

HERBERT SPENCER.

Mr. HERBERT SPENCER, the eminent English philosophical writer, arrived in this country August 21. He has long desired to visit America, but has been deterred from the undertaking by his very imperfect health, and his apprehensions of the effect of the Atlantic voyage. He landed in a very exhausted condition, and declining all social engagements and excitement, went quietly away to the mountains to rest and recruit.

Mr. SPENCER was born in Derby, England, in 1820. His father was a teacher, a man of culture, of independent views, which he carried out in the education of his son. His fundamental principle in teaching was that only what the pupil does for himself is really valuable to him, and hence he labored to establish inquiring and self-reliant habits in the minds of his pupils rather than to help them to passive acquisitions. Young SPENCER was educated on this principle in his boyhood by his father, and afterward by his uncle, an English clergyman. He early took to mathematics and science rather than to classical studies, and instead of going to Cambridge, as his uncle, a university man, desired, he went into rail-roading, as a civil engineer, at the age of seventeen. The great railroad reaction of 1845 threw him out of business, and he then took to a literary career.

Mr. SPENCER is perhaps most widely known by the little work on education, which was contributed first to the *Reviews*, and issued as a book in 1860. It is written largely from the point of view of his own experience in methods of study, and is so strenuously favorable to the study of science, and so practically valuable as a guide to self-education, that it fell in with the tendencies of the age, and has exerted a very wide influence upon individual minds and upon practical school instruction, as shown by the fact that it has passed through many editions, and has been translated into a great number of languages in all quarters of the world.

Mr. SPENCER's life has been outwardly uneventful, and the world is interested in him solely as a thinker and a representative of great modern ideas. In this respect there has been a remarkable unity in his intellectual career. No more striking example can be found of a man working on from his youth through life in a broad but continuous line of research, although from the number and diversity of the fields he has had to traverse, there has arisen the notion that he has a great propensity to write upon everything. The simple fact is that he early got possession of a new all-comprehensive principle, and has spent his life in working it out in all directions.

In 1842, at the age of twenty-two, young SPENCER published a pamphlet on *The Proper Sphere of Government*, an ethical discussion of individual rights and public duties. This germinal exposition was developed into a volume, and published

in 1850 under the title of *Social Statics*. This book was an attempt to establish a scientific basis for private and public morals. Finding that the subject demanded far more extensive treatment, he projected a series of works, scientific in method, to bring out this view, and the

last of them is a treatise on the *Principles of Morality*, of which the *Data of Ethics* has been recently published. He is thus upon the same track of thought that he entered forty years ago, and all his intermediate labor has been pursued with distinct reference to the final result.

But this alone will not account for SPENCER's hold upon the thought of the age. He is widely known as the philosopher of evolution, but he was led into the investigation of this great doctrine by the necessities of his studies in ethical science. His first pamphlet is full of the idea of progress and adaptability in man and his social relations. In *Social Statics* the idea of evolution, though vaguely presented, has become the key to the discussion, and from 1850 on, Mr. SPENCER made the working out of this doctrine his great object. This he did at first in a fragmentary way. Having to get his living by writing, he made numerous contributions of articles to leading reviews from 1850 to 1860, all implying, illustrating, or expounding the evolutionary principle in a large number of its aspects and applications. He then projected the *Synthetic Philosophy*, in ten volumes, as a twenty years' work to develop the doctrine of evolution, and has been at it ever since. To show how far in advance he was of all other thinkers in this field, it may be stated that he had written more than thirty elaborate articles in the chief English reviews, all bearing upon evolution (although by the rule of those reviews unfortunately anonymous), and had drawn up a detailed scheme of the evolution philosophy in the exact logical order which he has since followed, and all this before Mr. DARWIN had published a word upon the subject.

Mr. SPENCER's health gave way in the year 1855, after the appearance of his *Principles of Psychology*, perhaps his profoundest work, and which was written in eleven months. After this he could do nothing for a year and a half, and he has been troubled with sleeplessness and much nervous irritation ever since. His main business for twenty-five years has been to economize his vital forces for the continuance of his work. All his books and letters are dictated, and at the best he has been able to give but about three hours a day to his amanuensis. He seeks relief from the strain of thought by recreations such as billiards, concerts, and country excursions, and has found social excitements so disturbing that he has been compelled very much to restrict them.

In social intercourse Mr. SPENCER is easy and agreeable. He is a ready and interesting talker, though his capacity for society small talk is slender. If conversation engages him, and he is in a vigorous condition, his talk is impressive and often brilliant; but as such excitement generally costs him sleep, he is apt to decline and avoid serious subjects on social occasions. Indeed, he is more and more compelled in these latter days to avoid all argument and exciting discussion, and if he is very much compelled to do so while in this country, his friends must credit it to his low physical condition, and remember that he regrets it more than anybody else.

E. L. YOUNG.



HERBERT SPENCER



A CHESS-MATCH.—FROM THE PICTURE BY U. BIDA.