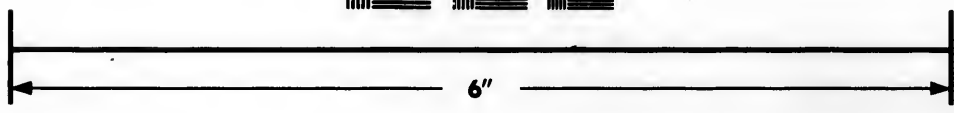
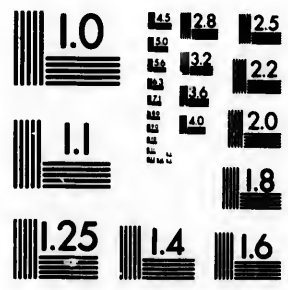


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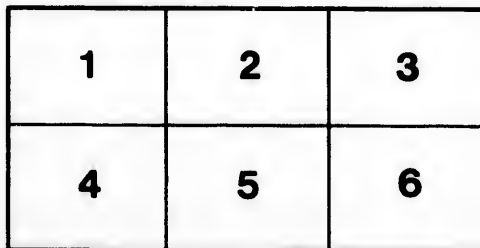
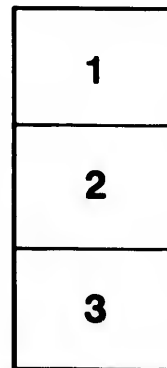
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THE  
WESTMINSTER REVIEW,

No. CL.

FOR OCTOBER, 1861.

ART. 1.—MR. GOLDWIN SMITH ON THE STUDY  
OF HISTORY.

*The Study of History: Two Lectures delivered by GOLDWIN SMITH, M.A., Regius Professor of Modern History in the University of Oxford.* Oxford and London: J. H. and J. Parker. 1861.

WHETHER the facts of human nature and society are capable of scientific treatment is undoubtedly the question upon which the course of all future thought must depend. Every fresh discovery, theory, or controversy gives a new importance to this central problem. Moral, social and religious discussions seem all to gravitate to this, and await the answer to the higher question in which they are involved. Debate now turns not simply on the soundness of the reasoning or the accuracy of observation, but upon the very nature of the reasoning process employed, and the sphere of thought itself. No doubt this, like so many famous controversies, must be ultimately decided by the practical good sense of mankind. We believe there is only one conclusive reply to the opponents of the scientific method—*solvitur ambulando*. We doubt if it is possible, and indeed worth the trouble, to argue men into a belief of the existence of any science. But all those who feel an interest in this theory must watch closely the manner, and still more the spirit, in which it is attacked. If we recur to this subject, it is with the purpose, not so much of answering objections as of protesting against the use of polemical invective in a scientific discussion.

In a recent number we pointed out that the new doctrine had made such progress,

that at both the older Universities the Professors of Modern History had thought it necessary to anathematize it with the usual formula. We then examined the argument of Mr. Kingsley. We pointed out his misconception of the theory in question, his original ideas about the common axioms of science, his peculiar tenets upon the nature of "laws," and how thoroughly, after all, he conceded the propositions he began by refuting. In a word, when he made it "the business of his life henceforward to teach Modern History in a way that should give satisfaction to the rulers of his University," we thought he must be content with a select rather than a numerous audience.

Since we then wrote, Mr. Goldwin Smith has published two lectures upon the Study of History, in which the same position is maintained with much more vigour, and we fear much less candour. If it were the object of his ambition also to give satisfaction to the rulers of his University, he could hardly have done better than publish addresses which seem better adapted for the pulpit of St. Mary's than the Chair of History, and which, with sundry allusions to his special study, are chiefly a panegyric of morality and religion. His lectures are no doubt very different from that of Mr. Kingsley. A veteran critic—*rude jam donatus*—is in the first place not likely to fall into the extravagances of a popular novelist. We are the very first to do justice to the many excellences this work possesses. Mr. Goldwin Smith is clearly master of a power of expression which has scarcely a rival amongst us. His language has a native strength and purity which rises not seldom into true poetry. He is, too, obviously possessed by real convictions, and a genu-

ine enthusiasm for moral greatness. These lectures have fine thoughts stamped in noble words. There is much with which we heartily sympathize, especially with some admirable examples which he gives us of the theory which he has undertaken to condemn. But, unfortunately, nervous English is not philosophical acumen. Wit is not the ultimate test of truth. And, above all, very decided principles are not the same thing as candour or temper. We do not see that the view of history here propounded is at bottom less confused and inconsistent than Mr. Kingsley's. He at any rate was obviously anxious to do justice to his opponents, and was uniformly courteous. If he occasionally wandered into the language of sermons, he never descended into that of a pamphleteer. But, so far as the argument goes, what we have here is radically the same. We have here the same misconception of the theory attacked, the same confusion about physical science, and even greater admission of the point in dispute.

Now it is impossible to regard the Oxford Professor as an independent reasoner, when we see the use he makes of his position. He opens his two lectures with a pungent apology for Christianity, and ends them with a still more pungent controversy on the attributes of God. We have here the same subjects we find in a Bampton Lecture. We have, in a pamphlet of ninety pages, nearly all the leading problems in theology, morals, and metaphysics. Amongst the preliminary questions disposed of are the attributes of the Creator and the character of Christ—the origin of evil, and a future state—the immortality of the soul, and the sanctions of morality—the doctrines of free will and necessity—the philosophy of the absolute and the theory of the Inconceivable. Comte and Hegel, Mr. Mansel and Mr. Mill, Mr. Buckle and Mr. Darwin, are refuted in successive paragraphs, or tossed upon the horns of a lively dilemma. And all this in two lectures upon the Study of History! And *à propos* of a proposal to reduce that study to a method.

We do not wish to be misunderstood; we are far from denying to the lecturer the right to engage in any theological argument he pleases. We welcome any man who will profess a conscientious belief. We quite think that his belief is conscientious. What we complain of is, that a philosophical question should be treated with the animus of a theological partisan. We protest against its discussion being made subservient to any religious controversy; and we very much complain of the impatient spirit with which this is done. Now what the

undergraduates may say to getting extra University sermons, we cannot conceive. All that concerns us is to insist that a purely philosophical question should be treated upon its own merits. We intend to put it exclusively upon that ground, and we think that any one who removes it from that ground loses his right to be heard. That the facts of human society are capable of scientific treatment, is a view which, to say the least, is maintained by some of the most influential modern writers, and is adopted in greater or less degree by a wide and increasing number. Now it pleases the Oxford Professor to denounce this theory as a base materialism, and rank profanity. Those who support it are treated as the enemies of the human race, and are devoid of all the higher instincts of our nature. In a perverse generation the warning voice of the preacher is heard. One voice, at least, shall be heard to uphold morality, religion, and common sense. "Truth, morality, God, are swept away," he cries aloud against one of his opponents—indeed, a brother lecturer. In fact, he has pretty hard words, and some still harder insinuations, for them all. It is refreshing in these days to see a man in such very downright earnest. It is rare to see a genuine passion for a scientific idea. Apply induction to history, indeed! No, cries the Professor: better to be a blade of grass at once. "Try a new method of reasoning," we say—"and sink into a brute," he adds. So is it that a metaphysical discussion is spiced with the famous old epithets, and "Atheist," "Pantheist," "Materialist," and "Antichrist," enliven an inquiry into the function of induction.

The fact is, that the tone of the lecturer occasionally recalls that of those painful people who are possessed of a mission. One would suppose that Providence had raised him up as a sort of Voltaire on the orthodox side. Here and there it seems as if he had conceived the ingenious idea of sneering religion into favour. As the famous Methodist thought the Devil ought not to have all the good tunes, so he seems to think it a pity to let him have all the bon-mots! Obviously, caricature may be available in the actual state of the Church. He apparently supposes that men are to be made religious by a vigorous application of fun and hard names. Accordingly he has determined to turn his singular powers of ridicule to moral and religious topics, with the intention of satirizing mankind into true belief, and counteracting the tendencies of the age by a sort of burlesque of modern philosophy.

He seems to possess a personal antipathy against what he calls materialism—but what

the world calls the progress of scientific ideas. What Reform was to Mr. Croker—what the Revolution is to M. Venillot—that Materialism is to Mr. Goldwin Smith. It lurks in our popular theories, and pervades our ordinary phrases. The very words "development," "growth," "organization," and "law," savour of it. Of course, such writers as Mr. Mill, Mr. Spencer, Mr. Darwin, or Mr. Buckle, are the very high priests of abomination. M. Comte, of course, is a sort of Arimanes, or Principle of Evil. In accordance with this singular view, we are told of "the prevailing passion for degrading humanity to mere clay;" of men who desire to "repose under the tranquil reign of physical necessity, to become a part of the material world." We hear of nothing but the "physical school of philosophy," and the "physical theory of the universe," and "materialism," and "scientific atheism," and a "mad mysticism," and of our becoming "a mere grain in the mass of being," whatever that may mean, and of the extinction of all sympathy, self-exertion, and effort, and all the other dreadful things with which the metaphysicians of the last century and the theologians of every century threaten all who dispute their propositions.

We are accustomed to all this from the pulpit. But is this a very enlightened tone for a philosophical discussion? Now is this the language which thinking men use when they are arguing upon the logic of the moral sciences? The doctrine of causation, or what he calls the physical theory as applied to society, is maintained by no one more thoroughly than Mr. Mill. Is this the sort of style in which his system is examined at Oxford? We trow not. Is all this a rational picture of contemporary thought? Who is this that reproves our age for "the prevailing passion for degrading humanity to mere clay"? Seriously, is this much better than mere academic bombast? One would suppose that he only was left as the Prophet of the Lord amidst the priests of Baal—an Abdiel amidst the rebel angels. For our part, we must say that we do not see around us these degrading passions. We do not think that the public regards the scientific thinkers of the day as so utterly demoralizing. We recommend that serious systems of philosophy should be discussed without caricature; and, on the whole, all this seems to us rather like tilting at windmills.

But there is one feature of the method here employed which strikes us as decidedly unfair. It is the way in which the most different possible theories are confounded toge-

ther. The view of a true development being observable in history is common to a crowd of very opposite thinkers, and is held by many very orthodox believers. Yet men with very little else in common are all here consigned to the limbo of Materialism. One would almost suppose that they are all—*ex hypothesi*—atheists, even if not converts to the religion of M. Comte. Now, in the first place, we think no fair reasoner would, without explanation, make Positivism identical with Atheism seeing that Comte expressly repudiates Atheism as "the most irrational form of theology." But to let this pass, why is Mr. Buckle a positivist? He has told us how far he agrees with M. Comte, which it seems to us is very little. It is difficult to say which of them would most strongly repudiate the title. But, after all, the application of causation to society is adopted by men who have no other thing in common with M. Comte even philosophically. Of course his is a very unpopular name, and the convenient synonym for his system tells with the public, especially with an ecclesiastical public. But we do not like attempts to put down philosophical theories by a sort of terrorism, and dispose of them by raising a cry of "Mad dog!" The constant use of the sibilant reminds us too much of the way in which the *Record* croaks out "Jesuit" when it quarrels with a clergyman. It reminds us too much of the ingenious divine at Cambridge who urged his religious principles upon a friend with a horse-whip. Theories of history must be examined on their own merits, and not by pointing a sarcasm with the sacred name. Besides which, in philosophical discussions, we respect a really thoughtful discrimination between the various theories discussed. The scientific view of history is maintained from a multitude of different points of view. It is not to be exploded by indiscriminate satire or by a volley of bon-mots. Its leading exponent in England is, as we have said, Mr. Mill. As applied to him, the language here used is an obvious extravagance. Men are not to be made responsible for all they have offered as well as for all they have maintained. Whilst we doubt whether the doctrine of development can be settled by a few jokes about the Positivist calendar, we do not think M. Comte's vast philosophy of history will be demolished by small fun about Mr. Buckle's theory of food.

