

or the rich, the conditions are not those which prevail in a state of nature, and in the nature of the case the results must differ as widely as do the two sets of conditions. By means of an artificial social arrangement the process of natural selection is thrown out of operation, and evolution brought to a standstill. We will now deal with sexual selection.

We have already seen that in a state of nature the female selects for mate the strongest and most courageous male. After natural selection has done its work, sexual selection takes up the unfinished task and carries it a step further. The powerful influence of this secondary selection in improving the species is obvious at a glance. The choice of the female is determined by the instinct of self-preservation. It is clear that in a state of Socialism, with conditions similar to those prevailing in a state of nature, sexual selection would operate as it does in a state of nature, and would therefore render valuable assistance in evolving a higher type of humanity. Superior physique, courage, beauty, mental power, and moral worth would all attract the female, and influence her choice, thus assuring to the man of the future an unlimited degree of excellence in these qualities. But how does sexual selection act under Capitalism today? The instinct of self-preservation prompts the female to find a mate among the rich and the latter are not endowed to any exceptional extent with the qualities named. It may be said with safety that a hunchback earl or duke of the poorest mental equipment has today a thousand times better chance of begetting children than has the most gifted man who possesses no property. The instinct of self-preservation prompts the female to seek first of all an assured living, and it is not easy to see how this can be found among men of no property, whose own living is precarious. To deal exhaustively with the action of sexual selection under Capitalism would require more space than can possibly be devoted to the point in this essay. Doubtless various reflections will arise in the mind of the reader. For the present it must suffice to point out that, for the rich, the production of children is made artificially easy, and that solely because they are rich. If wealth were a mark of superiority, this state of affairs might inspire some hope for the future of the race; but is it? It cannot be argued that it is such in the case of those who are born rich, but we will consider whether those who win their wealth do so because they are superior to their neighbours. Everything in this connection depends on the commercial value of excellence, and excellence may be taken to be of three sorts—physical, mental, and moral. We will deal with them in this order.

What is the commercial value of superior physique today? Among manual labourers there is no class physically equal to navvies. The work of the navy is so heavy that nobody but a splendidly built man can perform it. Very many abandon it after a short trial. Is the navy better paid than the average labourer? He is; but how much? In the experience of the present writer, the difference in wages in favour of the navy is about one penny per hour. At first sight that seems an appreciable advantage, but a closer examination will show that it is nothing of the sort. Every owner of horses knows that it costs more to keep a Clydesdale horse than a Welsh