

Mr. Spencer classifies them as external and internal: the former being the flora, fauna, climate, and other environments of primitive man, and the latter being primitive man's own physical emotional, and intellectual nature, experiences, and ideas. In dealing with this part of his subject Mr. Spencer lays down the principle that "the conception of primitive man and his history must be formed from those existing races of men which, as judged by their visible characters and their implements, approach most nearly to him."* What then follows shows that he here refers to the living human beings who are in the most savage and least civilized condition. "Observe what such men and their ideas and habits are," says he, "and you see as nearly as possible what primitive men and their ideas and habits were."

Of course it was inevitable that in a professedly eminently scientific study of Sociology Mr. Spencer would come upon primitive man's religious ideas, institutions, and habits. Strangely enough, however, he nowhere defines religion, but appears to regard it as made up of men's ideas and sentiments relating to the supernatural, and resulting in certain ecclesiastical observances and institutions. He claims that there are some civilized and many savage men who have no religious ideas, sentiments, or institutions whatever! Hence he draws the remarkable conclusion that primitive man was entirely without religion. † But in the course of time it appeared, and has become all but universal. Whence did it come? His answer in brief is: "Comparative sociology discloses a common origin for each leading element of religious belief. The conception of the ghost, along with the multiplying and complicating ideas arising from it, we find everywhere. Thus we have abundant proofs of the natural genesis of religions." ‡

In this connection Mr. Spencer goes on to say: "Undeniably, a system of superstitions evolves after the same manner as all other things. By continuous integration and differentiation it is formed into an aggregate which, while increasing, passes from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity. This correspondence is indeed inevitable. The law which is conformed to by the evolving human being, and which is consequently conformed to by the evolving human intelligence, is of necessity conformed to by all products of that intelligence. Showing itself in structures, and by implication in the functions of those structures, this law cannot but show itself in the concrete manifestations of those functions. Just as language, considered as an objective product, bears the impress of the subjective process, so too does that system of ideas concerning the nature of things, which the mind gradually elaborates." §

In support of each of his points Mr. Spencer brings forward many statements of travelers among savages, which he alleges to be satisfactory evidence of the truth of his argument. Much of this evi-

* Principles of Sociology, Chap. IV., §23.

† Ecclesiastical Institutions, Chap. I., §983.

‡ Principles of Sociology, Vol. I., Chap. XXVI., §307.

‡ *Ibid.*, §585.