

Recognition, tacit or express, of the common weal, as the condition of individual satisfaction, is a mark of all modern theories of conduct. Such superficially contradictory sayings as "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul," and "He that gaineth his life shall lose it," are reconciled in the command, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." But while modern ethics cannot rid itself of the principle of universal brotherhood, systems differ very much in the firmness with which they grasp and apply the principle. Hobbes was very far from having a clear consciousness of it, and hence he says aloud that society rests on prudent selfishness, while the effect of his doctrine was to overthrow the "right divine of kings to govern wrong," and to make the common good the basis of the state. It has been said that Hobbes was led to maintain the absolute authority of the sovereign power from observing the anarchy which prevailed during the civil war. This is hardly correct, but this theory of the state was no doubt suggested by the struggle against the arbitrary rule of Charles I. Man, he holds, is, in a state of nature, absolutely selfish. The primary desires are love of life, love of gain, and love of glory, which give rise to a "war of every man against every man." To put an end to mutual distrust, and secure one's own good, which can never be attained as long as unrestrained selfishness prevails, men enter into a *contract* to abstain from mutual aggression. In the state of nature there are no rights; the rule is,

"That he should take who has the power,
And he should keep who can."

Right and wrong are the creation of the state. All the social virtues are but different ways of securing peace. Reason teaches men to give up their individual wills to one man, or assembly of men, so that the various conflicting wills may be reconciled in a single will. From the very nature of the contract the surrender is absolute. In a monarchy the king can do no wrong, and he is the head at once of church and state. While Hobbes admits the right of the people to establish other forms of government he inclines himself to an absolute monarchy, on the ground that the selfishness of a single ruler will be less disastrous than that of a large body. As we have not even yet got rid of the doctrine of individualism, or of the supposition of a "state of nature," which reappears in Mr. Herbert Spencer's recent pamphlet, "*The Man versus the State*," it may be profitable to examine the doctrine of Hobbes with some care. (1) The theory is utterly unhistorical. (a.) There never was a time when men existed out of society, and stood to one another in an attitude of pure antagonism. The "state of nature" is a fiction. No doubt savage races have no settled government or code of laws, but they have chiefs whose authority is at least partially recognized and customs which they follow only too slavishly. In the earliest form of society perhaps even the family did not exist, but at no time could men have lived without some

connecting social bonds. As Plato says, "There must be honour even among thieves." A number of men, not united in any way, would have become a prey to the lower animals or to hostile groups of war. In fact the further we go back the less individuality there is, although at the same time the less sociality. (b.) As man never existed out of society, plainly society cannot be the product of contract. Not only is there no historical evidence for it, but a contract such as Hobbes describes could not have been made. The intelligence and self-control presupposed could only be developed by that very social organization which the contract is supposed first to constitute. (2) There is no philosophical basis for Hobbes' doctrine. The notion of the State as a mere aggregate of individuals is essentially false. (a) Hobbes speaks of "that great Leviathan called a commonwealth" as an "automaton" or "artificial man." This conception is quite inadequate. At the very least the State must be compared to an organism, which is not a mere aggregate of parts, but a living unity. As we cannot transfer an eye, or a heart, or a brain from one living being to another, because each living being is an inseparable unity, so we cannot separate individual men from society without logically destroying them. Apart from the functions which he discharges, the individual man is nothing, although no doubt every man has capacities which are not exhausted in the functions he fulfils. Hence the supposed "state of nature" in which men exist before society, is an absurdity. (b) The state, therefore, is not the "artificial" product of a contract. It is not made but grows, and like other organisms it grows out of that which is already organic. No man or body of men can say, "Thus and thus shall the state be;" it defies all efforts to change its fundamental character, and develops in its own way. (3) The state is more than an organism; it is self-conscious. Each member may be conscious not only of his own activity, but of the activity of all other members. It is this fact that distinguishes human society from gregariousness. Lower animals have social instincts, but they cannot separate themselves from them, and being unable to invent new forms of association, they do not progress as man does. The State is most perfect in which the largest number of citizens have learned to comprehend the whole meaning of the complex functions of the society of which they are organs. Hence the necessity of education by political life, which in Hobbes' theory of the State as a despotism over the individual is impossible. (4) Man is not "by nature" absolutely selfish. He always existed in society, and therefore always displayed social tendencies. The truth is that man has no original "nature" in the sense of definite tendencies, but merely unrealized capacities, which in their fruition become selfish or unselfish, according to the direction they take. The ideal of conduct develops as the people develops, and, as a rule, that ideal is embodied in the laws and customs of the age. Selfishness in the individual consists in deviation from this standard; unselfishness in conformity to it. But