Now there is one piece of advice which we wish to give to the Professor. It is this. When a man comes forward as a very vehement defender of the faith, it would be becoming to profess some decent respect for the orthodox system which he maintains.



Plenty of invective against unbelievers in general, we have, and much also about the morality of the Gospel, but not one word about doctrines, creeds, or Bible. We have no wish whatever to scrutinize any man's religious belief, but we can only remark, that in this vehement attack upon unbelief, Christianity is uniformly regarded as a "moral system," and not as a "scheme of redemption." For all that we read here, the lecturer might not hold a single doctrine of the Church, though, of course, with his official position, he does hold them all. Yet the way in which he talks about "churches passing away," and the importance of dogmas and formulas, would make orthodoxy uneasy. We are not sure that his language even about "the Founder of Christianity," and the "Christian Type," and the "Christian Example," is strictly evangelical. He tells us "we must put ourselves in the position of listeners to the Sermon on the Mount, and regard the religion in its original essence as a new principle of action and a new source of spiritual life." Why this is exactly that proposal of those with whom the orthodox world is so indignant. We hope the lecturer has no hard words for them, or he must be a perfect Bedouin of theology. But the orthodox do not now take up this position. They set to work to prove the verbal inspiration, and the Mosaic cosmogony, and the doctrine of Atonement. The Professor must be aware that what the dispute has turned on, is the authority of the Bible, the miracles, the doctrines of original sin, vicarious sacrifice, and eternal damnation. What he makes of these we cannot say; but he tells us in a third lecture about a Christendom which is approaching, "stripped indeed of much that is essential to religion in the eyes of polemical theologians." We are far from objecting to all this. We respect this purpose, and believe it to be sincere. But we think the man who uses this language should be more sparing in attack, and should remove from it every trace of bitterness. The world, we think, will pass its judgment on one who, in the heat of his attack upon scepticism, throws over dogmas and churches, says bitter things about the pure morality of the Gospel, which was never denied, and, abandoning all the outworks of the faith, falls back foaming with wrath upon a religion of love.

We can assure the lecturer that we have no intention of entering upon any religious discussions. We honour the Christian virtues as much as he does, and regard them as part of civilization itself. But the question at issue between us is a scientific, not a religious one. We may say at once, that we

are neither Atheists, Pantheists, Positivists, nor Materialists; yet we do adopt the scientific theory of history: and we think that the opinion, that human affairs proceed on intelligible methods is not likely to be exploded by appeals to cling to the morality of the Sermon on the Mount.

We now proceed to point out instances of the spirit of which we complain, and we commence with one which seems to combine nearly all the Professor's faults at once. We find in the second page the following remark. "It has been said that Christianity must be retrograde, because instead of looking forward it looks back to Christ. It is not easy to see why it is more retrograde to look back to the Source of a higher spiritual life in Christ, than it is to look back to the source of all life in Mr. Darwin's monad." Now we cannot see the meaning of this strange religious squib. What has the theory of history to do with Mr. Darwin's monad? We confess we can see neither analogy nor argument. Does any school, any human being, look back to Mr. Darwin's monad? Does any one worship it as a type for our imitation as the Giver of life, as an object of love, prayer, or obedience? Where is the analogy between the scientific hypothesis and the second Person of the Trinity? Really, all this seems to us very foolish and not very reverent. We can hardly understand the state of mind of a man who can suppose that religion can be advanced by so miserable a joke. We can only imagine that the object is to place opponents in a repulsive light. It would certainly be very retrograde in physiology to hold up the monad as a type of the animal organism. We are not aware that it is supposed to awaken religious emotion in any sect whatever. So far as Positivism, indeed, is concerned, M. Comte repudiates "the cloudy discussions, on the origin of animals." The whole passage, in short, is without meaning, or candour, or even wit. It turns solely on a sort of pun on the double sense of the word 'source,' firstly as the 'author' and then as the 'germ.'

We think we once saw this same idea in a journal, together with some fireworks about a 'church of animality' and 'African apes,' and 'monads,' and 'starch,' and so forth, which were some how supposed to establish the truth of Christianity. If we remember rightly, the pious writer succeeded in turning the words of Christ himself into an epigram, flavoured Gospel-truth with personalities, and insisted upon "a religion of love" with considerable force of sarcasm. The bit of wit before us might be in place in some academic *Charivari*. We can fancy

the common rooms being quite tickled with this last new religious theory—the Sermon on the Mount done into bon-mots; but we must say we hardly expected to find a Professor prefacing a Philosophy of History by this strange fun. We must say that with us it prejudices every word that follows. We rather doubt after this that the writer is capable of seriously grappling with any system of philosophy, much less of criticising the theory of the inconceivable. It sounds to us too much like the smart things which they say in the newspapers.

If this were a solitary specimen of his method of arguing, we should say less; but it is only the first of a series. The Professor undertakes to demolish the famous doctrine of M. Comte—the law of the three stages, the successive phases of the human intellect. For this purpose he repeats the old objection that the stages are not successive but simultaneous, and that the same minds are found using all together. Now surely, Comte invariably insists that the three stages have actually co-existed in nearly all minds. His theory never was that the mind, as a whole, passed through three stages, but that each separate conception and branch of knowledge did, and that in the order of the complication of the subject-matter. Indeed, he states his theory in nearly the same words in which the lecturer states the objection which is to destroy it; for he says, that a man takes a theological view of one subject, a metaphysical of another, and a positive of a third; nor did he ever pretend that one of these methods rigidly excluded the other. Most minds, he says, retain traces of all three, even in the same subject-matter; but qualifications of this kind cannot affect the law or the tendency. Beside which, the terms ought to be properly explained, which is not done here. By the Theological he does not mean the belief in God, because he includes in it Fetichism and Atheism. For the same reason, by the Positive he does not mean Atheistical. These terms, in fact, have been abundantly explained by their author. He says he means, by the Theological method, the explanation of facts by a spontaneous fiction of the imagination; by the Metaphysical, their explanation by a crude theory, or unverified hypothesis; by the Positive, the truly scientific explanation with a systematic verification. Of course, these methods flow into one another and are very rarely absolutely distinct. What an objector has really to show is this, that men use other methods of thought, or that they do not in the main use these successively in the order stated, and that in proportion to the complication of the subject-matter. This

the lecturer has not done. Nor will it avail him to show that no epoch exactly corresponds with any of these three methods. It was never pretended that it was so. The theory was simply, that in successive ages one or other of these methods is seen to predominate. Can he disprove this? The fact is, that a theory like this, involving the aggregate of all the reasoning powers, is not to be disposed of by putting special constructions on the terms in which it is expressed. He asks why the Positive is the last—that is, why scientific reasoning is the most complete. We wish he would suggest a fourth method—that is, some opinion which is neither spontaneous imagination, mere hypothesis, nor positive knowledge. The scientific state of the intellect is thought to be the last, because there is no instance on record of any mind, in any subject, passing out of that into a distinct and superior process of reasoning. We know there are processes thought to be superior, as indeed these lectures remind us; but we think these processes so far from passing out of the Scientific have not yet passed into it—and are, in fact, the Metaphysical.

The lecturer tells us that the same system makes “the scientific faculties and tendencies predominate in man.” Really, this is too bad. Every one who has read anything of Comte’s works, especially the later, knows that it is the very foundation of all his method to give the predominance to the moral faculties. It is useless to quote, because every line he has written would prove it. He regards it as the characteristic of his system. We can fancy a very careless reader of his first work being misled by his statement that the history of society must be explained chiefly by the history of human mind. But in the “Politique” this apparent anomaly is elaborately discussed. He there shows that the intellectual, though subordinate to the moral qualities, must be studied mainly in history, because they show a more complex and regular development. “Of the human capacities,” he says, “the strongest (the moral) show no distinct law of evolution—the feeblest (the intellectual) are the ones of which it is most essential to ascertain the progress.” And yet, after this, this Professor deliberately tells us that Comte makes the intellectual predominate over the moral qualities. Having thus misstated his theory, let us see how he overthrows it. “Which view of science,” he asks, “was it that predominated in Attila and Timour?” And this in reply to a theory that the civilization of an age or people is to be directly attributed to its general intellectual condition, or, in the language of Mr.

Mill, "that the order of progression in all respects will mainly depend on the order of progression in the intellectual convictions of mankind." We abstain from comment upon this new mode of establishing the philosophy of history, which seems to us like stating an adverse theory by inverting it and answering it with a sneer.

There are various other instances we might quote of misconceptions, chiefly respecting M. Comte, which though not very important seem to show the spirit in which criticism is conducted. For instance, he tells us that Positivists have made a sort of "demonology" of eminent reactionists. The sole ground for this is, that in the first publication of his "Calendar," we understand M. Comte marked two names, those of Julian and Napoleon, as worthy of general condemnation. He soon regretted and expunged this very mild imitation of the Commination Service, and his "Calendar" has since invariably appeared without it. Next he tells us, that the same system being guided by success, "consigns to infamy the memory of men who, though they fell, fell struggling in a noble cause, and have left a great and regenerating example to mankind." Now, if he is thinking of Brutus and Cassius, opinions will differ about the regenerating example of assassination; but we think it fair to point out that, so far from worshipping success, the "hagiology" contained the names of men like Demosthenes, Hannibal, the Gracchi, Coligny, and Koskiusko, who all fell and failed, and M. Comte is full of enthusiasm for many a great but unsuccessful cause. It is indeed an error to talk of his using an "historical morality." If he says "man is to be studied historically," he means the human faculties can only be exhaustively treated by watching them in action. To assert that his meaning is, that "whatever has been is right" is contradicted by every line he has written. If he speaks of success at all, is it only that sort of success which falls in with and promotes the great cause of human progress? Now, as we have said, we have no right to speak on behalf of Positivists. They must speak for themselves. We are not concerned to defend the religious system of M. Comte. Its recognised adherents must do that. We, perhaps, need not state that we do not keep for purposes of private devotion either "a monad" or an "African ape," but we are very much concerned to have philosophical theory dispassionately and fairly examined. In the same way, we must protest against the manner in which Mr. Buckle is similarly treated, whose views, however, we do not intend to endorse. "Other writers," we are told, "erect some one

physical influence, the influence of race, of climate, of food, into a sort of destiny of nations." Mr. Buckle, indeed, who if not named is alluded to, may have exaggerated, especially in his first volume, these influences; but he expressly states his belief to be, that the human influences far overpower the physical and tend more and more to do so. Mr. Buckle may be in error, but at least he has devoted his life to conscientious labours. We have no wish to see philosophers disposed of by petulant epigrams, and we think a candid mind could see something in his work beside "the prevailing passion for degrading humanity to mere clay."

