

## CHAPTER XXI

### SOCIAL EVOLUTION

"In the slow progress of humanity there is always a long way between the premises and the conclusion, between the germinating of an idea in the religious life and its manifestation as a transforming social principle; and it may work for a long time unconsciously as such a principle before it is explicitly recognised in its universal meaning. Yet though a thousand years are as one day in the secular process of development, which is the manifestation of the divine spirit in man, the days and the years come to an end, and the fruit follows by an inevitable necessity upon the seed." — **Caikd**, "The Evolution of Religion."

The distinguishing characteristic of current thought, that which differentiates it from the thought of preceding ages, is that all phenomena are considered, studied, and investigated in the light of that basic conception of modern philosophy, Evolution, or Development. This is as yet, perhaps, specially true of organic phenomena, of problems arising from a consideration of the multifarious phenomena of life, under which social phenomena must necessarily be included, of which social phenomena are, in truth, the highest, most complex, and to mankind the most important and interesting manifestations. To unfold the history of social evolution, to trace the steps of the development of social life, would be to write the history of civilisation, to record the story of the ascent of man. For the history of civilisation is but the record of social evolution; the story of the ascent of man is but the narration of his development as a social animal, is but the account of the development of those powers and attributes which elevate him above the rest of creation, and which themselves are the highest products and crowning fruits of social life.

Some form of social life, however rudimentary, some degree of association and co-operation, however incomplete, is a necessary condition of man's existence; is, indeed, a necessary consequence of the physiological constitution of man. Without mutual aid, mutual support, mutual defence, man could never have survived that bitter struggle for life, that continuous competition for the means of subsistence, from which at last he emerged victorious over all his competitors. Today man, proud man, stands alone, supreme Lord and Master of the Earth, and all that it contains; his former rivals, or rather such as he has allowed to survive, are now his humble servants; the mysterious forces of Nature, before which of old he crouched and quailed in abject fear, are now his willing slaves, harnessed into his service and made to minister to his wants. His supremacy is now unquestioned; his power measureless; his resources illimitable; his knowledge exhaustless. But his supremacy, his power, his resources,

and even his knowledge are not individual, but racial; they are the inheritance and possession not of the individual but of the race. Individually, man still remains the feeblest, weakest, most impotent of animals, unable, isolated and unaided, to do more, even under the most favourable conditions, than preserve his existence and provide for his most primitive and pressing necessities. Just as it has only been by collective action, by association and co-operation, that his supremacy has been established, his power and resources developed, his vast store of knowledge accumulated, so, too, it is only by the same means that his proud position can be maintained, his power and resources be made available, and his knowledge be made serviceable. Individually, man is still the most helpless of animals; collectively, in union with his fellows, he is the most powerful. Above everything else, man is a social animal; his development has been the fruit of social life; his progress has been social progress. Hence the history of his development would be but the record of social evolution.

Needless to say, we have no intention of here endeavouring even to outline the successive steps, at times retrograde as well as progressive, by which mankind have attained to their present stage of social development. The leading principles of organic evolution are now well known; Variation and Selection are the two essential elements of all development; and these two factors are traceable in social as in all other organic phenomena. Development is, in truth, a necessary concomitant of life; organic existence is one long continuous development. Development (or Evolution) and progress, however, are not synonymous terms, and using them synonymously, as is the habit of many writers, can only lead to confusion and misunderstanding. Progress indicates a certain kind of change or development, an advance, a movement or development in a certain direction, toward a certain goal. Hence, whether we can dignify any change or development as progress will depend not only on the direction in which it tends, but also on the direction in which we think it should tend, on the goal we desire to be attained. Hence changes or development some may regard as progress, others may regard as retrograde, and vice versa; the decision will at all times be determined by the standpoint of the observer. Generally speaking, however, progress denotes a more complete and thorough adaptation of means to ends. Material progress, or progress in industrial life, involves new and improved methods of ministering to the material wants of man, improved methods of production and distribution. Military progress involves new and improved methods of organising and arming men, an advance in the art of destruction. Social progress, or progress in the art of living in peaceful social union, involves improved social habits, customs, laws and institutions, i.e., social habits, customs, etc., more conducive to the aim and end of all voluntary social union, the well-being and happiness of those within its sphere: and this, as we have already endeavoured to show, is only possible by a broadening and deepening of our conceptions of morality, and the shaping of our social customs, laws and institutions in conformity therewith.

