

Chapter III— The Synthetic Philosophy

I wish to keep close to the land question. But to understand fairly Mr. Spencer's views on the land question as expressed in *Justice*, and to discover what ground there may be for the changes they show, it is necessary to get some idea of the system of which it is the crown.

Justice is in fact the real revision of *Social Statics* in the new light of the system of philosophy which its author has since elaborated. Both books go over the same ground, that of social economics, and the title of one might serve for that of the other. This ground it was that first attracted Mr. Spencer, and he went over it forty-two years ago in the temper of a social reformer. He now returns to these living, burning questions of the time with the reputation of a great philosopher, after assiduous years spent in what purports to be a wider and deeper survey. For of the philosophy which he has in the meantime elaborated it is claimed not only that "it is more logically complete than any other system," but that "it is more practical than any other, because it bears immediately upon common experience, takes hold of the living questions of the time, throws light upon the course of human affairs, and gives knowledge that may serve both for public and individual guidance."¹³

I speak of Herbert Spencer in *Social Statics* as a social reformer, to distinguish his attitude at that time from his present attitude. But he was not content in that book to advocate empirical remedies for the disorder, waste and wrong that he beheld about him. He saw that expediency offered no sure guide; that such was the infirmity of human powers, and such, in the complexity of social actions and reactions, was the impossibility of calculating results, that legislation based on mere policy was constantly bringing to naught the best-laid schemes, constantly entangling men in blind ways, constantly resulting in the unforeseen and unwished. The burden of *Social Statics* is that there is a better guide in social affairs than the calculations of expediency; that what men should look to is not results but principles; that the moral sense may be trusted where the intellect is certain to go astray. Its central idea is that the universe bespeaks to us its ori-

¹³ E. L. Youmans, M.D., *Herbert Spencer and the Doctrine of Evolution*, Popular Science Library. D. Appleton & Co., New York.

gin in an intelligence of which *Justice* must be an attribute; that there is in human affairs a divinely appointed order to which, if it would prosper, society must conform; that there is an eternal rule of right, by which, despite all perturbations of the intellect, social institutions may be safely measured.

This rule of right, as expressed in the first principle of *Social Statics*—this "law of equal liberty," that "each has freedom to do all that he wills provided that he infringes not the equal freedom of any other"—what is it indeed but an expression in primary essential of the Golden Rule? What Mr. Spencer declared in *Social Statics* is in fact what the National Assembly of France declared in 1789, "That ignorance, neglect or contempt of human rights are the sole causes of public misfortunes and corruptions of government." And with clearer vision than the French Assembly, he saw and did not hesitate to assert that the most important of human rights from the neglect and contempt of which society to-day suffers, is the natural and equal right to the use of the planet.

It is its protest against materialism, its assertion of the supremacy of the moral law, its declaration of God-given rights that are above all human enactments, that despite whatever it may contain of crudity and inconsistency make *Social Statics* a noble book, and in the deepest sense a religiously-minded book.

In the course Mr. Spencer thus entered in his early manhood there was work enough to have engaged the greatest powers for the longest lifetime; but work that would have involved a constant and bitter contest with the strongest forces—forces that have at their disposal not only the material things that make life pleasant, but present honour as well. Mr. Spencer did not continue the struggle that in *Social Statics* he began. He turned from the field of social reform to the field of speculative philosophy, in which he has won great reputation and authority. It is the scheme of philosophy thus developed that forms the basis of *Justice*, as the ideas of a living God, of a divinely appointed order, and of an eternal distinction between right and wrong, just and unjust, form the basis of *Social Statics*.

In its earlier volumes this philosophy was styled "Spencer's Evolutionary Philosophy." This title has since been abandoned for the less definite but more ambitious one of "Spencer's Synthetic Philosophy." Since synthesis is the opposite of analysis, the putting together,

instead of taking apart—a synthetic philosophy is a philosophy which explains the world (a term which in the philosophic sense includes all of which we can become conscious), not by the process of taking things apart and seeing of what they are composed; but by assuming an original principle or principles, and from that starting-point mentally building up the world, thus showing how it came to be. The Book of Genesis embodies probably the oldest synthetic philosophy we have record of. Mr. Spencer's is the latest.