There is, however, one instance of misrepresentation which touches us so nearly, that we are bound to state it. In a lecture subsequently published with which we are not dealing, the Professor alluding to an article in this Review, says "we have been told that Christianity almost stifled the political genius of Cromwell." Now we were speaking not of Christianity but of Judaism. We were pointing out the influence which some of the darker features of the Hebrew character exercised upon modern religion. We were contrasting the respective influence of the Old and New Testament, and were showing how largely the former had affected the Protestant mind, and as an instance we pointed out that it had given a tinge of fanaticism even to the mind of Cromwell. Every word in the passage and paragraph refers expressly to Judaism as contrasted with Christianity. And yet our critic can tell us in the same passage, that Cromwell's Christianity was tainted with Judaism, which is precisely what we were saying. We consider this a plain case of misquotation. We well know that Mr. Goldwin Smith is utterly incapable of conscious misstatement. This serves only to show into what want of care controversy can draw an honourable man.

The above are a few specimens of the misrepresentations which have led us to criticize these Lectures. There is so much with which we heartily agree, and that with which we disagree may be so easily left to itself, that we should hardly have noticed it but for the tendency it exhibits to deal with questions in an off-hand spirit. We object to see such genuine force of conviction and such extraordinary powers of statement made use of with so little care and moderation. We are far from thinking this temper incompatible with very serious purpose and even an honest love for truth, and very noble sympathies; but the handling of philosophical questions requires more patience, more reflection, and more candour. We should like seriously to ask the lecturer whether

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he doubts, upon reflection, that the principal objects of his criticism are men just as honest in the pursuit of truth as himself, with just as sincere a love for moral greatness; whether he has thoroughly weighed and thoroughly understood their respective systems as a whole, and whether he supposes philosophy or religion can be benefited by speaking of them invariably in the terms most certain to be odious?

We are the more anxious to protest against this spirit, because it occasionally bears slight traces of resemblance to a style very prevalent now-a-days, which seems to us to be doing some harm. There flourishes a species of literature (if we may be pardoned for a mere digression) which seems to regard all things in heaven and earth as mere raw material for epigrams. According to this school, art consists in pitching on some funny point on the surface of the subject, which is made a peg for a string of witticisms. The favourite "mot" is worked and twisted inside out, until little intelligible meaning remains. A man who starts a discussion on the logic of the moral sciences, will at once find himself pelted with "African apes," and "Darwinian monads," and "Positivist grandmothers," until he might suppose himself in the midst of a sort of literary grinning-match. The process is simple enough. The art consists in grinning down your opponent. You select that point which seems to you most easily made ludicrous, and then you have to place it in an odious light. You may be a very good fellow yourself, but you have to represent yourself as a perfect cynic, and incapable of a gentle feeling. You must be particularly gruff with women. It shows that you are superior to cant. Parallels are useful: they show scholarship. You should compare the statesmen of the day to Wat Tyler and Titus Oates, and foreign monarchs to Attila and Heliogabalus. With religion you need not trouble yourself: it will suffice to be generally pungent and funny. If you think a man a baboon, say so. If you differ from an opinion, call it execrable. If you speak of a man, do so as if he had done you a deadly wrong. It gives brilliancy to the style. Personalities are permissible, if you are master of Greek. Should you know a bit of gossip, out with it: it will certainly amuse; besides, it might give pain. In a word, you will assume that whatever you disagree with, which will naturally include most things, is utterly grotesque and foul, and of course if you think so you must say so in plain terms. We must say that we are rather tired of this sort of thing. It is quite Americanising our literature. It is so

eternally smart. Jesting, like other things, grows spasmodic; and we do not want men to be cudgeling their brains all day to imitate Junius. There are other things in the world besides sardonic common sense and grim fun, and we should like to see it remembered that courteousness, thoughtfulness, and sympathy are not yet utterly unmanly.

But to return: we admit that it is only occasionally, as if uncontrollably, that this spirit gets the better of the lecturer, whose usual tone is that of a man serious—nay, solemn. Having pointed out the faults of manner of which we complain, we proceed to deal with the main purpose of these lectures. It is, as we have said, to repudiate the application of scientific methods to reasoning upon human affairs. The entire argument is made to rest upon the doctrine of free will. Man, we are told, is free. His actions are not governed by motives, because he is free to select what motive of action he pleases. Hence his will acts by a process which cannot be reduced to regular induction, to definite laws, or intelligible methods. There is in the will an element which obeys no rules we can conceive, and which is utterly mysterious. It is arbitrary, irregular, and inexplicable. Hence systematic observation and methodical calculation are impossible, because the facts observed possess a wayward power which transcends every known process of human reasoning. Hence all certainty, all science, and all foreknowledge, even, it seems, that of God himself, become impossible.

Hence all attempts to discover laws in history are idle, for with this mysterious element there can be no invariable methods of action and no regular principles. Development, certainty, and science in social affairs are impossible. To assert that it is to reduce man to the reign of physical necessity, and to degrade him into clay. If man's future is to depend on "laws," it must be rigidly fixed, and all moral responsibility and judgment, nay, all sympathy, are extinguished. Even effort, purpose, and forethought are absurd. Virtue, gratitude, and devotion vanish. Morality, truth, and religion become mere names. Life is a dreary fatalism. Man is absorbed into the material universe, and becomes "a grain in the mass of being." He rots in cold obstruction, and yields himself up in apathy to a horrible "phantasmagoria of fate."

Now before yielding to this remarkable nightmare, would it not have been better if the Professor had asked himself if this was in any sense a fair representation of the theory in question? Is it probable, or even

possible, that some of the finest minds amongst us should be the slaves of so coarse a delusion? Has he not proved too much? Has he not, in his eagerness, stretched his refutation to a point where it becomes itself ridiculous? The writer who in this country has most powerfully maintained this theory is Mr. Mill. It is the principal feature of his principal work. Is Mr. Mill then, of all writers, the one who systematically degrades the human character? Does he place man below the brutes, the victim of a dark fate? Is the author of the work on "Liberty" this prophet of blank apathy? Does he teach the hopelessness of effort, the extinction of all character, and surrender of all moral dignity? Or to take another instance: a recent, though we think far from safe, exponent of the same theory is Mr. Buckle, the object of a singular antipathy on the part of the Professor. Is his view of history and society utterly devoid of sympathy with character? is it a mere catalogue of material laws? does it show nothing but a dreary fatalism? Mr. Grote and Mr. Milman are, beyond all question, our two greatest modern historians. Yet both their histories are written strictly upon a theory which our Oxford Professor of History tells us reduces mankind to a lifeless atom, and extinguishes the very ideas of character, morality, and sympathy.

Of all the philosophical characteristics of Mr. Grote's great work, that of a profound conception of the laws of society is the most prominent, and yet we think few will say that on his theory of history, all love of human greatness, all interest in character and the long struggle of humanity, is impossible. Sir Cornewall Lewis holds no mean place amongst our thinkers. Is he, too, this dark and gloomy fatalist? Yet his works on politics and history are absolutely based upon the theory which the Professor tells us is the negation of every attribute of man. We might add many instances, for there is hardly a philosopher and hardly a popular teacher who does not in some form adopt the theory in question. We must say, that if this besee dreary a materialism, the world of our day must be in a sad way.

Or if the lecturer means to confine his argument to the particular school of M. Comte (which he cannot reasonably do) the case is hardly mended. A principal exponent of his philosophical system in England, Miss Martineau, has, we think, written enough to show that it is possible to be a very ardent adherent of that system without losing all power of interest in human effort, character, or suffering, and without representing mankind as a plaything of

necessity. But to come to M. Comte himself. We can understand a variety of objections to his theory of history. But of all conceivable objections, none is so preposterous as to argue that he extinguishes all sympathy with human greatness—that he ignores the force of the human will, or degrades the moral character and moral powers. Most of all, it is preposterous to tell us that he subordinates man to the material world, or represents him as incapable of influencing and even creating his own destiny. Where in the whole range of philosophy can we find more intense sympathy with all greatness, suffering, and effort, a deeper sorrow for wasted powers, a loftier hope of a higher destiny for the race? Yet this is the man we are now told whose system extinguishes every quality of man, and stamps him as a blind puppet of a phantasmagoria of fate.

But if those who support the theory of causation in human affairs see with satisfaction an Oxford Professor attacking it with all the extravagance of despair, still more hopeful must they feel when they observe the method of his attack. That theory is being established by an immense induction of facts, by countless separate testimonies, and the whole current of modern thought, as seen in every popular idea and phrase. From this ground the Professor withdraws, and takes his last stand on a metaphysical puzzle. All the thousand examples of actual laws observed in society, and the instinctive bent of all speculation, around us, to push these observations still further, are to give way to a mere bit of abstract logic. We are asked to reject the conclusions of the principal thinkers of our time, to contradict the evidence of mankind, by a few of the old dilemmas of the controversies of the last century. The whole argument of the Professor rests upon his theory of free will. This is the cloudland into which a keen practical reasoner has been forced to withdraw. There, indeed, we decline to follow him. Our readers will hardly expect that we are about to stir the deep dust that buries the tomes upon free will and necessity. We are not about to dispute his doctrine of free will by contending for that of necessity.

We thought that the two dogmas had mutually slain each other, and lay side by side in an honourable grave. We hardly expected to find them dragged forth into the light in this age and for this purpose. But the Professor seems to us to ignore the whole history of this famous controversy. He actually seems to think that the puzzle of ages is at last solved, or at least may be



by a few vigorous epigrams. He tells us with triumph that the science of history is based upon the "quicksand" of free will, and seems quite to forget that his whole refutation is based upon the same quicksand too. If the theory of free will is a quicksand, as we verily believe it to be, it must be equally treacherous to both sides. He may maintain any theory of free will he pleases, but he will hardly pretend that it is generally received.

The fact is, that his theory of history is built upon the assumption of a postulate which has been denied by the greatest intellects, and by ages of metaphysicians, moralists, and theologians. And this is not a branch of his argument, but it is the very root and substance of it. Not merely is it based upon a metaphysical dogma, but upon the most contested and misty of all the dogmas in metaphysics. If there is one question upon which less certainty reigns than another, it is this; and it is precisely this dogma upon which the Professor bases his whole philosophy of history. He may assume his own view to be true, but he must be aware that upon all who reject it, and they are the bulk of the thinking, as well as of the religious, world, his argument is totally lost. If the question of the application of science to history is to await the solution of the great metaphysical problem, it may have another fourteen centuries of interminable debate before it. He may think that the scientific view of history accepts the other horn of the dilemma—the doctrine of necessity. It does nothing of the sort. It stands upon its own proof. It leaves the antagonistic dogmas of metaphysics in their interecine struggle. It accepts and adopts the practical conclusions of both parties. The common sense of mankind seems to have assumed that the will possesses an immense power of subduing circumstances, forming character, and regulating action. All that has been said of its force, of its efforts, struggles, and independence, is taken in its practical sense as beyond question: as a fact, all admit that man has his destiny in his own keeping. On the other hand, it is no less universally assumed that this will works by intelligible methods, consistently follows motives, is therefore a fit subject for methodical observation, systematic calculation, and scientific reasoning, and is compatible with (at least) Divine prevision. Now both of these two points of view are absolutely necessary to the scientific view of history. No theory can insist more strongly upon the power of the will. None more distinctly reconciles it with the possibility of prevision.