This brings us to the one point, to emphasise which the present chapter has been written, viz., that social progress, though it may involve material and intellectual progress, is essentially and inherently moral progress. Moral progress is, in truth, the tardy but crowning fruit of all material and intellectual progress. It may be, as Maine contends,<sup>1</sup> that "nothing is more distasteful to men, either as individuals or masses, than the admission of their moral progress as a substantive reality." Yet moral progress is a substantive reality, the most important, the most consistent, the most permanent, and the most valuable and serviceable reality of human development, of social evolution. It is to the relations arising out of social life, out of that association and co-operation which is the necessary condition of man's existence, that the source and origin of morals is to be found. As Darwin expresses it,<sup>2</sup> "the moral sense is fundamentally identical with the social instincts." It is, in truth, to the exigencies and necessities arising out of living in social union with his fellows that we owe that glorious, but as yet incomplete, evolution which has transformed brute-man into thinking-man, into ethical-man; which has enabled him to conquer the promptings of his brute nature; which has clothed him with that truly human garment, with the sense of sympathy, duty, justice, and love, by the further development of which our present social evils can alone be overcome, and the race attain to a civilisation such as the wisest of us today can only dimly foresee, to a civilisation based on Reason, on Justice, on Peace, and on Love. The evolution of such a civilisation may be slow — moral progress is necessarily slow — but our activities, individual and social, should be continually inspired, directed, and animated by the knowledge that each one of us, according to our capabilities and opportunities, can either promote or retard its development. We must fight on the side of Ormuzd, or we must fight on the side of Ahriman.

1 "Ancient Law," pp. 70, 71.

2 "The Descent of Man," p 98

Here we deem it necessary to point out that social progress does not mean, as Professor Huxley erroneously contended, "a checking of the cosmic process at every step, and the substitution for it of another, which may be called the ethical process."<sup>1</sup> Nor is it true that "the history of civilisation details the steps by which men have succeeded in building up an artificial world within the cosmos."<sup>2</sup> The evolution of society, of social life, is as much a part of the cosmic process as is the evolution of the individual. Social progress is but a necessary development of the cosmic process; and the history of civilisation does but record the story of this development. The Struggle for Existence and the Survival of the Fittest are the two currently accepted and universally manifest principles of the cosmic process, of cosmic evolution; and in the cosmic struggle for existence, the conditions being such as they are, those animals

which developed habits of association and co-operation have proved themselves the fittest, and have survived. Social life, based on and consisting of association and co-operation, is, indeed, the necessary outcome of the struggle for existence; and ethical man is the necessary product of social life. Hence we see that so far from "cosmic nature being no school of virtue, but the headquarters of the enemy of ethical nature,"<sup>1</sup> the very reverse is the case. It was in the school of cosmic nature that man has developed those attributes we call virtues — those attributes necessary to the preservation and conducive to the welfare, not of the individual, but of the community of which he forms a part.<sup>2</sup> It was owing to the struggle for existence, compelling him as it did to association with his fellows, that we owe the existence and development of that sense of duty, of responsibility, and of justice, which forms the necessary foundation of all ethics, which is the highest product of social life, and the development of which is the necessary pre-requisite of social progress. Therefore it is that the logic of facts convinces us that the cosmos works through the lower nature of man, not against righteousness, but for it.<sup>3</sup>

1 "Evolution and Ethics," p. 33.

2 Ibid., p. 35.

1 Ibid., v. 27.

2 "We have now seen that actions are regarded by savages, and were probably so regarded by primeval man, as good or bad, solely as they affect in an obvious manner the welfare of the tribe — not that of the species, nor that of man as an individual member of the tribe. This conclusion agrees well with the belief that the so-called moral sense is aboriginally derived from the social instincts, for both relate at first exclusively to the community." — "The Descent of Man," pp. 96, 97 (Darwin).