Spencer's "Synthetic Philosophy" is in the main a fusion and extension of two hypotheses—the nebular hypothesis of the formation of celestial bodies, and what is best known as the Darwinian hypothesis of the development of species, with a bridging over of such gulfs as the passage from the inorganic to the organic, and from matter and motion to mind, and some infusion of what I take to be Kantian metaphysics. Though Mr. Spencer objects to the characterization, I can only describe this philosophy as materialistic, since it accounts for the world and all it contains, including the human ego, by the interactions of matter and motion, without reference to any such thing as intelligence, purpose or will, except as derived from them. It does not, of course, any more than other materialistic philosophies, pretend to explain what matter and motion are, or how they came to be. That, for it, is the unknowable, while it deals only with what may be known by men. But within the region of the knowable, all things to it have come to be, or are coming to be, by the interactions of matter and motion, in a process which it terms "evolution," and which it describes as "an integration of matter, and concomitant dissipation of motion, during which the matter passes from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity, and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation."

After evolution has reached its limit and all the motion is dissipated, comes a temporary equilibrium, and then dissolution sets in, by the integration of motion and the dissipation of matter, so that, according to the Synthetic Philosophy, the universe goes on, so far as we can see, to infinity, like one of those disks boys play with, which by means of a twisted string is made to spin around one way, then to come to a momentary stop, and then spin back the other way, the process continuing so long as the boy will gently extend and then gently bring together his hands. What is it that supplies the force fur-

nished in the case of the toy by the boy's hands? And has it, like the boy's hands conscious will behind it? This to the Spencerian Synthetic Philosophy is the unknowable.

This unknowable is not God, though Mr. Spencer presents it to the religious sentiment as something with which it may be satisfied, and some of his followers, and sometimes even he himself, speak of it in ways that suggest identity. In *Social Statics*, however, Mr. Spencer frequently uses the term "God," but he certainly never thought that he knew God in the sense of comprehending him, or that it was possible for man so to know him. And if the unknowable of his philosophy means that—

Being above all beings! Mighty One,
Whom none can comprehend and none explore!
Who fill'st existence with thyself alone—
Embracing all, supporting, ruling o'er—
Being whom we call God, and know no more!¹⁴

—why should he with the development of his philosophy have abandoned the use of the old term for that which beneath the myths and fables and creeds by which men have endeavoured to formulate spiritual perceptions has been always recognized as apparent to the human soul yet transcending human knowledge?

This unknowable must be distinguished from the unknown. It is that which not only is not, but never can be known in any way; that which not merely we cannot comprehend, but of which we can know nothing at all, even of its intelligence or non-intelligence, its consciousness or non-consciousness, its nature or its attributes. It is difficult indeed to see how we may predicate even existence of it, as we may of an unknown person or unknown thing. For this requires at least some knowledge. But of the unknowable we lack the capacity of knowing anything whatever. Air is unknowable directly to our sense of sight; we cannot directly see air. But by its resistance, its weight, its chemical and other qualities, it is knowable by our other faculties; and it is indirectly knowable even to our sight, through the moving of leaves, the motion of watery surfaces, etc.; while if air were unknowable, we could not be conscious of it in any possible way. It would be precisely the same to us as no air.

¹⁴ Derzhavin, Bowring's translation.

By the constitution of the human mind it is impossible for us in attempting to trace back the line of causation to find any stopping-place until we reach that which thinks and wills—that to which the volition is akin which to our consciousness is an originating element in the trains of sequences that we ourselves set in motion, or at least modify and divert. Thus any materialistic or mechanical philosophy must either beg the question by assuming the eternity of matter and motion, or admit something behind them which it must take for granted and leave out of its explanation, simply denying that it can be recognized as intelligence or will apart from matter and motion, i.e., spirit. If the unknowable in the Spencerian philosophy means anything more than the vacuum that is thus left where a spiritual First Cause is denied, it seems to mean what by some metaphysicians is styled "the thing in itself."

This "thing in itself" is in metaphysical language the noumenon as distinguished from the phenomenon: the thing as it really is, as distinguished from the thing as it is recognized in its qualities by the percipient being. But this, if not another name for spirit, really amounts to vacancy. Such idea of "the thing in itself" as opposed to the thing as known in phenomena, seems to come from the habit, to which our use of language leads, of associating independent existence with qualities to which we give independent names. Thus no man ever saw white except as a white thing. But as things have other colors we can readily separate the idea white from the idea thing. Forgetting, since we are dealing only with words, that the abstraction of one color implies its replacement by another color, and the abstraction of all colors would render the thing non-existent so far at least as our sight is concerned, we may mentally separate the idea of color, and imagine the thing in other respects as remaining. Extending the process of abstraction to all other qualities, we may fancy that we have still remaining the idea of the thing separated from all idea of its qualities. But what we have remaining is really only a verbal simulacrum, that sounds like something, and may be written or parsed, but which on analysis consists of negations, and means really no thing or nothing. This, as well as I can understand it, is that "thing in itself," of which, in some part, or in some aspects, Mr. Spencer's unknowable seems to consist.