How these two are reconciled may still remain an insoluble problem in the eyes of metaphysicians, but it has now ceased to possess any interest or use. The practical issue is, that none believe the will to be the victim of circumstance, and none believe it to transcend the sphere of knowledge. In the system of a great metaphysician Free-will and Necessity are two contradictories, either of which is inconceivable. With our faculties, he says, it is equally impossible to conceive choice combined with certainty, as it is to conceive volition without a cause.

It is quite true that there have been writers who have literally taught a doctrine of fatalism, and others who have taught what we certainly call materialism. To ignore or to disparage the power of the will to modify its own character—the innate capacity of every man to be in the main what he wills to be, to act as he wills to act—in short, to form himself by the free exercise of his faculties, is no doubt a pernicious error which has been ages ago very vigorously taught. Much of the language of Hobbes and Spinoza is, perhaps, open to this criticism. To exaggerate the influence of the external world upon man, to attribute to his circumstances or his fellows the exclusive control over character or action, is no doubt a very fatal error which has also been maintained. Montesquieu and his school, or such men as Priestley, Goodwin, or Owen, may be fairly open to such a charge as this. We are ready to join in vigorous repudiation of any such view. Anything which tends to deny to man the fullest power to develop his own faculties, to control his own life, and form his future, we are ready to condemn. Against such disputants the language of these lectures about man being the puppet of circumstances, the victim of a physical necessity, the plaything of a phantasmagoria of fate, may have some meaning. And if any one held such opinions, this language might have an object. But no one in this day holds any such theory, least of all those who adopt the scientific theory of history. All its principal exponents have most carefully guarded against such an assumption. And to tell us that the historical theories of men like M. Comte and Mr. Mill are rank fatalism, degrade man to clay, and annul human effort, is nothing, we think, but a piece of barren mystification.

But to proceed to the arguments upon which this theory is conducted. The Professor starts with telling us that "whatever there is in action will be everywhere present in history, and the founders of the new physical science of history have to lay the foundations of their science in what seems

the quicksand of free will." Now here at the outset we must protest against the term "science of history." The Professor tells us that though there is no science, there is a philosophy of history. We are not aware that any supporters of the theory he is attacking have ever spoken of a science of history. So far as M. Comte is concerned, he always calls his work the "Philosophy of History." Besides, why physical? This is a mere begging the question. The point contended for is, that the inductive method is applicable not only to the physical but to the moral sciences. If he means that the term science is only applicable to things physical, why does he himself talk of economical and mental sciences? If he admits that an inductive system is possible in the moral as well as the physical world, how does its introduction in history constitute a physical science? In truth, we fear the term is used merely to raise a prejudice and insinuate materialism. But to proceed: the founders of a scientific theory of history do most certainly not lay its foundation in the quicksand of free will. They meet a metaphysical objection on its own ground. But their theory is no more based upon any theory of necessity than it is on any theory of the origin of evil.

We will, however, follow the argument when fairly launched into the quicksands of free will. Our knowledge of it, it seems, is deduced from consciousness, and then we are asked, from what source those who repudiate its existence derive the knowledge of their own existence. Surely the school which denies to consciousness the authority to establish any absolute freedom of the will, rejects its authority for any other absolute doctrine whatever. They would say that consciousness can only prove that we feel that we exist, and in the same way may prove that we feel that we are free: upon which we all agree. Consciousness cannot tell us anything about the process by which we exist, or came into existence, or the process by which we will. Besides, what is it we learn from consciousness? That we are not under Necessity; that our will does not struggle against something it resists, it might tell us. But necessity is not alleged. What is alleged is, that our wills are determined by our characters and our circumstances. Can consciousness tell us they are not? How can consciousness tell us that the will is unaccountable, and works upon methods which the reasoning faculties cannot deal with? That is the real point which it is called in to prove. We might almost as soon expect it to satisfy us about the anatomy of the body.

Next we are told that unless we accept this Freedom, or unaccountability of the will, we must believe in Necessity; and if necessity does not mean the connexion between cause and effect, what is it to mean? The word has a very distinct meaning. From Locke downwards metaphysicians have shown that it means, in ordinary language, compulsion from without overcoming resistance from within. Now we assert nothing of this kind respecting the will. We think it a misuse of language to apply this term, except metaphorically, to the normal exercise of the faculties. Why force upon us a term which expresses an idea we never suggest? At any rate, find some other word which expresses compulsion overcoming resistance. The will is free, and is only-free when it can work under the conditions of its nature; that is, when no necessity exists to constrain it. If none exists, it will infallibly follow those conditions. We call man free when he can fairly develop his natural faculties. It seems a misuse of language to say that in doing so he is constrained by his natural faculties. His various powers work freely when they follow mutual relations. Is freedom impossible unless they are independent of relations? In a word, the will is free when it can act according to the constitution of our moral nature, and it would be under necessity if it could not.

We are favoured with an answer to the old objection, that an absolute belief in Free will—that is, the unaccountability of the will—conflicts with the belief in the omniscience of the Creator; that if free will is incompatible with the certainty of science, it must be no less incompatible with the certainty or foreknowledge of God. We cannot but think the answer which he gives us is a strange one. "The real answer," he says, "seems to be this—that the words omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, though positive in form, are negative in meaning. They mean only that we know not the bounds of the knowledge, power, or presence of God." This, we must say, seems to us rather like evasion. It sounds like that theory of the Inconceivable which, he tells us later, sweeps away "morality, truth, God." Is Providence, then (which is omniscience and omnipotence combined), negative in meaning? Does the whole mean that men are not sure what He knows or does not know? They cannot say but that He knows this or that. But how, if this is orthodox theology, does it meet the argument—which is this: "What you are about to do, free as you are, is certain. It must be certain, because it is known to God. For

to Him all things are known." And then comes the answer: "No: when we say all things are known to Him, we mean we do not know the bounds of His knowledge—we do not know in what sense He knows it." This is the way in which the question, "Does He know the thing you are about to do?" is answered. We might reply in his own words, "A rooted contradiction in our minds is not to be removed merely by denying us the use of the term in which the contradiction is expressed." We are sure that this is not strictly logical, and we think not strictly orthodox. This particular objection, indeed, is one we rather like. It seems to us a mode in which metaphysicians may be answered according to their metaphysics. The dilemma is strictly inextricable. No sophistry can solve it. If man is absolutely free to choose, and this absolute freedom makes any certain prevision impossible, God himself cannot know what he will choose; and the Professor is hardly sure that He does. No refining about the meaning of omniscience will alter the matter. "Omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence, negative in meaning," indeed! We shall almost expect to hear next, that God's mercy, justice, and truth, nay, creation and Creator, are ideas negative in meaning.

After all, there is nothing like putting this argument in a concrete form, where metaphysical riddles are impossible. You say,—God knows what will take place a thousand years hence, that He knows it all certainly, that He knows it all minutely. If He does not, if you doubt it for an instant, if you only mean negatively that He does, then what do you mean by Providence? Providence has a positive meaning—that He has actually foreseen and provided for the smallest incident. Then it follows that the world's future to Him at least is certain. If so, the freedom of man's will to choose is compatible with a predetermined result. In other words, our consciousness of the freedom of the will can offer no objection to a science of human society which it does not offer to the foundation of theology.

Having in one paragraph undermined all natural religion, in the next the Professor upsets every recognized theory of the formation of character. It will not avail, he says, to cite the moral certainty with which we predict conduct resulting from settled character. For this settled character was the result of action which was free, and therefore retains the uncertain element out of which it was formed. Now, surely this is to overthrow the established theory of habit, at least as old as Aristotle,—that

cases occur in which acts within our control lead by constant repetition to a character from which flow (until the character is altered, or the circumstances wholly changed, which are obviously within our observation) acts which have passed out of our control. Are we certain that a man of perfect honour will not commit an act of treachery? No, says the Professor, certainly not; for the character of honour was formed by a long course of action, of each step of which we could not be certain. Therefore the uncertain element remains. But it seems to us, that to take this as a universal rule is far more than can be established. Why does the existence of a certain element in each action by which character is formed, require the existence of the same element in the character when formed? There was, for instance, a struggle in the action; will there be any in the character? Besides, it is here admitted that there is a moral certainty by which we predict the future conduct of nations and men. We may say that, as we do not want certainly to predict acts but tendencies, we need no more. Let us examine, too, what this moral certainty implies. Does it not imply that if our belief falls short of absolute or scientific certainty, it is merely that we have not got all the necessary facts to observe? Certainly not that there is an inherent uncertainty about that which we have observed. How could we feel moral certainty about actions, whilst we really believed that the entire nature of the action was such as possessed no uniformity? How feel moral certainty, without a single certain rule at any step of a long reasoning process? It seems to us that the Professor is here putting the unaccountability of the human will far higher than was ever attempted by metaphysicians. Few, we think, have contended for more than that the individual acts by which we form our characters are inscrutable. None, we think, deny the certainty of fixed characters, and the strict relation they bear to their consequent acts.

Then settling deeper in the "quicksand" of Free will, the argument continues. Action, he says, is a choice between motives. It follows a motive, but how are we to tell *which* motive it will follow? The only ground we have for calling one motive the strongest, is that it has prevailed before; but this is set aside in every great change of conduct by an effort of the will for which some other antecedent must be found. Why, of course, a new motive. Does the Professor suppose that a man who habitually follows a certain motive will cease to do so, whilst all the circumstances, including his



own state of mind, are absolutely unchangeable (and a change in either is a new motive)? If so, men would cease to be responsible for their actions. "Action is a choice between motives." Then, if so, the choice determines the motive, and not the motive the choice. If the mind is inclined antecedently to the inducement (and to choose a motive, it must be antecedently inclined), what is the use of the motive? Man can act without motive, if volition precedes the motive. Why does he need the influence of any inducement, if he is free to choose under which influence he will fall? The fact is, the Professor is here simply confounding motives with courses of action. Action is no doubt a choice between several possible courses in obedience to the strongest motive. There are, indeed, other grounds for calling a motive the strongest, beside that of its having prevailed previously. The state of the mind to be influenced, the presence of a new or extraordinary counter-motive, are all elements in the calculation. The real history of all this is, that he is using the word motive in its vulgar and not in its philosophical sense. The motive to action, in the sense of the cause of action in all such arguments, comprises the whole of the circumstances which precede action, both the inducements presented to the mind and the condition of the mind on which they act. In that sense, and in that sense only, does action follow its motive. No one ever pretended that action could be predicted from a knowledge of mere external inducements. What the theory really is, is this—that, given a complete knowledge of the habitual character, and the actual condition of mind of any person, and all the motives influencing the mind, with their relative degrees of force, the resulting act could be predicted. It is no objection to say that those data are impossible to procure. The only point we have to prove is, that action is invariably determined by the manner in which definite ends affect the moral nature. To make a science of society possible, it is only necessary to add to this, that on a great scale, and to establish only general tendencies, the necessary information can be obtained.