3 Compare "Evolution and Ethics," pp. 27, 28.

Morality is not, as Buckle and others have contended,<sup>4</sup> a stationary, but in reality a continuously, though slowly, progressive element of human development. True it is that, in all epochs and in all countries, the moral man is always the man who consistently strives to do what he thinks he ought to do, what he deems it his duty to do. But what he will think he ought to do, what he will deem it his duty to do, will naturally and necessarily be mainly determined by the beliefs and conceptions, and the social habits and customs, prevailing in the community in which he lives; and, as everyone attentive to the subject is aware, these beliefs and conceptions, habits and customs, are in no two countries and at no two epochs exactly alike. Moral progress may be the least obtrusive, and to the superficial observer the most difficult to discern; yet it is in differences in the current views of morality, in the prevailing conceptions of the relations and duties of the individual toward his fellows, that we find the most fundamental, deep-reaching and characteristic differences of different epochs in the evolution of man, of the various stages of development through which he has passed, and is still passing. When looking back over the dim pages of universal history, over

the blurred and pathetic record of what has been termed the martyrdom, as well as the ascent, of man, it is in changes in the accepted views of morality, of the relations and duties of man to man, that we find those monumental signs betokening the advance of the race to a higher plane of individual and social life.

4 See his "History of Civilisation in England," chap. v.

As already pointed out, without some glimmering of the fundamental elementary principles of morality, without some recognition of responsibility and duty towards others, without some perception of Justice, some realisation of the claims of others, social union, or peaceful association and co-operation, must for ever remain impossible. As Professor Huxley well expresses it:<sup>1</sup> "Society is impossible unless those who are associated agree to observe certain rules of conduct towards one another; its stability depends on the steadiness with which they abide by that agreement; and, so far as they waver, that mutual trust which is the bond of society is weakened or destroyed." We know of no associated body of men, however primitive, that has not its rules of right and wrong, that does not observe some recognised rules of conduct one towards another; of no tribe of men without some social habits and customs made obligatory on all, the observance of which is inculcated on its members as a necessary condition of social life, and the violation of which would be resented, and visited with punishment. Moreover, however irrational, or even wicked, however opposed to true welfare and happiness, some of these habits and customs may appear to the developed intellect and the refined moral perception of civilised man, there can be no doubt but that originally they were the products of reason, shortsighted and erroneous though it may have been; that they owe their origin to the exigencies, real or imaginary, of the conditions of existence under which those who formulated them found themselves; and that when formulated they were deemed necessary to the preservation or conducive to the welfare of the horde or tribe, community or nation.

1 "Evolution and Ethics," p. 10.

Students of social evolution, as of the evolution of ethics, would do well constantly to bear in mind that primitive social habits and customs are framed, not in accordance with any abstract principles of right and wrong — such principles are the fruits of a much later stage of intellectual and ethical development — nor with reference to the preservation or well-being of the individual, but solely with reference to what is deemed necessary for the preservation or conducive to the welfare of the horde or tribe. Necessity, the exigencies of the struggle for existence, demanded that the preservation and well-being of the tribe or clan should be the supreme law, obedience to which was an essential condition of success, and consequently of survival, in the bitter and continuous struggle between neighbouring or rival communities, which constitutes nearly the whole life's history of primitive and semi-civilised man. From the earliest times the necessity for obedience to its demands has been one of the main

factors in the development of the character of social man, constantly tending to develop that sentiment of fidelity to his fellows which man shares in common with other social animals,<sup>1</sup> which forms the basis of all the higher civic and social virtues, now dignified by the term altruistic, and the fullest development of which constitutes ethical man. For ethical man is the man, the mainspring of whose activities is consideration for the welfare of others. Thus we see that, instead of being "the headquarters of the enemy of ethical nature," cosmic nature is, in truth, the school of virtue, the school in which man has acquired and developed his ethical nature; that ethical progress is no exception to the general rule that progress is the result of necessity;<sup>2</sup> and that it is to the struggle for existence that man is indebted for the origin and development of all those higher virtues which are the crown and glory of the human race, and the further development of which is the necessary pre-requisite of further social progress, the *conditio sine qua non* of the attainment of that purer and nobler civilisation which today is the dream and aspiration of our highest minds.

