SOME NEW BOOKS.

James Russell Lowell's Anti-Slavery Papers.

Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Co. have published in two volumes the prose contributions of James Russell Lowell to the columns of the anti-slavery press. It is admitted in the preface that Lowell's part in the abolition movement was not a conspicuous one, and that he himself counted his poems his chief service to the anti-slavery cause. It is, of course, for this reason that the papers here reprinted have remained for so long uncollected. It is further acknowledged by the compiler that the articles brought together in these volumes exhibit little argument; what we have in them is the preaching of a convert to the converted. On the other hand, some of them are masterpieces of invective and sarcasm; they are everywhere illuminated by wit, and their literary quality is, as might be expected, admirable. All of them are instinct with the patriotic ardor which was to find still more glowing expression in the "Biglow Papers" and the "Commemoration Ode." The surprising range of the articles, which include comments on the Irish Rebellion and the French Revolution, as well as current American politics, is accounted for by his definition of "The Aim of the True Abolitionist," which, he said, was not only to put an end to negro slavery in America: "He is equally the sworn foe of tyranny throughout the world." An Abolitionist Lowell was not in the Garrisonian sense of the word. He was rather a Free-Soiler; that is to say, he desired to exclude slavery from the Territories, but would have allowed it to remain in the States wherein it was authorized by the Constitution until the Constitution should be amended. As the editor of these volumes points out, Lowell was no Radical, and never sympathized with the extreme wing of the Abolitionists in their repudiation of the Federal organic law, and in their proposals to dissolve the Union. We should add that, of the fifty articles here reproduced, the first five were contributed during 1844 to the *Pennsylvania Freeman*; the rest, between 1845 and 1850, to the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, of which Lowell was for two years a titular associate editor.

I.

One of these articles—that on "The Prejudice of Color"—is as timely to-day as it was in 1845, when it was penned. Mr. Lowell held that there was nothing more sadly and pitiably ludicrous in the motley face of our social system than the prejudice of color. "An aristocracy of intellect," he said, "may claim some leniency of judgment from the reason, and there are certain physiological arguments to bolster up an aristocracy of birth; but a patent of nobility founded on no better distinction than an accidental difference in the secreting vessels of the skin would seem ridiculous even to a German Count who had earned his title by the more valid consideration of thirty-six dollars." Elsewhere he shows that we are not even consistent and undiscriminating in our objection to color. "The black men, having endured unparalleled hardships and oppressions with resignation and patience, are despised as wanting in spirit and capacity, while the red men, having returned blow for blow—having displayed, perhaps, more hideous qualities than any other savages—become the theme of novels and romances, are made the subject of rhymes almost as atrocious as one of their own war songs, and furnish even our children's books with pernicious examples of utterly barbarous and pagan virtues." It is as true now as it was in 1845 that the prejudice against color is no less pervasive and deep-seated at the North than at the South. Lowell pointed out that "the colored people of the so-called free States are still held in slavery by something stronger than the Constitution, more terrible than the cannon and the bayonet—the force of a depraved and un-Christian public opinion. We shut them rigidly out from every path of emulation or of ambition, and then deny to them the possession of ordinary faculties.

"No talent will show itself till there is a demand for its exercise, and then it leaps spontaneously and irresistibly into vigorous action. The proportion of degraded whites in this country is to the full as great as the proportion of degraded persons in the colored population; it is infinitely greater if we consider the respective opportunities of the two races." The paper concludes with the expression of a conviction that Abolitionists could in no way more usefully serve their cause than by seeking to elevate the condition of the colored race in the Free States, and to break down every barrier of invidious distinction between them and their privileged brothers. "While our moral atmosphere is so dense and heavy with prejudice, it will be impossible for the colored man to stand erect or to breathe freely. Even if he make the attempt, he can never attain that quiet unconsciousness so necessary to a full and harmonious development while he is continually forced to resist the terrible pressure from without. It is for us to endeavor to reduce this atmosphere to the true natural weight, and so struggle as manfully and earnestly, and as constantly also, against the slave system of the North as against that of the South."

II.

It is well known that Daniel Webster lost a large proportion of his friends at the North by his advocacy of the Clay Compromise measures of 1850. Many years before, however, he had come to be regarded not only by extreme Abolitionists of the Garrison type, but also by Free-Soilers, as a "lost archangel." Lowell gives utterance to the feeling of stern reprobation and profound regret with which the great orator had come to be regarded by many of his former admirers as early as July, 1846, when, it seems, Edward Webster, with his father's approval, undertook to recruit in Boston a company of volunteers for the Mexican War. That incident furnished the text for an article here reprinted. Premising that he is no believer in mute inglorious Miltons, in inheriters of unfulfilled renown, in the smothering of genius by circumstances, the writer admits that "might have been" is a melancholy phrase after all, and that "the saddest sight this world has to offer is that of great faculties debased from their legitimate functions and frittered away in the base uses of the world, 'of genius given and knowledge won in vain,' of the eagle turned buzzard, and claiming only a buzzard's inheritance in that sky where he should have soared supreme." Lowell proceeds to tell us that, among the thousand and one so-called great men of our so-called democracy, Daniel Webster excites in him the most painful feeling of regret. "A man who might have done so much, and who will die without having disburdened the weary heart of humanity of one of its devouring griefs! What has freedom to thank Daniel Webster for? What has Peace? What has Civilization? What has that true Conservatism, which consists in bringing the earth forward and upward to the idea of its benign Maker?

