depression which the opening of your letter implies, may not be lasting; and that you may hereafter resume your career of usefulness.

The expression of opinion with which your letter concludes is much stronger than I had hoped, and cannot fail, if I may make use of it, to be of great service.

Among the friends whose interest he sought to enlist was Dr. Hooker.

---

[1] *Autobiography*, ii., 23.

To J. D. Hooker.

13 *December*, 1858.

I am about to seek some such position as that of foreign consul ; and my purpose in seeking it is to obtain the means of prosecuting various literary (or more properly, scientific) projects which I am now unable to carry out.

What I have hitherto written bears but a small ratio to that which I am anxious to write. Aims, originally somewhat extensive, have been gradually growing more so. Especially of late certain ideas, of which a few crude, misshapen rudiments exist in the *Essays*, have been developing in a way I never anticipated—promising in great measure to absorb, and give unity to, the separate works I had before contemplated. And this has made me the more eager to go on.

But, unhappily for me, my books have no adequate sale. . . . Under these circumstances the course suggested to me is to obtain, if possible, some post, rather of responsibility than of much active duty, which would afford me adequate leisure for executing the contemplated works. . . .

If you believe it is desirable to treat Psychology and Sociology after the spirit and methods of physical science (I give this as the best brief indication of my chief aim)—and if you believe, from what you see of my writings, that I am likely to achieve anything in this direction, perhaps you will add the weight of your name to that of others. I am desirous to have the matter considered solely on public grounds. If you think that, through the advancement of opinion, an adequate public advantage would probably result from my gaining the desired position, and if, *in so far only as you think this*, you could aid me by your testimony, you would do all that I wish, and would much oblige.

In the matter of consular appointments, Dr. Hooker's reply was not encouraging.

They do entail an amount of worry to a sensitive and duty-loving man that is far from congenial to reflection. . . . I hence question whether some post demanding the veriest drudgery and nothing else, during work-hours, would not prove more suited to your pursuits, so long as the said drudgery was limited as to time per day and entailed no after cares. . . . This is teaching the teacher with a vengeance, for no one should know all this so well as you ; but no man can be his own physician or metaphysician either !

When inviting the opinions of his friends, he had been careful to state that he wished this question of an appoint-

ment to be treated solely on public grounds. The testimonials he received laid stress, therefore, on the public value of his work as a thinker and writer, the importance of giving him the means and leisure to carry it on, and the possession by him of the intellectual and moral qualifications that go to make a valuable public servant. Here are a few extracts from the testimonials.

Mr. J. S. MILL.—I should think it a credit to any minister to obtain the aid of abilities and principles like yours for the public service, and an absolute disgrace not to avail himself of them when offered.

Dr. R. G. LATHAM.—I have no hesitation in committing myself to the opinion that any position which gave you leisure and opportunity for continuing your labours in the direction in which they already lie, would be a benefit not only to a limited number of readers, but to the national literature and science in general.

Dr. J. D. HOOKER.—I have been deeply impressed with your accurate and extensive information, your vast power of acquiring knowledge, and the sagacity with which you analyze and generalize the facts and ideas which lay at the foundations of both the Natural and Physical Sciences. Nor are you less happy in your manner of expounding your results than in your methods of arriving at them. . . . In common with all your friends, my great desire is to see you placed in some responsible position, where you could devote a fair share of your time to the solution of the great problems that occupy your attention, feeling assured as I do, that wherever you may be placed, your love of these sciences, your power of observation and reflection, and your ability and promptness in treating of them, will lead to your developing results of the greatest importance to the advance of human knowledge and happiness.

Mr. GEORGE GROTE.—I feel assured that your services are likely to prove extremely valuable in any department of administration to which you may be named: not merely from such a combination of intellectual study with knowledge of practical details, but also from that uprightness, sincerity of character, and habit of diligent industry, which I know you to possess besides.

