

# ROBERT BLATCHFORD

NOT GUILTY: A DEFENCE  
OF THE BOTTOM DOG

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*Not Guilty: A Defence of the Bottom Dog:**

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# **Robert Blatchford**

## **Not Guilty: A Defence of the Bottom Dog**

### **THE AUTHOR'S APOLOGY**

THIS is not a stiff and learned work, written by a professor for professors, but a human book, written in humanity's behalf by a man, for men and women.

I shall not fret you with strange and stilted language, nor weary you with tedious and irksome science, nor gall you with far-fetched theories, nor waste your time in any vain word-twisting nor splitting of hairs.

A plain-dealing man, speaking frankly and simply to honest and plain-dealing readers, I shall trust to common sense and common knowledge and common English to make my meaning clear.

I have been warned that it is easier to write a book on such a theme as this than to get people to read it when written. But I am hopeful, and my hope springs from the living interest and deep significance of the subject.

For in defending the Bottom Dog I do not deal with hard science only; but with the dearest faiths, the oldest wrongs, and

the most awful relationships of the great human family, for whose good I strive, and to whose judgment I appeal.

Knowing, as I do, how the hard-working and hard-playing public shun laborious thinking and serious writing, and how they hate to have their ease disturbed or their prejudices handled rudely, I still make bold to undertake this task, because of the vital nature of the problems I shall probe.

The case for the Bottom Dog should touch the public heart to the quick, for it affects the truth of our religions, the justice of our laws, and the destinies of our children and our children's; children.

Much golden eloquence has been squandered in praise of the successful and the good; much stern condemnation has been vented upon the wicked. I venture now to plead for those of our poor brothers and sisters who are accursed of Christ and rejected.

Hitherto all the love, all the honours, all the applause of this? world, and all the rewards of heaven, have been lavished on the fortunate and the strong; and the portion of the unfriended Bottom Dog, in his adversity and weakness, has been curses, blows, chains, the gallows, and everlasting damnation.

I shall plead, then, for those who are loathed and tortured and branded as the sinful and unclean; for those who have hated us and wronged us, and have been wronged and hated by us. I shall defend them for right's sake, for pity's sake, and for the benefit of society and the race. For these also are of our flesh, these also have erred and gone astray, these also are victims of

an inscrutable and relentless Fate.

If it concerns us that the religions of the world are childish dreams, or nightmares; if it concerns us that penal laws and moral codes are survivals of barbarism and fear; if it concerns us that our most cherished and venerable ideas of our relations to God and to each other are illogical and savage, then the case for the Bottom Dog concerns us nearly.

If it moves us to learn that disease may be prevented, that ruin may be averted, that broken hearts and broken lives may be made whole; if it inspires us to hear how beauty may be conjured out of loathliness and glory out of shame; how waste may be turned to wealth and death to life, and despair to happiness, then the case for the Bottom Dog is a case to be well and truly tried.

If man's flesh and woman's flesh are merchandise or carrion; if the defiled and trampled souls of innocent children are no more to us than are the trodden blossoms under the feet of swine; if love lies to us and pity is a cheat; if whips and chains and contumely and the gibbet are meet for our sisters and our brothers and if dishonourable ease and beggarly pride and the flatteries of fools are worthy of ourselves, then we have the Yellow Press and the painted altar and the Parliamentary speeches and a selfish heaven and a hell where the worm never dies; and everything is for the best in, this best of all possible worlds.

But because I believe "men needs must love the highest when they see it," because I believe that the universal heart is sweet

and sound, because I believe there are many who honour truth and seek happiness and peace for all, I do not fear to plead for the Bottom Dog, nor to ask a patient hearing.

Rightly or wrongly, happily or unhappily, but with all the sincerity of my soul, I shall here deny the justice and reason of every kind of blame and praise, of punishment and reward – human or divine.

Divine law – the law made by priests, and attributed to God – consists of a code of rewards and punishments' for acts called good or bad. Human law – the law made by Kings and Parliaments – consists of a code of punishments for acts called criminal and unlawful.

I claim that men should not be classified as good and bad, but as fortunate and unfortunate; that they should be pitied, and not blamed; helped instead of being punished.

I claim that since we do not hold a man worthy of praise for being born beautiful, nor of blame for being born ugly, neither should we hold him worthy of praise for being born virtuous, nor of blame for being born vicious.

I base this claim upon the self-evident and undeniable fact that man has no part in the creation of his own nature.

I shall be told this means that no man is answerable for his own acts.

That is exactly what it does mean.

But, it will be urged, every man has a free will to act as he chooses; and to deny that is to imperil all law and order, all

morality and discipline.

I deny both these inferences, and I ask the reader to hear my case patiently, and to judge it on its merits.

Let us first test the justice of our laws, divine and human: the question of their usefulness we will deal with later.

# CHAPTER ONE – THE LAWS OF GOD

DIVINE law says that certain acts are good, and that certain acts are evil; and that God will reward those who do well, and will punish those who do ill. And we are told that God will so act because God is *just*.

But I claim that God *cannot* justly punish those, who disobey, nor reward those who obey His laws.

Religious people tell us that God is "The Great First Cause": that God created *all* things – mankind, the universe, nature and all her laws. Who is answerable for a thing that is caused: he who causes it, or he who does not cause it?

He who causes it is answerable. And God is "The First Great Cause" of *all* things. And the cause of all things is answerable for all things.

If God created *all* things He must have created the evil as well as the good.

Who, then, is responsible for good and evil? Only God, for He made them.

He who creates all is responsible for all. God created all: God is responsible for all.

He who creates nothing is responsible for nothing. Man created nothing: man is responsible for nothing.

Therefore man is not responsible for his nature, nor for the acts prompted by that nature.

Therefore God cannot justly punish man for his acts.

Therefore the Divine law, with its code of rewards and punishments, is not a just law, and cannot have emanated from a just God.

Therefore the Christian religion is built upon a foundation of error, and there are no such things as God's wrath, God's pardon; heaven or hell.

That argument has never been answered. But attempts have been made to evade it, and the plea most commonly put forward has been so gracefully expressed by Mr. G. K. Chesterton that I will quote it in his own words:

Now, the question round which this controversy has circled for ages is simply this: Clearly God can, in the exercise of His omnipotence, give part of Himself to His creatures; can give His strength to the bull, or His beauty to the lily. Could God possibly, in the exercise of His omnipotence, give to one of His creatures some portion of that other quality of His – His originating power, His power of primal invention, this making things from nothing or Himself? If God can do all things, can He not make man free? Can He not give man the power to create actions as God creates stars? He can give His force; can He give a little of his sovereignty? Can He, in short, create a kind of little God – an "imago Dei?"

The answer to that quaint piece of reasoning is that it begs

the question. For I do not say that God cannot give to man any power He chooses; but that God is responsible, and man is not responsible, for the nature and the acts of any power by God bestowed.

If man did not invent, nor create himself; if man did not create "the power" bestowed upon him by God; if man did not bestow that power upon himself, how can man be responsible for the power or for its acts?

God not only created man; He created the material of which man was made, and the laws of the universe into which man was introduced.

God is the "First Great Cause": He created all things: the evil and the good. How can God blame man for the effects of which God is the cause?

For the defeat of all Christian apologists it is not necessary for me to add another word; the argument is invincible as it stands. But for the reader's sake it may be as well to deal rather more fully with what may be to him a new and startling idea. Let us then return to Mr. Chesterton's plea.

God is said to give to man a "power": a power which, Mr. Chesterton says, God "made out of Himself." And this power will create thoughts, will create actions as God creates stars.

But we see that man cannot create the thoughts nor cause the actions until God gives him the "power." Then it is the "power" that creates the thoughts or acts. Then it is not man, but the "power" – the power God made out of Himself and bestowed

upon man – that creates the thoughts or acts. Then the "power" is a kind of lord or ruler made by God, and put by God over man, as a rider is placed upon a horse, or a pilot on a ship. Then man is no more responsible for the acts or the thoughts of this ruling power than a horse is responsible for the acts of a jockey, or a ship for the acts of a pilot.

In fact, the "power" given by God to man is only another name for the "will of God," or the "power of God"; and if man's acts are ruled, or created, by the will or power of God, how can God justly punish man for those acts?

If God created man as well as this imaginary "power" which God is said to give to man, God is responsible for the acts of both.

It is claimed by others that man is responsible to God for his acts because God gave him "reason," or because God gave him a "conscience," or because God gave him a "will" to choose.

But these words, "conscience," "reason," and "will," are only other names for Mr. Chesterton's imaginary "power."

