

equilibrium takes place." The first step in the Darwinian process is therefore a pure assumption unsupported by any authenticated fact. And in the second place, there is the equally formidable difficulty that notwithstanding all the varieties produced artificially under the control of man—as in the case of "pigeons" as elaborately illustrated in Mr. Darwin's last work, or the variations produced in nature by the struggle for existence and natural selection, "the immutability of species is maintained by two unassailable laws—the ultimate sterility of all breeds and their reversion to the type when left alone. Man can influence size, which is a variation of individuals and not of species. Man can modify the flower and fruits of plants within certain limits, and obtain blue or lavender or varying blossoms; but specific characters elude his power entirely. Permanent reproduction is the fundamental idea of species; and there is no continuous fecundity in breeds, their sterility or reversion being inevitable." (*Athenaeum*). The Darwinian theory has been by many ridiculed as grotesque and absurd, from the days when Lord Monboddo described humanity as gradually wearing off its fleshy appendage by the prosaic process of sitting on its;—and the most recent "chaff" of this sort is given in the clever and amusing verses of Lord Seavers, lately published from *Blackwood*.

By others it is angrily opposed on the plea that it leads to atheism, and banishes the Creator from His own creation. I do not think that either ridicule or indignation is a just or reasonable ground on which to controvert it. There is nothing in the idea of development by such natural laws as Darwin speaks of which is irrational in itself or inconsistent with the most general acknowledgment of the Creator as evolving the scheme of the universe thus naturally and continuously, instead of by successive acts of specific creation. And truth is truth wherever it is met, and to be devoutly acknowledged when proved as such, with utter disregard of all consequences—whether real or imaginary. I disbelieve the Darwinian system, simply because no sufficient evidence has been adduced to sustain it. On this question, as well as the related one on the origin of man, I would recommend the careful study of a series of admirable papers under in course of publication by the Duke of Argyll in *Good Words*.

I have tasked your attention and wasted your patience too far already; but there is just one other point to which I must refer briefly, as the practical outcome of all these speculations. Do they not give encouragement to materialism as the foundation principle of our speculative philosophy? As a matter of fact, I think it must be admitted that materialism does derive support from them, and that the school of the Positivists or Empiricists represented by its founder, Auguste Comte, and illustrated by such eminent disciples as Lewis, Harrierson, and John Stuart Mill, exercises a powerful influence on the cultivated minds of the present age. What we have to deal with, they tell us, is only the world as we find it, and as intellect enables us to comprehend it. We are to content ourselves with observing laws—by which they mean certain invariable sequences—and govern ourselves in accordance with these. Final causes and existence or entities of any kind beyond what the understanding can grasp, they deem outside the province of human cognition. To quote from Professor Maass's exposition" of the philosophy of Mill—a work which in small compass presents the whole argument with great clearness:—"We do not mean that he (Mr. Mill) consciously adopts the grosser tenets of the materialists. We are not aware that he has ever positively denied the existence of a soul distinct from the body, or maintained that the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile. But he is the advocate of a philosophic method, which makes the belief in the existence of an immaterial principle superfluous and incongruous; he not only acknowledges no such distinction between the phenomena of mind and those of matter as to require the hypothesis of a free intelligence to account for it; he not only regards the ascertained laws of co-existence and succession in material phenomena as the type and rule according to which all phenomena whatever—those of internal consciousness no less than of external observation—are to be tested; but he even expressly denies the existence of that free will which Sir W. Hamilton regards as the indispensable condition of all morality and all religion. Thus, instead of recognizing in the facts of intelligence "an order of existence diametrically in contrast to that displayed to us in the facts of the material universe, he regards both facts as of the same kind and explicable by the same laws; he abolishes the primary contrast of consciousness between the *Esprit* and the non-*Esprit*—the person and the thing; he reduces man to a thing instead of a person—to one among the many phenomena of the universe, determined by the same laws of invariable antecedence, and consequence, included under the same formulae of empirical generalization. He thus makes man the Slave, not the Master of Nature; passively carried along in the current of successive phenomena; unable by any act of free will to arrest a single wave in its course or to divert it from its ordained direction." I have said that this Materialism derives support from the developments of physical science within recent years. But not necessarily so. I believe that there are equally consistent with what I consider the far higher, broader, and richer philosophy of which in modern times Sir William Hamilton has been the most distinguished exponent. Hamilton rises from the "conditioned" to the "unconditioned," sets forth as the cardinal point of his system the absolute necessity of acknowledging the existence of a *spherical* belief beyond the limits of the sphere of thought—"to show articulately that we must believe an actual truth that we are unable (positively) to conceive as even possible." Or, as in another remarkable passage he expresses it, "We are taught the salutary lesson that the capacity of thought is not to be constituted into the measure of existence; and are warned from recognizing the domain of our knowledge as necessarily co-extensive with the horizon of our faith. And by a wonderful revelation we are thus, in the very consciousness of our inability to conceive aught above the relative and finite, inspired with a belief in the existence of something unconditioned beyond the sphere of all comprehensible reality. We have, therefore, thus opened before us two distinct realms of contemplation—The Natural and the Super-Natural—matter and mind, as far as they are conditioned by the laws of nature and distinctly cognizable by reason; and mind and moral existence, whether human or divine, and infinite unconditioned by time and space, on which Faith can expatiate—under the light of Revelation—it becomes the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. And thus it is that such a duplex yet exquisitely harmonious character is possible as that of Faraday, so beautifully and profoundly drawn in the following words, which I adopt from the *Athenaeum* received a fortnight ago: "Whether standing as the philosopher before the rack and fashion of the land, or as the preacher meeting a few humble and devout men and women to teach them the lessons of the Sermon on the Mount, he was the priest of that high religion which sees a Lawgiver as the cause of every law; and represses the pride of human intellect by showing the weakness of man's mightiest efforts to penetrate the darkness which hides powers unknown, guided by laws unknown of, beyond which repose the God of Creation, to whom Faraday ever prayed." For light, more light."