

Engines

Every Club

## Eugenics (Query Club April 1912)

In England we are, typically, a people of high ideals; hence our high morality, commercial and social, which is probably the largest factor in our recent prosperity; hence too our ~~hypothesis~~ national hypocrisy, which disguises the gross realities it cannot abolish, and hence also comes that passion for reforming things, for forming societies to propagate, or to abolish things; a passion which rose to its height, with singular irony, in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, at a time when quite a lot of intelligent people imagined, with the ~~socialist~~ economists, that our civilization could be based on individualistic selfishness.

From one point of view the formation of the Eugenic Society was the crowning outcome of this passion for social service; for while other societies have striven for the realisation of different ideals, ethical, economic, aesthetic or political, the Eugenic Societies deal with the innate qualities and tendencies of human nature, which is the basic raw material out of which these ideals are built, and relative to which they exist. But we may look upon <sup>the matter</sup> it from a rather wider and more illuminating standpoint.

Natural selection on an individualistic basis would account fully enough for the development of the human intellect, as well as for the human body, and a full-blooded pursuit of the selfish instincts; it does not account for unselfishness, for the higher social instincts, or for the moral qualities, like courage or charity. Courage for instance would mean nothing to the wild individualist; his instinctive anger or greed, and his instinctive fear are nicely balanced, so that he may obtain his necessities, without wasting his life by taking undue risks, or his opportunities by useless caution.

It required the simultaneous action of social selection, the <sup>extermination</sup> ~~elimination~~ of tribes or societies <sup>ies</sup> which lacked the social qualities, to give rise to the higher mental, or as they are usually called, the moral <sup>instincts</sup> ~~qualities~~. And as has been frequently pointed out, by Herbert Spencer for instance, and more recently by Karl Pearson, and Benjamin Kidd, it is social selection, which acting by the competition of different nations for food, land and mineral wealth, and for commercial and political supremacy, which has driven modern

nations to adopt a more complex, and a closer political organization, and to enforce a more complete subservience of individual to national interests, even when the moral instincts, unassisted by intellectual considerations, would themselves justify. It is from this point of view, as a final and predominant factor in the survival not only of our race, and the political organization with which it has associated itself, but especially of the ethical and intellectual inheritance which requires a continuous supply of the highest type of men, for its support and increase, that I shall principally regard Eugenics this evening.

The interest of the community in developing and using the latent abilities of its individual members, has resulted in a number of ~~measures~~ legal measures dealing with the support and education of the lowest classes. Apart from any benefit these measures may have conferred on the classes concerned, they have had a valuable effect of calling public attention to the problem of degeneracy, which is intimately involved. Instead of feeble-minded persons being as unimportant as they were useless, they have risen to some prominence now that they are positively harmful. The Report of the Royal Commission for the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded gives full illustrations of the various ways in which these people, whose life is usually a misery to themselves, dissipate public money, <sup>and</sup> waste the time of the work house, law court and prison officials; ~~in addition to~~ while it is noticeable that their birthrate is far in excess of that of other classes. But we must not confine our attention to those who can be certified as Feeble-minded, it is hoped that they will be dealt with on the lines of the Bill which the Eugenic Society drew up some time ago, and for which facilities have been promised this Session; we may divide all ~~poor law expenditure~~ <sup>into</sup> distress, entailing expenditure under the poor law, into that which is accidental, and can be allowed for on the ordinary rates of Insurance; and that which is caused by the inherited ineptitude of the classes concerned. Inquiries have elicited families of paupers, often seven or 800 members being recorded, the majority of whom have had trace to the family tradition of simple pauperism, though these families throw a large proportion of feeble minded children. About 30 per cent of the juvenile crime is committed by feeble minded boys, but a large proportion of the petty <sup>adult as well as juvenile</sup> crime is committed by persons, who though not definitely feeble minded, are largely dumbly or careless, to an extent which renders them unfit to earn their

own living, or to make the community any adequate return, for the cost they throw upon it.

The financial burden of this growing mass of ineptitude would be difficult to exaggerate; apart from the direct burden of the rates, which transfers itself into house rent and wages in the poorer districts, industries are hampered by the higher wages required, as well as by the loss and waste of bad workmanship. There is not ~~an~~ industry or business in the country which could not afford better salaries or wages to its employes, or better dividends to its owners, if the burden were lightened. The state would be relieved of a growing charge on the exchequer, besides relieving ~~interest~~ income and other taxes on the wealth released. ~~The~~ Finally better means would remain to be spent on ~~the amenities of life~~ <sup>the amenities of life</sup> by the middle classes, and on the ~~elements~~ <sup>rudiments</sup> of comfort and culture by the poorer.

