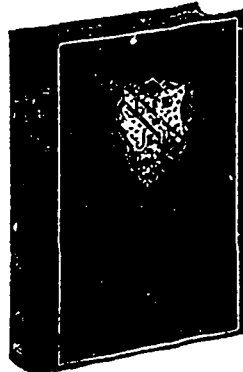




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and observation, be-
came a philosopher.
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training he had
learned to admire
and respect the char-
acter and teaching of
Jesus of Nazareth,
but his good sense
and reason led him
to disbelieve in the
supernatural origin
of the "Son of
Mary." His reasons
for this disbelief—

this want of faith—are as follows, and are given
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DYNAMIC SOCIOLOGY.

BY PROF. WAIRD.

V.

It is thus clear how wholly different must be both the nature and the plan of operation of a truly progressive system from those of any of the non-progressive systems which have divided up the energies of the world in the past.

It may be asked, "Where can this knowledge be obtained? Must we go to nature for it and dig it out of the bowels of the earth before we can scatter it among men?" This is now happily unnecessary. Unaided nature, operating upon man as upon animals and plants, has impelled him to seek this knowledge for himself, and obeying this strictly biological law, he has brought to light a vast mass of truth, sufficient, if properly distributed, to place society on the highway to permanent prosperity. But, as the movement, being a purely natural one, has been strictly egoistic, this mass of knowledge has remained locked up in the minds of a few persons, and has only been allowed to exert an indirect influence on the state of society, and scarcely any on the great majority of its individual members. Further, society at large, which has come into the possession of the greater part of this knowledge, has taken no pains to secure its diffusion among its members. The only means of obtaining this knowledge is for each individual to seek it out for himself—an effort which not one in a thousand could afford to make, even should he chance to have a desire. The great majority never even learn the fact that any such fund of knowledge exists in the world. Comparatively few have any idea of its value.

It is customary in our day to recommend in the strongest terms the extension to all our higher institutions of the facilities for increasing knowledge, for independent original research. This is well, but the fact is that not one-hundredth part of the facts which original research has already brought forth are to-day obtainable by the one-hundredth part of the members of society, so that not one truth in ten thousand is fully utilized. Why go on bringing forth new truth, when in the existing state of society it is impossible to make a proper use of what we already have? It would not be difficult to demonstrate that this constant accumulation of materials for progress so far beyond the capacity of society to utilize them, or even to become conscious of their existence, exerts along with some direct benefits a large amount of indirect evil to society itself. It is like gorging the stomach to repletion in the hope that thereby nutrition may be increased. And, just as this may with some safety be done by lowly-organized creatures, while its practice by highly-organized ones is certain to end in reaction and disease, so the early and lowly organized societies of the world may without danger have accumulated great masses of facts for the later and more delicately-constituted ones to apply, while the same policy pursued by the latter makes a dangerous chasm between the intelligent few and the ignorant many, which cannot fail to accomplish the aggrandisement of the former at the expense of the latter. To this influence, if I mistake not, is to be ascribed the greater part of the evils of which modern society complains. Every cultivated man has often wondered at the extraordinary degree of refinement to which many branches of knowledge have been carried. Considered independently of each other, nearly every so-called science, not to speak of the arts both useful and æsthetic, has been pursued to the most astonishing heights of specialization, and carried out through the most delicate and multiplied ramifications. I need but refer to the great and useful sciences of mathematics, of astronomy, of physics, and of chemistry. Still better illustrations, however, are to be found in the less practical sciences of zoology and botany. The incentive in these latter seems to have chiefly been mere fondness for the acquisition of facts. There is scarcely an animal or a plant in Europe, in America, or even in Australia, that has not been collected, studied, described, named, and classified. Volumes have been written and profusely illustrated with elegant plates to describe the species of certain plants and animals whose practical use to mankind is not appreciable, and is not in the slightest degree increased by such accurate knowledge on the part of a few specialists. Considering the number of important and fundamental problems which every science always presents, and the manner in which these are neglected, while such abstruse and useless niceties are spun out by specialists, I have been led to believe that, except as goaded on by personal want, the human intellect prefers trifles and hair-breadth subtleties to the serious investigation of truth. This tendency, so manifest in science, has, as all know, been still more pronounced