But, proceeds the Professor, "When the action is done, the connexion between it and its motive becomes necessary and certain; and we may argue backwards from action to motive with all the accuracy of science." Then what is the objection to a science of history? In history we have the actions given us; then why may we not from them argue back to the motives—let us show their necessary connexion with human facul-

ties and circumstances, and that with all the accuracy of science? Besides, how can the connexion between action and its motive be necessary and certain, if each does not imply the other? Where necessary connexion exists, antecedent or consequent cause or effect being given, the other term is ascertained. It can make no difference from which end of the series we start. Where any set of conditions invariably precedes any result, that set of conditions must invariably be followed by that result. Anything which interfered with this consequence would be a new condition introduced. If given a certain action, we know that certain antecedents invariably preceded it; given those antecedents, we can ascertain the action. Here, again, it seems his limited use of the word "motive" misleads him. His instance is peculiarly unfortunate. "Finding at Rome a law to encourage tyrannicide, we are certain that there had been tyrants at Rome." We are certain of nothing of the kind. There might have been tyrants at Greece, from whence the law may have been copied, or there might have been no tyrants at all, and the Romans may have thought prevention better than cure; or the law might have arisen out of a misconception of a tradition, or may have been a mere whim. In short, it may have arisen in fifty different ways. The Professor forgets that, as there may be different motives each leading to different acts, there may be different motives all leading to one act. If it is impossible to know with certainty which motive a man will choose, why is it so easy to know certainly which motive he has chosen?

He next asks how, upon the Necessarian theory of action, we can account for the facts of our feeling free to act, of our approving or blaming our own acts by conscience, and of our approving or blaming the acts of others. So long as this assumption of necessity is forced into the question, it is impossible to argue it. If we could not help our acts, of course none of these things would be rational. But the causal theory never pretended that we cannot help our acts. To do so is Asiatic fatalism. On the contrary, that theory insists that our acts are caused mainly by our own characters, which are formed mainly by our own efforts. No analysis of the process by which this is done can affect the true freedom of the action, nor can the fact that it has a process at all. The truth is, the answer to all these three objections is the same. We feel free from external compulsion, and what that consciousness can prove to us is a question we have already examined. That the causal theory of action extinguishes praise and blame, con-

science, sympathy, and effort, is repeated in these lectures in every variety of form. Now that theory merely requires that every action has a regular antecedent, such antecedent being mainly the disposition of the agent, and partially the circumstances in which he is placed. Praise and blame are simply the judgment we pass upon the exercise of the moral qualities—that is, the disposition of the agent. How then does a theory which simply establishes a strict relation between the disposition and the act interfere with praise and blame—our moral judgment upon the disposition? On the contrary, it much strengthens it. The more certain we are that the act was caused by a certain disposition, the more sure we feel in judging the disposition from the act. In our own case we generally do this with complete confidence. The less means we have of connecting a certain act with a certain disposition, the less able are we to judge. Indeed, when very uncertain, as in cases of mania, we cease to judge at all. "If the will is guided by motives, why do we praise or blame?" It might be sufficient to answer, that praise and blame form part, and a very essential part, of the motives. We find in practice that praise and blame lead to certain results. The more certain we are that they will be followed by those results, the more certain should we be to use them as the means. If the theory of acts having regular antecedents went on to trace those antecedents wholly to something outside the agent, which is the Necessarian theory, we should no doubt cease, strictly speaking, to praise or blame; but it does not. It traces them up to the moral qualities. "Why do we not praise and blame the material world?" it is asked. Because it has not moral qualities. To ask why we praise or blame the exercise of moral qualities, is like asking why we love or hate. The only new feature now introduced into the analysis of the moral qualities is the theoretic possibility of predicting their action. How does certainty, regularity, or rationality in action, limit the liability to praise or blame? The more certain we are of future conduct, the more strongly do we praise and blame the character. If we are certain that a man will cheat, the more unreserved is our blame; if we are certain that he will not lie, the more complete our praise. Praise and blame vary directly, not inversely, with certainty. In the extremes, perfect uncertainty, as in mania, makes both impossible; the highest character we know is one in which we feel moral certainty. Yet, whilst moral certainty is the highest praise we can give, it is here pretended that the theoretic possibility of scientific certainty extinguishes

praise and blame, and puts an end to character.

"How can we feel love or gratitude towards the necessary organ of a human progress?" the lecturer asks. Now that is a question which, since he adopts the doctrine of Progress, we should like to ask him. We suppose he means by the doctrine, that he is sure that the world will progress. Then why does he feel love or gratitude towards those who contribute to an end of which he is sure? He will say he does not mean a necessary progress. Neither do we. We do not mean a progress that the agents are forced into, but one which they are sure to adopt. "How can we feel gratitude to them more than to a fertilizing river?" he asks. We admit that this is a good epigram; in fact, the lecturer thinks it so good that he has indulged in it twice. But does it advance the argument? We feel gratitude towards a certain active disposition, a feeling which moves a person to do good to us or our kind. We do not perceive this feeling in fertilizing rivers. If they have it, they keep it to themselves. Now how does our certainty that this feeling will operate interfere with the sincerest gratitude? We are certain of the affection of a parent; we may believe in a given case that it is impossible that it should cease to exist, yet we are not less grateful. Men are certain of the providence of God: they call it a necessity of His existence, meaning that they cannot conceive Him otherwise; yet they do not cease to feel grateful.

Now surely all this is only a revival of a few old metaphysical dilemmas. Every one of these arguments may be found in any of the old discussions about Free will, urged, we think, with far greater subtlety, though not perhaps quite so tersely. We remember, indeed, almost the same logic, nearly in the same words, used in the controversy with Jonathan Edwards by the now forgotten Mr. Chubb. Had Mr. Chubb lived in this railroad age, he would have learned, no doubt, to dispose of the controversy in half a dozen smart sentences. He might have spared his learning, his ingenuity, and his labour. It is a strange instance of the discredit into which pure metaphysics have fallen, that an Oxford professor argues this question absolutely *de novo*, as though these ponderous discussions had never existed. It is quite right that they should be forgotten; but we must remember that the labour of so many lives will not be compressed into a few paragraphs.

Having seen how the Professor deals with metaphysics, let us see how he succeeds with science. And here we find it necessary to

quote a passage which seems to us almost unique:—

“Great stress is laid by the Necessarians on what are called moral statistics. It seems that feel as free as we may, our will is bound by a law compelling the same number of men to commit the same number of crimes within a certain cycle. The cycle, curiously enough, coincides with the period of a year, which is naturally selected by the Registrar-General for his Reports. But, first, the statistics tendered are not moral, but legal. They tell us only the outward act, not its inward moral character. They set down alike under murder the act of a Rush or a Palmer, and the act of an Othello. Secondly, we are to draw some momentous inference from the uniformity of the returns. How far are they uniform? M. Quetelet gives the number of convictions in France for the years 1826, 1827, 1828, 1829, severally as 4348, 4236, 4551, 4475. The similarity is easily accounted for by that general uniformity of human nature which we all admit. How is the difference, amounting to more than 300 between one year and the next, to be accounted for except by free will? But, thirdly, it will be found that these statistics are unconsciously, but effectually, garbled. To prove the law of the uniformity of crime, periods are selected when crime was uniform. Instead of four years of the Restoration, in which we know very well there was no great outburst of wickedness, give us a table including the civil war between the Burgundians and the Armagnacs, the St. Bartholomew, the Reign of Terror, or the days of June, 1848. It will be said, perhaps, that this was under different circumstances; but it is a very free use of the term ‘circumstance’ to include in it all the evil and foolish actions of men which lead to, or are committed in, a sanguinary revolution. Social and criminal statistics are most valuable; the commencement of their accurate registration will probably be a great epoch in the history of legislation and government; but the reason why they are so valuable is that they are not fixed by necessity, but variable, and may be varied for the better by the wisdom of governments—governments which Necessarians are always exhorting to reform themselves, instead of showing how their goodness or badness necessarily arises from the climate or the food. If the statistics were fixed by necessity, to collect them would be a mere indulgence of curiosity, like measuring all the human race when we could not add a cubit to their stature.”

This passage seems to us so thick set with misconceptions that we can with difficulty believe it was intended for serious argument. It is hard to decide where criticism should begin. We presume, we hardly need say, that statistics of crime—avowedly dealing only with the political aspect of moral questions—are used for the sole purpose of proving that crime bears a fixed relation to the moral condition and peculiar circumstances of the people observed, and they are collected with the direct object of impressing on us the necessity of reducing the crime by improving the moral condition. Yet men

are told by the Regius Professor of Modern History in the University of Oxford, that their object is to show that “our will is bound by a law compelling the same number of men to commit the same number of crimes within a certain cycle.” The law, indeed, is, that the same number of men, *with exactly the same characters*, and in exactly the same circumstances, will commit the same number of crimes; and the value of the law is this—that, as we can change the characters, we can in precisely the same proportion diminish the crime. “The cycle, curiously enough, coincides with the period of a year.” Truly, a rare bit of wit. Does the Professor suppose the law—i.e. the relation—is less true of a period of ten years or six months? Some limit for the observation must be taken, we suppose? Why not tell us that the observation, curiously enough, coincides with the political division called France—or, curiously enough, applies only to murder or suicide? Surely this trick of jesting may become quite a monomania. Again, these statistics “tell us only the outward act.” Did they ever profess to tell us more? So far as history is concerned, that is all that is required. As applied to character, they only profess to be rough notes and indications of tendencies. Next he asks, “How is the difference, amounting to more than three hundred, between one year and the next, to be accounted for, except by free will?” Why, by altered characters mainly, and varied conditions partially. How can the similarity be accounted for by free will in the Professor’s sense, that is, the absence of invariable relation between character and act? Let us examine what these returns imply. They tell us that 40,000,000 wills, with an infinite change of disposition, variety of temptations, opportunities, and conditions existing every minute throughout an entire year, issue in acts which year after year vary only as one in fifteen. Let us imagine the myriads of possible complications which these conditions afford, and then try, if we can, to doubt that if the entire character and disposition, and all the motives and circumstances of action, be known, the resulting act can be ascertained. Let us suppose, for instance, that the circumstances of one year were to be repeated in the next—that the same men, with characters absolutely unaltered, with every condition and circumstance identical—every purse as temptingly placed, every knife as ready, every instinct, passion, and pain as keen—can we doubt that precisely the same acts would be repeated, and the whole events of one year exactly correspond with those of the last?

And this is all that is meant when it is said that human affairs are the subject of causation.

But he tells us "to prove the law of the uniformity of crime, periods are selected when crime is uniform"—the law of the uniformity of crime! Truly, this is the Nemesis of jesting. The only uniformity is the uniformity of the relation between crime and its cause. Given certain characters and conditions, there follow certain acts. Vary the characters and conditions, and you vary the acts. Very different characters and conditions are followed by very different results. The only thing uniform or constant in the whole process is the *relation*. "Periods are selected when crime is uniform." Certainly, periods are selected when the characters and conditions are known to be very similar, as successive years in a very calm epoch, and the argument shows that these similar conditions are followed by very similar results. Reigns of Terror are not selected simply because the dispositions are so inflamed, and the conditions are so abnormal, and the data so intricate that all comparison becomes hopeless or useless. But the crime of a Reign of Terror bears precisely the same fixed relation to the characters of the men and the conditions producing it as does the crime of any period of stagnation. If the crimes are then immensely multiplied, it is because the cause of crime—the vices of character and the conditions which lead to it—are multiplied in an equal degree. "In comparing the vital statistics of one country and another, we should not select years of pestilence or civil war, simply because the data are obscure; certainly not because we doubt the certain connexion between death and the causes of death.