But if the Spencerian philosophy is thus indefinite as to what precedes or underlies matter and motion, it certainly shows no lack of definiteness from the appearance of matter and motion onward. With matter and motion begins its knowable, and from thenceforward, without pause or break, it builds up the whole universe by the integration of the one, and the dissipation of the other, in the mode described as evolution, without recourse to any other element.

In this elimination of any spiritual element lies, it seems to me, the essential characteristic of the Spencerian philosophy. It is not, as is largely supposed, the evolution philosophy, but an evolution philosophy; that is to say, its rejection of any spiritual element in its account of the genesis of things does not follow from its acceptance of the principle of evolution; but the peculiarity of its teachings as to evolution arises from its ignoring of the spiritual element, from its assumption that, matter and motion given, their interactions will account for all that we see, feel or know.

In reality the Spencerian idea of evolution differs as widely from that held by such evolutionists as Alfred Russel Wallace, St George Mivart, or Joseph Le Conte, as it differs from the idea of special and direct creation. It is only when this is recognized that the real point of issue raised by or perhaps rather around the doctrine of evolution is seen. We all see that the oak is evolved from the acorn, the man from the child. And that it is intended for the evolution of something is the only intelligible account that we can make for ourselves of the universe. Thus in some sense we all believe in evolution, and in some sense the vast majority of men always have. And even the evolution of man from the animal kingdom offers no real difficulty so long as this is understood as only the form or external of his genesis. To me, for instance, who, possibly from my ignorance of such branches, am unable to see the weight of the evidence of man's descent from other animals, which many specialists in natural science deem conclusive, it yet appears antecedently probable that externally such might have been his descent. For it seems better to accord with the economy manifested through nature, to think that when the soul of man first took incasement in physical body on this earth it should have taken the form nearest to its needs, rather than that inorganic matter should be built up. And while I cannot conceive how, even in illimitable time, the animal could of itself turn into the man, it is easy for me to

think that if the spirit of man passed into the body of a brute the animal body would soon assume human shape.

Let me illustrate the distinction I wish to point out:

Here is a locomotive of the first class, or a great Corliss engine, capable on the pressure of a child's finger of exerting to definite ends a mighty force. How did it come to be?

"It came to be," some one might answer, "from the integrations of matter and motion. This matter existed not to go further back than is necessary, in ores of iron and copper and zinc, and in the wood of trees. By motion acting on matter these materials were transported, separated, combined and adjusted, until integrated into this definite, coherent heterogeneity that you see."

Such answer would not satisfy me. I would indeed see that it was quite true that from the first wresting of the ores from their beds, to the last touch of file or emerypaper, every step in this construction involved the action of motion on matter; but I would know that this was not all, and that what so ordered and directed the action of motion on matter as to bring this construction into being was the intelligence and volition of man. And I would reply, "You do not go deep enough: what this construction really bespeaks is something you have omitted; something to which matter is but the material, and motion the tool—the intelligence, consciousness and freedom of human will."

Or, here is a picture. Let it be a reproduction of a Madonna of Raphael's, such as are made or might be made by selffeeding presses. Shall anyone explain the impression of grace and beauty and loving purity that it produces on him who contemplates it, by explaining on the undulatory theory of light how impressions of color are produced on the retina of the eye? Or shall he account for its genesis by telling me that by integrations of matter and motion certain pigments have become disposed on paper in a certain way? Should he attempt to do so I would say to him, "You are telling me merely of the medium through which in this picture soul speaks to soul; you are merely telling me of the means by which the thought of the painter found expression in outward form."

But suppose he should answer—

"You delude yourself. I have investigated the matter, and have been to the place where such pictures as this are brought forth. I saw no painter; I saw only a series of revolving cylinders, through which

an endless roll of paper was drawn by steel fingers. By the automatic motion of this machinery one cylinder impressed on the paper some patches of one color, and another some patches of another color, till at last, by such successive actions of motion on matter, a picture like this came forth."

Would I be any more convinced that such a picture could have come to be without that power, essentially different from matter and motion, which we feel in ourselves and recognize in other men, which draws a deep gulf between man and all other animals; that power which plans, contrives, and by using matter and motion creates; that power in short which we call spirit? Would I not say to him, "What you tell me of the way this picture was brought forth by no means lessens my certainty that it could primarily have originated only in the mind and soul of a painter, but only shows me in the automatic working of the presses of which you speak a higher expression of the same power of using tools to body forth thought that was shown in the use of palette and brush. In this reproduction, as in each and all of the various processes and machines by which it was brought to be, I see a manifestation of the same essential thing that the original picture would show to me originating will, adapting mind; in short, not matter and motion, but spirit, or soul."