Professor CAMPBELL FRASER.—I am happy to give my testimony to his power of invigorating and inspiring other minds. . . . I should anticipate a salutary impulse to surrounding opinion wherever he may be placed, from his fearless investigations, as well as valuable results to science from his habits of unbiassed and laborious interpretations of phenomena.

Sir HENRY HOLLAND.—I am very desirous to aid, in any way that may be in my power, the desire you express to obtain

some office under Government. I may in part perhaps do this by writing a few lines to convey my opinion of your eminent fitness for any position, in which high honour and integrity are required ; conjoined with equally high intelligence and mental cultivation.

Professor HUXLEY.—Founded as it is upon the accurate observation of facts, science would soon stagnate if the co-ordination of its data did not accompany their accumulation—and I can conceive nothing that would give a more vigorous impulse to the progress of science than the promulgation of a modern "novum organon" adapted to the state of knowledge in these days, and showing the unity of method of all science and the mutual connexion and interdependence of all forms of cognition.

I cannot testify more strongly to my estimation of Mr. Spencer's abilities, than by expressing my belief that if health and moderate leisure be granted him, he will very satisfactorily perform this necessary piece of work for us.

Professor TYNDALL.—It gives me pleasure to state that in your writings I discern the working of a rarely gifted and a rarely furnished mind. I do not know that I have met anywhere a deeper and truer spirit of research. Your facts are legion, and your power of dealing with them . . . is to me almost without a parallel. . . . I would here express the earnest hope that circumstances may be so shaped as to enable you to apply powers of the rarest order, and knowledge which it must have required long years of labour to attain, in its advancement and propagation.

Of the letters of thanks two only have been found—namely, to Dr. Hooker and Professor Huxley.

To J. D. HOOKER.

16 *December*, 1858.

Thank you very heartily for your valuable testimonial, and the sympathetic expressions accompanying it. Of the one let me say that it is quite the kind of thing I wanted, but much better than I had dared to hope. . . .

My reason for choosing this [a foreign consulship] as the direction in which to seek an appointment was partly because I thought the requisite leisure would thus be secured, and partly because the office is one which I could undertake consistently with my views on the limits of State-duty. But your remarks give me pause. . . .

I looked for you last night at the meeting of the Geological Society, wishing to thank you in person, but I could not see you. The evening was a triumph for Huxley, and rather damaging for the progressive theory, *as commonly held*.

TO T. H. HUXLEY.

31 *December*, 1858.

I scarcely know how adequately to thank you for your most cordial testimonial. It far surpasses what I had hoped. . . .

I had no idea that you had so far divined my aim ; though you have given to it an expression that I had never thought of doing. I know that I have sometimes dropped hints ; but my ambition has of late been growing so wide that I have not dared fully to utter it to anyone. But that, having in some sort recognized it, you, who so well know my weak points, should still think that I may do something towards achieving it, is, I assure you, an immense satisfaction, and will be to me a great encouragement to persevere.

Though I fear few will realize the possibility, or at any rate probability, that results of value may arise from giving me the opportunity of working out my aims, yet that one in your position should express this conviction cannot fail to be of important service to me.

In pursuance of his idea of getting some post in connection with India he had applied to Lord Stanley, who, as well as Mr. Disraeli, expressed a desire to help him.

FROM LORD STANLEY.

EAST INDIA HOUSE, 4 *January*, 1859.

I have long been familiar with your works on *Psychology* and *Social Statics*, and accept with pleasure the copies which you send, although I have already other copies in my library. Having read these works with close attention, I require no further proof of your qualification in point of intellectual ability for public service ; and I should be glad to be able to secure for the State the advantage of your talents and assiduity. But it is fair to inform you that the amount at my disposal of what is called "patronage" is but small. . . . My power of furthering your wishes is therefore very limited ; but if you will state to what particular branch of the service your wishes point, I shall be better able to say whether I see any prospect of being able to offer you employment.

TO HIS MOTHER.

28 *March*, 1859.