1 "The members of animal societies possess in a marvellous degree the power of co-operation, the sentiment of fidelity to the herd . . . they possess in a dispersed and elementary condition all the materials of which human nature is composed." — "The Martyrdom of Man" (Winwood Reade).

2 "The lower animals merely strive to live, to procure females, and to rear their young. It is so ordered by Nature that by so striving to live they develop their physical structure; they obtain faint glimmerings of reason; they think and deliberate; they sympathise and love; they become Man. In the same way primeval men have no other object than to keep the clan alive. It is so ordered by Nature that, in striving to preserve the existence of the clan, they not only acquire the arts of agriculture, domestication, and navigation; they not only discover fire, and its uses in cooking, in war and in metallurgy; they not only detect the hidden properties of plants, and apply them to save their own lives in disease, and to destroy their enemies in battle; they not only learn to manipulate Nature, and to distribute water by machinery; but they also, by means of the long life-battle, are developed into moral beings." — "The Martyrdom of Man," p. 464 (Winwood Reade).

The social habits, customs, laws, and institutions prevailing in any community can always be accepted as a true gauge of the stage of intellectual and moral development to which it has attained. For they always reflect the current beliefs of what is necessary to the existence and welfare of the community as a whole, and the accepted views of man's relations and duties towards his fellows. Altered conditions, wider experience, advance in intellectual powers, increase in knowledge, insight, and foresight eventually bring in their train altered conceptions of what is necessary and what is right; and existing social habits, customs, and laws have gradually to be altered and modified in accordance therewith. This process is necessarily a slow one; for the tendency of mankind is always to cling to the social garment to which it has

adapted itself, to preserve unchanged those customs, laws, and institutions to which it has learned to conform its life. As Carlyle expresses it: "The Law of Perseverance is among the deepest in man; by nature he hates change; seldom will he quit his old house till it has actually fallen about his ears. Thus have I seen Solemnities linger as Ceremonies, sacred Symbols as idle Pageants, to the extent of three hundred years and more after all life and sacredness had evaporated out of them."<sup>1</sup>

1 "Sartor Resartus," p. 164.

At a somewhat late stage of man's social development, the prevailing intellectual and moral conceptions are gathered together and embodied in those various codes of ethics, or ethical systems — of which codes of law, or legal systems, are but the reflection, or rather more detailed application — which have been formulated by the sages and leaders of mankind as the necessary guides and safeguards of social life, and which constitute the most important, most valuable, most permanent, and most essential part of all religions.<sup>1</sup> The basic teachings of all such systems may be much the same; for the fundamental moral truths are amongst the first general truths discovered and formulated by man, the first triumph of man's intellectual development; and a truth, whether we please to call it an intellectual or a moral, a scientific, an ethical or a religious truth, once discovered, for ever remains the same. Moral progress does not necessarily consist in the discovery of new truths, but in the more rigid interpretation and more widely extended application of those basic moral principles which form the necessary foundation of all social life. Thou shalt not kill! Thou shalt not steal!<sup>2</sup> These two great social commandments constitute the foundation of all systems of social ethics that have ever been devised; and past social progress has consisted, and future social progress will necessarily consist, in the more rigid interpretation, and more widely extended application, of these primitive basic social principles.

1 "It would be absurd to say that at any time man's relations to the beings he conceived as divine has not had a determining influence on his view of his relations to his fellow-men, and of the conduct therefore incumbent on him. And this would least of all be true of the earliest period of human history. Perhaps we might even go farther and say that, then and always, religion and morality are necessary correlates of each other, and that it is impossible to elevate one of them without also elevating the other." — "The Evolution of Religion," p. 237 (Caird).

2 Carlyle speaks of "the divine Commandment, Thou shalt not steal, wherein truly, if well understood, is comprised the whole Hebrew Decalogue, with Solon's and Lycurguss Constitutions, Justinian's Pandects, the Code Napoleon, and all Codes, Catechisms, Divinities, Moralities whatsoever, that man has hitherto devised (and enforced with Altar-fire and Gallows-ropes) for his social guidance." — "Sartor Resartus," p. 138.