Let us be careful to keep our thoughts quite clear and unentangled. If we speak of "will," or "power," or "reason," as a thing "given to man," we imply that "will," or "power," is a thing *outside* of man, and not a part of him.

Having failed to saddle man with responsibility for himself, our opponents would now make him responsible for some "power" outside himself. The simple answer is that man made neither himself nor his powers, and that God made man and the power given to man; therefore God and not man is responsible.

Conscience and reason and the "power" are rulers or guides given to man by God. God made these guides or rulers.

These guides must be true guides, or false guides: they must be good or bad.

God is all-knowing, as well as all-powerful. Not only has He power to create at will a true guide or a false guide, but He *knows* when He creates a guide, and when He bestows that guide upon man, whether it will be a true or a false guide. Therefore, when God created the reason or the conscience and gave it to man, He *knew* whether the reason or the conscience would guide man right or wrong. If the power made and bestowed by God leads man wrongly, it is leading man as God *willed* and *knew* it would lead him. How, then, can God justly blame man for the acts that reason or power "creates"?

God creates a number of good propensities, and a number of evil propensities, packs them up in a bundle and calls them "man." Is the skinful of propensities created and put together by God responsible for the proportion of good and evil powers it comprises?

But then Mr. Chesterton suggests that God puts over the bundle a "power" of control. That power controls man for evil: as God must have known it would. Is the bundle of God's making responsible for the failure of the power God made and sent to manage it? God must have known when He created and put the "power" in control that it would fail.

Tell me now, some wise philosopher, or great divine, or

learned logician, which is the *man*? Is it the good propensities, or the evil propensities, or the power of control? And tell me how can any one or all of these be responsible to the God who invented them, who created them, who joined them together; who made and united them, knowing they would fail?

Here is a grand conception of an "all-wise," "all-powerful," perfectly "just" God, who creates a man whom He knows *must* do evil, gives him a guide who cannot make him do well, issues commands for him to act as God has made it impossible for him to act, and finally punishes him for failing to do what God knew from the first he was incapable of doing.

And the world is paying millions of money, and bestowing honours and rewards in profusion upon the learned and wise and spiritual leaders who teach it to believe such illogical nonsense as the above.

When we turn from the old idea of instantaneous creation to the new idea of evolution, the theories about "God's mercy" and "God's wrath" are still more impossible and absurd.

For now we are to believe that God, the "First Great Cause," "in the beginning" created not man and beast, and forest and sea, and hill and plain, but "matter," and "force," and "law."

Out of the matter and force God made, working to the law God made, there slowly developed the nebulae, the suns, the planets.

Out of the same matter and force, changed in form by the working of God's laws, there slowly developed the single-celled

jelly-like creature from which, by the working of God's laws, all other forms of life have since evolved.

Out of matter and force, working to God's laws, man has been evolved.

Is there any step in the long march of evolution from the first creation of matter and force to the evolution of man, when the jelly speck, or the polyp, or the fish, or the reptile, or the beast, or the ape, or the man, had power to change, or to assist, or to resist the working of the laws God made?

Is there any step in the long march of evolution, any link in the long chain of cause and effect, when any one of the things or beings evolved by law working on matter and force could by act or will of their own have developed otherwise than as they did?

Is it not plain that man has developed into that which he is by slow evolution of matter and force, through the operation of divine laws over which he had no more control than he now has over the revolution of the suns in their orbits?

How, then, can we believe that man is to blame for being that which he is?

Is there any quality of body or of mind that has not been *inevitably* evolved in man by the working of God's laws?

You are not going to tell me that I am answerable or blameable for the nature of matter and force, nor for the operations of God's laws, are you?

You will not suggest that I am responsible for the creation: so long ago, and I so new, so weak, so small!

God, when He created matter and force and law, knew the nature of matter and force, and the power and purpose of law. He knew that they must work as He had made and meant them to work. He knew that we *must* be as His agents *must* make us.

Will He punish or reward us, then, for the acts of His agents: the agents He made and controlled? Absurd.

But, it may be urged, "man has a soul." So! He got that soul from God. God made the soul and fixed its powers for good and evil.

It is the soul, then, that is responsible, is it? But the soul did not create itself, and can only act as God has ordained that it shall and must act.

If man is not to blame for his own acts he is not to blame for the acts of his soul; and for the same reason.

"Soul," or "man," "reason," or "conscience," responsibility lies with the causer, and not with the thing caused.

And God is "The First Great Cause," and how then can God justly punish any of His creatures for being as He created them?

It is impossible. It is unthinkable. But upon this unthinkable and impossible absurdity the whole code of divine laws is built.

Therefore the Christian religion is untrue, and man is not responsible to God for his nature nor for his acts.

## CHAPTER TWO – THE LAWS OF MAN

COMMON law and common usage all the world over hold men answerable for their acts, and blame or punish them when those acts transgress the laws of custom.

Human law, like the divine law, is based upon the false idea that men know what is right and what is wrong, and have power to choose the right.

Human law, like divine law, classifies men as good and bad, and punishes them for doing "wrong."

But men should not be classified as good and bad, but as fortunate and unfortunate, as weak and strong.

And the unfortunate and weak should not be blamed, but pitied; should not be punished but helped.

The just and wise course is to look upon all wrong-doers as we look upon the ignorant, the diseased, the insane, and the deformed.

Many of our wrong-doers are ignorant, or diseased, or insane, or mentally deformed. But there are some who are base or savage by nature. These should be regarded as we regard base or savage animals: as creatures of a lower order, dangerous, but not deserving blame nor hatred. And this is the sound view, as I shall show, because these unhappy creatures are nearer to our

brutish ancestors than other men, the ancient strain of man's bestial origin cropping out in them through no fault of their own.

Religion says man is the product of God; science says he is the product of "heredity" and "environment." The difference does not matter much to my case. The point is that man does not create himself, and so is not to blame for his nature, and, therefore, is not to blame for his acts.

For man did not help God in the act of his creation, nor did he choose his own ancestors.

"What! do you mean to say that the ruffian, the libertine, and the knave are not to be blamed nor punished for any of the vile and cruel acts they perpetrate?" asks "the average man."

Yes. That is what I mean. And that is not a new and startling "craze," as many may suppose, but is a piece of very ancient wisdom; as old as the oldest thought of India and of Greece. In the *Bhagavad-gita* it is written:

He sees truly who sees all actions to be done by nature alone, and likewise the self not the doer.

And Socrates said:

It is an odd thing that if you had met a man ill-conditioned in body you would not have been angry; but to have met a man rudely disposed in mind provokes you.

Neither am I unsupported to-day in my heresies. Most theologians are opposed to me, but most men of science are with me: they look upon man as a creature of "heredity" and "environment."

What a man *does* depends upon what he *is*; and what he *is* depends upon his "breed" and his "experience."

We admit that no two men are quite alike. We should not expect men who are unlike in nature and in knowledge to do like acts. Where the causes are different it is folly to expect identical effects.

Every man is that which his forbears (his ancestors) and his experiences (his environment) have made him. Every man's character is formed partly by "heredity" (breed, or descent) and partly by "environment" (experience, or surroundings). That is to say, his character depends partly upon the nature of his parents, and partly upon the nature of his experience.

He comes into the world just as his ancestors have made him. He did not choose his ancestors; he had nothing to do with the moulding of their natures. Every quality, good or bad, in his own nature, has been handed down to him by his forbears, without knowledge or consent.

How can we blame the new-born or unborn baby for the nature and arrangement of the cells – which are *he*?

Born into the world as he was made, he is a helpless infant, dependent upon his nurses and his teachers. He did not choose his nurses, nor his teachers; he cannot control their conduct towards him, nor test the truth nor virtue of the lessons he learns from them.

He grows older the nature he inherited from his ancestors is modified, for better or for worse, by the lessons and the treatment

given to him by his nurses, his companions, and his teachers.

So, when he becomes a man he is that which his forbears and his fellow creatures have made him.

That is to say, he is the product of his heredity and his environment. He could not be otherwise.

How, then, can it be just to blame him for being that which he *must* be?

But, it may be objected, a man has power to change, or to conquer, his environment; to train, or to subdue, his original nature.

That depends upon the strength of his original nature (which his ancestors handed down to him) and of his environment – which consists, largely, of the actions of his fellow-creatures.

A man has power to do that which his forbears have made him able to do. He has power to do no more.

He has certain powers given him by his forbears, which may have been developed or repressed by his surroundings. With those powers, as modified by the influences surrounding and outside himself, he may do all that his nature desires and is able to do. Up to the limit of his inherited powers he may do all that his environment (his experiences) have taught or incited him to do.