"In one word, how is God the better served, how are heaven and earth more at one for His having bestowed upon this man that large utterance, that divine faculty of eloquent speech?" Lowell bears witness to the prodigious influence of Webster's physical presence, to the wonderful magnetism exerted by him over masses of men. "We saw him when he defended himself in Faneuil Hall against the outraged Whigism of Boston for having retained his seat in the Tyler Cabinet, and when the thronging audience came, not, as usual, to witness and decorate his orations, but to sit, as it were, in judgment upon him. Many a better speech, both in the grandeur and the grace of oratory, have we heard from Wendell Phillips, but never did we encounter a harder ask than to escape the fascination of that magnificent presence of the man, which worked so potently to charm the mind from a judicial serenity to an admiring enthusiasm. There he stood at bay, and that one man, with his ponderous forehead, his sharp, cliff-edge brows, his brooding, thunderous eyes, his Mirabeau mane of hair, and all those other nameless attributes of his lion-like port seemed enough to overbalance and outweigh that great multitude of men who came as accusers, but who remained, so to speak, as captives, swayed to and fro by his aroused energy, as the facile brain is turned hither and thither in mimic surges by the strong wind that runs before the thunder-gust. We have compared him to a lion, yet, perhaps, that lazy strength of his might better be typified by a slightly changed quotation from that language for which, to display his shallowness, he has so sophomoric a fondness. Let us liken him, then, to an angry bull, to an '*Epicuri di grege*, taurus.'" Lowell adds that, in his opinion, no truly great man can find his adequate type among the animals, though men of any conceivable degree of mental power may.

It was, of course, easy to show that a great occasion had not been wanting to Webster, but that Webster had been wanting to the occasion. There was a time during the early '40s when Webster seemed disposed to enter the anti-slavery ranks. When the plot for the annexation of Texas was ripening toward its consummation, a public meeting was called in Boston to protest against this new encroachment of the slave-holding oligarchy. It was rumored that Webster would speak at this meeting, and such was unquestionably his intention. But the Massachusetts magnates of commerce and manufacture held themselves aloof, and Webster, governed by his friends, and persuaded that his original diagnosis of the political situation, drawn from the pulse of the Commonwealth, was incorrect, stayed away, and held his peace. Lowell contrasts what Webster actually did with what he might have done had his trumpet voice been raised in behalf of the oppressed from the commanding position conceded to his powerful intellect. Webster's actual achievements are thus described: "He has made some 'great' speeches in defence of the tariff. He has defended from the insults of a worthless slave trader that state which, were it indeed worthy of his eulogy, were it the old Bay State of former days, would never have suffered a cowardly Governor to impeach the integrity of a noble Commonwealth by issuing his proclamation in behalf of his slave-trading, murderous and unholy war. He has won the title of 'Defender of the Constitution,' by his zeal in fostering the corrupt public sentiment which sets the political shifts of men above the law of nature and of God. He has settled the Northeastern boundary. He has, in accordance with that axiom of natural philosophy which declares that *ex nihilo nihil fit*, reduced Charles Jared Ingersoll to nothing by a speech in which he descended even below the vulgar level of his assailant. And, finally, he has sent his youngest son (a youth who has just about brains enough to be conveniently come at by a cannon ball) to Boston to recruit a company for the Mexican War, as if his subserviency to the slave power had not already amply atoned for his Federalism in the last war, and richly earned for him the title of *patriot*, as it is understood in America. Shall not the Recording Angel write *Ichabod* after the name of this man in the great book of Doom?" The paper ends with a forecast of the fame that might have been Webster's had he seized the opportunity offered by the Texas conspiracy to cast in his lot with the Anti-Slavery Whigs. "The fervor, the inspiration, the glorious delirium of standing for the first time face to face with a great principle might have snatched him away as in a fiery chariot from the narrow conventional sphere which had enthralled him. Once more, God said, Behold the occasion! and the man slunk away, to be for life the defender of the 'Constitution,' when he might have been the champion of Freedom and of Man! Once more a vision of the President's chair hung like a cloud before his eyes, and blotted out that golden throne among the immortals which stood empty for him."

III.

