

It was just at that point that the popular belief became dangerous. It was commonly believed that if they provided an ideal environment for a child, say of criminal tendencies or defective physique, they would not only improve him as an individual, but would also improve him as a breeding stock. Now the weight of scientific opinion did not countenance that belief. As an individual they might have made a man of him;

but as a breeding stock, he remained what he had been. Of course that cut both ways. If an individual who might have grown up good, grew up bad, while he deteriorated as an individual, as a breeding stock he remained what he was. All that was expressed in scientific terms as the doctrine of the non-transmission of acquired characters. The individual transmitted inborn, not acquired characters. Now, on the face of it, that seemed ridiculous, impossible. The very fact that it seemed ridiculous and impossible tended only to make its endorsement by the weight of scientific opinion more significant. Speaking for himself, he accepted that opinion, knowing as he did that it was the result of prolonged and elaborate investigation by many of the ablest minds of our age. If they were sceptical on the subject, he would refer them to Thompson's great work on heredity, in which the writer did justice to both sides of the question. The writer summed up his general conclusion as follows:—"There seems to be no convincing evidence in support of the affirmative position (that acquired characters can be transmitted); and there is a strong presumption in favour of the negative." If that were so, it had an immense significance for the social reformer. The social reformer had been prone to imagine that he could save the race by providing an adequate nurture for the children of the race. By that means, the next generation would be born with a clean heritage. They could not shed the past in that way. They could only secure a clean heritage by the process of breeding from superior stocks. The child of the slum may be taken out of the slums; he would breed the stock from which he came, despite his changed environment.

—Inferior Stocks More Prolific.—

With regard to the existing deeper consciousness to-day of the claims of human weakness, he thought that consciousness had had, and was destined to have, a far-reaching influence upon the efficiency of natural selection as a factor in maintaining the racial type. The spirit of the time had been distinguished by a progressive desire to qualify the operation of natural selection. Natural selection operated, and it must always operate, but it operated in an ever-increasing degree. Preventive and remedial medicine was partly responsible, but a potent factor was the resurgent will of man rising in revolt against the cruel-

ties of a Nature of which it had been said—"So careful of the type she seems, so careless of the single life." Much of the legislation of the time illustrated that resurgent will at work. Public Health Acts, Social Insurance Acts, industrial legislation, as well as the multiplication of public and private philanthropic institutions, qualified in many and diverse ways the operation of natural selection. Nature, as they generally understood the term, would eliminate the weak; but man rose in revolt against this law. As a result, the relatively weak survived. But they not only survived, they intermarried, and they had a posterity which perpetuated their weakness, despite any improvement in the parental environment. That fact, taken in conjunction with the fact that breeding was on the whole more prolific in inferior stocks, involved a grave consequence. Unless other agencies were at work they would have saved the single life at the expense of a persistent degradation of the average life.

—Three Practical Conclusions.—

He submitted three practical conclusions for their consideration. In the first place it was the duty of statesmanship to control social and economic institutions in such a way that the fact of survival became increasingly a proof of the possession of really desirable qualities. In the past, such institutions had too often tended for the survival of undesirable rather than desirable types. More especially in the lower strata of society, individuals had been born and had died under conditions which had precluded them from any fair and reasonable chance to demonstrate their fitness to survive. (Hear, hear.) In the second place, there was such a thing as artificial selection. They had all heard of eugenics. He presumed that they all believed in eugenics. But they must not expect too much of eugenics. Extreme forms of unfitnes might be dealt with. The habitual criminal, the insane, the unemployable might be drafted, in one way or another, out of the marriage market.

encourage a love for knowledge, to discipline the mind as an instrument of thought, and to inculcate right methods of reading and study. Those were the only elements in character, but not the only elements. In many ways, direct or indirect, the teacher had recognised the fact. His point was that the recognition involved a graver responsibility to-day than in time past. The moral education of the pupil, his manners, and the discipline of his will—those great objects made an ever increasing demand upon the teacher. He did not mean that they involved didactic discourse. They were ends to be pursued by ways more direct, more subtle, and more burdensome. However they were to be pursued, the conditions of the time demanded that they should receive from the teacher more consideration, more systematic and sustained effort, than had been deemed necessary in the past.

—Teaching of Politics Suggested.—

They might think that he had taken a gloomy view of recent progress. They might think that he had ignored those aspects of modern life which revealed progress in a real sense, for example, the triumphs of democracy, and the growth of a sense of corporate responsibility, of social solidarity, and of human brotherhood. As a matter of fact, however, when they turned to those aspects they would find that they involved a direct increase of the teacher's responsibility. (Hear, hear.) In the first place, as teachers in a democratic community, they were not merely training citizens, they were training the very heart of the national destiny. When previously he had addressed them, he had dwelt upon that subject at some length. He would only remind them now of the conclusion which he had then submitted for their consideration—the conclusion that a school curriculum with any pretension to completeness should find some place for the teaching of the elements of politics. It was of the utmost importance that pupils, when they left the teacher, would already know a little and want to know more, of the principles of wise legislative action. (Applause.) They could deal with no more than the rudiments of the subject; but it was within their power, and he believed it to be their duty, to evoke their interest in those grave responsibilities which they would have to discharge as enfranchised citizens of a democratic community.