To speak of a man conquering his environment is the same thing as to speak of a man swimming against a stream. He can swim against the stream if he has strength and skill to overcome the stream. His strength is his heredity: his skill is the result of his environment. If his strength and skill are more than equal to the

force of the stream he will conquer his environment; if the stream is too strong for him he will be conquered by his environment.

His acts, in short, depend wholly upon his nature and his environment: neither of which is of his own choosing. Of this I will say more in its place.

A man gets his nature from his forbears, just as certainly as he gets the shape of his nose, the length of his foot, and the colour of his eyes from his forbears.

As we do not blame a man for being born with red or black hair, why should we blame him for being born with strong passions or base desires?

If it is foolish to blame a child for being born with a deformed or weak spine, how can it be reasonable to blame him for being born with a deformed or weak brain?

The nature and quality of his hair and his eyes, of his spine and his brain, of his passions and desires, were all settled *for* and not *by* him before he drew the breath of life.

If we blame a man because he has inherited fickleness from an Italian grandfather, or praise him because he has inherited steadfastness from a Dutch grandmother, we are actually praising or blaming him because, before he was born, an Italian married a Hollander.

If we blame a man for inheriting cupidity from an ancestor who was greedy and rapacious, or for inheriting licentious inclinations from an ancestor who was a rake, we are blaming him for failing to be born of better parents.

Briefly, then, heredity makes, and environment modifies, a man's nature. And both these forces are *outside* the man.

Therefore man becomes that which he is by the action of forces outside himself. Therefore it is unjust to blame a man for being that which he is. Therefore it is unjust to blame him for doing that which he does.

Therefore our human laws, which punish men for their acts, are unjust laws.

Now, before we go fully into the meanings of the words "heredity" and "environment," let us make a short summary of the arguments above put forth.

Since man did not create his own nature, man is not responsible for his own acts.

Therefore all laws, human or divine, which punish man for his acts are unjust laws.

# CHAPTER THREE – WHERE DO OUR NATURES COME FROM?

I HOPE the reader will not fight shy of heredity. I trust he will find it quite simple and interesting; and I promise him to use no unfamiliar words, nor to trouble him with difficult and tedious scientific expositions.

I deal with heredity before environment, because it is needful to take them one at a time, and heredity comes first; as birth before schooling.

But we must not fall into the bad habit of thinking of heredity and environment apart from each other, for it is *both*, and not either of them that make man's character.

It is often said that neither heredity nor environment accounts for a man's conduct. And that is true. But it is true, also, that heredity *and* environment account for every quality in the human "make-up." A pianist, an artist, or a cricketer is "made as well as born," and so is every man. A good batsman is a good batsman for two reasons: (1) He was born with good sight, steady nerves, and sound sense, all of which he owes to his ancestors. (2) He has been well taught, or has practised well, and this practice, this endeavour to succeed, he owes to his inherited ambition, and to the precept and example of other men. So if a man plays a fiddle well, or steers a ship well, or devotes his life to charity,

the excellence is always due to heredity *and* environment. For the cricketer would never have been a cricketer, nor the violinist a violinist, had he been born in a country where cricket and violin playing were unknown. And, on the other hand, a man bred amongst cricketers or musicians will never excel in music nor in cricket unless he has what is called "a gift"; and the gift is "heredity."

## **NOW, WHAT DO WE MEAN BY "HEREDITY"?**

Heredity is "descent," or "breed." Heredity, as the word is here used, means those qualities which are handed down from one generation to the next. It means those qualities which a new generation inherits from the generation from whom it descends.

It means all that "is bred in the bone." If a man inherits a Grecian nose, a violent temper, well-knit muscles, a love of excitement, or a good ear for music, from his father or mother, that quality or feature is part of his heredity. It is "bred in him."

Every quality a child possesses at the moment of birth, *every* quality of body or of mind, is inherited from his parents and their ancestors. And the whole of those qualities – which *are* the child – are what we call "heredity."

No child brings into the world one single quality of body or mind that has not been handed down to it by its ancestors.

And yet no two children are exactly alike, and no child is exactly like any one of its forbears.

This difference of children from each other and from the parent stock is called "variation."

Hundreds of books and papers have been written about "variation," and to read some of them one might suppose variation to be a very difficult subject. But it is quite simple, and will not give us any trouble at all. Let us see.

## **WHY WE ARE NOT ALL ALIKE**

The cause of variation can be easily understood.

Variation is due to the fact that every child has two parents. If these two parents were exactly alike, and if their ancestors had been all exactly alike, their children would be exactly like each other and like their parents.

But the father and mother are of different families, of different natures, and perhaps of different races. And the ancestors of the father and mother – millions in number – were all different from each other in nature and in descent.

Now, since a child inherits some qualities from its father and some from its mother, it follows that if the father and mother are different from each other, the child must differ from both, and yet resemble both. For he will inherit from the father qualities which the mother has not inherited from her ancestors, and he will inherit from the mother qualities which the father did not inherit from his ancestors. So the child will resemble both parents, without being an exact copy of either. It "varies" from

both parents by inheriting from each.

The child of a black and a white parent is what we call a half-caste: he is neither a negro nor a white man. The pup of a bulldog and a terrier is neither a bull-dog nor a terrier; he is a bull-terrier terrier.

But heredity goes farther than that, and variation is more complex than that.

We must not think of a man as inheriting from his father and mother only. He inherits from the parents of both his parents; and from thousands of ancestors before those. He inherits from men and women who died thousands of years before he was born. He inherits from the cave-man, from the tree-man, from the ape-man, from the ape, and from the beast before the ape.

The child in the womb begins as a cell, and develops through the stages of evolution, becoming an embryo worm, fish, quadruped, ape, and, finally, a human baby.

The child is born with the bodily and mental qualities inherited from many generations of beasts and many generations of men.

Any one of the many ancient qualities of mind or body may crop up again in a modern child. Children have been born with tails; children have been born with six nipples, like a dog, instead of with two, like a human being.

And now I will explain, simply and briefly, what we mean by the word "Atavism."

## WHY THE CLOCK OF DESCENT SOMETIMES GOES BACKWARD

"Atavism," or "breeding back," or "reversion," may reach back through thousands of generations, and some trait of the cave-man, or the beast, may reappear in a child of Twentieth Century civilisation.

Darwin, in *The Descent of Man*, Chapter II, gives many instances of "atavism," or breeding back, by human beings to apish and even quadrupedal characteristics. Alluding to a case cited by Mr. J. Wood, in which a man had seven muscles "proper to certain apes," Darwin says:

It is quite incredible that a man should through mere accident abnormally resemble certain apes in no less than seven of his muscles, if there had been no genetic connection between them. On the other hand, if man is descended from some apelike creature, no valid reason can be assigned why certain muscles should not suddenly reappear after an interval of many thousand generations, in the same manner as with horses, asses, and mules, dark-coloured stripes suddenly reappear on the legs and shoulders after an interval of hundreds, or, more probably, of thousands of generations.

Dr. Lydston, in *The Diseases of Society* (Lippincott: 1904) says:

The outcropping of ancestral types of mentality is observed

to underlie many of the manifestations of vice and crime. These ancestral types or traits may revert farther back even than the savage progenitors of civilised man, and approximate those of the lower animals who, in their turn, stand behind the savage in the line of descent.

This "reversion to older and lower types," or "breeding back," is important, because it is the source of much crime – the origin of very many "Bottom Dogs," as we shall see. But at present we need only notice that heredity, or breed, reaches back through immense distances of time; so that a man inherits not only from savage ancestors, but also from the brutes. And man has no power to *choose* his breed, has no choice of ancestors, but must take the qualities of body and mind they hand down to him, be those qualities good or bad.

Descent, or breed, does not work regularly. Any trait of any ancestor, beast or man, near or remote, may crop up suddenly in any new generation. A child may bear little likeness to its father or mother: it may be more like its great-grandfather, its uncle, or its aunt.

It is as though every dead fore-parent back to the dimmest horizon of time, were liable to put a ghostly finger in the pie, to mend or mar it.

Let us now use a simple illustration of the workings of heredity, variation, and atavism, or breeding back.

There is no need to trouble ourselves with the scientific explanations. What we have to understand is that children inherit

qualities from their ancestors; that children vary from their ancestors and from each other; and that old types or old qualities may crop out suddenly and unexpectedly in a new generation. Knowing, as we do, that children inherit from their parents and fore-parents, the rest may be made, quite plain without a single scientific word.

In our illustration we will take for parents and children bottles, and for hereditary qualities beads of different colours.