And of what moment would be the question whether this picture came into existence by the direct action of human will upon the paper, or indirectly through its action upon automatic machinery, as compared with the question whether its existence involved human action or not?

It is on this vital point of the existence or non-existence of spirit as a prime motor that the real issue raised by theories of evolution comes. Such evolutionism as is represented by the men of whom I have spoken, sees in evolution only a mode in which the creative spirit works. Such evolutionism as is formulated in the Spencerian philosophy eliminates spirit from its hypothesis, and takes into account only matter and motion.

Here is where all materialistic or mechanical theories of the universe ultimately fail. The belief in God, that is to say, in a Spiritual Originator, has no such utterly inadequate and ridiculous genesis as that which we shall shortly see Mr. Spencer gives for it. It springs from the same primary ineradicable perception that universally leads

men, whenever they see in a thing destitute of life the evidence of adaptation involving choice, to attribute it to man. No civilized man, after inspection, ever took the rudest huts raised by savages for the structures of lower animals. No savage who might at a distance have thought a ship a bird, or a steamer a marine monster, ever failed on closer view to know that it was a man's building. No wandering Bedouin ever attributed to natural forces ruins so vast that they transcended his ideas of man's ability. On the contrary, so clear is the impress and testimony of that creative power which so widely and unmistakably distinguishes man from all other animals, that rude peoples invariably attribute constructions which they deem beyond man's ability, to genii, fairies or demons—beings possessing powers of the same kind as man, but in larger degree. And they do this for the same reason that they attribute the bringing into being of the highest of adaptations, those that embody life, to a highest of spiritual beings—the Great Spirit, or God. And when our larger knowledge shows us no wavering or confusion in the line which marks conscious adaptation, so that to the specialist the chipping of a flint taken from a long-buried river-drift, or the scratching on a tusk of a preglacial animal, shows the same unmistakable evidence of man's work as does the engine or the picture, how shall we otherwise interpret the evidences of design similar in kind but infinitely higher in degree which nature on every hand reveals than as indicating the work of God?

But to return again to our illustration: If when, to him who contends that the engine or the picture has come to be by the integrations of matter and motion, I say that such structures unmistakably bespeak man's work, suppose he should reply to me:

"What is man's work but the interaction of matter and motion? What is man's hand but a certain arrangement of matter? What is the force it exerts but a dissipation of motion? Did they, too, not exist in an indefinite, incoherent homogeneous shape in the primordial mass? Do they not come to man from unnumbered transmutations in the food he eats, the water he drinks, the air he breathes, to pass from him into other numberless mutations? If you think man is not included in matter and motion, shut off even for a little while his supplies of matter and motion, and where is your man?"

"Your explanation no better satisfies me than before," I would reply. "While it may be true as far as it goes, it is inadequate and false

in omitting an essential factor, and that a factor which is not last but first. Matter and motion acting to all eternity could not bring forth such a structure as this. I know, from all my experience of how things come to be, that this structure had its primary genesis in thought; that in all its parts, and as a combined whole, it was thought out before it was worked out. I grant you that, at least normally, our perceptions of thought in others are dependent on our perceptions of matter and motion. But I too think. And I know from perceptions that are even closer and truer than my perceptions of matter and motion, that thought is something different from matter and motion, and from any combination of them. I think when my body is still, when my eyes are shut, even when my senses are locked from the external world by sleep. And though I can only look out, not in; though I cannot tell you what I myself am, any more than you can tell me what matter and motion are; although I can no more tell you how I came to be than you can tell me how matter and motion came to be, nor in what way this, that I feel is I, is embodied in a material frame, I do feel directly, and know from its capacities, that it is something different from and superior to the matter and motion of that frame, and that it endures while they change. And so your explanation of the genesis of things that excludes everything but matter and motion, is to me as superficial as if you were to explain a Caesar or Shakespeare by the food he ate; an *In Memoriam* by pen and ink; or my recognition of my friend's voice, and our communication of thought through the telephone, by the copper wire and the current of electricity.