A few days ago I was much disheartened in consequence of finding, in the course of a conversation with Mr. Wilson, that there were now very few posts that would at all suit me—very few that would give adequate leisure. . . . The only posts that Mr. Wilson thought would be available were those of stamp-distributors.

These endeavours to find employment interfered with the article on "The Morals of Trade," which was not finished till January. At home for a few weeks he began a paper on the relative values of the different kinds of knowledge. He also made his first regular experiment in dictation in the shape of a memorial from his father to the Town Council about the houses in Bridgegate.

To J. S. Mill.

Derby, 17 *February*, 1859.

I should ere this have thanked you very much (as I now do) for the copy of your Essay *On Liberty*, which you have been so kind as to send me.

In recent times the topic has been so much disgraced by clap-trap declamation and the questionable characters of those who have dealt with it, that it has become one apt to call up more or less derision in the minds of a large class of people. And greatly needing as it did to be rescued from its damaging associations, I rejoice that it has been taken up by one whose name will beget for it respectful consideration.

I am very glad, too, that you should have treated that aspect of the matter which so greatly needs exposition—the claims of the individual *versus* those of society. Unfortunately, the notion of Liberty has been so much mixed up with that of organic reforms, that, with the mass of men, it has come to be synonymous with democratic government; and many of those who think themselves its warmest advocates are above all others inclined to increase the tyranny of the State over individuals. Indeed, the strong tendency there is on the part of the working classes to Over-Legislate has given me the only qualms I have had of late years respecting the effects of increased popular power.

You do not carry the assertion of private against public claims quite so far as I do. But though as a matter of theory I could have wished for something further, yet, considered with reference to its influence, I am glad your Essay asserts no more than it does: it will have the greater weight with almost all readers. I hope for great effects from it in mitigating that mania for meddling which has been the curse of recent legislation. And I know of no more important service to the time than to reform public opinion in this matter.

The next letter acknowledges a copy of the pamphlet on Parliamentary Reform.

To J. S. Mill.

London, 25 *March*, 1859.

I scarcely know what to say respecting an educational qualification ; but on the whole my leanings are, I think, rather towards dissent than otherwise. Setting aside practical difficulties, which I expect would be considerable, I doubt whether education, of the elementary kind, is a trustworthy test of the intelligence requisite to give a vote. The mass of those who have the mere rudiments of education, are, I believe, as profoundly ignorant of all matters bearing on legislation as those who cannot read and write. By-and-bye, perhaps, as cheap newspapers spread, it may become otherwise ; but at present I fancy this is the case. Moreover, the sprinkling of artisans who have made some use of their education, and are politically active, would not improbably make worse voters [rather] than better. If the rest know *nothing*, the knowledge of these consists chiefly of *error*. Preferring publications that promise them impossible advantages, and reading only these, they contract some of the wildest hopes and will listen to no criticism of them ; and very generally their desire for political power originates in the determination to enact their utopias. The present strike of the shoemakers (an intelligent body of artisans) against the sewing-machine shows that, *relatively to social phenomena*, they are no wiser than peasants.

I merely set down these considerations at random—not having thought out the question carefully.

Respecting the ballot I own to being very much shaken, if not indeed converted.

May I draw your attention to a point in the representation which seems to me of more importance than any other? I mean the propriety of insisting that those who have votes shall personally pay rates. The tendency of late has been exactly in the opposite direction. Small householders have been more and more freed from direct taxes, without diminishing their political power. Some years since they were disfranchised when their landlords compounded for the rates ; but now it is otherwise. The result is that the connexion between all governmental action and the demand for taxes—a connexion far too faintly realized even under the most favourable circumstances—is becoming less and less familiar to the working class mind. The result is necessarily an increased leaning towards over-legislation. This is now conspicuously the case in municipal governments. The municipal taxes being paid by the landlords of small houses, and the tenants being not reminded by increased rates that they have to pay for extra municipal outlay, it has now become in towns the popular policy to make public gardens, and build public baths, &c., at the town's expense : the popular candidate gains suffrages

by promising these things. If all the men who had political power had constantly thrust upon them, in a quite distinct, tangible manner, the fact that for every additional function undertaken by the Government, general or local, they had to pay so much the more money, there would be an efficient check upon interference. I feel very much inclined to think *that representation may be safely extended so fast only* as taxation becomes direct and equitably distributed.