## **THE MYSTERY OF DESCENT MADE EASY**

Now, take a bottle of red beads, and call it male. Take a bottle of blue beads, and call it female.

From each bottle take a portion of beads; mix them in a third bottle and call it "child."

We have now a child of a red father and a blue mother; and we find that this child is not all red, nor all blue, but part red and part blue.

It is like the father, for it has red beads; it is like the mother, for it has blue beads.

It is unlike the father, for the father has no blue, and it is unlike the mother, for the mother has no red.

Here we have a simple illustration of "heredity" and "variation."

Now, could we blame the "child" bottle for having red and blue beads in it; or could we blame the "child" bottle for having

no yellow and no green beads in it?

But that is an example of a simple mixture of two ancestral strains. We have to do with mixtures of millions of strains.

Let us carry our illustration forward another generation.

Take our blue and red "child" and marry him to the child of a black bottle and a yellow bottle.

This gives us a marriage between Red-Blue and Black-Yellow.

The "child" bottle mixed from these two bottles of double colours will contain four colours.

He will "inherit" from grandfather Red and grandmother Blue, from grandfather Black and grandmother Yellow, and from father Red-Blue and mother Black-Yellow.

He will be like the six fore-parents, but different from each of them.

Can we blame this "child" bottle for being made up of red, blue, black, and yellow? Can we blame it for having no purple nor white beads in its composition? No. These colours were mixed *for* the child, and not *by* it.

How could there be white or purple beads in this bottle, when there were no white nor purple beads in the bottles from which it was filled?

But what of the variation amongst brothers and sisters?

That is easily understood. If the four colours in the ancestral bottles are evenly mixed, the grandchildren bottles will vary from their ancestors, but not from each other.

As we know that brothers and sisters do vary from each other,

we must conclude that the hereditary qualities are not evenly mixed.

## WHERE DO OUR NATURES COME FROM?

For the scientific explanation of this fact I must refer you to *The Germ Plasm*, by Weissmann.

For our purposes it is enough to know that brothers and sisters do vary from each other, and that they so vary because the ancestral qualities are not evenly distributed amongst the "sperms" and the "ova." On this head our own knowledge and observation do not leave any room for doubt.

It is as if in the case of our marriage of Red-Blue and Black-Yellow there were three child-bottles, of which one got more red and yellow, one more blue and red, and one more yellow and blue than the others. So that the three brother-bottles would differ from their fore-parents and from each other.

And as it would be foolish to blame the second bottle for having less red in it than the first, so it is foolish to blame a human child for having less intellect or less industry than his brothers.

If you refer to the masterly description of the impregnation of the ova given in Haeckel's great work, *The Evolution of Man*, you will find that the heredity of brothers is largely a matter of accident. See the plate and explanation on page 130 in the first volume.

The "variation" in brothers and sisters is like the variation in

the mixing of beads in our bottles.

It is as though we made several tartan plaids of the same four colours, but in different patterns.

It is like dealing hands of cards from a shuffled pack. There are four suits, but one hand may be rich in clubs, another in diamonds.

And who in a game of whist would blame his partner for holding no trumps in his hand? The partner could only play the trumps dealt out to him.

In no way can a child control the pre-natal shuffling or dealing of the ancestral pack.

Now, as to atavism, or breeding back. In the ancestral bottles called men and women there are millions of different kinds of beads. And it sometimes happens that a particular kind of bead (or quality) which has lain dormant for a long time – perhaps for a thousand years – will crop up in a new mixing that goes to make a "child-bottle," and so that child may be less like its own parents than like some ancestor who has been dead and forgotten for centuries.

In the case of the man with the seven ape muscles, mentioned by Darwin, the breeding back must have reached millions of years.

This "lying doggo," or inactive, of some hereditary trait, may be likened to the action of a kaleidoscope. We do not see all the fragments of coloured glass at every turn. But they are all there.

We do not see the same pattern twice; yet the patterns are

made almost of the same colours and the same pieces.

And now I think we have got a clear idea of the meanings of the words "heredity," "variation," and "atavism," and the most timid reader will not be afraid of them any more.

There is no need, for our purpose, to wrestle with severe science. The reader may find for himself all about "pangenesis" in Darwin, and about the "germ plasm" in Weissmann. Here we will not tax our memories with such weird words as "biophors," "gemmules," "ids," "idents," and "determinants." Our similes of beads, tartans, and cards will serve us well enough.

The only objection to our similes is that they are too simple.

The mixture of bloods in descent is very much more extensive than our mixture of cards or beads.

If we trace a child's descent back only four generations we find that he has no less than thirty fore-parents belonging to sixteen different families. Another generation would reach thirty-two families. If we go back to twenty generations we find the number of families drawn upon to be over a million.

But Darwin speaks of "thousands of generations." Does not this suggest the wonderful possibilities of variation and atavism?

Imagine the variety of character and physique in a city like London. Then remember that each one of us is descended from more ancestors, and of much wider varieties, than all the population of London. And to hold a man answerable for his inheritance from those motley myriads of men and women is to hold him answerable for the natures and the actions of millions

of human beings whom he never saw, of whom he never heard.

We all know that the different races of men differ from each other in colour, in features, and in capacity. We have only to think for a little of the Japanese, the Americans, the Spaniards, and the Swedes, to feel the full force of the term "racial characteristics."

We know that there is a great difference between the Irish and the Scotch. We know that there is a great difference between the Italians and the Dutch. We know the strongly marked peculiarities of the Jews and the Greeks.

Now, to blame a man for his nature is to blame him for not being like some other man. And how absurd it would be to blame a Norwegian for not being like a Jew, or a Gascon for not being like a Scot.

The Italians are wayward and impulsive: the Dutch are steadfast and cautious. Is it reasonable to blame the one for not being like the other?

If a child is born of an Italian father and an Irish mother, is it reasonable to expect that child to be as cool and methodical as the child of Dutch and Scottish parents?

Is it not the same with personal as with racial traits?

We have all heard of "Spanish pride," and of "Irish wit"; we have all heard of the pride of the Howards, and the genius of the Bachs.

To blame a Spaniard for being proud is to blame him for being born of Spanish parents. To blame a Howard for his pride is to blame him for being a son of the Howards.

Bach was a musical genius, Sheridan was witty, Nelson was brave, Rembrandt was a great painter, because there were golden beads in their ancestral bottles. But *they* did not put the golden beads there. They inherited them, as Lord Tomnoddy inherits his lands, his riches, and his plentiful lack of wit.

We should not expect the daughter of Carmen to be like the daughter of Jeannie Deans, nor the son of Rawdon Crawley to be like the son of Parson Adams. We should, indeed, no more think of praising a man for inheriting the genius or the virtues of his ancestors, than we should think of praising a man for inheriting his parents' wealth.

We have laughed over the Gilbertian satire on our patriotic boastfulness:

For he himself has said it,  
And it's greatly to his credit,  
That he is an Englishman.  
He might have been a Rooshian,  
A Frenchman, Turk, or Prooshian,  
Or even Italian;  
But in spite of all temptations  
To belong to other nations,  
He remains an Englishman.

All of us can feel the point of those satirical lines; but some of us have yet to learn that a man can no more help being born "good" or "bad," "smart" or "dull," than he can help being born

English, French, or Prooshian, or "even Italian."

Some of our ancestors conquered at Hastings, and some of them did not. Some of our ancestors held the pass at Thermopylae, and others ran away at Bunker's Hill. Some were saints, and some were petty larcenists; some were philosophers, and some were pirates; some were knights and some were savages; some were gentle ladies, some were apes, and some were hogs. And we inherit from them all.

We are all of us great-great-grandchildren of the beasts. We carry the bestial attributes in our blood: some more, some less. Who amongst us is so pure and exalted that he has never been conscious of the bestial taint? Who amongst us has not fought with wild beasts – not at Ephesus, but in his own heart?

Some of our ancestors wore tails! Is it strange that some of our descendants should have what Winwood Reade called "tailed minds"? The ghosts of old tragedies haunt the gloomy vestibules of many human minds. The Bottom Dog may often be possessed of ancestral devils.

He that is without inherited taint among us, let him cast the first stone.

# CHAPTER FOUR – THE BEGINNINGS OF MORALS

## !WHAT do we mean by the words "sin" and "vice," and "crime"?

Sin is disobedience of the laws of God.

Crime is disobedience of the laws of men.

Vice is disobedience of the laws of nature.

I say that there is no such thing as a known law of God: that the so-called laws of God were made by men in God's name, and that therefore the word "sin" need trouble us no more. There is no such thing as sin.