"So clear, so certain, am I that what I can recognize, better than I can define, as spirit, is alone competent to produce things in which I see conscious, willing intelligence that if you were to show me a brush that seemed of itself to paint pictures, a pen that seemed of itself to write intelligible words, or even an animal that seemed to show that power which is the essential characteristic of man, I could only account for it as a manifestation of spirit acting in a way unfamiliar to me—if not spirit in a human body, playing a trick upon me, then spirit in some other form. And this would be the conclusion of all men."

While less acute thinkers profess to sneer at the evidence from design, Schopenhauer, whose great ability certainly entitles him to high rank among atheistic philosophers, is able to avoid the conclu-

sion of an Originating Intelligence only by eliminating intelligence from will, and assuming that bare will, or desire unconjoined with intelligence, directly originates, just as the will to make a bodily movement brings about that movement without knowledge or consciousness of how it is brought about.¹⁵

¹⁵ Schopenhauer's explanation of the origin of species is in interesting contrast to that of the evolutionary hypothesis, and to my mind comes closer to the truth. According to him the numberless forms and adaptations of animated nature, instead of proceeding from slow modifications, by which various creatures have been adapted to their conditions, are the expression of the desire or collective volition of the animal. I quote from the chapter on Comparative Anatomy in *The Will in Nature*, Bohn translation:

"Every animal form is a longing of the will to live which is roused by circumstances. For instance, the will is seized with a longing to live on trees, to hang on their branches, to devour their leaves, without contention with other animals and without over touching the ground. This longing presents itself throughout endless time in the form (or Platonic idea) of the sloth. It can hardly walk at all, being only adapted for climbing; helpless on the ground it is agile on trees and looks itself like a moss-clad bough in order to escape the notice of its pursuers. ...

"The universal fitness for their ends, the obviously intentional design of all the parts of the organism of the lower animals without exception proclaim too distinctly for it over to have been seriously questioned, that here no forces of Nature acting by chance and without plan have been at work, but a will ... (That) no organ interferes with another, each rather assisting the others and none remaining unemployed; also that no subordinate organ would be better suited to another mode of existence, while the life which the animal really leads is determined by the principal organs alone, but on the contrary each part of the animal not only corresponds to every other part, but also to its mode of life: its claws for instance are invariably adapted for seizing the prey which its teeth are suited to tear and break, and its intestinal canal to digest; its limbs are constructed to convey it where that prey is to be found, and no organ ever remains unemployed ... added to the circumstance that no organ required for its mode of life is ever wanting in any animal, and that all, even the most heterogeneous, harmonize together and are as it were calculated for a quite specially determined way of life, for the element in which the prey dwells, for the pursuit, the overcoming, the crushing and digesting of that prey—all this, we say, proves that the animal's structure has been determined by the mode of life by which the animal desired to find its substance, and not vice versa. It also proves that the result is exactly the same as if a knowledge of that mode of life and of its outward conditions had preceded the structure, and as if therefore every animal had chosen its equipment before it assumed a body; just as a sportsman before starting chooses his whole equipment, gun, powder, shot, pouch, hunting-knife and dress, according to the game he intends chasing. He does not take aim at the wild boar because he happens to have a rifle; he took the rifle with him and not a fowling-piece, because he intended to hunt the wild boar. The ox does not butt because it happens to have horns; it has horns because it intends to butt.

"Now to render this proof complete we have the additional circumstance that in many animals, during the time they are growing, the effort of the will to which a limb is destined to minister, manifests itself before the existence of the limb itself, its employment thus anticipating its existence. Young he-goats, rams, calves for instance butt with their bare polls before they have any horns; the young boar tries to gore on either side, before its tusks are fully developed which would respond to the intended effect, while on the other hand it neglects to use the smaller teeth it already has in its mouth and with which it might really bite. Thus its mode of defending itself does not adapt itself to the existing weapons, but vice versa.

"... Behold the countless varieties of animal shapes. How entirely is each of them the mere image of its volition, the evident expression of the strivings of the will which constitute its

But within the sphere in which we can trace origination does it anywhere appear that will without intelligence can accomplish anything? So far as we can see clearly, is it not always true that where volition without commensurate intelligence seems to result in accomplishment it is because the needed intelligence has been supplied by another will? Thus an engine-driver desires his train to move forward or backward, fast or slow, and by a motion that seems directly responsive to his will, his desire takes effect through the pulling of a lever. He may know nothing of the adjustments of the machine that in response to his will thus converts heat into motion, and utterly lack the intelligence needed to construct it. But that knowledge and intelligence were none the less necessary to this moving of the train. If not conjoined with his will they were conjoined with other wills—the wills that have constructed a machine by which a train may be moved on the pulling of a lever. The little intelligence needed in use proves the great intelligence exerted in construction.