As already repeatedly emphasised, without some recognition and observance of these two principles, social life, voluntary association and co-operation, is manifestly impossible. From the earliest times down to our own days, however, mankind have found it difficult, at times impossible, strictly to obey them. Hence not only have they limited their application to members of the same family, horde, tribe, nation, or race, but they have, both consciously and unconsciously, adopted innumerable social habits and customs which are a direct infringement of same; and we are perforce compelled to admit that such infringements continue to disgrace our present civilisation. Parricide, infanticide, the killing off of the old, the feeble, the decrepit, and the helpless, are, it is true, no longer sanctioned by custom, and would now outrage the moral sentiment of the race. But war, not only defensive but offensive, is still waged by the most advanced communities, and in time of war killing is regarded not only as a necessary evil, but as in itself praiseworthy and commendable. Or again, slavery and serfdom, the two worst forms of theft that were ever sanctioned by custom, have disappeared, or are disappearing; but, as we have already pointed out, social habits, customs, laws, and institutions still continue, are defended as necessary and even as right, which deprive the greater portion of every civilised community of their rights to life, to liberty, to property, and to happiness. However, if we have read the lesson of universal history aright, all such customs, too, are doomed to pass away as incompatible with the wellbeing of the race, as conflicting with its broadening moral conceptions, and as opposed to the realisation of its highest aspirations.

Existing fundamental laws and institutions are, in truth, as already pointed out, but the slightly modified fruits of a time when industry was despised, when war was considered the only pursuit worthy of a man and of a nation, and when success in war had secured to a conquering class or caste dominion over their fellows. They were not framed in accordance with consideration for the well-being of the community as a whole, but of a privileged class or section of the community, tending to aggrandise and enrich these, to degrade and impoverish all who had no share in their privileges. They are, in fact, the fruit of Despotism, not of Democracy; of Might, not of Right; of Force, not of Reason. Hence we cannot wonder that their effects, the social and economic conditions to which they condemn the great majority of the people, should inflame the breasts of all who look beneath the surface of things with the bitterest feelings of discontent, dissatisfaction, and dismay,<sup>1</sup> impelling them not only to condemn the existing civilisation, based as it is on the misery, suffering, and impoverishment of the disinherited masses, but even to despair of the future of mankind. This state of mind, this discontent, dissatisfaction, dismay, and despair, finds expression in almost all writings on social questions, impelling even such a capable, coolheaded, even-minded and impartial a thinker as Professor Huxley to voice it in the following eloquent and burning words:<sup>1</sup> "Even the best of modern civilisations appears to me to exhibit a condition of mankind which neither embodies



any worthy ideal, nor even possesses the merit of stability. I do not hesitate to express the opinion that, if there is no hope of a large improvement of the condition of the great part of the human family; if it is true that the increase of knowledge, the winning of a greater dominion over Nature which is the consequence, and the wealth which follows upon that dominion are to make no difference in the extent and the intensity of want, with its concomitant physical and moral degradation amongst the masses of the people, I should hail the advent of some kindly comet which would sweep the whole affair away as a desirable consummation."

1 In his work on "Social Evolution," Mr. Kidd seems surprised, and even appalled, to find that "the conditions of life in the advanced societies of today are without any sanction from reason for the masses of the people." This, however, is only what [he should have expected. Existing conditions of life are the product of the prevailing social customs, laws, and institutions, and so long as these are irrational and immoral, we can hardly expect their results to derive "any sanction from reason," or to be beneficial to the race. When, however, Mr. Kidd argues from this fact that therefore "there is no rational sanction for social progress;" that "the central fact with which we are confronted in our progressive societies is that the interests of the social organism and those of the individuals comprising it at any time are actually antagonistic, they can never be reconciled; they are inherently and essentially irreconcilable," and that, therefore, we must seek an «/ra-rational sanction for social conduct, an ultra-rational cause of social progress: then we can only exclaim with Goethe —

"Daran erkenn' ich den gelehrten Herrn!