It will be remembered that in 1848 Daniel Webster again failed to receive the Whig nomination for the Presidency, Thurlow Weed having persuaded the National Convention of his party that Gen. Zachary Taylor would be a more popular candidate. Webster did not hesitate to describe the nomination as one not fit to be made, and for a time it seemed probable that he would take no part in the campaign. The Free-Soilers hoped that he would declare himself openly against the pro-slavery wing of the Whig party and coöperate in the "Barnburner" movement, which, even as it was, had the effect of defeating the election of the Democratic candidate, Gen. Cass. These hopes were in Lowell's mind when he penned the article, "What Will Mr. Webster Do?" He recognized that in Massachusetts just then there were a multitude of people waiting for Mr. Webster's action on the recent nomination for the Presidency. "What," asked Lowell, "will Mr. Webster do? This is of more importance to him than to the great principle which is beginning to winnow the old parties. This principle, having God on its side, can do very well without Mr. Webster—but can he do as well without it? The truth of that principle will not be affected by his taking one side or the other. But *occasio celeris*, and the great man is always the man of the occasion. He mounts and guides that mad steed whose neck is clothed with thunder, and whose fierce *Ha! ha!* at the sound of the trumpets appals weaker spirits. Two or three years ago we spoke of one occasion which Mr. Webster allowed to slip away from him. That was the annexation of Texas. Another is offered him now. We do not believe that party ever got what was meant for mankind. Mr. Webster has now once more an opportunity of showing which he was meant for. If party be large enough to hold him, then mankind can afford to let him go. Nevertheless, it is sad to imagine him still grinding for the Philistines. We cannot help thinking that his first appearance as Samson grasping the pillars of the idol-temple would draw a fuller house than Mr. Van Buren in the same character."

Lowell thought that, if the Whigs could elect Taylor at all, they could do it without Webster's help. Appeals to the reason would be superfluous and impertinent on behalf of a "hurrah" candidate. On the other hand, Lowell was not blind to the value of the assistance which Webster could have given to the anti-slavery Whigs "Let that great force of his but once get a chance to work freely, let it be inspired by contact with great principles, and it would become irresistible" And, again, "If ever a man was intended for a shepherd of the people Daniel Webster is. The people are fast awakening to great principles; what they want is a great man to concentrate and intensify their diffuse enthusiasm. And it is not every sort of greatness that will serve for the occasion. Webster, if he would only let himself go, has every qualification for a popular leader. The use of such a man would be that of a conductor to gather, from every part of the cloud of popular indignation, the scattered electricity which would waste itself in heat lightnings, and, grasping it into one huge thunderbolt, let it fall like the messenger of an angry God among the triflers in the Capitol." The article ends with an appeal: "Let Mr. Webster give over at last the futile task of sowing the barren seashore of the present, and devote himself to the Future, the only legitimate seed-field of great minds. Slimmer and glibber men will slip through the labyrinth of politics more easily than he. He will always be out stripped and outwitted. Politics are in their nature transitory. He who writes his name on them, be the letters never so large, writes it on sand. The next wind of shifting opinion puffs it out forever. It is never too late to do a wise or great action. We do not yet wholly despair of hearing the voice of our Daniel reading the *Mene mene* written on the wall of our political fabric."

IV.

An article dated March 2, 1849, is entitled "Mr. Clay as an Abolitionist—Second Appearance in Fifty Years." It sets forth in detail the impression which the career of the great Kentuckian had made upon the writer's mind. To Lowell American politics presented no more singular phenomenon than the poularity of Henry Clay. He could not easily account for the phenomenon, because Clay had been associated with failures rather than triumphs, and with defeats instead of victories. "He has achieved more signal unsuccesses than any statesman in the country." Lowell also thought that Clay's popularity had never struck down any deep root into the heart of the people. "Old Hickory, who put a great deal of straightforward sense into very crooked spelling; who hanged the Bank as he had hanged Ambrister in Florida; who bullied France, who dragooned South Carolina, and swore by the Eternal now and then, had a far stronger hold upon the masses, because he reflected them more truly." Nevertheless, Lowell could not but recognize that Clay was the idol of the protectionists. It is admitted that he "somehow conjured an enthusiasm into merchants and cotton spinners. He found and had a way to set on fire the hearts of Banks and Brokers Boards. Though a slaveholder, uttering sentiments which would have authorized his own chattels to cut his throat, he was the idol of those whose enthusiasm for freedom is multiplied by the square of the distance at which the struggle for it takes place. Though not immaculate in private character, he attracted to himself the support of the religious classes. Bible, Tract, Missionary and Magdalen Societies were well nigh unanimous for him. Washington was the Jerusalem and he the Godfrey of a new crusade." How then, shall we explain such far-reaching popularity? Lowell answers: "Was not all this because he was the genius of Compromises, of middle courses, of blowing neither hot nor cold, in short, of the American System? Whatever the cause, the loyalty to him has no parallel, except in the history of the House of Stewart. In this view it becomes poetical. As a forlorn hope, as a devotion to disinterested defeat, it has gained here and there, a recruit from a different order of mind. Whittier addressed to him the most poetical of modern poetical verses. And even now, as Hogg wrote Jacobite songs after the last of the Stewarts had for years been laid in his mockery-tomb at Rome, Greeley turned sadly away from the solid, rough-and-ready pudding, to sup full of the East wind of long ago hopeless hopes and to compose cold water dithyrambics to the patriarch sitting over his wine at the St. Charles Hotel."