So a lady at the opera puts her glass to her eyes and turns a screw as she wishes to make what she sees appear nearer. She may not know how many lenses her glass contains; still less their nature and properties; and is utterly without the knowledge required for making such glasses. But that she may accomplish at will results requiring such knowledge is because others possess it.

So, if we look through any part of the wide field in which human advance has brought volition nearer to result and lessened the knowledge and intelligence required by the will to use, we find its reason in the greater knowledge and intelligence shown in adaptation. If the ordinary shipmaster of today can with the aid of a quadrant, a nautical almanac and a table of logarithms learn from the heavens his position on the trackless ocean, it is because of the high intelligence and

character! Their difference in shape is only the portrait of their difference in character. ... Each particular striving of the will presents itself in a particular modification of shape. The abode of the prey therefore has determined the shape of its pursuer ... and no shape is rejected by the will to live as too grotesque to attain its ends. ... As the will has equipped itself with every organ and every weapon, offensive as well as defensive, so has it likewise provided itself in every animal shape with an intellect, as a means of preservation for the individual and the species. ... Beasts of prey do not hunt nor foxes thief because they have more intelligence; on the contrary they have more intelligence, just as they have stronger tooth and claws, because they wished to live by hunting and thieving."

tireless studies of others. If girls who know only how to strike a key and interpret a click, or put a peg in a hole, can talk with each other hundreds of miles apart, it is because of discoverers, inventors and constructors.

If, then, in the only field in which we can see origination taking place, we find that the originator is always intelligent, conscious will, and if we find that where the will that uses an adaptation does not possess the knowledge or intelligence necessary to originate it, another will or wills conjoined with deeper knowledge and wider intelligence has done so, what is the reasonable inference as to adaptations of a higher kind, the genesis of which we cannot see, and which so far transcend the knowledge and intelligence of the creatures that through them are enabled to give their own wills effect?

What are our bodies but a more perfect adjustment of parts, such as we see in machines? What are our eyes but a more perfect adjustment of lenses, such as we see in operaglasses? If, then, my hand closes when I will to grasp, without any knowledge on my part of the correlated movements that must necessarily intervene; if when I merely will to look, the lenses of my eyes are by delicate and complex machinery directed to the position and adapted to the distance; if all through animal and even vegetable nature I may see utilisations of knowledge and adaptations of intelligence transcending, not merely the powers of their users, but the highest human knowledge and intelligence, shall I infer that these utilisations and adaptations come without knowledge and intelligence? Or shall I regard them as evidences of a deeper knowledge and wider intelligence, which, since we find intelligence and knowledge invariably associated with consciousness, must pertain to a higher consciousness?

But to come back to the Book of Genesis that is offered to us in Mr. Spencer's Synthetic Philosophy.

First—if we will insist upon a first—comes the unknowable; then force; then from force, matter and motion. Matter first appears, permeated with motion, in a state of indefinite, incoherent homogeneity, from which a principle which is styled "the instability of the homogeneous" starts the "integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion," called evolution, "during which the matter passes from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogene-

ity, and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation."

This is in brief the whole story:

Matter revolving in accordance with the nebular hypothesis gives rise to nebulous aggregations; these to suns, which throw off revolving satellites, that in the course of time cool into earths, on the crust of which continuing evolution separates gases and differentiates the strata of inorganic matter. By the multiplying effects of motion acting on matter, the earth becomes fitted for life; and from the differences in the physical mobilities and chemical activities in the segregations of matter produce in colloid or jelly-like substances, such as starch, the beginnings of life, which is defined as "the definite combination of heterogeneous changes, both simultaneous and successive, in correspondence with external coexistences and sequences." And then by forces of various kinds, but all derived from motion, and being its mechanical equivalents, all the forms of life, vegetable and animal, proceed.

By this process of evolution man was finally developed from a lower animal—he himself, with all his attributes and social institutions, being like everything else an outcome of this process, which, acting through survival of the fittest, heredity and the pressure of conditions, has been and is moulding him into harmony with those conditions.

Of primitive man we have much and very definite information from Mr. Spencer. He was smaller and less powerful, especially in the lower limbs, than man is now, but had a larger abdomen and came earlier to maturity. He was wavering and inconstant; he had no surprise or curiosity or ingenuity; his imagination was reminiscent only, not constructive; he lacked abstract ideas, was without notion of definiteness and truth, or of benevolence equity or duty; he was unable to think even of a single law, much less of law in general; had neither the habit of expressing things definitely, nor the habit of testing assertions, nor a due sense of contrast between fact and fiction; and for him deliberately to weigh evidence was impossible. He was a cannibal; was entirely promiscuous in his sexual relations; had no idea of any other life or of any supernatural existences or powers, and no care for, no sympathy with, and no idea of the goodness or bad-

ness of acts toward any of his fellows, except so far as female primitive man was concerned with her offspring during infancy.