Social statistics, he tells us, are valuable because "they are not fixed by necessity, but variable." Does he seriously pretend that any man ever proposed social statistics except with a view of showing how intimate was the connexion between man and his acts, and how impossible it is to effect the acts, unless by influencing the character? "Necessarians exhort governments to reform themselves, instead of showing how their goodness or badness necessarily arises from the climate or the food." This is the old sneer at Mr. Buckle, who at least, if he has exaggerated the influence of external nature on national character has hardly less exaggerated that of institutions. "If statistics were fixed by necessity, to collect them would be a mere indulgence of curiosity." Who (except as a burlesque) ever supposed a statistician to mean that the actual figures

of his returns were uniform, or to collect them with any other view than that of ultimately altering the proportion? Moreover, when statistics are fixed by necessity—*i.e.*, we suppose, by physical causation—are they not often perfectly variable by man, and valuable for that reason? Sanitary statistics drawn from the physical laws of health are perfectly necessary in the Professor's sense, yet the collecting them is not found to be the mere indulgence of curiosity. On the contrary, we can vary them almost at pleasure by altering the conditions. Agricultural statistics drawn from the physical laws which govern the cultivation of the soil are fixed by necessity, yet they are studied in order that we may change them. Even when the statistics are not variable by man, as astronomical or meteorological statistics, the collecting them is anything but the indulgence of curiosity. On the contrary, where we cannot make use of the physical laws, we can at any rate withdraw ourselves and our property from their influence. In short, the subject of all physical science is, as the Professor would say, fixed by necessity or physical causation; and it is precisely this knowledge which enables us to obtain so complete a mastery over the phenomena of nature. Why, then, does the discovery of causation diminish our power over those of society? It would seem that the Professor's system reduces all science whatever to a mere indulgence of curiosity. We wish he would not be so hard upon this pardonable weakness.

A little further on he tells us that "it is worth remarking that an average is not a law: not only so, but the taking an average rather implies that no law is known." If we were giving a lecture upon History, we might perhaps reply that it is just as well worth remarking that a policeman is not a law; not only so, but sending for a policeman implies that the law has been broken. The connexion is quite as close, *i.e.* it is verbal. "An average is not a law." Why we always thought an average was nothing but the mean of an aggregate of observations. A law is the relation between cause and effect, antecedent and consequent. What have these in common? The taking an average implies nothing about a law, one way or the other. We might take the average height of the police force quite irrespective of any cause or law whatever. When we compare a variety of causes with a variety of effects, we often compare the average of the causes with the average of effects. We might expect next year's crop to conform to the average, but only on the assumption of the average of fine weather.

Just so, an average state of education is followed by an average state of crime. But this is a mere artifice of calculation. The law is the relation (roughly taken) between one average and another. They have absolutely nothing more in common than the rule of subtraction and the rule of three. We may use one without the other, or use one to assist the other. We think it hardly complimentary to the understanding of the undergraduates, that the Professor should warn them against so incredible a blunder. Yet, indeed, we remember a similar warning in the inaugural address of the Regius Professor at Cambridge.

But he proceeds to explain more fully his theory of science. "We may pronounce at once that a complete induction from the facts of history is impossible. History cannot furnish its own inductive law. An induction, to be sound, must take in actually or virtually all the facts. But history is unlike all other studies in this, that she never can have actually or virtually all the facts before her. What is past she knows in part; what is to come she knows not, and can never know." Now, what study ever has all the facts before it actually or virtually? We always thought that induction was a process of reasoning from the known to the unknown. From a few known facts, others out of our reach are inferred. It can make no difference whether the result is future in time or not, so long as the data we require are before us. If an induction did take in all the facts, it would be no induction at all; it would add nothing to our knowledge, but would be, as Bacon says, "simple enumeration." Let us see how the process of such a science as astronomy differs from that proposed in social science. An astronomer observes the daily revolution of the earth, and he infers as a law that it will continue to revolve. The facts of its continued future revolutions are not before him actually or virtually: he infers them by a reasoning process. A social philosopher, observing in history man's uniform habit of forming societies, infers the law that man will continue to be a social being and form societies—a valuable inference made by Aristotle. Wherein does the reasoning process differ? He is not as certain of his inference as the astronomer, perhaps, because the facts are less easy to observe, and liable to far greater modification.

Neither science can give any abstract certainty. Both imply the assumption that what has been will be—the only basis of all human thought about phenomena. Doubtless, the conditions of human society change, whilst those of the planetary system are

almost fixed. The planetary system itself is not absolutely fixed or free from unknown perturbations. The earth and all that is on it are in continual change. Nothing recurs in our system under exactly the same conditions as before. But to take a less extreme case. An astronomer observes a new comet. He has before him but a few data respecting its course. The rest are absolutely unknown to him. He cannot be absolutely certain that this comet is like other comets, or possesses the same laws. Besides, comets have abnormal courses and very dissimilar ones. Yet he determines its course, establishing by induction the law of its progress—"what is past he knows in part, what is to come he knows not," but can by patient science discover. Against this calculation indeed, every one of the objections here brought against a science of society will apply. Can he tell that the course of the comet he is observing may not be the segment of some far wider course and depend on some higher law? How can he predicate of a comet laws at all? Is induction possible in anything so mysterious? Can he tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth? After all, how can his small observation be erected into a law—how can he be absolutely certain or talk of invariable rule? The fact is, in the abstract, no astronomer, no man of science, can say more than that, provided things go on as they are, certain results will follow. These are the conditions of human knowledge. Laws are relative, and express regularity only so far as we can observe.

Again, in forming an induction from social phenomena, it makes no difference, so long as we have the data we need, whether the result belongs to the past or the future. An astronomer will calculate an eclipse as easily for the next century as for the last. The data are given, the inference is drawn. So a social philosopher, with vastly inferior precision, can calculate the results of any given state of civilization in the future as in the past. When an historian speculates, without reference to minor complications, what would have been the general distant consequences of some set of events having happened differently in history (*e.g.* the triumph of Persia over Greece—this all historians do, and our Professor does excellently well), he is doing precisely the same as if he were to calculate the general future consequences of some actual set of events before him. In both cases he reasons from the known to the unknown, and forms an induction without having the facts either actually or virtually before him. What science ever has? Geologists reason about the earth's

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crust from a few data, without the least possibility of getting at all the facts. They form their laws by assuming many facts they can never ascertain. Meteorologists calculate the course of a storm; by starting from a few known observations, they establish the law of its course. How was the induction complete in this case? Professor Owen out of a few bones reconstructs an extinct animal. Had he all the facts before him? A mineralogist observes the bias of certain strata: he forms his induction, and discovers a mine. A physician watches a pestilence sweeping over a continent: he ascertains some law, and predicts its arrival at a given spot at a given time. What is he doing but forming an induction from a few known facts to other unknown consequences? But here it may be objected, that each of these was guided in his induction by recorded observations of similar cases, and by general laws of the nature of the subject observed. Certainly: and it is precisely the same with the science of society. Here the Professor is misled by his own misuse of the term Science of History. Of course, there is no science of history. Of course, "history cannot furnish its own inductive law." Who ever supposed it could? The facts of history alone could never by mere inspection lead to a safe induction.

The science of society proposes to establish its laws, first by using the common laws, or call them tendencies, of human nature, and then by comparing these with the facts of the past. A traveller following the course of a mighty river, could never feel certain that if it had run northwards for even 1000 miles, it would continue the same course,—that this was the law of its course—although he would certainly have a most valuable empirical guide. But if he thoroughly knew the geographical conditions which determined its course, and had, over a vast tract, observed the manner in which it obeyed their influence, he could then form a really scientific, though far from an exact notion as to its future course. It might be that this law might prove to be largely in error; but he would be, indeed, void of all common sense if he refused to guide his future journeys by this, the only help which he possessed. Used only as an illustration, something of this kind is true of the social science. It has followed a mighty stream for ages, and has watched the course which it has taken; but it has watched that course throughout from the conditions which affected it, and believes that it possesses some certain knowledge of the nature of both and their mutual relation. It is this mistake of supposing that it was ever proposed to base

a science of society on mere facts of the past, and not on the science of human nature and the study of human faculties, which pervades the whole argument of these lectures. Hence we hear of the science of history, and an historical morality, and of ignoring the facts of human sentiment and feeling—all charges utterly unfounded. M. Comte and Mr. Mill, from different points of view, most emphatically insist that social science must start not with history, but with ethics; that morality is not historical but instinctive; and that there cannot be any phenomena of human nature which must not be dealt with in any theory of human society. But, after all, if an induction from the facts of history is impossible; if after 4000 years of history any generalization is impossible, because the facts are not actually or virtually before us, what mean the doctrines of "Progress," or of the "Unity of the Race," or the "Succession of Ages"—what means the "Philosophy of History" itself? How does the Professor know that all these which he has observed in the past will continue in the future? How, for instance, does he know that because Christianity has proved good in the past it will in the future? Why are they not mere segments of a higher law? Has he all the facts before him, or how came he with these grand inductions? In a word, is not the objection to generalizing for the future just as fatal to the philosophy as it is to what he calls the science of history?

To us it appears that the whole argument against the science of society proceeds upon an erroneous conception of all science. He brings against this science charges which are just as applicable to all others. Let us sum up the objections here urged against a society of science. We are told that the notion of causation, as applied to man, reduces him to an atom of a material universe, extinguishes sympathy, effort, and morality, and conflicts with his consciousness of free will; that society is affected by physical accidents, hereditary qualities, and by many influences quite inaccessible to our research; that no science of society can make us absolutely certain of the future, or can furnish us with exact particulars: all our observations may be subject to some higher law, and, after all there may be a mysterious basis of thought quite independent of observation and science. Why, every one of these objections could be made against the other sciences in their turn. It is a mere misconception of physical science, to suppose that it exhibits any fatality or fixed necessity in matter: so far from showing us that matter is immutable, it shows us how thoroughly it is mutable. If causation in nature does not

extinguish effort to affect it, why should causation observed in man? Science in either case is only a systematic collection of observations and inferences about the respective methods in which man and nature move. No science professes to give absolute certainty in a metaphysical sense. Few sciences descend into exactness respecting particulars. All acknowledge certain influences, as affecting their subject, into which they can gain no insight. No science pretends that some unknown force might not utterly change the whole conditions and nature of things. But each works on quietly until this catastrophe arrives.