In reviewing Clay's political life, Lowell can find but one great principle that he was ever capable of appreciating. "One, and only one—that Henry Clay of Kentucky ought to be the next President of these United States. Unfortunately, he has always had a fancy that the Presidential Chair was situated somewhere between two stools, and has, accordingly, several times seated himself with an uncomfortable rapidity upon the floor." For example: "His philanthropy embraced all races, but embraced the African with a difference—that is, with a handcuff. He was a republican of the sternest pattern, but who could conceive of a republican blacking his own boots? He was willing to allow that slavery was a moral and political evil to both master and slave, but were not his chattels fat and sweet? He was opposed to the annexation of Texas, but then,—he was in favor of it. He was torn by conflicting emotions. Northwardly, he was *anti*, southwardly, he was *pro*. He was opposed to the Mexican War, but would have relished slaughtering his private Mexican in a humble way. On the question of the Wilmot Proviso, we suppose, he would be against the extension of slavery into new territory, but would be in favor of allowing 'Southern gentlemen' to emigrate thither with their flocks and herds."

V.

What did Lowell think of the prospective relations of British North America to the United Kingdom on the one hand and to the United States on the other? Some recent incidents had led him to discuss the subject in the paper entitled "Canada" in November, 1849. Lowell saw that her Colonies are dear to England as matters of pride, and that Canada is especially dear, as a trophy won from her ancient enemy, France. He also saw that the Colonies were dear to the mother country in another sense, and that, soon or late, it would be needful to strike a balance-sheet between pride and expense. At any rate, the question of the separation of the North American provinces from the mother country had already in 1849, begun to be discussed on both sides of the ocean. It seemed to Lowell that it would be wise in England to yield gracefully and promptly.

"If it be the mission of the English race to plant the germs of self-government in every quarter of the globe, it is most desirable that the different portions of that race, wherever settled, and however governed, should be able to communicate everywhere the entire moral force of a great united nation. The ties of ancestry and of a common past, so rudely snapped between the mother country and the Thirteen Colonies by the American War of Independence, are beginning to reunite themselves. Every steamer carries and fastens a spider-thread of sympathy and interest, each invisible, but the sum of which will, at last, rebind firmly together the little island and the daughter it disinherited and disowned. It cannot be but that the experience of seventy years has made England wiser, and that she will be slow to estrange another child." Writing fifty-three years ago, Mr. Lowell imagined that the annexation of British North America to the United States was manifest destiny. "England is no longer the only central sun of an Anglo-Saxon system. The great fragment which wandered off, a separate planet, and has become the United States, begins to pull with gradually increasing force the nearer satellites. Canada gravitates toward the larger and more neighboring body. This is not the manifest destiny of aggressive rapine, as in the case of Texas, but obedience to the attraction of natural laws." Setting aside for the moment the attraction of the American Republic, Lowell deemed it certain that the centrifugal force of the provinces was steadily increasing, and carrying them further and further from the British centre. "Interest draws the colonists of English descent in a direction opposite to predilection and habit. And, even supposing an undiminished loyalty in these, there must be taken into account the presence of a neutral body in a large subjugated population the French Canadian which has retained its language and traditions, and whose *vis inertiæ* must be overcome by an intenser loyalty on the part of the rest." When Lowell wrote, two plans had been proposed by those who favored the separation of British North America from the mother country, to-wit, independence and annexation to the United States. Lowell thought that "here again the French element in the population must be considered. If not numerous enough to set up for themselves, they would certainly offer very perplexing material to be worked into the fabric of a new Republic. This with other circumstances of convenience and interest, would certainly lead to a proposal for annexation. The proposal once made, annexation may be looked upon as a certain event." The constitutionality of annexation had been settled by the then recent precedent afforded by the joint resolution of Congress admitting Texas to the Union.

VI.

In 1849 and afterwards the Abolitionists used to be told by defenders of the Southern institution that the system of chattell slavery at the South was no worse than that of wages-slavery at the North, and that land monopoly was at the bottom of the evil. From this premise the deduction was drawn that the Abolitionists would do well to pluck the beam out of their own eye, and then they might hope to see more clearly how to take the mote out of their brother's eye. Lowell examined the assertion in a paper called "Putting the Cart Before the Horse." He would not for a moment admit that chattell-slavery was no worse than wages-slavery. "This matter of comparative miseries is hardly one to be settled by argument. Our human instincts decide it for us at once, and without appeal. We do not believe that there is a hired laborer (man or woman) in America who would exchange conditions with the fattest and sleekest slave at the South, not even though it were to be owned by Henry Clay, or General Taylor himself. Were the question one solely of physical well being, it would not bear argument for a moment. The Southern *Quarterly Review* estimates the annual expense of a plantation slave at thirty-five dollars a year, or less than ten cents a day." Obviously, however, it is not a question of mere bodily comfort. "The condition of the hired laborer everywhere is one which admits of exceptions for superior energy and intelligence. That of the slave knows no exceptions, but crushes all to one dead level of stupid animalism or sullen despair. The slave has no hope but that weary northward flight, the bloodhounds, the worse than bloodhounds at his heels, and that horrible distrust of every human being in his heart." If anybody desired to argue that slavery was only one pustule indicating the presence of disease in the American social system, Lowell did not feel himself concerned to deny it. He refused, however, to accept this as an argument for apathy, for letting evil things alone, or for so generalizing and dissipating the efforts of reform that they would fail to reach particular evils. "We have great doubts of the possibility of arousing a community to the wickedness of monopolizing land, when the community feels no stings of conscience at monopolizing man. We do not believe that a man can be convinced of the sinfulness of paying small wages while he is allowed to retain his belief in the righteousness of paying none at all. In short, we do not feel entirely convinced that it is best to put the cart before the horse."

