

Declaration of Independence are the glorious ideals of our republic, which we celebrate on its natal day." J. J. M.

"THE BEING WITH THE UPTURNED FACE."

This book, by Clarence Latherbury, is a very practical prophecy of better things. A call to a fuller life in the present, and an awakening that shall show men that individual redemption must come from within, that each man must be his own redeemer, laying hold on the Spirit of Truth, to save him from his ignorance, and doubts and weakness. The message of the book is along Theosophic lines, and to some eyes may seem to confuse instead of solving the problem of evil.

Aside from this, which may be looked upon as a defect, there are hosts of positive thoughts, angelic hosts they might be called, which strengthen and invigorate the reader until he can almost feel his old shell falling away.

The book shows the wide reading as well as the earnest thought of its author and it possesses a style befitting its matter, rich, full and flowing. A. S.

HON. ROBERT BAKER.

The frontispiece of this issue represents the floral locomotive and tender, made of roses and immortelles, presented to the Hon. Robert Baker by his admirers, and placed upon his desk on the eve of taking his seat in the House of Representatives. It was designed, of course, as a testimonial for his course in refusing a pass from the B. & O. R. R.

Mr. Baker is demonstrating to the country and to his party the character of his democracy. Mr. Hepburn, republican member of the House, has also learned how dangerous it is to play with edged tools. He will be wiser hereafter. Copies of the speech in reply to Mr. Hepburn, which Mr. Baker delivered in the House, may be obtained by writing either to your own Congressman, or to James M. Griggs, Chairman of the Cong. Dem. Com. at Washington, D. C. The speech can be of considerable service to the cause if widely distributed, and we trust our friends will help push its circulation. Remember this speech can be sent in bulk to those making application to Congressman Griggs, and our friends can distribute copies in their own neighborhoods.

A SYMPOSIUM ON INTEREST.

In our next number will appear a symposium on interest, to which Lewis H. Behrens, James Love, S. J. Chubb, John J. Murphy, Byron W. Holt, J. R. Cummings, S. Solis Cohen, John Filmer and others will contribute. This will form a most interesting and valuable series of papers.

* THE INDIVIDUALISM OF HERBERT SPENCER.

(For the Review.)

BY THOMAS SCANLON.

The passing of Herbert Spencer leaves a big void in the ranks of the thinkers in every department of human inquiry and in no field will his influence be more missed than in that of political and social science. For, although there was nothing that he did not touch and find a place for in his philosophical scheme, his ultimate purpose was, as he tells us in the preface to one of his works, "that of finding, for the principles of right or wrong, in conduct at large, a scientific basis." For this the teeming resources of natural science were ransacked; the crowning work of evolution, to the eye of this philosopher was a world of right living human beings; a world in which the greatest possible amount of happiness would be realized, and where no one's happiness would mean anybody else's misery. The aim that runs through Spencer's first book, "Social Statics," is the same aim which, reinforced by riper research and modified in some important details, appears as the culminating point in his philosophy, under the division of ethics.

Starting from star-dust and winding up with the greatest happiness of the human race is a long stride. The very thought of such a stride makes the ordinary mind stagger, as it did the mind of Spencer himself in later years, yet he had the boldness to grasp it in outline in the noonday of his career, and the good fortune to live to bridge it all over, if not to the satisfaction of all religious critics and scientific specialists, at least to the admiration of all who are qualified to recognize the calibre of a mind of the highest generalizing power. Nor can it be said that he "spread himself out very thin" over the wide area thus covered; the breadth of his mental operations was never at the expense of its depth: no writer ever brought more inductive evidence to back up his inductive speculations. Although his mind was of telescopic penetration, he was microscopic in the skill with

*This article from the pen of one of the shrewdest and clearest thinkers in our movement presents a more charitable view of Mr. Spencer's course on the Land Question, and is at variance with the generally accepted opinion of the majority of Single Taxers, and with that of Mr. Henry George, Jr., printed elsewhere in this issue of the Review. We fancy that most of our readers will side with the majority. The distinction between "relative" and "absolute" ethics seems to us childish, a paltry subterfuge which will permit any philosopher to escape from the legitimate conclusions of his teachings. The principles of "absolute" ethics become "relative"—*i. e.*, command practical application—the minute they are understood. The absolute implies the imperative "Thou shalt," and the principles then comprehended are at once relative. If they are not, the value of ethical speculation is merely a harmless diversion in which to engage will seem to serious minds a criminal waste of intellectual energy.—The Editor.

which he marshalled the facts of nature in support of his theories. None of his readers ever found his disquisitions dry for the want of apt illustrations.