A paper on Geology was dictated during a six weeks' sojourn at home before going to Achranich. The following are extracts from letters to his parents while he was in Argyllshire.

21 *July*.—They are all very kind, and everything goes on very agreeably. The weather is very fine and the scenery magnificent.

7 *August*.—As I did before, I find this air rather enervating. But I am sleeping well and enjoying myself greatly. . . .

This is a capital place for studying geology, and especially the geology of metamorphic rocks. There is an immense variety of formations within a small area.

4 *September*.—Mrs. Smith has pressed me to stay as long as I find it agreeable. . . . I am pretty well, but am rendered rather stupid by this damp climate.

13 *September*.—Valentine Smith, with whom I was intending to come south, does not start till Tuesday, and they have persuaded me to stay till he leaves. . . .

We yesterday had the most charming excursion I ever had in my life. We went by sea—a boat containing twelve—down the Sound of Mull, up Loch Sunart and Loch Teacuis, and home by land. The scenery was splendid and the colouring marvellous. The day was one I shall never forget.

He had got over the dread of society experienced during the eighteen months following the writing of the *Psychology*. Thus he writes (14 November) :—

Along with some others I supped with Hepworth Dixon, the editor of the *Athenæum*, on Tuesday. . . . I dined with Sir J. Trelawney on Saturday; and at Massons' last night. Notwithstanding which, I am very well to-day. I am . . . feeling as usual the benefits of London. I think it not improbable that the *dryness* of the London air, from there being so

many miles of paved and roofed surface, is the cause of its salubrity.

All this was favourable to work. In addition to a review of Bain's *The Emotions and the Will*, he finished an article on the "Social Organism," and began one on "Prison Ethics." For *Macmillan's Magazine*, to which Mr. Masson had asked him to contribute, he thought of writing on "The Physics of Physiology," but took instead "The Physiology of Laughter." When, many years after, he came upon the letter to his father in which this projected paper on the "Physics of Physiology" is mentioned, he appended to it the following note :—

> I did not know that the conception of such an article dated so far back ; but I have often since thought the topic one which deserved special treatment. Indeed, there is ample scope for a large work dealing with this division of biology. The mass of medical men are generally very ignorant of physics, and either misinterpret or fail to interpret many simple physiological phenomena from the absence of fit knowledge. . . . A want of knowledge as thus illustrated is, as I say, very general, and there needs a scientific setting forth of all such organic processes as come under ordinary physical laws. . . . This scheme for an essay on "The Physics of Physiology," which has an immense number of applications, was for some reason not carried out. I suppose it must have been that other essays took precedence of it.

By the beginning of 1860 he had given up all hope of obtaining an appointment that would make his livelihood secure and at the same time allow him the leisure necessary for writing a system of philosophy. Most men in these circumstances would have given up further attempts to combine ends apparently so incompatible, and would have sacrificed philosophy. Not so Herbert Spencer. In a letter to his father, dated January 20, after mentioning that he had agreed to write an article for the *Westminster* on "Reform—the Danger and the Safeguard," he adds : "I shall send you something that will surprise you in a few days." This referred to the programme of the System of Philosophy. A printed copy bears a note in his own handwriting: "Do not let this be seen at present. I want to take some opinions on it before finally issuing it." With some verbal

differences it is the same as the programme given in Appendix A of the *Autobiography*. Only in place of the first sentence as finally adopted one reads: "In most cases writers of philosophical books who are unable to bear heavy losses, or have already lost what they had to lose, must either be silent or must publish by subscription. The last alternative Mr. Spencer proposes to adopt rather than leave unwritten a connected series of works which he has for several years been elaborating."