VII.

In a paper entitled "Shall we ever be republicans?" Lowell expressed the opinion that his countrymen had never got over a certain shamefacedness at the disrespectability of their position. They had never been more than nominal republicans. "We feel as if, when we espoused Liberty, we had contracted a mésalliance. The criticism of the traveller who looks at us from a monarchical point of view exasperates us. Instead of minding our own business, we have been pitifully anxious as to what would be thought of us in Europe. We have had Europe in our minds fifty times when we have had God and Conscience once. Our literature has endeavored to convince Europeans that we are as like them as circumstances would admit. The men who have the highest and boldest bearing among us are the slaveholders. We are anxious to be acknowledged as one of the great Powers of Christendom, forgetful that all the navies in the world are weak in comparison with one sentence in the Declaration of Independence. When every other argument in favor of our infamous Mexican War had been exhausted, there was this still left, that it would make us more respected abroad. We are afraid of our own principles as a raw recruit of his musket. As far as the outward machinery of our Government is concerned, we are democratic only in our predilection for little men." Is it not a degrading fact, asks Lowell elsewhere in this paper, that a man's being *known* is enough to prevent his having any hope of the Presidency? Of course what Lowell had in mind was the preference shown by the Whig National Convention in 1848 for the unknown Taylor over Clay and Webster.

One of the most interesting papers in these volumes deals with the "French Revolution of 1848," the news of which had been received with a good deal of coolness by many of the leading American newspapers. Lowell quite understood the causes of the approach to frigidity. "There is in this country," he writes, "a large class of persons who seem to consider that the tendency of all republics is toward anarchy. They are unable to perceive that a government is secure and stable exactly in proportion as the interests of all are most clearly represented in it. They dignify with the respectable name of Conservatism a stupid adherence to the makeshift Present and a total want of faith in, or comprehension of the Future." Persons of this stamp cannot shake off the prepossession that a certain amount of sham is necessary to the well governing of a people. "Their notion of government is the good old John Bull one, that it is solely an institution for the preservation of the property of those who have it, and of the bones and sinews of those who have it not, to the end that the aforesaid property may be further increased. The only New Testament doctrine of which they have an adequate conception is that to him who hath shall be given, and from him who hath not shall be taken even that which he hath. These otherwise worthy persons are so completely behind this age that the dust of it gets in their eyes. They sympathize with Louis Philippe in his dethronement, and quite forget the sympathy due to the people he had dethroned."

So far as Lowell personally was concerned, he rejoiced at the popular uprising which took place in France in 1848, neither was his joy dependent on the success or failure of the movement. He saw, on the contrary, that, if the French people were not yet ripe for self-government, their failure would help them to become so. Attention is directed to the difference between the French Revolution of 1848 and other popular upheavals. What overthrew Louis Philippe was the resolve to bring about social reorganization and regeneration, or, in other words, to improve the lot of the proletariat. On the other hand, the first English revolution had been a revolt of the middle classes. "There were republicans among the leaders of it, and there were men who cried out for King Jesus, and meant King Log; but the people were quite inadequate to self-government, and Cromwell became necessary. The only change from the old system of affairs was that a head was put at the apex of the State instead of a mask. The second English revolution was one of the aristocracy, resulting in a mere change of dynasties. Our own Revolution was rather a separation from Great Britain, and did not produce any striking social change. It is true that speculative minds like Jefferson's, in advance of their time, incorporated certain radical ideas in the Declaration put forth by the United Colonies. But, if those ideas were enthusiastically, they were not appreciatingly, received. It is true that the farmers at Concord Bridge, as Emerson has said, 'fired the shot heard round the world,' but they were not conscious of the mighty effects to flow from that little touch of their fingers upon the trigger."