Was ihr nicht tastet, stent euch meilenfern;  
Was ihr nicht fasst, das fehlt euch ganr und gar;  
Was ihr nicht rechnet, glaubt ihr, sei nicht wahr;  
Was ihr nicht wagt, hat fur euch kein Gewicht;  
Was ihr nicht munzt, das, meint ihr, gelte nicht."

Yes, in all earnestness, if there were no hope of a large improvement in the condition of the great part of the human family; if the persistence and deepening of poverty, with all its attendant evils, were the inevitable accompaniment of progress; if the wellbeing of the few were alone possible, and had to be purchased at the cost of the enslavement of the many; if the physical, moral, and spiritual degradation of the majority, were the price mankind must necessarily pay for its increase in material wealth; if the exploitation, the misery, suffering and impoverishment, of the masses of the people were a necessary condition of civilisation; if it were inherent in the very nature of things that our advance in knowledge, and consequently increased dominion over Nature, could not bring in its train the physical well-being and moral elevation of the whole of mankind — then some such speedy ending were devoutly to be wished.

This,

1 " Government: Anarchy or Regimentation." Quoted from Kidd's "Social Evolution," p. 4.

however, is not the case. Poverty, the widening of the gulf between rich and poor, is not the necessary accompaniment of progress. The misery, suffering, and impoverishment of the greater part of the human family, the enslavement and exploitation, the physical, moral, and spiritual degradation of the masses of mankind, are not necessary conditions of civilisation. They are but the results of our present stunted, halting, and incomplete civilisation — of a civilisation founded on laws and institutions, based on inequality and producing inequality, which the present generation have inherited from a barbarous and ignorant past, which they, in their ignorance, have regarded as both necessary and right, and have consequently still retained as adequate guides of social conduct, as the necessary pillars and supports of social life: and their results betray the source whence they sprang. The social ills which still afflict humanity, and which, as we have seen, impel even courageous thinkers to despair of the future of mankind, are, indeed, but the painful and distressing symptoms which betray the presence of some root-evil, hurtful to the body politic, hostile to true civilisation, opposed to reason, incompatible with morality, and consequently inimical to all real social progress: an evil, however, which our advance in intellectual power and broadening conceptions of morality, and the inevitable modification of social laws and institutions in accordance therewith, must necessarily doom to extinction.

So far from social progress, or the evolution of society to higher, more perfect, i.e., more equitable, forms, having no sanction and deriving no aid from reason,<sup>1</sup> the very reverse is the case. Social progress has ever been the crowning, though long delayed and often lost, stunted, or blighted fruit of material and intellectual progress. To act well, virtuously, mankind must first have learned from experience to distinguish between good and evil, between things conducive to well-being and happiness, and things destructive thereof. Correct thought is the necessary precursor of right action. Virtue, the mother of Happiness, individual and social, is the result of knowledge; Vice, the mother of Misery, the accompaniment of ignorance. Mankind will eat poison so long only as they know it not to be poison. The individual man desires to live and to be happy; he can, however, only live and only find happiness in association with his fellows. Hence consideration for himself necessarily impels him to consideration for others. From time immemorial, however, this consideration, this sense of sympathy, responsibility, and duty, has been very restricted in its application. "The chief causes of the low morality of savages, as judged by our standard," says Darwin,<sup>1</sup> "are, firstly, the confinement of sympathy to the same tribe." The same fact forces itself on our attention when we turn to the history of the ancient Jews, as

recorded in the pages of the Old Testament. Whatever may have been their virtues, consideration for those outside their own ranks cannot truthfully be included amongst them. The same applies to all those ancient nations who seem to have regarded war as the natural state of mankind, and whose insane ambitions could only have been sated by the conquest of the whole world. The national polity of the Romans, to whom almost all our fundamental social laws and institutions can be directly traced, was the organised exploitation by force and violence of all weaker people. Even the Greeks, to whom we are indebted for so much of modern culture, had, as George Henry Lewis<sup>2</sup> points out, "scarcely any suspicion of what we call Humanity."