I say that since there are bad laws as well as good laws, a crime may be a good instead of a bad act. For though it is wrong to disobey a good law, it may be right to disobey a bad law.

And now what do we mean by the words "good" and "bad," "moral" and "immoral"?

We call an act good when it "makes good"; when its effects are beneficial. We call an act bad when it "makes bad"; when its effects are injurious.

What are "morals"? My dictionary says, "the doctrine of man's moral duties *and social relations*"; and in Crabbe's

*Synonyms* I find: "By an observance of good morals we *become good members of society.*"

The italics are mine. Morals are the standard of social conduct. All immoral conduct is anti-social, and all anti-social conduct is immoral.

If there were only one man in the world he could not act immorally, for there would be no other person whom his acts could injure or offend.

Where two persons live together either may act immorally, for he may so act as to injure or offend his companion.

Any act is immoral and wrong which needlessly injures a fellow creature. But no act is immoral or wrong which does not directly or indirectly inflict needless injury upon any fellow creature.

I say, "needless injury"; for it may sometimes be right and necessary to injure a fellow creature.

If it is wrong to inflict needless injury upon our fellows, it is right to defend our fellows and ourselves from the attacks of those who would needlessly injure us.

Any act which inflicts "needless" injury upon a fellow creature is immoral; but no act which does not inflict needless injury upon a fellow creature is immoral.

That is the root of my moral code. It may at first seem insufficient, but I think it will be found to reach high enough, wide enough, and deep enough to cover all true morality. For there is hardly any act a man can perform which does not affect

a fellow creature.

For instance, if a man takes to drink, or neglects his health, he injures others as well as himself. For he becomes a less agreeable and a less useful member of society. He takes more from the common stock, and gives back less. He may even become an eyesore, or a danger, or a burden to his fellows. A cricketer who drank, or neglected to practise, would be acting as immorally towards the rest of the team as he would if he fielded carelessly or batted selfishly. Because, speaking morally, a man belongs not only to himself, but also to the whole human race.

## **WHERE DID MORALS COME FROM?**

Morals do not come by revelation, but by evolution. Morals are not based upon the commands of God, but upon the nature and the needs of man. Our churches attribute the origin of morals to the Bible. But the Egyptians and Babylons had moral codes before Moses was born or the Bible written. Thousands of years, tens of thousands of years, perhaps millions of years before Abraham, there were civilisations and moral codes.

Even before the coming of man there were the beginnings of morals in the animal world.

When I was a boy, we were taught that acts were right or wrong as they were pleasing or displeasing to the God of the Hebrew Bible.

There were two kinds of men – good men and bad men. The

good men might expect to succeed in business here and go to heaven hereafter. The bad men were in peril of financial frosts in this world, and of penal fires in the world to come.

As I grew older and began to think for myself, I broke from that teaching, and at last came to see that all acts were wrong which caused needless injury to others; that the best and happiest man was he who most earnestly devoted himself to making others happy; that all wrong-doing sprang from selfishness, and all well-doing from unselfishness; that all moral acts were social acts, and all immoral acts unsocial acts; and that therefore Socialism was good, and Individualism was evil.

But as to the beginning of the social virtues I was puzzled.

In most religions morality is supposed to have been established by divine revelation. Men did not know right from wrong until God gave them codes of laws ready-made; and even after men had the divine laws given to them they were by nature so depraved that they could only obey those laws by the special grace of God.

The idea that morality was slowly built up by evolution was first given to the world by Spencer and Darwin. It has since been elaborated by other writers, notably by Winwood Reade and Prince Kropotkin.

The notions of "the struggle for existence" and "the survival of the fittest" have been too commonly taken to mean that life in the animal world is one tragic series of ruthless single combats; that every man's hand always was and ever must be against the

hand of every man, and every beast's tooth and claw against the tooth and claw of every beast.

But if we read Darwin's *Descent of Man* and Prince Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid Among Animals* and Winwood Reade's *Martyrdom of Man*, we shall find that the law of natural selection does not favour any such horrible conclusions.

Self-preservation may be the first law of nature; but it is not the last law of nature. In union is strength. The gregarious animals – those which live in communities of flocks and herds – as the apes, the deer, the rooks, the bees, the bison, the swallows, and the wolves, gain by mutual aid in the struggle for existence, for, by reason of their numbers and their union, they are better able to watch for the approach and to defeat the attacks of their enemies.

From this union and mutual aid of the gregarious animals arose the social instincts.

The sociable animals would doubtless be first drawn together partly for safety and partly for company.

Sheep, deer, buffalo, wild dogs, ants, rooks, and other social animals enjoy the companionship of their own kind. They play together, feed together, sleep together, hunt together, and help each other to evade or resist their common foes. They share in social pleasures, and practise some of the social virtues.

And as the more sociable animals would be safest, and the less sociable animals most exposed to danger, natural selection would tend to raise the level of sociability, because the stock would be

bred more from sociable than from unsociable animals.

The apes are social animals, and also imitative animals. The ape-like forbears of man would unite for safety and for society, and, being imitative, would observe and copy any invention or discovery due to lucky accident or to the sharper wits amongst their number.

Like the lower animals, they would play together, feed together, fight in companies, defend or rescue their young, and post sentinels to watch for the approach of danger.

Long before man had thought of any ghost or God, some rude form of order and morality would exist in the families and tribes of men, as some rude form of order and morality exists to-day amongst the wild elephants, the bees, the deer, and other creatures.

I once saw two horses fighting in a field. A third and older horse came up and parted them, and then drove them away in opposite directions. So in the earliest human tribes would the leaders prevent brawling and exact obedience.

Partly from such action, and partly from the training of the young, would be formed the habit of resenting and of punishing certain unsocial acts which the herd or tribe felt to be opposed to the general welfare.

One of the first faults man would brand as immoral would be cowardice. One of the earliest moral laws would, perhaps, resemble the Viking law that men who proved cowards in battle should be buried in the swamp under a hurdle.

Imitation, habit, natural selection, and the love of approbation, would all tend to fix and improve these crude customs, and from these simple beginnings would grow up laws and morals and conscience.

Very likely the earliest human groups were family groups, or clans. These clans would fight against other clans.

The next step may have been the union of clans into tribes, and the next the banding of tribes into nations.

At present men are mostly united as nations. Each nation has its own laws, its own morality, and its own patriotism, and the different nations are more or less hostile to each other; as formerly were the tribes or clans.

The final triumph will be the union of the nations in one brotherhood, and the abolition of war.

The red Indian does not think it immoral to murder an Indian of another tribe. The European does not think it immoral to kill thousands of men in battle. The evolution of morality has not yet carried us as far as universal peace. Nor has any revelation of God forbidden war.

We do not need to think long, nor to look far to see that different conditions have evolved different moral codes.

But all morals may be divided into two classes: True Morals and Artificial Morals.

True morals are all founded on the rule that it is wrong to cause needless injury to any fellow-creature.

Artificial morals are those morals invented by priests, kings,

lawyers, poets, soldiers, and philosophers.

Moral codes made by rulers, or by ruling classes, are generally founded on expediency; and expediency, as understood by the rulers or the ruling classes, usually means those things that are expedient for themselves.

Now that which is expedient for a king, a tyrant, or an aristocracy may be far from expedient for the people over whom they rule. So we need not be surprised to find that many of the laws of barbarous and civilised nations are immoral laws. Our British game laws, land laws, poor laws, and very many of the criminal laws, and the laws relating to property, are immoral laws.

But there is no revelation of God condemning those laws. Nor does any European church oppose those laws, nor denounce them as immoral.

Then as to public opinion – our unwritten moral code – there is no clear and logical system of moral principles. For instance, the public think it a pity that men should be out of work, that women should starve, that little children should be sent to school unwashed and unfed. But the public do not think these things immoral. The fact is, the British people, after more than a thousand years of Christian teaching, do not know what true morality is. And how should they know, when their teachers in the church do not know?

The churches have always drawn their morality from the Bible, and have always tried to fit it in with the immoral codes

made by kings, soldiers, landlords, money-lenders, and other immoral persons.

The Church has often pleaded for "charity" to the poor, but has never come to the rescue of the "Bottom Dog"; because the churches have never understood morality nor human nature.

It is science, and not the revelation of God, nor the teaching of priests, that has enabled us to begin to understand human nature, and has made it possible to build up a systematic code of true morality.