From the replies to his circular the following are a few pertinent extracts.

Mr. R. CHAMBERS.—It is certainly a very grand design, such as few living men could have grappled with, or even conceived. If you execute it in a manner at all attractive you will obtain a great fame.

Mr. H. T. BUCKLE.—I am so sensible of the value of what you are doing that you may rely on my co-operation as far as my power extends.

Mr. J. A. FROUDE.—May it (the projected work) answer all the questions which your prospectus suggests. Your first proposition I confess myself unable to understand. Mansel says his absolute is the unknowable. How by following out his reasonings you are to establish a belief in it, I am curious to see. . . . But, by all means, let us hear what you have to say.

Sir JOHN HERSCHEL.—I could wish you had not adopted in the very outset of your programme the Shibboleth of the Hegel and Schelling School of German Philosophy, "The Absolute."

Rev. CHARLES KINGSLEY.—Anything from your pen will be important to me; and from your programme you are facing the whole matter from that side from which it *must* be faced, sooner or later.

Sir CHARLES LYELL.—I hope you will not consider it impertinent in me to remark that I regret the first four lines of your printed programme. There is nothing in your writings and style to entitle even a hostile critic to raise up images of "heavy losses" and unsaleability in your future projected works.

F. W. NEWMAN.—It must surely tend to public enlightenment that the works of one who has thought so continuously should appear in a continuous shape, provided only that you do not become too voluminous.

FROM CHARLES DARWIN.

2 [*February*, 1860.]

From your letter I infer that you have not received a copy of my book, which I am very sorry for. I told Mr. Murray to send you one, *amongst the first distributed* in November. . . . I have now written a preface for the foreign editions and for any future English edition (should there be one), in which I give a very brief sketch [of the progress of opinion], and have with much pleasure alluded to your excellent essay on Development in your general Essays.

TO EDWARD LOTT.

10 *February*, 1860.

Have you got a copy of the "Theory of Population," and if so, can you find it? I have no copy left save one that is cut into parts for future use.

I am just reading Darwin's book (a copy of which has been searching for me since November and has only just come to hand) and want to send him the "Population" to show how thoroughly his argument harmonizes with that which I have used at the close of that essay.

I shall shortly be sending you something which will surprise you.

At the foot of a copy of this letter Spencer has noted: "This makes it clear that the programme of the 'System of Philosophy,' *in its finished form* was drawn up before I read the *Origin of Species*." Along with the pamphlet on "Population," he sent Mr. Darwin a note, acknowledging the *Origin of Species*, and apparently remarking on it.

FROM CHARLES DARWIN.

23 [*February*, 1860].

I write one line to thank you much for your note. Of my numerous (private) critics, you are almost the only one who has put the philosophy of the argument, as it seems to me, in a fair way—namely, as an hypothesis (with some innate probability, as it seems to me) which explains several groups of facts.[1]

You put the case of selection in your pamphlet on Population in a very striking and clear manner.

The issue of the programme seemed a favourable opportunity for carrying out the intention, expressed some years

---

[1] See also *Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, ii., 290.

before, of trying to introduce his books to the American public. The response from an American friend, Mr. Silsbee, though somewhat vague, was not discouraging. In a subsequent letter from the same correspondent, Mr. Edward Livingston Youmans is for the first time brought to Spencer's notice. Mr. Youmans's interest had been awakened some years before on reading a notice of the *Principles of Psychology*. No sooner had he read Spencer's circular and programme than he wrote (February 23) a letter—the first of a long and important series—full of enthusiasm and promising hearty co-operation. He wished to include, in a book he was about to bring out, two of Spencer's educational articles, and deeply regretted Spencer's refusal, "as it took from me the instrument upon which I prospectively and chiefly relied for advancement of your larger enterprise. Upon taking hold of the matter I encounter the difficulty which I anticipated: it is that you are almost unknown to the people."[1]