1 See "Social Evolution," chaps, ii. and iii. (Kidd).

1 "The Descent of Man," Vol. I., p. 97.

2 "But the Ethics of the Greeks were at the best narrow and egoistical. Morality, however exalted or comprehensive, only seemed to embrace the Individual; it was extremely incomplete as regards the Family, and had scarcely any suspicion of what we call Humanity." — "History of Philosophy," Vol. I, p. 408.

It is, however, just on this conception of Humanity, of the claims on our consideration, our sympathy, and our sense of justice, not only of our own family, tribe, clan, nation, or race, but of all mankind, that our present broadened conceptions of morality are based. The fundamental, social, moral, political, or ethical teachings of Christianity, now avowedly accepted by all the nations of Western Europe, are, in truth, based on the broadest and truest conceptions of Equality, or of Justice, and proclaim in unmistakable tones the Brotherhood of Man, not of the isolated family, horde, tribe, clan, nation, or race, but of Man.<sup>1</sup> And it is in accordance with the dictates of these teachings, with the demands of the Golden Rule of Righteousness, of the Law of Equal Freedom, that it behoves us to modify existing social customs, laws and institutions, if we desire that they and their fruits shall be consonant with the teachings of Christianity, with the requirements and aspirations of thoughtful, ethical man.

1 "It is true that Christianity for a long time hid its levelling power in the very excess of an idealism, which treated worldly distinctions as indifferent, and therefore allowed them to subsist. But by treating all such distinction as accidental differences of outward position, which a few years must terminate, and by disregarding them in the order of the church, it spread through all the nations which it reached a consciousness of the infinite value of each individual soul, and of the comparative unimportance of the things that in this world divide one man from or set him above another — a consciousness which in the long run must be fatal to all absolute claims of superiority." — "The Evolution of Religion," p. 16 (Caird).

Social progress, as already pointed out, though it may involve intellectual and material

progress, is essentially moral progress. Intellectual development, advance in knowledge and increased dominion over external nature, cannot alone secure to mankind the blessings of social progress. They must be accompanied by moral progress; for moral progress is the essential condition, the necessary pre-requisite to the reaping of the full fruits of intellectual development. We have to learn, not only how to conquer external nature, but how to conquer ourselves. Intellectual advance necessarily brings in its train altered beliefs of what is right and what is wrong, of what is conducive to well-being, and what is productive of misery, altered views of man's relations and duties towards his fellows: in short, altered conceptions of individual and social morality. And social progress involves corresponding alterations and modifications of existing social customs, laws and institutions, in which past and obsolete conceptions have been embodied and are still reflected. This is always a slow, difficult and painful process; but where from any causes it has been made impossible, there progress has been made impossible. As Bagehot expresses it,<sup>1</sup> "The whole history of civilisation is strewn with creeds and institutions which were invaluable at first, and deadly afterwards. Progress would not have been the rarity it is if the early food had not been the late poison." What is true of the past is true of today. Fortunately for the future of our race, there are no parchments strong enough to serve as fetters for all future generations. The Golden Age, the Age of Reason, of Justice, of Peace and of Love, the age in which the Golden Rule of Righteousness shall rule o'er mankind, lies not behind us, but before us. If, however, it is ever to be attained, if it is ever to be brought within the reach of future generations, we must free ourselves from the shackles of those ancient laws and institutions which are, indeed, the present poison, stultifying all our efforts, hindering mankind from reaping the full fruits of its intellectual development, the full harvest of its industrial activities, as of its moral development, and condemning the larger part of the human family to conditions the consideration of which, as already shown, impels many of the most thoughtful and ethical amongst our fellows to relinquish all hope of the future of mankind. There is, however, no real need to despair, for we cannot doubt but that in the near future, as in the remote past, the necessities and exigencies of social life will again guide man's footsteps towards those paths which lead to righteousness, to the further development of his ethical nature, which lead indeed to that goal towards which his social and industrial instincts constantly impel him, from attaining which his anti-social or predatory instincts alone hold him back, and the record of his continuous struggle toward which constitutes the history of civilisation, of Social Evolution.

1 "Physics and Politics," p. 74,