Lowell thought that if the American people had understood their own Declaration of Independence the roots of slavery would never have been allowed to strike into and split asunder the very foundations of our social institutions. That is to say, the Declaration was for them precisely what Rufus Choate called it, a tissue of glittering generalities. If, now, we turn to the first French Revolution, we find this interpreted by Lowell as "only the natural recoil of an oppressed and imbruted people. If the men who attempted to ride that whirlwind had been competent to the occasion, they would have looked forward, and would not have raked for a system among the ruins of ancient Rome." Since 1789 the masses have gradually been getting to be considered as something different in kind from water power and steam power, though identical with them in use. "It is found that the little spark of God in them makes them uneasy under systems of legislation which might be welcomed with a self-forgetting patriotism by water-wheels and spinning-jennies. The shadow cast on the wall by the last French Revolution (1848), 'with fear of change perplexing monarchs,' is not that of the armed man of the old republic, but of a simple workman in his blouse. And monarchs are not the only persons perplexed by it." It will be remembered that the provisional government organized in Paris in 1848 undertook to establish government workshops in which artisans could get something to do. To Lowell there was "something unspeakably touching in the spectacle of a mob of successful insurgents satisfied with the hope of work. Is there no advance here?" he asks. "Is not this cry for work better than the old *panem et circenses*?"

M. M. H.

A Russian Contribution to Sociology.

A series of articles which first appeared in the *Nineteenth Century* have been collected, revised and supplemented with an appendix in a volume entitled *Mutual Aid, A Factor of Evolution*, by P. Kropotkin (McClure, Phillips & Co.). It is well known that the author is a Socialist of an advanced type, but it should be equally known that he is a man of science, a man of learning and a sturdy thinker. His purpose in this book is to develop an idea expressed by Darwin in "The Descent of Man," and formulated by Prof. Kessler in 1880, the idea, namely, that, besides the law of mutual struggle, there is in nature the law of mutual aid, which, for the success of the struggle for life, and especially for the progressive evolution of the species, is even more important than the law of mutual contest. Among recent essays in the same direction are "The Lowell Lectures on the Ascent of Man," by Henry Drummond, and "The Origin and Growth of the Moral Instinct," by A. Sutherland, both of which inquiries follow for the most part the lines taken in Buchner's "Love and Love-Life in the Animal World." A third work dealing with man exclusively, and pursuing a like course of investigation, is "The Principles of Sociology," by Prof. F. A. Giddings, the first edition of which was published in New York and London six or seven years ago. We need not remind the readers of Herbert Spencer that the same subject is discussed at length in his "Data of Ethics" and "Principles of Ethics." We cannot here attempt a detailed comparison of the views set forth in all the writings mentioned, but, after indicating briefly the conclusions reached by Prince Kropotkin, we shall place beside them those at which Mr. Spencer has arrived.

The author of the book before us shows that, in the animal world, the vast majority of species live in societies, and that they find in association the best arms for the struggle for life; understood, of course, in its wide Darwinian sense—not as a struggle for the sheer means of existence, but as a struggle against all natural conditions unfavorable to the species. The animal species, in which individual struggle has been reduced to its narrowest limits, and the practice of mutual aid has attained the greatest development, are invariably the most numerous, the most prosperous and the most open to further progress. The mutual protection which is obtained in this case, the possibility of attaining old age and of accumulating experience, the higher intellectual development, and the further growth of sociable habits, secure the maintenance of the species, its extension, and its further progressive evolution. The unsociable species, on the contrary, are doomed to decay.

Turning to man our author encounters him living in clans and tribes at the very dawn of the Stone Age; he recognizes a wide series of social institutions developed already in the lower savage stage, in the clan and the tribe; and he finds that the earliest tribal customs and habits gave to mankind the embryo of all the institutions which constituted later on the leading aspects of further progress. Out of the savage tribe grew up the barbarian village community; and a new, still wider circle of social customs, habits and institutions, numbers of which are still alive among ourselves, was developed under the principles of common possession of a given territory and common defence of it under the jurisdiction of the village folkmote and in the federation of villages belonging, or supposed to belong, to one stem. And when new requirements induced men to make a new start, they made it in the city, which represented a double net work of territorial units (village communities) connected with guilds—these latter arising out of the common prosecution of a given art or craft, or for mutual support and defence. Finally, in the last two chapters of this book facts are adduced to show, that, although the growth of the State on the pattern of imperial Rome had put a violent end to all mediæval institutions for mutual support, this new aspect of civilization could not last. The State, based upon loose aggregations of individuals, and undertaking to be their only bond of union, did not answer its purpose. The mutual aid tendency finally broke down the iron rules of the State; it reappeared and reasserted itself in an infinity of associations which now tend to embrace all aspects of life and to take possession of all that is required by man for life, and for making good the waste occasioned by life.