The Professor might bring kindred objections against every existing science. To an astronomer he would say, "How can you be absolutely certain that the sun will continue to rise?" You can only tell us that it has done so for a few centuries—a mere segment of eternity! Why may not some higher law intervene to alter its course? Is there not in the celestial system an erratic force, a number of wild comets, many of which, you confess, baffle your calculations? Why may not one of these dash right into the earth, or sweep it away in its tail?" To a physicist he would say, "The whole earth, you say, is cooling and changing within and without; you tell us of electric currents which are quite mysterious. How can you, in this perpetual flux, tell us what the conditions of the earth may be 1000 years hence; and, if so, how talk about invariable laws of matter? Your observations may refer only to a mere phase of its transformations. You talk of laws of the tides: are there not infinite perturbations which affect them?—can you calculate these? You talk of laws of storms and weather. Have you all the facts before you actually or virtually? Predict if the sun will shine at noon next Thursday week." He might go to the physiologist and say, "Your pretended science, which tells us of perpetual composition and decomposition, conflicts with my consciousness of personal identity. Show me how I am the same man this year that I was the last. Besides, prove to me that matter exists, and is not a subjective creation. If not, your science is based upon a quicksand, and may be the study of mere phantasms. You talk of a science of physiology, but can you explain all the *lusus naturee*? Do you administer a single drug with absolute certainty of its effects? Are there not mysterious diseases, the least knowledge of which is above you? Do you see laws in them? Is there not in the human constitution a powerful element of confusion? Do you not yourself tell us of the

changes which seem to arise in the very conditions of the human frame, and of new maladies which affect it? Such is the basis upon which your pretended science of medicine must be based." And what answer would he receive? "Truly," the man of science would reply, not interrupting his experiment, "there are perturbations, and sorely do they try us. Much of that with which you threaten us is possible. Much of that which you ask of us is impossible. Science is as imperfect as the human faculties. But, such as it is, with many failures, it produces some practical results. It is all that we know. We have no choice. It is this, or none."

In fact, throughout these lectures a notion of the material universe is implied which is quite unwarranted by science. Physical science does not teach us anything about necessity, or matter bound in chains, or an irresistible fate. "Why should science talk of universal laws, or even of laws at all?" asks the Professor. Why, indeed? No man of science ever does imagine that they possess any objective reality. Law is, no doubt, a far from satisfactory term; but it is too late now to change it. Laws in any science mean, after all, nothing but the methods in which we observe things to accompany or succeed one another. Persons have been even supposed to worship laws. This form of idolatry must be something like worshipping the binomial theorem. It has been proposed with much reason to substitute the term "methods" for "laws." But if laws—if regularity imply a sort of fatality imposed on matter, into what strange difficulties must this theory conduct us! These laws of matter must be as irreconcilable with the will of God as laws of action are with the will of man. Does science imply that God Himself is under necessity? The lecturer warns us against supposing that nature acts under some primeval command without the sustaining hand of a Creator. If He is not working still in nature, he says, we have a strange idea of Providence. Then His will must continue to maintain regular laws. If he does, is He, too, absorbed into this chain of fate? Is His will sunk in a physical necessity? No, they will tell us. He works regularly because it is His nature to act by law. Then why is it so degrading to suppose that this is man's nature also?

After all, let us consider what "law" means, and what "science" means. There is nothing mysterious about either. Law does not imply fatality, any more than "science" implies exactness. Laws are only the generalizations of our experience: science is only the systematising of our gene-

realizations. Imperfect generalizations always exist before they are, as it were, codified into laws. Many laws are recognised long before they are corrected and harmonized into a science. What, then, is the real nature of the proposal to establish a science of society? Nothing but to develop our current generalizations, and ascertain others as distinct laws, and to give those laws a new connexion, meaning, and value by arranging them into a strict logical method. And this is all that causes such an outcry! This it is which is to suffocate human nature, and reduce us to brutes. This is to extinguish all human character, sympathy and effort. Why, this objection, if sound, should have been taken long ago. It strikes at the basis of all calculation about human affairs at all. The objection ought to have been raised when morals, practical maxims, historical or political speculations first began. They all proceed on the assumption which is here so violently attacked, that men do and will act intelligibly, and regularly follow motives. No doubt the assumption of the true uniformity of laws is now consciously expressed, and with very important consequences. We now know that no generalizations possess any high value unless so far as we have carefully verified them by the appropriate logical process. But the reasoning process here involved is identical with that used in less systematic generalizations.

So long as man has reflected on man, he has done so on the assumption that human actions have an intelligible cause, and that human motives will result in action. This is the foundation of all morals, of all politics, of all prudence, and of all education. Whatever knowledge we have reached respecting man, has gone simply on the ground that the human character acted on regular methods, and was a fit subject for systematic observation. Where we could not feel this, we cease to reason at all. A thoroughly capricious character, *i.e.* one in which the motives are too complex to estimate, we cease to study. Exactly as the character rises in steadiness is it a subject for forethought. Now, what is the assumption involved in all these processes? That those motives of action we can ascertain operate in a uniform manner. There is always more or less uncertainty in the result. But why? Is it because we have insufficient data, or because we doubt the uniformity of those we have? If we find a man acting differently to what we expected from our knowledge of his character and motives, we seek for some unforeseen motive, or suppose some motive to operate with an unforeseen force. It is a condition of our mental powers, to imagine

some fresh cause which we do not discern; we never acquiesce in the belief that it is from some mysterious quality in those causes which we know. If we see a man uniformly act in a certain way, we assume that, whilst his character is unaltered and his circumstances identical, he will continue to do so. If he does not, we seek for a reason—that is, a new motive,—or else we affirm a change in his character. It would not, in a grave case, satisfy our reason to say he chose differently. Why did he choose, we seek to know; and this is the foundation of all education. If a motive does not operate, we add to its force. If it still fails, we seek for the counter-motive, and seek to affect that. If all fails, we attribute it to a definite character. We never assume that motives act differently at different times, except we suppose a change in the disposition they affect. If over and above our limited insight into dispositions, and our very partial knowledge of circumstances, there were added an inherent uncertainty about their mutual relation, anything like regular forecast would be impossible, and not only moral certainty, but even general rules hopeless. In short, the moment we begin methodically to calculate antecedents, with a view to predict with confidence results, that moment we are assuming, however unconsciously, the relation of cause and effect.

We have said that we consider the lecturer himself very largely to adopt the theory of history which we have maintained. We will now briefly examine these cases. The first words of the Professor tell us that "the theory of history adopted in those lectures is in accordance with the doctrine of progress." Progress is afterwards explained, "that the history of the race, or at least the principal portion of it, exhibits a course of moral, intellectual, and material progress." With the increase of the material arts of life "the aggregate powers and sympathies of the race increase." "He has advanced in knowledge, and still advances, and that in the accelerating ratio of his augmented knowledge added to his powers;" and "the character of the race advances through history." "Effort is the law, if law it is to be called, of history." Now with all this we heartily agree. We call this a law of society. We want nothing more. In the first place, the objections here urged against laws of society all apply to this. This theory can only mean that a uniform tendency has been observed in man to advance his various powers, which bear definite relations to each other, and even advance at definite rates or ratios. Their comparative force and rapidity are also ascertained: there is,



therefore, uniformity in variety. There are constant relations, there is action and reaction, there is antecedent and consequent; there is regularity, there is permanence, and there is calculability: there is, therefore "law." It is not enough to show that this is not exact. So long as there is any uniform relation there is a law. Now how was this law ascertained? By induction, not simply from the facts of history but the facts of human nature. Why do not all the other objections apply? If man's freedom makes certainty impossible, how be certain that he will improve? If it is certain that he will improve, why praise those who assist that end? Why is not this a segment of a higher law? Or will it be said that there is no abstract certainty about it? Yet it is a certainty such as we unhesitatingly act on, and that is all we require.

Again, it may be said that this progress is mere increase, and therefore has none of the properties of a law. On the contrary, it is totally unlike accumulation. It is not that the human race grows bigger, or stronger, or richer: it grows nobler, wiser, and happier. It does not increase in bulk: it changes in character. In no respect does it remain the same. It assumes ever new phases. Complex movement goes on. The very character of its parts, and the conditions around them, undergo eternal change. Yet in the midst of this remains thorough unity. The relations of the parts of this vast whole remain uniform. The rates at which they change remain the same. The manner in which they act and react remains. Lastly, the mode in which they modify remains. The comparison of all these together, the relations of the constants and the variables constitute the establishment of a law. It is, in truth, development. "Physical development?" Certainly not; but with all the true characteristics of development. All that we ask is, that the process should be examined by a qualified use of the methods used in studying other developments. Such is the fundamental conception running through these lectures, we think thoroughly if unconsciously adopted, and admirably illustrated. No doubt the lecturer would say that he means something much less exact or much less uniform. Perhaps he may; but he means more than a metaphor. He means that which is at bottom equivalent to a law. Besides, let him not assume that the scientific view claims any great exactness or metaphysical certainty. The study of the future man must be liable to great perturbations. Doubtless material accidents, remarkable characters, intellects, &c., affect it much. Then the conditions of the race may vary. But all

these have their own appropriate explanation. The limits of their influence can be ascertained, and within these limits only is it pretended that society is a subject of scientific study.

Nor let it be supposed that we are laying stress on mere expressions. The same view pervades the whole lectures, and gives them their value. It is impossible to say that he means a mere general motion. He seems to adopt the view of Coleridge, "that in the education of the mind of the race, as in that of the individual, each different age and purpose requires different objects and different means, though all dictated by the same principle, tending to the same end, and forming consecutive parts of the same method." Undoubtedly, any rational view of Providence requires some such conception as this. It requires some common purpose running, even if unseen, through successive ages. But this is absolutely incompatible with abstract uncertainty. It requires a uniform persistence in a defined course. If the hand of Providence affect all that "has a permanent operation on all the destinies and intellectual condition of mankind at large," if ages are "the consecutive parts of the same method," history, in the broad sense, must show mankind advancing along a fixed and ordained course, in accordance with definite principles, and working up into one system. But this is impossible on the assumption of independent and irregular wills, which are without fixed course and fixed conditions. On this assumption, the human wills, however free, must conform to a definite end, and combine in an intelligible even if inscrutable purpose. In short, once regard the human race as one living and growing whole, and all history as one inwoven tale, it follows that uniformity and certainty must exist. All objections to regular order, as such, must apply equally to the regular order of Providence. And if the hand of Providence guides the human world, why should it not guide it like the material, by laws? If the conception of order excludes that of human will in the moral, it must no less exclude that of the Divine will in the physical.

But the lecturer may say, all this falls short of "law." There is really no magic about the term. Let us see how far he will go himself. "A philosophy of history rests upon connexion; such connexion as we know and in every process and word of life assume, that there is between the action and its motive, between motives and circumstances, between the conduct of men and the effect produced upon their character, between historic antecedents and their results." We do not know

that we could more completely express our own faith in this matter. He may tell us that this connexion is merely that of high probability; that result usually follows antecedent; that acts generally follow motives. We have no wish to dispute about terms; only it must be remembered that this high probability runs not seldom into moral certainty. The whole question turns on the examination of this high probability. We require means to estimate it, rules to calculate it, methods of reasoning upon it. Let us have it defined—what is, what is not regular. We ask only for systematic analysis and comparison of these varying probabilities. We need the mass of reasoning upon the subject reduced to a system. At least, we ought to be told what is the amount of the probability assumed. But nothing of this kind is attempted. We are left with a confused body of inferences utterly without method. All that we need is a logic of these various branches of our knowledge. If you object to a scientific logic, construct some other. We need again a "Novum Organum" of thought. If you refuse the scientific organum, supply us with a better.