And although the ~~economic~~ economic effects, of the degenerate case which we are supporting, are possibly the most important, yet there are others which should be considered. There is a moral as well as an economic advantage in the removal of the criminal and sub-criminal classes whose influence is widespread in all our larger towns. There is an intellectual as well as an economic advantage in the elimination of those children, varying from the merely stupid to the semi-idiotic, who drag the <sup>it appears to me</sup> wheels of educational efficiency in the primary schools. And there is an immense advantage possible to the peace and happiness of thousands of families of all classes, if we could avoid those sad cases, where the Eugenicallly lower type has filtered upwards from its proper stratum, and crops out in erratic examples of vice, profligacy, or mania.

It is sad to conclude as the majority of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws would have us do, that this <sup>social</sup> work of provision and education in the last century has failed; and has failed because the social reformers overlooked scientific facts which should have been well within their reach. We cannot blame the framers of the Education Act of 1870 for believing that <sup>the</sup> effects of using the scholastic abilities would be inherited, and that future generations would become inherently more teachable, ~~owing to the efforts~~ because their parents' abilities had been cultivated; of course they were

mistaken, the effects of use and disuse are not inherited, but this fact was not established, by the labours of Galton and Weismann, until the eighties, and not universally accepted till later still; but we must blame our legislators for neglecting warnings, as prominent as that made by Darwin in 1859, when the Origin of Species was published, of the inevitable effect of the differential birth-rate, which was then coming into existence. In the region affected by State interference these effects are now evident; the feeble minded are <sup>now</sup> numerous enough to demand separate legislation, while, in spite of compulsory education, the number of able-bodied paupers continues to increase.

At the other end of the Eugenic scale, among the classes which cannot be directly influenced by legislation, the facts were made clear by Galton in his Hereditary Genius, published in 1869. Assuming that mental and moral qualities were inherited in the same degree as physical characters, an assumption which has since been amply justified by a vast body of statistics, he divides the human race into grades at equal intervals of ability. The number for million in ~~each~~ each <sup>grade</sup> ~~group~~ can be derived from the normal curve of frequency of errors, and the quality of the grades Galton describes somewhat as follows. There are 14 grades considered which are lettered from the centre from a to g, small letters being below the average and <sup>capital</sup> big letters above. g and f are many of e are idiots unless we rise through the feeble minded, and the inept to a and A which comprise the mediocre half of the population; still improving we come to c the level of the foreman of the average jury, D and E are classes of fair ability to whom most of the prizes of life fall, F and G Galton describes as eminent, comprising the most able 250 in each million of the population. It is to this class belong the famous men of all times, judges, statesmen, artists, novelists, administrators, scientists to whom we as a nation owe all that is good in our laws, customs, traditions and literature. In hundreds of families Galton traced the inheritance of great ability; and his work has been continued by W. C. D. Whetham and his wife on the fuller and fuller material of the Dictionary of National Biography. His results have even more weight than those of Galton, owing partly to the fuller information made available by the publication of the Dictionary, partly by the fact that the Dictionary was not published in order to support any <sup>particular</sup> theory of heredity.

Finding a homogeneous group of administrators, who had inherited or received

pepages, he finds that they average 4.5 eminent relatives, about equal numbers being on the mother's as on the father's side. While among those who distinguished themselves in science, art or religion, labours which unlike administration do not entail social advancement, the ~~proportion~~ <sup>average</sup> is about 1, and it is noticeable that the eminence is nearly always on the father's side. The inference is that administrative ability, the qualities which make successful soldiers, statesmen, governors as well as those who can well administer large estates and business enterprises, are widely distributed in the social class in which these men move, so that they are much more likely to marry ability akin to their own than the scientist or artist, who is quite likely to <sup>marry</sup> take a stock containing no particular ability in his own line. And this contrast is emphasized by ~~two~~ <sup>at least one</sup> striking families, ~~that~~ <sup>that of</sup> Hutton, Darwin and Wedgwoods, all with scientific ability, who have produced in all 9 Fellows of the Royal Society, ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> effect of like talent intermarrying;

~~under the family of the Westons. Perhaps we may hope that ~~the~~ even such a devoted adherent of the view that all men are born equal as would believe that all great administrators became so by the favour of their <sup>eminent</sup> grand nephews, will hesitate before ascribing to ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> Darwin family such incredible success in winning the Royal Society.~~

I have no time to describe the work of the Anthropologists and Biometricians who have laid set our theories of heredity upon a firm basis of ascertained fact; nor to deal with the somewhat better known work of the Mendelians, who have opened up such an amazing prospect of synthetic breeding, and ~~which~~ <sup>who are</sup> throwing so much light on the nature of sex; nor to follow the recent investigations on the forms and causes of variation, which is associated with the names of De Vries and Johanssen. I shall have to pass straight on to consider the social conditions in which Eugenic ideals can come into practice.