How this sorry monster, this big-bellied, short-legged, bad lot of an ancestor of ours managed to avoid the fate of the Kilkenny cats, and keep in existence, we are not definitely informed; but it seems from the Synthetic Philosophy that he did, and went on evolving.

Various processes of his further evolution are in the Synthetic Philosophy described. Seeing shadows cast by the sun, the primitive man took them for other selves, which, aided by his dreams, brought him to a belief in doubles, more extensive even than that which Mr. Stead has expounded in his *Real Ghost Stories* and *More Ghost Stories*.

This led him to believe in another life, and his fear of chiefs and efforts to propitiate them after they were dead evolved the idea of God. Some regard for others, and some crude notion of property, was also evolved by fear of reprisal from others when he injured them or took their belongings, and by the punishment inflicted by chiefs. Cannibalism declined as the practice of slavery grew, and it became more profitable to work a captive than to eat him. But primitive man was not only a cannibal, he was a trophy-taker, given to the practice of gathering human heads and jaw-bones as evidences of his prowess. This led to mutilations of the living, or self-mutilations, as marks of respect or deference, and this again led to the giving of presents; and this in its turn evolved on the one side into political and ecclesiastical revenues, and on the other into a greater respect for property, and a recognition of value, and finally into barter, and then trade. In similar ways all our perceptions, feelings, instincts and habits have arisen. As for the mooted question, whether we have innate ideas or whether all our ideas are derived from experience, the solution of the Synthetic Philosophy is, that while all our ideas are originally derived from experience, they are of two kinds—those which the experience of our ancestors has registered in our inherited nervous system, and which therefore seem to us original, or innate, and those which we ourselves derive from experience.

Such, in brief, is the scheme of philosophy that in the interval between the publication of *Social Statics* and the publication of *Justice* Mr. Spencer has developed; and which it is the purpose of the last book to apply to the moral questions gone over in the first.

Of the inadequacy of such a philosophy to account for human progress, or coherently to marshal the great facts of human life and human history I have already treated at some length in Book X of *Progress and Poverty*, entitled "The Law of Human Progress." But what we are now concerned with is the question, Where in such a philosophy is a basis for moral ideas to be found?

I cannot see, nor can I find that Mr. Spencer has been able to. Though still continuing to condemn Bentham, as he did in *Social Statics*, all his efforts to obtain something like a moral sanction reach no further than expediency.

And how can it be otherwise? If, in all we are and think and feel, we are but passing phases of the interactions of matter and motion?—if behind the force manifested in matter and motion is nothing but the unknowable, and before us nothing but dissipation—personal dissipation when we die, and the matter and motion of which alone we are composed seek other forms; and then a death of the race, followed by a dissipation of the globe?—why should we not eat, drink, and be merry to the limit of opportunity and digestion? If our ideas of God and of a future life come merely from the blunders of savages so stupid that they took shadows for other selves and dreams for realities? if we would still be eating each other had it not been discovered that man might use man more profitably as a laborer than as food? if what we call the promptings of conscience are merely inherited habits, the results of the fear of punishment transmitted through the nervous system?—why should I not lie whenever I may find it convenient and safe to lie? why should I avoid any omission or commission that will bring no legal or social or personal penalty or inconvenience? why should I refrain from selling my ability, whatever it may be, to any cause or interest that has power to give me what I desire, whether it be wealth or honour?

Mr. Spencer's philosophy makes no distinction between motives and results, nor does it admit of any. If it has any gospel, it is the gospel of results, and the results that it treats as to be sought are only results that make life pleasurable. Temperance, chastity, probity, industry, public spirit, generosity, love! They have in this philosophy no promise and no reward, save as they may directly or indirectly add to the pleasure of the individual. For the self-sacrifice of the hero, the devotion of the saint, the steadfastness of the martyr; for the spirit