The marvel is that taking the whole span of Spencer's scheme into consideration, the inconsistencies and errors alleged against him should be so few. He sought to unify all knowledge, to reduce our ideas of all things to order, and to expel mystery from the knowable universe; he may have failed; yet his works remain on record as evidence of what a finite mind can do towards clarifying human intelligence.

In this short sketch I propose to confine myself to Spencer as an ethical and political teacher. Within that relatively contracted sphere his ideas have, perhaps, met with more opposition than they have anywhere else, unless it be in the domain of theology. It has been said that Spencer's views on government which, as the reader knows, were those of extreme *laissez-faire*ism, did not tally with his evolutionary theories; that these latter led towards socialism, and that his clinging to the former was not the result of reasoned consistency but of an early bias toward individualism which subsequent intellectual discipline failed to shake off. Such impressions indicate a slight acquaintance with Spencer's works. It was easy for the careless reader to misapprehend his meaning. Accustomed as he was to weigh every word he used, and to use only the right word in the right place, he was compelled, by the generalizing character of his subjects, to express himself frequently in abstract terms, and these terms when filtered through everyday minds did not always convey the message intended. But to those who have a clear grasp of what Spencer meant by the word "evolution" there ought not to arise any difficulty in tracing the harmony of his many-sided views. As in the biological world, progress from a lower to a higher state was marked, amongst other things, by an increasing substitution of heterogeneity for homogeneity, so higher up in the scale of being until the grand superstructure of human society is reached, the same law holds good; societies and States become progressive in proportion as they display greater heterogeneity of parts. Here, then, was a physical criterion of ethical results; a scientific standard by which the conduct of men, whether associated together as a government, or acting in their individual capacity, might alike be judged. Was Spencer, then, inconsistent when he argued that the functions of government ought to be limited to preserving the equal rights of all human beings? The way to answer this question is to ask another, viz: Under which system is there likely to be greater heterogeneity of social life—the system under which everyone is free to pursue his inclinations subject to his not infringing the equal rights of his fellows, or the system under which action is

interfered with by governmental authority? Spencer was an individualist because he was an evolutionist; in other words, because he saw that under individualism there would be the widest possible scope for that diversity and complexity of human society which are the distinguishing marks of evolution, progress, happiness or whatever else we like to call it.

But the men who thought Spencer inconsistent in his views on government were few in comparison with those who thought them intrinsically wrong. All the signs of the times seemed to be against him, and it takes a philosopher to look deeper than the signs of the times. How, it was commonly asked, could a man be right in holding views which are at variance with the trend of public opinion and statesmanship throughout the world? Does not the universal growth of the socialistic spirit and the assumption by governments everywhere, of larger and larger powers, prove that the world is growing in a direction contrary to that outlined by Spencer and hence that he has failed to discover the laws of social growth? That society continues to grow towards socialism, the author of "The Coming Slavery" was the first to admit, but inasmuch as he only enunciated a law and did not make a prediction his authority is in no way damaged by the event. His position is that in so far as governments have encroached upon the province of the individual, there has taken place, *not evolution but dissolution*; the extent to which the dissolution has taken place in no wise affecting the validity of the law. Whether the modern civilized States will go to pieces like those which have preceded them, or whether they shall progress toward higher and higher levels of happiness depends upon whether the law of evolution is lived up to or not, and if it is not, there is nothing for them but dissolution, all the decrees of all the governments in the world—democratic or autocratic—to the contrary notwithstanding.

To elevate human conduct into a science was a bold and masterly conception. It marked a great advance as the position taken by the expediency philosophers like Bentham and Mill. There's was a makeshift standard; "the greatest good of the greatest number" was all it aimed at. It offered no guidance as to what classes of acts were good and why they were good, but committed everything to the sliding-scale of majority-rule. Spencer took hold of the difficulties which they shirked, gave them an evolutionary setting and produced a code of social justice which, whatever be its shortcomings, has at least scientific orderliness and coherency.