As to what morality is, I claim it is the rule of social conduct: the measure of right conduct between man and man; and I shall build up my whole case upon the simple moral rule that "every act is immoral which needlessly injures any fellow-creature." This rule is only an old truth in a new form. It is, indeed, just a modern reading of the "Golden Rule." It is not the rule itself, but the use I shall put it to, that is likely to flutter certain moral doves. As to the rule, the teachings of most great moralists, of all times and nations, go to prove it. As, for instance:

Lao Tze, a Chinese moralist, before Confucius, said: "The good I would meet with goodness, the not-good I would also meet with goodness."

Confucius, Chinese moralist, said: "What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others."

He also said: "Benevolence is to be in one's most inward heart in sympathy with all things; to love all men; and to allow no selfish thoughts."

The same kind of teaching is found in the Buddhist books, and in the rock edicts of King Asoka. Here is a Buddhist precept, which has a special interest as touching the *origin* of morals.

"Since even animals can live together in mutual reverence, confidence, and courtesy, much more should you, O brethren, so let your light shine forth that you may be seen to dwell in like manner together."

The Hebrew moralists often sounded the same note. In Leviticus we find: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

In Proverbs: "If thine enemy be hungry give him bread to eat, and if he be thirsty give him water to drink."

In the Talmud it is written: "Do not unto others that which it would be disagreeable to you to suffer yourself; that is the main part of the law."

We have the same idea expressed by Christ: "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them, for this is the Law and the Prophets." Sextus, a teacher of Epictetus, said: "What you wish your neighbours to be to you, such be also to them."

Isocrates said: "Act towards others as you desire others to act towards you."

King Asoka said: "I consider the welfare of all people as something for which I must work."

## THE BEGINNINGS OF MORALS

In the Buddhist "Kathâ Sarit Sâgara" it is written: "Why should we cling to this perishable body? In the eye of the wise the only thing it is good for is to benefit one's fellow creatures." And another Buddhist author expresses the same idea with still more force and beauty: "Full of love for all things in the world, practising virtue in order to benefit others – this man alone is happy."

But even when the moralists did not lay down the "Golden Rule," they taught that the cause of sin and of suffering was selfishness; and they spoke strongly against self-pity, and self-love, and self-aggrandisement.

What is the lesson of Buddha, and of the Indian, Persian, and Greek moralists? Buddha went out into the world to search for the cause of human sin and sorrow. He found the cause to be self-indulgence and the cure to be self-conquest. "The cause of pain," he said, "is desire." And this lesson was repeated over and over again by Socrates, Plato, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, and Plutarch, and Seneca..

The moral is that selfishness is bad, and unselfishness is good. And this moral is backed by the almost universal practice of all men in all ages and of all races in testing or weighing the virtue or the value of any person's conduct.

What is the common assay for moral gold? The test of

the  *motive*. Sir Gorgio Midas has given £100,000 to found a Midas hospital. What says the man in the street? "Ah! fine advertisement for the Midas pills!" Mr. Queech, the grocer and churchwarden, has given £5 to the new Methodist Sunday School. "H'm!" says the cynical average man, "a sprat to catch a mackerel." Sir Norman Conquest, Bart, M.P., has made an eloquent speech in favour of old-age pensions. Chigwin, the incorruptible, remarks with a sniff that "it looks as if there would soon be a General Election."

What do these gibes mean? They mean that the benevolence of Messrs. Midas, Queech, and Conquest is inspired by selfishness, and therefore is not worthy, but base.

Now, when a gang of colliers go down a burning pit to save life, or when a sailor jumps overboard in a storm to save a drowning fireman, or when a Russian countess goes to Siberia for trying to free the Russian serfs, there is no sneer heard. Chigwin's fierce eye lights up, the man in the street nods approvingly, and the average man in the railway compartment observes sententiously:

"That's pluck."

Well. Is it not clear that these acts are approved and held good? And is it not clear that they are held to be good because they are felt to be unselfish?

Now, I make bold to say that in no case shall we find a man or woman honoured or praised by men when his conduct is believed to be selfish. It is always selfishness that men scorn. It is always

self-sacrifice or unselfish service they admire. This shows us that deep in the universal heart the root idea of morality is social service. This is not a divine truth: it is a human truth.

Selfishness has come to be called "bad" because it injures the many without benefiting the one. Unselfishness has come to be called "good" because it brings benefit and pleasure to one and all. "It is twice bless'd: it blesseth him that gives and him that takes." As Marcus Aurelius expresses it: "That which is not for the interest of the whole swarm is not for the interest of a single bee." And again he puts it: "Mankind are under one common law; and if so they must be fellow-citizens, and belong to the same body politic. From whence it will follow that the whole world is but one commonwealth."

And Epictetus, the Greek slave, said that as "God is the father of all men, then all men are brothers."

For countless ages this notion of human brotherhood, and of the evil of self-love, has been to morality what the sap is to the tree. And now let us think once more how the notion first came into being.

I said that morality – which is the knowledge of good and evil – did not come by revelation from God, but by means of evolution. And I said that this idea was first put forth by Spencer and Darwin, and afterwards dealt with by other writers.

Darwin's idea was two-fold. He held that man inherited his social instincts (on which morality is built) from the lower animals; and he thought that very likely the origin of the social

instinct in animals was the relation of the parents to their young. Let us first see what Darwin said.

In Chapter Four of *The Descent of Man* Darwin deals with "moral sense." After remarking that, so far as he knows, no one has approached the question exclusively from the side of natural history, Darwin goes on:

The following proposition seems to me in a high degree probable – namely, that any animal whatever, endowed with well-marked social instincts, the parental and filial affections being here included, would inevitably acquire a moral sense, or conscience, as soon as its intellectual powers had become as well, or nearly as well, developed as in man.

For, firstly, the social instincts lead an animal to take pleasure in the society of its fellows, and feel a certain amount of sympathy with them, and to perform various services for them...

Every one must have noticed how miserable dogs, horses, sheep, etc., are when separated from their companions, and what strong mutual affection the two former kinds, at least, shown on their reunion...

All animals living in a body, which defend themselves or attack their enemies in concert, must indeed be in some degree faithful to one another; and those that follow a leader must be in some degree obedient. When the baboons in Abyssinia plunder a garden, they silently follow a leader, and if an imprudent young animal makes a noise, he receives a slap from the others to teach him silence and obedience...

With respect to the impulse which leads certain animals to associate together, and to aid one another in many ways, we may infer that in most cases they are impelled by the same sense of satisfaction or pleasure which they experience in performing other instinctive actions...

In however complex a manner this feeling (sympathy) may have originated, as it is one of high importance to all those animals which aid and defend one another, it will have been increased through natural selection for those communities which included the greatest number of sympathetic members would flourish best and rear the greatest number of offspring...

Thus the social instincts, which must have been acquired by man in a very rude state, and probably even by his early apelike progenitors, still give the impulse to some of his best actions; but his actions are in a higher degree determined by the expressed wishes and judgment of his fellow-men, and unfortunately very often by his own strong selfish desires.

Those quotations should be enough to show Darwin's idea of the origin of the social, or moral, feelings. But I shall quote besides Haeckel's comment on Darwin's theory.

Speaking of the "Golden Rule" in his *Confessions of Faith of a Man of Science*, Haeckel says:

In the human family this maxim has always been accepted as self-evident; as ethical instinct it was an inheritance derived from our animal ancestors. It had already found a place among the herds of apes and other social mammals; in a similar

manner, but with wider scope, it was already present in the most primitive communities and among the hordes of the least advanced savages. Brotherly love – mutual support, succour, protection, and the like – had already made its appearance among gregarious animals as a social duty; for without it, the continued existence of such societies is impossible. Although at a later period, in the case of man, these moral foundations of society came to be much more highly developed, their oldest prehistoric source, as Darwin has shown, is to be sought in the social instincts of animals. Among the higher vertebrates (dogs, horses, elephants, etc.), the development of social relations and duties is the indispensable condition of their living together in orderly societies. Such societies have for man also been the most important instrument of intellectual and moral progress.

There is a very able article in the March, 1905, issue of the *Nineteenth Century*, by Prince Kropotkin, the author of *Mutual Aid*, on Darwin's theory of the origin of the moral sense, in which the striking suggestion is made that primitive man, besides inheriting from animals the social instinct, also copied from them the first rudiments of tribal union and mutual aid. This notion may be gathered from the following picturesque passages:

Primitive man lived in close intimacy with animals. With some of them he probably shared the shelters under the rocks, occasionally the caverns, and very often food...

Our primitive ancestors lived *with* the animals, in the midst of them. And as soon as they began to bring some order into their

observations of nature, and to transmit them to posterity, the animals and their life supplied them with the chief materials for their unwritten encyclopaedia of knowledge, as well as for their wisdom, which they expressed in proverbs and sayings. Animal psychology was the first psychology man was aware of – it is still a favourite subject of talk at the camp fires; animal life, closely interwoven with that of man, was the subject of the very first rudiments of art, inspiring the first engravers and sculptors, and entering into the composition of the most ancient epical traditions and cosmogonic myths...