It is not for a moment denied by the author of this volume that mutual aid, even though it may represent one of the factors of evolution, does, nevertheless, cover only one aspect of human relations, that, by the side of this current, powerful though it may be, there is, and always has been, another current—the self-assertion of the individual, not only in its efforts to obtain personal or caste superiority, economical, political and spiritual, but also in its much more important, although less evident function of breaking through the bonds, always prone to become crystallized, which the tribe, the village community, the city and the State impose upon the individual. In other words, we must not lose sight of the self-assertion of the individual considered as a progressive element. No review of evolution can be complete, unless these two dominant currents are analyzed. As a matter of fact, however, the self-assertion of the individual or of groups of individuals, their struggles for superiority and the conflicts which resulted therefrom, have been analyzed and described from time immemorial. In truth, until comparatively recent times, this current alone has received attention from the epic poet, the annalist, the historian and the sociologist. History, as it has hitherto been written, is almost entirely a description of the ways and means by which theocracy, military power, autocracy and, later on, the rule of the richer classes, have been promoted, established and maintained. The struggles between these forces make, in fact, the substance of history. We may thus take the knowledge of the individual factor in human history as granted—even though, in our author's opinion, there is full room for a new study of the subject; while, on the other side, the mutual-aid factor was long totally lost sight of, it was simply denied, or even scoffed at, by the writers of the past generation. That is why Prince Kropotkin has deemed it needful to exhibit in this book, first of all, the immense part which the mutual-aid factor plays in the evolution of both the animal world and human societies. Only after the importance of this factor has been fully recognized will it be possible to proceed to a comparison between the two factors. Adequately to set forth such a comparison would require, our author thinks, as many years, namely, seven, as it took him to produce the present volume.

Pending the accomplishment of such a comparison, Prince Kropotkin expresses the opinion that to make even a rough estimate of the relative importance of the two factors by any method more or less statistical is impossible He reminds us that a single war may be productive of more evil, immediate and subsequent, than hundreds of years of the unchecked action of the mutual-aid principle may be productive of good. He submits, however, that, when we observe how in the animal world progressive development and mutual aid go hand in hand, while the inner struggle within the species is concomitant with retrogressive development; when we notice that, in the case of men, even success in struggle and war is proportionate to the development of mutual aid in each of the two conflicting nations, cities, parties or tribes, and that in the process of evolution war itself (so far as it can go this way) has been made subservient to the ends of progress in mutual aid within the nation, the city or the clan—we already obtain a perception of the dominating influence of the mutual-aid factor as an element of progress. We see also that the practice of mutual aid and its successive developments have created the very conditions of society life in which man was enabled to develop his arts, knowledge and intelligence; and that the periods when institutions based on the mutual aid tendency took their greatest development were also the periods of the greatest progress in arts, industry and science. In fact, the study of the inner life of the mediæval cities and of the ancient Greek cities reveals the fact that the combination for mutual aid, as it was practised within the guild, and the Greek clan, with a large initiative, which was left to the individual and the group by means of the federative principle, gave to mankind the two greatest periods of its history—the ancient Greek city and the mediæval city periods—while the ruin of the above institutions during the State periods of history, which followed, corresponded in both cases to a rapid decay.

As to the sudden industrial progress which has been achieved during our own century, and is usually ascribed to the triumph of individualism and competition, Prince Kropotkin holds that it certainly has a much deeper origin than that. Once the great discoveries of the fifteenth century were made, especially that of the pressure of the atmosphere, supported by a series of advances in natural philosophy, discoveries and advances achieved under the mediæval city organization—once these discoveries were made, the invention of the steam motor and the whole industrial revolution which the conquest of a new power implied, had, necessarily, to follow. Had the mediæval cities lived to bring their discoveries to that point, the ethical consequences of the revolution effected by steam might have been different; but the same revolution in technics and science would have inevitably taken place. Our author, indeed, regards it as an open question whether the general decay of industries which followed the ruin of the free cities, and was especially noticeable in the first part of the eighteenth century, did not considerably retard the appearance of the steam engine, as well as the consequent revolution in arts. He thinks that, if we consider the astounding rapidity of industrial progress from the twelfth to the fifteenth century—in weaving, working of metals, architecture and navigation, and ponder over the scientific discoveries which that industrial progress led to at the end of the fifteenth century—we must ask ourselves whether mankind was not delayed in its taking full advantage of these conquests, when a general depression of arts and industries took place in Europe after the decay of mediæval civilization. Surely it was not the disappearance of the artist-artisan, nor the ruin of large cities and the extinction of intercourse between them, which could favor the industrial revolution; we know, indeed, that James Watt spent twenty or more years of his life in order to render his invention serviceable, because he could not find in the eighteenth century in England what he would readily have found in mediæval Florence or Bruges, that is, the artisans capable of realizing his devices in metal, and of giving them the artistic finish and precision which the steam engine required.

In a word, our author holds that, to attribute the industrial progress of our century to the war of each against all, which some misinterpreting and misleading disciples of Darwin have proclaimed, is to reason like the man who, knowing not the causes of rain, attributes it to the victim he has immolated before his clay idol. For industrial progress, as for every other conquest over nature, mutual aid and close intercourse certainly are, as they have been, much more advantageous than mutual struggle.