But, after all, this question must be decided *à posteriori*. Let us try how far this method will lead us. A logic of causation we have; a logic of connexion is not even suggested or attempted. In the meantime, let us see if this method of induction will not lead to practical results. As to the want of exactness in the facts observed, that may not prove, for the purposes we require, to be altogether fatal. Many valuable scientific processes proceed upon data *ex hypothesi* inexact. Indeed, as the sciences rise in practical value, the less precise becomes our knowledge of the facts on which they are based; just because the more complex is their subject, the greater is its capacity for modification. But this method has been tried upon a great scale with astonishing success. The lecturer talks of the "moral and economical sciences." Why, are not these physical sciences? He says, Butler was a great discoverer of the "laws of human nature." What are the laws of human nature? Again, he tells us, "society is the necessary medium of moral development to man." What is moral development? He may say that all these are metaphors, that he means nothing physical. Neither, again, do we. But all this proves that his whole conception is penetrated with the idea for which we contend. He admits that political economy is a science, and even an exact science, until it descends into particular actions. Now, this is almost more than we

ask. No science of society pretends to predict particular actions. It deals with uniform tendencies, and assigns limits within which particular actions must fall. But is this, in truth, a question of metaphors? Can he or any one assert that political economy, in the truest sense, has not established a single law? Every one of its conclusions ultimately concerns the human will, whether laws of population, accumulation, or distribution. Is there no one genuine law? And one real law overthrows the notion that "law" is incompatible with the human will. But he goes further. The same conception, he tells us, is applicable to the mind. "In the material and intellectual world we are content to see order and design. The law of gravitation, the laws of the association of ideas, so far as they go, perfectly satisfy our mind." There appear, then, to be genuine laws of mind. But does this degrade the intellect and reduce it to mere clay? Is intellect bound in the chains of necessity? There are therefore economical laws, mental laws, and lastly, laws of human nature. The ground held sacred from the polluted touch of "law" seems narrowing gradually to nothing. Every phase of life, and every element of human nature, in turn exhibits its presence. Thought, ranging over the whole material and immaterial world, pursues one common method. One set of ideas alone, it seems, is to be for ever exempt from method or order.

There is a sentence in the opening paragraph of these lectures which exactly expresses all that we look for in a scientific view of history. "There was needed a habit of methodical investigation with a view to real results, of which physical science is the great school." Now, we consider all this impossible, except on the ground upon which we stand. How can physical science, for which the common postulate is causation, be a great school for investigation where the postulate is the absence of causation? How can there be methodical investigation where the facts observed are not merely obscure, but irregular in a manner and degree to which we have no clue? It would be like investigating the throwing of dice. Lastly, how can there be "real results," except by the use of prevision, which we are told is out of the question? In a word, how can there be not merely science, but philosophy, investigation, or certainty, when we suppose results to follow antecedents in a mysterious manner, unlike anything else ever observed by the mind, and to bear a mutual relation which we do not attempt to define?

We now proceed to quote some passages

from these lectures, which seem to us, in the main, excellent examples of the method we contend for.

"Two great attempts have been made in the history of the world to crush the nationality of large groups of nations, forming the civilized portion of the globe. The first was made by the military Rome of antiquity; the second, of a qualified kind, was made by the ecclesiastical Rome of the middle ages, partly by priestly weapons, partly by the sword of devout kings. The result was universal corruption, political and social in the first case, ecclesiastical in the second. In both cases aid was brought, and the fortunes of humanity were restored by a power from without, but for which it would seem the corruption would have been hopeless. In the first case the warlike tribes of the North shivered the yoke of Rome, and after an agony of six centuries restored the nations. In the second case, Greece rose from the dead with the New Testament [*Bible*] in her hand, and breathed into the kindred spirits of the great Teutonic races such love of free inquiry and of liberty, that they rose and rent the bonds of Rome and her Celtic vassals—rent them, but at the cost of a convulsion which filled the world with blood, and has made mutual hatred almost the law of Christendom from that hour to this. (!) Without the help of Greece [*i. e. intellect*] it does not appear that the gate of the tomb in which Europe lay would ever have been forced back. She might have been put up in it for ever, like the doomed spirits in Dante, when the lid of their sepulchres is closed at the last day. Wickliffe and John Huss spent their force against it in vain. The tyranny might have been differently shared between the different powers of the universal Church, between Pope and Council, between Pope and King: but this change would have done little for liberty or truth. Nationality is not a virtue, but it is an ordinance of nature, and a natural bond: it does much good; in itself it prevents none; and the experience of history condemns every attempt to crush it, when it has once been really formed."

Or again—

"If the doctrines of any Established Church are not absolute and final truth, its corporate interests are apt to come ultimately into collision with the moral instincts of man pressing onwards, in obedience to his conscience, towards the further knowledge of religious truth [*i. e. moral progress, though superior, is guided by intellectual progress*]. Then arises a terrible conflict. To save their threatened dominion, the defenders of ecclesiastical interests use, while they can, the civil sword, and wage with that weapon contests which fill the world with worse than blood. They massacre, they burn, they torture, they drag human nature into depths of deliberate cruelty, which without their teaching it could never have known; they train men, and not only men but women, to look on with pious joy while frames broken with the rack are borne from the dungeon of the Inquisition to its pile. Uniting intrigue with force, they creep into the ear of kings, of courtiers, of royal concubines; they con-

sent, as the price of protection, to bless and sanctify despotism in its foulest form; they excite bloody wars of opinion against nations struggling to be free. Still the day goes against them; humanity asserts its power; executioners fall; sovereigns discover that it little avails the king to rule the people if the Magian is to rule the king; public opinion sways the world [*i. e. intellectual convictions*], and the hour of Phillip II., of Père la Chaise, of Madame de Maintenon, is gone never to return [*a positive prediction*]. Then follows a hopeless struggle for the last relics of religious protection, for exclusive political privileges, and for tests; a struggle in which religion is made to appear in the eyes of the people the constant enemy of improvement and justice—religion from whom all true improvement and all true justice spring. This struggle, too, approaches its inevitable close. Then recourse is had, in the last resort, to intellectual intrigue, and the power of sophistry is invoked to place man in the dilemma between submission to an authority which has lost his allegiance, and the utter abandonment of his belief in God—a desperate policy; for, placed between falsehood and the abyss, humanity has always had grace to choose the abyss, conscious as it is that to fly from falsehood, through whatever clouds and darkness, is to fly to the God of truth."

Or again—

"In the passionate desire to reach individual perfection, and in the conviction (*N. B. movement determined by conviction*) that the claims of society were opposed to that desire, men have fled from society and embraced the monastic life. The contemplative and ascetic type of character alone seemed clear of all those peculiar flaws and deformities to which each of the worldly types is liable. The experiment has been tried on a large scale, and under various conditions; by the Buddhist ascetics; in a higher form by the Christian monks of the Eastern Church; and in a higher still by those of the West. In each case the result has been decisive [*the physical method of concomitant variations*]. The monks of the West long kept avenging nature at bay by uniting action of various kinds with asceticism and contemplation, but, among them, too, corruption at last set in, and proved that this hypothesis of life and character was not the true one, and that humanity must relinquish the uniform and perfect type which formed the dream of a Benedict or a Francis, and descend again to variety and imperfection."

We quote these passages with the greater pleasure, because we think them excellent specimens of the manly eloquence and the enthusiasm for the nobler instincts with which these lectures are full. Yet these passages seem to us strictly based upon a method which may not be the scientific, but is singularly like it. This reads very like the use of scientific reasoning. We have something very like the method of agreement and of difference, and unquestionably the method of concomitant variations. We

have, undoubtedly, the use of induction from the experience of history; we have a theory of development in an institution; we have tendencies established to be irresistible, uniform, and certain—in short, laws. We have all the terms “law,” “conditions,” “experiment,” “hypothesis,” “inevitable,” “decisive result.” It is possible to talk science all one’s life without knowing it. It is surely impossible to call all this metaphor. It is here distinctly assumed that what has happened in the past will continue in the future; that on a large scale sets of events will follow in an intelligible order; that a multitude of wills all conform to a general end; that their action in the mass is perfectly certain; that it is limited by distinct conditions; that wills and characters will be bent by the influences around them; that there is a general consensus of wills against which individual wills cannot struggle with ultimate success; that the whole progress throughout its course has a uniform method; that each element of the progress acts and reacts in a highly complex and subtle manner. This may not be physical, but it is, unquestionably, scientific development.

This we believe to be the germ of a scientific view of history. Could all this very elaborate reasoning have proceeded on an assumption that result bears to antecedent, not indeed the known relation of sequence, but some relation not capable of being defined in words? What more is needed to make it complete? There is only needed that this method should be extended and reduced to a system. In the first place we need a general knowledge of the leading instincts and capacities of man. For this we require, at least, some of the laws of human life and of the human organization which involve some general science and a basis of logical belief. We need also a knowledge of the natural and necessary institutions of human society, and of the paramount laws of human development. Having these we need a truly complete survey of history, especially of its earliest and simplest phases. We need to regard all history as a whole, and to connect it with the rest of our knowledge. Lastly, we need to study it with a purpose, and value it for the use to which we can turn it. It is obvious that the passages we have quoted fall far short of this in degree, but they do not differ in kind. We believe, indeed, that all we sketched as a scientific view of history is possible, without involving one single assumption that is not implied in every line that we have quoted.

After all, social science must establish

itself by visible results. The proof of its possibility rests, we think, not upon metaphysical or even logical reasoning, but upon facts. It is being day by day built up by the common tendency of public opinion, by the practice of all who write or teach history at all, and most of all by the necessity all feel for rational methods of observation, and some comprehensive theory which will render truly systematic and practical a vast body of disconnected thought.

If we have spoken our mind freely to the lecturer, it is because we complain of the contemptuous impatience with which he treats men and systems he dislikes. We see in these lectures nothing to justify such a tone, unless it be a remarkable gift of expression. But we are not insensible to the fine qualities of character they display. We wish we could quote some noble passages upon the social nature of morality. We should like also to point out how these virtually agree with some theories with which we are familiar. With his historical judgments we are disposed generally to concur, and forgive him much for his enthusiasm for our favourite heroes Alfred and Cromwell. We wish, however, he would moderate his loathing for Julius Cæsar. That, however, which seems to us chiefly to distinguish these lectures, is the genuine zeal they exhibit to seek in history a real philosophy of life, and view it mainly in its moral and religious aspect. Here again we have a new proof of the vitality and high purpose which the Universities have given us so many proofs that they possess. There is zeal and an elevation of spirit in their best aspect which must not be forgotten. It is the true source of the genuine patriotism they inspire. No doubt, their special subjects of study, whilst conducive, indeed, to a manly eloquence, foster a true devotion to moral and social truth and the story of heroic lives. With all this we wish they would exhibit less repugnance to the conclusions of science. These lectures show how commonly these are still regarded with the extravagance of terror. If the new theories attacked by the lecturer were such as lead into the hideous abyss supposed, they would scarcely be worth refuting. The moral feeling and the good sense of the public would protect them from this awful future. We have no such alarm. We have such confidence in the natural goodness of our race and its Creator, in the soundness of our civilization, and the reality of progress, as to welcome all conscientious labours with calmness and good will. We will examine them without paroxysm and criticise them without bitterness. These lectures tell us how a certain man once was

hung blindfold over what he supposed to be a precipice, clinging to a rope in his hands. He held on until his sinews cracked and the agony of death was passed; then falling, he found that he had been hanging half a foot from the ground. The lecturer, and many like him and around him, are hanging, we almost fancy, over a similar precipice. Let them not await till the agony of death is passed; let them take heart, and drop whilst they may, and stand with us upon firm ground.

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