The first thing which our children learn in natural history is something about the beasts of prey – the lions and the tigers; But the first thing that primitive savages must have learned about nature was that it represents a vast agglomeration of animal clans and tribes; the ape tribe, so nearly related to man, the ever-prowling wolf tribe, the knowing, chattering bird tribe, the ever-busy insect tribe, and on. For them the animals were an extension of their own kin – only so much wiser than themselves. And the first vague generalisation which men must have made about nature – so vague as to hardly differ from a mere impression – was that the living being and his clan or tribe are inseparable. We can separate them —*they* could not; and it seems even doubtful whether they could *think* of life otherwise than within a clan or a tribe...

And that man who had witnessed once an attack of wild dogs, or dholes, upon the biggest beasts of prey, certainly realised, once

and for ever, the irresistible force of the tribal unions, and the confidence and courage with which they inspire every individual. Man made divinities of these dogs, and worshipped them, trying by all sorts of magic to acquire their courage.

In the prairies and the woods our earliest ancestors saw myriads of animals, all living in clans and tribes. Countless herds of red deer, fallow deer, reindeer, gazelles, and antelopes, thousands of droves of buffaloes and legions of wild horses, wild donkeys, quaggas, zebras, and so on, were moving over the boundless plains, peacefully grazing side by side. Even the dreary plateaus had their herds of llamas and wild camels. And when man approached these animals, he soon realised how closely connected all these beings were in their respective droves or herds. Even when they seemed fully absorbed in grazing, and apparently took no notice of the others, they closely watched each other's movements, always ready to join in some common action. Man saw that all the deer tribe, whether they graze or merely gambol, always kept sentries, which never release their watchfulness and never are late to signal the approach of a beast of prey; he knew how, in case of a sudden attack, the males and the females would encircle their young ones and face the enemy, exposing their lives for the safety of the feeble ones; and how, even with such timid creatures as the antelopes, or the fallow deer, the old males would often sacrifice themselves in order to cover the retreat of the herd. Man knew all that, which we ignore or easily forget, and he repeated it in his tales, embellishing the

acts of courage and self-sacrifice with his primitive poetry, or mimicking them in his religious tribal dances...

Social life – that is, *we*, not *I*– is, in the eyes of primitive man, the normal form of life. *It is life itself*. Therefore "we" must have been the normal form of thinking for primitive man: a "category" of his understanding, as Kant might have said. And not even "we," which is still too personal, because it represents a multiplication of the "*I*'s," but rather such expression as "the men of the beaver tribe," "the kangaroo men," or "the turtles." This was the primitive form of thinking, which nature impressed upon the mind of man.

Here, in that identification, or, we might even say, in this absorption of the "I" by the tribe, lies the root of all ethical thought. The self-asserting "individual" came much later on. Even now, with the lower savages, the "individual" hardly exists at all. It is the tribe, with its hard-and-fast rules, superstitions, taboos, habits, and interests, which is always present in the mind of the child of nature. And in that constant, ever-present identification of the unit with the whole lies the substratum of all ethics, the germ out of which all the subsequent conceptions of justice, and the still higher conceptions of morality, grew up in the course of evolution.

Besides these excellent contributions to the subject, Prince Kropotkin gives us other new and striking thoughts, bearing upon the parental source of the social feelings indicated by Darwin. But first let us go back to Darwin. In Chapter Four of *The De-*

*scent of Man* Darwin says:

The feeling of pleasure from society is probably an extension of the parental or filial affections, since the social instinct seems to be developed by the young remaining for a long time with their parents, and this extension may be attributed in part to habit, but chiefly to natural selection. With those animals which were benefited by living in close association, the individuals which took the greatest pleasure in society would best escape various dangers, whilst those that cared least for their comrades, and lived solitary, would perish in greater numbers.

Dr. Saleeby, in the *Academy* in the spring of 1905, had some interesting remarks upon the origin of altruism. He "finds in the breast of the mammalian mother the fount whence love has flowed," and points out that the higher we go in the mammalian scale the more dependent are the young upon their mothers.

After describing the helplessness of the human baby, he continues thus:

Yet, this is the creature which has spread over the earth so that he numbers some fifteen hundred millions to-day. He is the "lord of creation," master of creatures bigger, stronger, fleetier, longer-lived than himself. The earth is his and the fulness thereof. Yet without love not one single specimen of him has a chance of reaching maturity, or even surviving for a week. Verily love is the greatest thing in the world.

Well, upon this subject of the parental origin of altruism, Prince Kropotkin throws another light. First, alluding to

Darwin's cautious handling of the subject of the maternal origin of social feelings, Prince Kropotkin, quotes Darwin's own remarkable comment, thus:

This caution was fully justified, because in other places he pointed out that the social instinct must be a *separate instinct in itself*, different from the others – an instinct which has been developed by natural selection *for its own sake*, as it was useful for the well-being and preservation of the species. It is so fundamental, that when it runs against another instinct, even one so strong as the attachment of the parents to their offspring, it often takes the upper hand. Birds, when the time has come for their autumn migration, will leave behind their tender young, not yet old enough for a prolonged flight, and follow their comrades.

He then offers the following suggestion:

To this striking illustration I may also add that the social instinct is strongly developed with many lower animals, such as the land-crabs, or the Molucca crab; as also with certain fishes, with whom it hardly could be considered as an extension of the filial or parental feelings. In these cases it appears rather an extension of the *brotherly* or *sisterly* relations or feelings of *comradeship*, which probably develop each time that a considerable number of young animals, having been hatched at a given place and at a given moment, continue to live together – whether they are with their parents or not. It would seem, therefore, more correct to consider the social and the parental instincts as *two* closely connected instincts, of which the former

is perhaps the earlier, and therefore the stronger, and which both go hand in hand in the evolution of the animal world. Both are favoured by natural selection, which as soon as they come into conflict keeps the balance between the two, for the ultimate good of the species.

To sum up all these ideas. We find it suggested that the social feelings from which morality sprang, were partly inherited by man from his animal ancestors, partly imitated from observation of the animals he knew so well in his wild life.

And we find it suggested that these social feelings probably began in the love of animals for their young, and in the brotherhood and comradeship of the young for each other.

It was the social feelings of men that made their Bibles: the Bibles did not make the social feelings.

Morality is the result of evolution, not of revelation.

# CHAPTER FIVE – THE ANCESTRAL STRUGGLE WITHIN US

I HAVE spoken of the "nature" handed down to us by our fore-parents. I might have said "natures," for our inheritance, being not from one, but from many, is not simple, but compound.

We too commonly think of a man as an Englishman or a Frenchman; as a Londoner or a Yorkshireman; as good or bad.

We too commonly think of a man as one person, instead of as a mixture of many persons. As though John Smith were *all* John Smith, and *always* John Smith.

There is no such thing as an unmixed Englishman, Irishman, or Yorkshireman.

There is no such thing as an unmixed John Smith.

Englishmen are bred from the Ancient Briton, from the Roman, from the Piets and Scots, from the Saxons, the Danes, the Norwegians, the Normans, the French. All these varied and antagonistic bloods were mixed in centuries ago.

Since then the mixing has gone on, plentifully varied by intermarriage with Irish, Scots, Dutch, Germans, Belgians, French, Italians, Poles, and Spaniards. We have had refugees and immigrants from all parts of Europe. We have given homes to the Huguenots, and the Emigrés from France, to the Lollards

and Lutherans from the Netherlands, to crowding fugitives from Russia, Holland, Hungary, Italy, and Greece. We have absorbed these foreigners and taken them into our blood. And the descendants of all these mixed races are called Englishmen.

The Londoner is a mixture of all those races, and more. From every part of England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales; from most parts of Europe, from many parts of America and Asia, and even Africa, streams of foreign blood have flowed in to make the Londoner.

In Yorkshire there are several distinct races, though none of them are pure. There is one Yorkshire type bearing marks of descent from the Norsemen, another bearing marks of descent from the Flemish and French immigrants, and another from the Normandy invaders. I have seen Vikings, Belgians, and Normans all playing cricket in the Yorkshire County team.

In Ireland there are Irishmen from Denmark and Norway, Irishmen from Ancient Mongolia, and, especially in Kerry, Irishmen who seem to be of almost pure Iberian type.