It is, at the same time, recognized that, especially in the domain of ethics, does the dominating importance of the mutual aid principle appear in full. That mutual aid is the real foundation of our ethical conception seems to our author evident. Whatever opinions may be held as to the first origin of the mutual aid feeling or instinct—whether a biological or a supernatural cause be ascribed to it—we can trace its existence as far back as to the lowest stages of the animal world; and, from these stages we can follow its uninterrupted evolution, in opposition to a number of contrary agencies, through all degrees of human development, up to the present time. Even the new religions which were born from time to time—always at epochs when the mutual-aid principle was falling into decay in the theocracies and despotic States of the East, or amid the decline of the Roman Empire—even the new religions, have only reaffirmed that same principle. They found their first supporters among the humble, in the lowest, downtrodden layers of society, where the mutual-aid principle is the necessary foundation of everyday life; and the new forms of union which were introduced in the earliest Buddhist and Christian communities, in the Moravian brotherhoods and so on, took the character of a return to the best aspects of mutual aid in early tribal life.

We are, lastly, invited to observe that at each epoch when an attempt to return to the old mutual-aid principle was made, the fundamental conception of the principle itself was widened. From the clan it was extended to the stem, to the federation of stems, to the nation, and, finally—an ideal at least—to the whole of mankind. It was also refined at the same time. In primitive Buddhism, in primitive Christianity, in the writings of some of the Mussulman teachers, in the early movements of the Protestant Reform, and especially in the ethical and philosophical movements of the eighteenth century and of our own time, the total abandonment of the idea of revenge, or of "due reward"—of good for good and evil for evil—is affirmed more and more vigorously. The higher conception of "no revenge for wrongs," and of freely giving more than one expects to receive from his neighbors, is proclaimed as being the real principle of morality—a principle superior to mere equivalence, equity or justice, and more conducive to happiness. Man is urged to be guided in his acts, not merely by love, which is always personal, or, at the best, tribal, but by the perception of his oneness with each human being. In the practice of mutual aid, which we can trace to the earliest beginnings of evolution, we thus find the positive and undoubted origin of our ethical conceptions; and we can affirm that in the ethical progress of man, mutual support—not mutual struggle—has had the leading part. In its wide extension—even at the present time, the author of the book before us would see the best guarantee of a still loftier evolution of our race.

Mr. Herbert Spencer is less optimistic than is Prince Kropotkin as to the date when a beneficent transformation of human society may be expected from a thorough application of the mutual-aid principle. To the former such a consummation, although devoutly to be wished, seems very far away. He notes in the "Principles of Ethics," that, while the majority believe that human nature is unchangeable, there are some who believe that it may rapidly be changed. In his judgment, both beliefs are wrong. Great alterations may be wrought but only in the course of multitudinous generations: the small alterations, such as those which distinguish nation from nation, taking centuries, and the great alterations, moulding an egoistic nature into an altruistic one, taking eras. Nevertheless, Mr. Spencer believes in the ultimate triumph of altruism, and in the complete transformation of society by the mutual-aid principle. He disclaims intellectual concurrence with the class of men who, while believing in organic evolution, and knowing that many of the multitudinous transformations effected by it are so marvellous as to seem scarcely credible, nevertheless tacitly assume that no further transformations will take place—not even such relatively small ones as would raise the higher types of men to a type fitted for harmonious social coöperation. He disclaims, also, sympathy with the second and much larger class of men to whom the future of mankind is not a matter of much interest; who regard with indifference a conclusion which holds out no promise of benefit to themselves, either here or hereafter. "There exists a few," says Mr. Spencer, and he himself is one of them, "who differ intellectually from the former of these classes, and morally from the other. To them it seems not only rational to believe in some further revolution, but irrational to doubt it—irrational to suppose that the causes which have in the past worked such wonderful effects, will in the future work no effect. Not expecting that any existing society will reach a high organization, nor that any of the varieties of men now living will become fully adapted to social life, they yet look forward to unceasing changes, now progressive, now retrogressive, to the evolution of a Humanity adjusted to the requirements of its life. 'And along with this belief there arises, in an increasing number, the *desire* to further the development. The anxieties which in many now go beyond the welfares of personal descendants, and include the welfare of the nation and its institutions, as well as, in some cases, the welfares of other nations and other races, will more and more become an anxiety for human progress at large.'"

Thus we see that Prince Kropotkin is mistaken when he assumes in his introduction to the present volume that Mr. Spencer is included in the number of evolutionists who do not refuse to admit the importance of mutual aid among animals, but do refuse to admit it for Man. Mr. Spencer may differ from Prince Kropotkin as to the stage of the evolution in human society when altruism, or the impulse to aid another, became an influential factor in that evolution, but he doubts neither the present existence nor the eventual importance of that factor. As we have said, he does not look forward, as does Prince Kropotkin to an early transformation of human society through the application of the mutual-aid principle, but he is confident that the transformation will be eventually attained. This is evident from the concluding sentence of the "Principles of Ethics," where we read: "Hereafter the highest ambition of the beneficent will be to have a share—even though an utterly inappreciable and unknown share—in 'the making of Man.' Experience occasionally shows that there may arise extreme interest in pursuing entirely unselfish ends, and, as time goes on, there will be more and more of those whose unselfish end will be the further evolution of Humanity. While contemplating from the heights of thought that far-off life of the race, never to be enjoyed by them, but only by a remote posterity, they will feel a calm pleasure in the consciousness of having aided the advance toward it."