The article on "Parliamentary Reform: the Dangers and Safeguards" was published in April, and that on "Prison Ethics" in July. The former was the last of the essays written for the Quarterly Reviews prior to the commencement of his great undertaking. About the writing of it he says in a memorandum:

> It was, moreover, the most rapidly written article which I ever published. At the time I had engaged an amanuensis who could write shorthand, and who during the pauses of my dictation was in the habit of transcribing his shorthand into longhand. This, of course, was a considerable economy of time; and I remember observing that I then achieved a page of print per hour—a rate of composition which I never before nor after equalled.

---

[1] *Edward Livingston Youmans*, pp. 104-110.

CHAPTER IX.

FIRST PRINCIPLES.

(*May*, 1860—*February*, 1863.)

THE following letter marks the beginning of what was described by Mrs. Huxley as the long path he had marked out for himself to travel.

TO HIS FATHER.

18 TORRINGTON SQUARE,
8 *May*, 1860.

I am fixed as above pretty comfortably. I began writing yesterday, and did better than I expected. Number of subscribers is now 280. Holyoake's are coming in; and I doubt not I shall get 350 *without America*.

He had not been many days at work when bad nervous symptoms drove him to Brighton for a few days. The month following he wrote, backing out of the arrangement previously made to join his father at Treport for the holidays. "Health is the first consideration, especially under my present engagements; and I am very decidedly of opinion that I shall benefit more by joining Lott's party at Llandudno than by going to France. . . . Add to which that it will be more economical, which just now is a consideration." Eventually, putting economy aside, he did both; spent first a short time at Llandudno and then joined his father and mother at Treport, returning to London in July. News from the United States was encouraging; putting him at ease as to the financial aspect of his undertaking. In a list of some of the earlier American subscribers one meets the names of George Bancroft, Henry Ward Beecher, Henry W. Bellows, F. Bowen, J. I. Bowditch, Henry C. Cary, E. H. Chapin, George W. Curtis, J. W. Draper, Edward Everett,

---

NOTE.—*Autobiography*, ii., chaps. xxxvii., xxxviii.

C. C. Felton, John W. Francis, Dr. Furness, Walcott Gibbs, Asa Gray, Horace Greeley, E. E. Hales, Geo. S. Hillard, F. H. Hodge, Francis Lieber, J. R. Lowell, W. B. Rogers, Jared Sparks, Charles Sumner, Bayard Taylor, George Ticknor, E. P. Whipple, Jeffries Wyman.

On his way to Achranich in September he spent a few days at home. The first of the two following extracts acknowledges the return of proofs of *First Principles*, the second gives expression to his sympathy on the occasion of a domestic bereavement.[1]

To T. H. Huxley.

Derby, 11 *September*, 1860.

I was, as you may suppose, immensely gratified to have from you so decided an expression of approval. Coming from you, who are so critical and sceptical, it took me somewhat by surprise ; and the more so because I feared that this first part would prove a choke-pear to the subscribers. Judge, then, how great a relief it was to read your letter.

Achranich, 23 *September*.—I sincerely sympathize with you and your wife in your great loss, knowing as I do how much you prized your little boy. I well remember your having told me how his existence had disclosed to you a new side of your nature, previously dormant ; and I can well understand how one, feeling so deeply the interests of parenthood, not only on their instinctive, but on their rational side, must be affected by such a catastrophe.

He would not allow Professor Huxley or Dr. Hooker to remain as paying subscribers, for the reason given in a letter of 6 October, 1860. "I have all along calculated on obtaining from you much aid in the shape of information, advice, and criticism ; and may, I fear, if you will allow me, from time to time, trouble you a good deal with questions and discussions. Though in such a case a pepper-corn acknowledgement, in the shape of a presentation copy, leaves the obligation just where it was, yet there is a certain satisfaction in going through the form of an acknowledgement ; and this satisfaction you must not deny me."[2]

---

[1] *Life of Professor Huxley*, i., 212-4.