That there is a highest possible state of human development; that this state, though belonging to the remote future, can be known by us, that we can aid in its realization by conscious effort, and that according

as we do or do not thus aid in its realization, our actions are good or bad; such was, roughly speaking, the view of human conduct which Spencer undertook to defend. While nature and not art was to be the great improver of humanity, yet art might assist nature by taking advantage of her laws. The process of improvement was necessarily slow; the millenium could not be ushered in before its time; the perfect man could only come with the perfect condition; in the meantime, with the world in its present discordant and transitional state, we cannot do absolutely the right thing; the thing that is right, relatively to our present imperfect stage of development, is all that we can reasonably be asked to do.

It was scarcely to be expected that views so novel and sweeping and running counter to popular ethical conceptions, would escape fierce criticism and they did not. Men brought up, to look upon the ideas of right and wrong as immutable could not readily comprehend the distinction between absolute and relative ethics. Cultured scientists like Professor Huxley and shrewd social observers like Henry George were unable to see why a right thing should not be a right thing whether it be done to-day, to-morrow or a million years hence. Yet if the question was asked whether the horse of to-day and the horse of a million years hence would be the same sort of animal, Professor Huxley at least, would have returned an emphatic "No." Anyhow Spencer did not escape the penalty of being in advance of his contemporaries. A man with two codes of ethics, unless he takes particular care to prevent them from getting mixed, is apt to be classed in the same category as a grocer with two different sets of weights. Spencer was not as careful as he might have been in defining the application of his doctrine to an important question of the day and there were not wanting attacks upon his honesty in consequence. In a book called "Social Statics" published by him in 1850, setting forth what, in his view, were the conditions under which the greatest amount of human happiness could be produced, he advocated what has since become known as "the nationalization of the land," but omitted to make it clear to his readers that he was only writing a book on absolute ethics whose sphere of application lay in the remote future. The book was naturally and inevitably accepted as an argument interested to influence legislation in England in the nineteenth century. The misunderstandings under this head continued to accumulate and Spencer's explanation of position, accompanied as it was, by a partial retraction of his earlier views led to a heated newspaper controversy, but did not greatly diminish the misunderstandings that had been created. He alleged that he never was a land nationalizer except in an academic or abstract sense, and that even in that limited sense he was no longer a land

nationalizer, having convinced himself that industrial ownership of land, subject to the control of the people acting through the State, was a sufficient compliance with the law of equal freedom which he had enunciated. Many of his admirers were and are unable to follow him through the logical meshes by which he managed to arrive at this latter conclusion, and the somewhat equivocal position assumed by him on this question made practical men ask what was the use of a code of ethics which gave such poor guidance when a concrete difficulty arose. It certainly does seem strange to us, poor every day mortals, that a man whose teachings tend towards liberty, who believed in the fullest development of individual life and regarded the formation of character as the chief end of government, who could speak of protectionists as "aggressors," and who saw no ethical warrant for property except in labor, should yet think himself consistent in holding that private property in land should be maintained. His changes of opinion were, no doubt, honestly arrived at. His love of toleration, his hatred of flattery, his fair methods of criticising his opponents, his cosmopolitanism and his indifference to the charges of want of patriotism made against him in recent years by his imperialistic opponents,—these are not the characteristics of a man who would tone down his opinions to suit "Sir John or His Grace." Probably Spencer's deep-rooted objection to State administration had more to do with his charge of view than anything else. Probably also his conviction that the evolution of society must be a slow process, made him recoil from the application of quick radical remedies to chronic social wrongs. It is for his readers to draw their own conclusions from the principles he lays down; from many of these conclusions in respect of current problems they will probably dissent, so seldom is the legislator an efficient administrator of his own laws; all the same these laws and generalizations are so many master-keys with which future inquirers will open new doors in every department of human thought.

James H. Warren, whose article, "A Leaf from the History of Pittsburg," appears elsewhere in this issue of the *Review*, is not generally known to the great body of Single Taxers, but his contribution to this number ought to make him so, for it is a notable one. It is such articles as this that the *Review* is in need of. There are in most of our cities concrete examples of the Schenley sort, and our contributors will kindly bear in mind that no more useful work can be done than the writing and printing of these tragic examples in the drama of civilization. More than half of the sorrows of the race are bound up in these innocent folds of parchment conveying to favored individuals titles to portions of the earth.