Though we may justly restrict the liberty of those who rely on the State for subsistence, it will probably be considered undesirable to interfere, except in special cases, with those classes which are self supporting. Here we must rely, for an improvement in the race, <sup>on</sup> sexual selection, exercised by both sexes in their choice of a mate. This agency is ~~now~~ <sup>in</sup> present at work, but it is not usually realised, and is also often overruled by other motives. Some people have imagined that Eugenic considerations would be opposed to the free choice which is

supported to be determined by Love alone; the contrary is the case; among healthy people with healthy instincts at any rate, beauty and vigour of body, a generous character, quick wit and high intellect are more attractive than their opposites, and Eugenic <sup>choice</sup> considerations with its general support the instinctive inclination, in opposition to the temporal considerations of wealth and position. Whetton has shown how much ~~depends on~~ the future of a generation depend on the choice of a wife, in the case of <sup>a man</sup> who <sup>has</sup> risen greatly in the social scale. If he marries young, as does a woman of his own class his family will show regression to type, and will be unable to support themselves in the high position <sup>attained by</sup> their father ~~has attained~~; if, as often happens, he marries on business, he is quite likely to leave no family <sup>at all</sup>, since heiresses naturally occur in sterile stocks. The result is that most of our great families have risen slowly; successively dropping their wives and husbands from the best stocks, and marrying late in life.

The deliberate sexual selection which I have sketched, ~~it~~ would ~~certainly~~ tend steadily to make the social stratification of society agree even more closely than it does at present; and further, if the type of the whole nation is to improve, society must be gradually replaced from above, the higher type having the higher birth rate, and vice versa. At present the opposite tendency is in progress, the lowest type of all, the feeble minded, have the highest birth rate, while the upper social classes have had a <sup>birth rate</sup> steadily decreasing in the last half century; this tendency may be observed in families with titles, baronetcies, and military and professional families, which as a rule in fact ~~that~~ a population composed entirely of dunces would ~~lose~~ fall to half its numbers in every generation; still of the ladies who were Newton and Gorton only 22% marry. If the opposite tendency were in progress we should have every social class successively filled with a finer better and finer type; and it must be noticed, each ~~family~~ ~~generation~~ generation would on the average take up a lower social status than their ~~father's~~ parents. Probably this would be counterbalanced by a rise in the prosperity of the country as a whole, which would inevitably be rapid in a nation of increasing ability; but we must face the fact that the progeny of a man's sons must expect to take up a rather more modest position in the world than their father.

But what if the process were carried still further; so that we may imagine a nation, ~~such~~ whose rulers are men of ability surpassing any that have

yet been born; whose bodies have the persistent health, and surplus energy of the wild animals, whose brains can grasp more complicated thoughts than ours, and who can record more complex memories; who have sharper senses and a keener enjoyment in the sense of them; who have eyes to see not things at once, <sup>with</sup> <sup>mind's fit to grasp</sup> points of view, more significant details. So that the scientists of to-day, who with infinite labour think they have constructed an imposing edifice of knowledge, will find that they have shaped a stone, heavy and perfect, for the sciences of the future. "What a shame!" you might say "if ~~the men~~ <sup>indiv.</sup> with the wisdom and wit of those whom we call poets and philosophers, should live in the conditions of the poorest farm labourer, with 10 hours work a day, and one meal near a week." But it would be the grossest mistake to imagine that happiness depends on such outward conditions. The life of a ~~poor~~ labourer might be delightful with sufficiently pleasant companions; Robert Burns was no better off economically, and I venture to think that Socrates enjoyed less material comfort than the average shopwalker. It all depends on innate health and good spirits, <sup>especially</sup> and the human environment. The real objection to poverty lies in the people with whom poverty would bring us into contact; hence the enormous economic waste involved in backing up a miserable appearance. I imagine that in the moral qualities ~~the improvement~~ there is equal room for improvement; to a people ~~to~~, as we are, partially incapable of keeping good resolutions, of living up to high ideals, or of forming lasting friendships, it is difficult to imagine a race to whom these things entirely belong. Yet such people have lived, and will live again. To a race of them there would be no rosy side to life. ~~After all the only convincing really convincing Utopia is the Kingdom of Heaven.~~

We might be content to leave all the greater problems for the future to solve, if we could only leave the seeds of a race fit to grapple with them. There is much to be said for the religion of the people in Durraney's story who "worshipped the years to come, making the earth a place for gods to dwell in."

The story referred to ~~comes in~~ it is "When the gods slept"  
in "Time and the Gods".



Ungrateful intellect and taste,

Why we improving, recent evolution

How we should of spirit, good breeding, of the mind, of the

Socialism

Ways and Means - bill, little children, certificate, social selection

As a matter of fact, physical superiority is correlated

with high intellect, why my interest in development

The drug net

Insurance bill

Man likes intelligence, agree with doing the industry of the

economy, and the beauty of life appears.

Curve worth is the test. (this was)

Spring.

submit really intended to report your best instincts

and overflowing pity for the lowest human beings

and by the way No Future

Hereditarily and Environment progress

we have improved E for 50 years

best way to be improved

~~There is no~~

~~of~~

~~the~~

~~of~~

~~the~~

~~of~~

~~the~~

~~of~~

~~the~~

~~of~~