that ennobles the annals of mankind, that has led and yet leads so many to endure discomfort, want, pain, death, for the love of the true and the pure and the good; for the noble hope of doing something to break the chains of the captive, to open the eyes of the blind, to make life for those who may come after fuller, nobler, happier; for the faith that has led men to dare all things and suffer all things; it has no breath of stimulation or praise. In the cold glare that it takes for light, such men are fools. For it knows no more of human will as a factor in the advance of mankind than it does of the Divine Will. To it what conditions exist, and what conditions will exist, are determined by the irresistible grind of forces that in the last analysis are resolvable into the integration of matter and the dissipation of motion. Its fatalism eliminates free will. Environment and heredity are everything, human volition nothing. Carry this philosophy to its legitimate conclusion, and the man is a mere automaton who thinks he is a free agent only because he does not feel the strings that move him. That I am a man is because I have been evolved from the brute, as the boulder is rounded from the rock; as the brute, my ancestor, was evolved from colloid, and colloid from indefinite, incoherent homogeneous matter. And that I am this or that kind of a man, with such and such powers, tastes, habits, ways of thinking, feeling, perceiving, acting, is simply the result of the external influences that registered in my ancestors the nerve impressions transmitted to me, and that have continued to mould me. Social institutions, the outgrowth of a similar evolution in which free will had no part, will continue their evolution without help or hindrance from anything which is really choice or volition of mine.

Extremes sometimes curiously meet. The philosophy of Schopenhauer, which in deriving everything from will is the antipodes of the Spencerian philosophy, and which, like the philosophies of India, of which it is a European version, holds existence an evil, and looks for relief only to the renunciation of the will to live, would, if it were generally accepted, produce among the European races the same social lethargy, the same hopelessness of reform, the same readiness to bow before any tyrant, that have so long characterized the masses of India. It seems to me that the essential fatalism of the philosophy of Mr. Spencer would have a similar result.¹⁶

¹⁶ In *Progress and Poverty*, Book X, Chapter 1, I say:

And as the pessimistic philosophy of the one seems to flow from the abandonment of action for mere speculation, and from the satiety and *ennui* which under certain conditions accompany it, so the evolutionary philosophy of the other seems to be such as might result from the abandonment of a noble purpose—from a turning from the thorny path which an attack upon vested wrongs must open, to embrace the pleasanter ways of acquiescence in things as they are.

It is not for me to say what is cause and what is effect; but the correspondence of Mr. Spencer's philosophy, which ignores the spiritual element and knows nothing of duty, with his own attitude as shown in his letters to the *St. James's Gazette* and *The Times* and in *The Man versus the State*, is very striking. In *Justice* we shall see more of this correspondence.

"The practical outcome of this theory is in a sort of hopeful fatalism, of which current literature is full. In this view, progress is the result of forces which work slowly, steadily and remorselessly, for the elevation of man. War, slavery, tyranny, superstition, famine and pestilence, the want and misery which fester in modern civilization, are the impelling causes which drive man on, by eliminating poorer types and extending the higher; and hereditary transmission is the power by which advances are fixed, and past advances made the footing for new advances. The individual is the result of changes thus impressed upon and perpetuated through a long series of past individuals, and the social organization takes its form from the individuals of which it is composed. Thus, while this theory is, as Herbert Spencer says* 'radical to a degree beyond anything which current radicalism conceives,' inasmuch as it looks for changes in the very nature of man; it is at the same time 'conservative to a degree beyond anything conceived by current conservatism,' inasmuch as it holds that no change can avail save these slow changes in men's natures. Philosophers may teach that this does not lessen the duty of endeavouring to reform abuses, just as the theologians who taught predestinarianism insisted on the duty of all to struggle for salvation; but, as generally apprehended, the result is fatalism—do what we may, the mill of the gods grind on regardless either of our aid or our hindrance.

* The Study of Sociology—Conclusion

Some years after this was written I had a curious illustration of its truth. Talking one day with the late E. L. Youmans, the great populariser of Spencerianism in the United States, a man of warm and generous sympathies, whose philosophy seemed to me like an ill-fitting coat he had accidentally picked up and put on, he fell into speaking with much warmth of the political corruption of New York, of the utter carelessness and selfishness of the rich, and of their readiness to submit to it, or to promote it wherever it served their money-getting purposes to do so. He became so indignant as he went on that he raised his voice till he almost shouted.

Alluding to a conversation some time before, in which I had affirmed and he had denied the duty of taking part in politics, I said to him, "What do you propose to do about it?"

Of a sudden his manner and tone were completely changed, as remembering his Spencerianism he threw himself back, and replied, with something like a sigh, "Nothing! You and I can do nothing at all. It's all a matter of evolution. We can only wait for evolution. Perhaps in four or five thousand years evolution may have carried men beyond this state of things. But we can do nothing."