

into a higher and more abstract form Darwin's discoveries and theories. In short, they regard him as a disciple of Darwin. And this brings me to the second of the two rectifications of public opinion which I promised above to attempt. Nothing could be more absurdly untrue than to regard Mr. Spencer as in any way, or in either department, a disciple of Darwin's. In the first place, as regards Organic Evolution, he was an avowed evolutionist long before the publication of Darwin's first hint on the subject. He continued an evolutionist, in the main on the same lines, after Darwin had brought out *The Origin of Species* and its ancillary volumes. He adopted, it is true, the theory of Natural Selection, as did every other evolutionist of his time (except Mr. Samuel Butler); but he adopted it merely as one among the factors of Organic Evolution, and, while valuing it highly, he never attributed to it the same almost exclusive importance as did Darwin himself—certainly not the same quite exclusive importance as has since been attached to it by the *doctrinaire* school of Neo-Darwinians, who employ it as the sole key which unlocks, in their opinion, all the problems of biology. On the contrary, he has always steadily maintained the existence and importance of other factors in Organic Evolution, and has combated with extraordinary vigour and acuteness the essentially Neo-Darwinian views of Weismann which make Natural Selection alone into the *deus ex machina* of organic development.

In the second place—and this is the more important point—as regards Evolution at Large, Mr. Spencer is not in the remotest degree beholden for the origin of his ideas to Darwin. So far as those ideas are not quite original with him—and no human idea is ever wholly original—they are derived from the direct line of Kant, Laplace, and the English geologists. For many years previous to Mr. Spencer's philosophic activity, the progress of human thought

had been gradually leading up to the point where a cosmic evolutionism, such as Mr. Spencer's, became almost of necessity the next forward step. But to say this is not to detract in any way from Mr. Spencer's greatness—rather the other way; for it needed a man of cosmic intellect and of cosmic learning to make the advance which had thus become inevitable. The moment had arrived, and waited for the thinker; Mr. Spencer was the thinker who came close upon the moment. The situation is this. Kant and Laplace had suggested that suns and stars might have grown, and assumed their existing distribution and movements, by the action of purely natural laws, without the need for direct creative or systematising effort from without. The geologists had suggested that the crust of the earth might have assumed its existing stratification and sculpture through the agency of causes at present in action. Erasmus Darwin and Lamarck had suggested that plants and animals might have been developed and specialised from a common original by the direct action of the environment, aided in part by their own volition, where such existed. But all these thinkers, great and able in their day, had addressed themselves—as Charles Darwin later addressed himself—to one set of phenomena alone; had regarded the process which they pointed out, in isolation only. It remained for a man of commanding intellect and vast grasp of generalising faculty to build up and unify these scattered evolutionary guesses into a single consistent concept of Evolution. Herbert Spencer was that man. He gave us both the concept and the name by which we habitually know it. The words "Theory of Evolution" occur already, seven years before Darwin, in the *Leader* essay.

This point, again, Mr. Clodd has excellently elaborated. "Contact with many sorts and conditions of men," he says,

brings home the need of ceaselessly