

British ambassador at Constantinople, respecting the Bulgarian massacres: 'We may indeed and we must feel indignant at the needless and monstrous severity with which the Bulgarian insurrection was put down: but the necessity which exists for England to prevent changes from occurring here which would be most detrimental to ourselves is not affected by the question whether it was ten thousand or twenty thousand persons who perished in the suppression. We have been upholding what we know to be a semi-civilized nation, liable under certain circumstances to be carried into fearful excesses; but the fact of this having just now been strikingly brought home to us cannot be sufficient reason for abandoning a policy which is the only one that can be followed with due regard to our own interests.' Pitt would have repudiated the sentiment, and probably ceased to employ the ambassador. But Sir Henry Eliot had a great body of British opinion with him. The journal which is the great organ at once of Agnosticism and aggrandizement confidently threatened with national scorn and indignation any government which, merely because the Turks had been guilty, as it confessed they had, of 'loathsome cruelty,' should shift the ground of English policy, which had for its ruling principle 'the irrepressible struggle for empire.' The practical deduction coheres perfectly with the principle thus avowed; and what is the irrepressible struggle for empire but evolution and natural selection applied to international relations?

Perhaps some subtler indications of evolutionist influence may be discerned. There seems to prevail in the treatment of history and politics not only an increased impartiality and comprehensiveness, the happy offspring of science, but what may almost be called a furor of cynical moderation. Enthusiasm, self-sacrifice, heroism, if they are to continue to exist, must be provided with new aliments; they have hitherto certainly been fed by the belief that he who should lose his life in a good cause would in some form or other gain it. Yet without enthusiasm, self-sacrifice, heroism, how could humanity have been nerved for its grandest efforts, or saved from its greatest perils?

China is without any real religion; she is thoroughly positive; and she is simply conservative of the present, especially of

the existing political and social order, without thought of progress: the worship of ancestors seems to consecrate that idea. It is to something of this kind that the line on which materialists are moving seems to us really to tend. A hive of human bees is, we believe, the avowed ideal of some social philosophers. In the routine life of Chinese industry, submitting to almost mechanical laws, without reflection or aspiration, we have a hive of human bees.

The world is in no danger of another Peloponnesian war, or of a repetition of the convulsions of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; but it is in considerable danger of a desperate conflict between different classes of society for the good things of that which people are coming to believe is the only world. Is it likely that the passions of such a conflict will be controlled by any motive derived from scientific definitions of evolution; by any consideration connected with the rhythm of motion, the instability of the homogeneous, or the multiplication of effects? Force is force, and its own warrant: so the strong will say, and upon this principle they will act in the struggle for existence and for the enjoyments of existence; they will be restrained only by something to which force must bow, and which no alembic, apparently, can extract from force itself.

✧ Renan and others of his school scent danger from the operation of their criticism on the minds of the common people, in whose ideas they know that morality is bound up with religion. They propose, accordingly, that the clergy shall keep up religion for the masses, leaving the select few to think as they please. A pleasant element in a moral civilization would be a clergy so conscious of the fraud which it was practising on the ignorant as to grant letters of exemption from belief to the learned! It is too late for *populus vult decipi*. The people will have no lies. Mechanics are alive to the state of the case, or to all that is most material in it, not less than M. Renan himself. Needless disturbance of vital belief is to be deprecated on grounds higher than the selfish fears of wealth and literary fastidiousness; but good never came of trying to blindfold any one.

A less Jesuistical plea for caution might be founded on the present state of the inquiry and the novelty of the situation, if we could here presume to enter on so