[2] Professor Huxley's letter of 10th October, 1860 (*Life and Letters*, i., 214) is in reply to the above letter. His biographer, when referring to the circumstances in which the letter was written, was misled, owing to Spencer having, through oversight, endorsed on the letter that it was written in 1866, when he had issued a notice of discontinuance.

To Mrs. Potter.

London, 25 *October*, 1860.

Have you seen the volume of Essays by Jowett and Co.? They appear to be creating a considerable sensation. As coming from some of the most influential men connected with the Church, they are extremely significant of the progress of opinion. . . .

By the way, referring to matters bearing upon the current theology, let me horrify you by the announcement of a recent discovery. There has just been sent over from Germany to Sir Charles Lyell the cast of a "skull, found along with the bones of the mammoth and other extinct mammals which lived during the period of the drift," or latest geologic epoch. And this skull, which, judging from the remains with which it is found, was contemporaneous with those flint implements which have lately been creating so great a sensation, by proving the vast antiquity of the human race—this skull, mark, *is intermediate between that of the gorilla and that of man!* There is a startling fact for you.

After this, anything else would be bathos, so I will leave off. With kindest regards to Mr. Potter and the little girls.

He was afraid that the delay in the issue of the first number of the serial might prejudice his interests in the United States, but Dr. Youmans set his mind at rest on that score.

From Edward Livingston Youmans.

6 *October*, 1860.

I was anxious to get the volume on Education out at the earliest moment, before the first part of the serial arrives. We don't exactly know about that "Unknowable," we have great faith in it, undoubtedly; but we are sure of the weapon in hand and prefer to open the campaign with that. I therefore by no means regret the delay of the first part, nor need you trouble yourself to hasten the sending of it now.[1]

Hardly had he settled down to work when he was summoned to Derby, owing to the illness of his uncle William—an illness which had a fatal termination towards the end of November. The legacy left by his uncle put him in possession of funds likely to be needed if his literary project was to be carried out. The number of subscribers,

[1] *Edward Livingston Youmans*, p. 112

if it could be kept up, would suffice to pay the cost of publication and yield him a small income—provided there were no defaulters. But it would not prove sufficient if there came a falling away of subscribers and bad debts. Even already there were indications that there might be difficulty in meeting the printer's bill, to say nothing of earning a living. The legacy came, therefore, at an opportune time.

Early in 1861 the second number was issued, and "so far as I have at present heard, meets with high approval." He mentions that he was "attending various lectures—seven this week," leading his father to fear a break-down. No letters between February 13 and June 14 are to be found; but one gathers from the *Autobiography* (ii., 65) that coincident with the bringing out of No. 3 of the serial there was a relapse; that he sought relaxation in visits to Standish and Derby; and that during these visits he revised the articles on Education, which he saw through the Press in May and June. As usual, he improved at Achranich (or Ardtornish, as his friend's Argyllshire home was now called) in July and August, and looked forward to being "able to go ahead with the work on return." This expectation was not realised; for soon after arriving in town the strain of bringing out his fourth instalment proved too much. By the middle of October he was contemplating going to Paris, where "change of air, change of scene, entire relaxation, and plenty of amusement, will, I hope, soon set me right." The *Autobiography* makes no mention of this visit, and beyond a reference to letters written in Paris on November 5 and 15, the above is the only hint of it. That it answered his expectations for a time at least may be inferred from a letter, dated Torrington Square, December 12, in which he says: "I am improving considerably; and have done a fair share of work this week without detriment." Early in 1862 we find him in Bloomsbury Square, which is, he fears, "too far away from the most of my friends."

In May he tells his father: "The chapter on 'Equilibration,' which I am now revising, works out beautifully; but it is giving me a good deal of trouble." "Equilibration" had been giving him trouble for several years. In an undated letter to Professor Tyndall from 13, Loudoun