—Claim of Human Weakness.—

In the second place, the growth in the sense of corporate responsibility, of social solidarity, and human brotherhood, implied above all things a deeper recognition of the claims of human weakness. That in itself was a good thing, a real achievement, and something to be proud about. Yet when viewed in relation to the teacher it implied an addition to his responsibilities which exceeded in significance any fact or condition to which he had previously referred. The great instrument in the maintenance of the racial type has been natural selection. The average offspring of parents was likely to be below rather than above the parental average. Hence, if in the past all the offspring had survived, the result would have been a steady degeneration of the race. Natural selection, however, had eliminated the rela-

tively weak, and thus secured the breeding of the race from the relatively strong. The result had been only clumsily attained. There had been much cruelty in the process; undesirable forms of inferiority had survived; and desirable forms of superiority had been sacrificed. The "fit" had indeed survived; but the fitness had meant a fitness to survive in a particular environment. Still, making all due allowance for such qualifications, the operation of natural selection had worked, steadily and persistently, in the direction of maintaining the racial standard.

—Improve the Environment!—

In the popular mind there persisted the belief that, independently of selection, you can improve a race by improving the environment of that race. Of course environment was extremely important; but its operation affected the individual rather than the racial type. He used environment in the broadest sense. He meant by it much more than physical and climatic conditions. He included the complexus of beliefs, opinions, knowledge, social, economic, and political conditions. Environment so defined was of the utmost importance. There were certain things which it could effectively do; and certain things which it could not effectively do. Let them consider for a moment the things which it could effectively do. In the first place, social and economic institutions might be of such a nature as to affect the forms of fitness upon which natural selection operated. The fitness, for example, instead of being dependent upon a capacity to survive in a free fight might be in part dependent upon the possession of mental or moral qualities which belonged to a higher plane. In the second place, an environment might bring out the potentialities for good, and repress the potentialities for evil in the children which were born into it.

—Brilliant Address by Professor Jethro Brown.—

Professor Jethro Brown delivered an inspiring discourse on "The growing responsibilities of the teacher." He remarked that the teacher received into his hands the youth of a nation. He had a great opportunity; and upon the use which he made of it depended to a large extent the character of the people and the destiny of a nation. He said, "to a large extent." Other powers were at work, acting in alliance with the teacher—the discipline of the church and the family, the spirit of authority, the laws and institutions of the State. To-day, however, some of those powers, though at work, were not so potent as they had been; and the increase in the activity of the State threw upon the teacher a responsibility of which the extent was not fully appreciated by the community, perhaps not even by the teacher himself.

—Exalted Motives Essential.—

They were, he believed, in a transitional period when old faiths had lost much of their authority and power, and revisions or reconstruction of that faith, while they might be potent with a few, had not the same controlling influence over the many. A single illustration would serve to point his argument. A boy who believed in Hell—as he had believed in it—had a strong though not an exalted motive to good conduct. (Laughter, and hear, hear.) A parent who believed in Hell, as his parents had believed in Hell, had a motive to watch with exceeding anxiety over the child's moral development. If they took away that belief altogether or weakened its intensity, they would depreciate the value of the human material with which the church had to deal admitted of appeal to more exalted motives of equal power. (Applause.) Emerson had remarked that a man who did a wrong punished himself. He degraded himself in the spiritual realm. If that great truth were realized in its full significance, all would be well. So far as he was able to judge, however, the great mass of individuals had relaxed their hold upon an ancient creed, without replacing that creed by any conviction or faith of equal power. The teacher had to work under those changed conditions. His responsibility was increased. He did not mean that he should expound religion. Heaven forbid! (Hear, hear.) But he did mean that the material which he had to deal with came to him less equipped in some important respects than formerly, and that he must make good the deficiency as best he could.

—Creed of Class Supremacy Undermined.—

The significance of the decline of the family as a social institution must be regarded for present purposes in association with a decline in the spirit of authority. For one thing they had lost belief in rank. That meant in some respects a gain, in others a loss. "I would rather be a peasant and reverence a lord, than be a politician and reverence nothing," it had been said. (Laughter and applause.) To-day the social value of rank sank to insignificance. The spread of knowledge and the growth of plutocracy had undermined the foundations of class supremacy. Although they were far from social equality, and they still had classes, the power of class to train men to reverence was lacking. Envy, not reverence, was the plant that thrived in the soil of a plutocratic society. They dreamt to-day of a new aristocracy which should be based, not on birth or wealth, but on mind and character. (Hear, hear.) Unfortunately, while the old aristocracy had lost its power, the new aristocracy was but a vision of a future that might be. As a result aristocracy as a school of reverence was non-existent.

—Parental Discipline Relaxed.—

From the point of the education of the youth of the nation, all that was significant. He had said the discipline of the family and of the spirit of authority had been in the past important allies of the teacher. He had tried to show that the value of these allies had been weakened in many ways. He would be very concrete. The family existed as a social institution in Australia to-day. But in many ways, and through various influences, parental discipline had relaxed. He believed that if they went into the homes of the Australian people they would scarcely find one in four where the training of the child character was intelligently and seriously undertaken. Love and affection might abound; but discipline was non-existent or capricious. (Hear, hear.) If that be so, an added responsibility was thrown upon the teacher. The teacher had always recognised that mind and character were the objectives of education; but his special contribution to education had been to inform the mind, to nurture latent potentialities of thinking, to awaken curiosity, to