The Iberian Irishman is short, dark, aquiline, and sardonic, with black hair and eyes, and a moustache more like a Tartar's than a European's. The Viking Irishman is big and burly, with blue or grey eyes, and reddish hair and beard; the difference between these two types is as great as that between a Saxon and a Spaniard.

One of these Irish Iberians marries a Yorkshire Dane. Their son marries the daughter of a Lancashire Belgian and an Ancient

Briton from Flint; and their children are English.

As I said just now, we think of John Smith as *all* John Smith and *always* John Smith.

But John is a mixture of millions of men and women, many of them as different from each other as John Ridd is different from Dick Swiveller, or as Diana of the Crossways is different from Betsy Trotwood. And these uncountable and conflicting natures are not extinct: they are alive and busy in the motley jumble we call John Smith.

John is not all John. He is, a great deal of him, Roman soldier, Ancient Briton, Viking pirate, Flemish weaver, Cornish fisherman, Lowland scholar, Irish grazier, London chorus girl, Yorkshire spinner, Welsh dairymaid, and a host of other gentle and simple, wild and tame, gay and grave, sweet and sour, fickle and constant, lovable and repellent ancestors; from his great-great-grandparent, the hairy treeman, with flat feet and club like a young larch, to his respectable father, the white-fronted, silk-hatted clerk in the Pudsey Penny Savings Bank.

And, being as he is, not all John Smith, but rather the knotted, crossed, and tangled mixture of Johns and Marys, and Smiths and Browns and Robinsons, that has been growing more dense and intricate for tens of thousands of years, how can we expect our good John to be always the same John?

We know John is many Johns in the course of a summer's day. We have seen him, possibly, skip back to the cave-man in a spasm of rage, glow with the tenderness of the French lady who

died of the plague in the Fourteenth Century, and then smile the smile of the merry young soldier who was shot at Dettingen – all in the time it takes him to clench and unclench his hand, or to feel in his pocket for a penny, or to flash a glance at a pretty face in the crowd.

John Smith is not English, nor Yorkshire; but human. He is not one man; but many men, and, which counts for more, many women.

And how can we say of John Smith that he is "good" or "bad"? It is like saying of a bottle of beads, mixed of fifty colours, that it is red, or blue. As John's ancestors were made up of good and bad, and as he is made up of them, so John is good and bad in stripes or patches: is good and bad by turns.

We speak of these mixed natures which a man inherits from his fore-parents as his "disposition": we call them "the qualities of his mind," and we wonder when we find him inconsistent, changeable, undecided. Ought we to be surprised that the continual struggle for the mastery amongst so many alien natures leads to unlooked-for and unwished-for results?

Take the case of a council, a cabinet, a regiment, composed of antagonistic natures; what happens? There are disputes, confusion, contradictions, cross-purposes. Well: a man is like a crowd, a Parliament, a camp of ill-matched foreign allies. Indeed, he *is* a crowd – a crowd of alien and ill-sorted ancestors.

The Great Arteries of Human Nature

But, differ from each other as we may, there are some general

qualities – some *human* qualities – common to most of us.

These common qualities may be split into two kinds, selfish and unselfish.

The selfish instincts come down to us from our earlier brute ancestors.

The unselfish instincts come down to us from our later brute ancestors, and from our human ancestors.

Amongst the strongest and the deepest of man's instincts are love of woman, love of children, love of pleasure, love of art, love of humanity, love of adventure, and love of praise.

I should say that the commonest and most lasting of all human passions is the love of praise: called by some "love of approbation."

From this great trunk impulse there spring many branches. Nearly all our vanities, ambitions, affectations, covetings, are born of our thirst for praise. It is largely in the hope of exciting the wonder or the admiration of our fellows that we toil and scramble and snatch and fight, for wealth, for power, for place; for masterly or daring achievement.

None but misers love money for its own sake. It is for what money will buy that men covet it; and the most desired of the things money will buy are power and display: the value of which lies in the astonishment they will create, and the flattery they will win.

How much meaning would remain to such proud and potent words as glory, riches, conquest, fame, hero, triumph, splendour,

if they were bereft of the glamour of human wonder and applause?

What man will bear and do and suffer for love of woman, and woman for love of man; what both will sacrifice for the sake of their children; how the devotee of art and science, literature, or war, will cleave to the work of his choice; with what eagerness the adventurer will follow his darling bent, seeking in the ends of the earth for excitement, happy to gaze once more into the "bright eyes of danger"; with what cheerful steadfastness and unwearied self-denial benevolence will labour for the good of the race; is known to us all. What we should remember is that these and other powers of our nature act and react upon each other: that one impulse checks, or goads, or diverts another.

Thus the love of our fellows will often check or turn aside our love of ourselves. Often when the desire for praise beckons us the dread of blame calls us back again. The love of praise may even lure us towards an act, and baulk us of its performance: as when a cricketer sacrifices the applause of the crowd in order to win the praise of captain or critics.

So will the lust of pleasure struggle against the lust of fame; the love of woman against the love of art; the passion for adventure against the desire for wealth; and the victory will be to the stronger.

Let us look into the human heart (the best way is to look into our own) and see how these inherited qualities work for and against each other.

One of the strongest checks is fear; another is what we call conscience.

Fear springs sometimes from "love of approbation"; we shrink from an act from fear of being found out, which would mean the loss of that esteem we so prize. Or we shrink from fear of bodily pain: as those knew well who invented the terrors of hell-fire.

There is a great deal of most respectable virtue that ought to be called cowardice. Deprive virtue of its "dare nots," and how many "would nots" and "should nots" might survive? Good conduct may not mean the presence of virtue, but the lack of courage, or desire.

But, happily, men do right, also, for right's sake; and because it is right; or they refrain from doing wrong because it is wrong.

The bent towards right conduct arises from one of two sources:

1. Education: we have been *taught* that certain acts are wrong.
2. Natural benevolence: a dislike to injure others.

The first of these – education – has to do with "environment"; the second is part of heredity. One we get from our fellow-men, the other from our ancestors.

Here let us pause to look into that much-preached-of "mystery" of the "dual consciousness," or "double-self."

We all know that men often do things which they know to be wrong. When we halt between the desire to do a thing, and the feeling that we ought not to do it, we seem to have two minds within us, and these two minds dispute about the decision.

What is this "mysterious" double-self? It is nothing but the

contest between heredity and environment; and is not mysterious at all.

Heredity is very old. It reaches back, to the beasts. It passes on to us, generation after generation, for millions of years, certain instincts, impulses, or desires of the beast.

Environment is new. It begins at the cradle. It prints upon us certain lessons of right and wrong. It tells us that we ought not to do certain things.

But the desire to do those things is part of our heredity. It is in our blood. It is persistent, turbulent, powerful. It rises up suddenly, with a glare and a snarl, like a wild beast in its lair. And at the sound of its roar, and the flame of its lambent eyes, and the feel of its fiery breath, memory lifts its voice and hand, and repeats the well-learned lesson with its "shall-nots."

We are told that the animal impulses dwell in the "hind brain," and that morals and thought dwell in the "fore brain." The "dual personality," then, the "double-self," consists of the two halves of the brain; and the dispute between passion and reason, or between desire and morality, is a conflict between the lower man and the higher; between the old Adam and the new.

But it is also, to a great extent, a conflict between the average man and the hero, or leader.

We inherit the roots of morality, that is to say, the "social instincts," or impulses of unselfish thoughts for others, from the sociable animals. But what we call "ethics," the rules or laws of moral conduct, have been slowly built up by human teachers.

These teachers have been men with a special genius for morals. They have made codes of morals higher than the nature of the average man can reach.

But the average man has been taught these codes of morals in his childhood, and has grown up in unquestioning respect for them.

So when his baser nature prompts him to an act, and his memory repeats the moral lesson it has learnt, we have the nature of the average man confronted by the teaching of the superior or more highly moral man.

And there is naturally a conflict between the desire to do evil, and the knowledge of what things are good. It is not easy for Wat Tyler, Corporal Trim, or Sir John Falstaff to follow the moral lines laid down by such men as Buddha, Seneca, or Socrates. Sir John knows the value of temperance; but he has a potent love of sack. Wat knows that it is good for a man to govern his temper; but he is a choleric subject, and "hefty" with a hammer. There was a lot of human nature in the shipwright, who being reminded that St. Paul said a man was better single, retorted that "St. Paul wasn't a North Shields man."

## **OUR POSSIBILITIES**

We know very well that some qualities may make either for good or bad. Strength, ability, courage, emulation, may go to the making of a great hero, or a great criminal..

If a man's bent, or teaching, be good, he will do better, if it be evil he will do worse by reason of his talents, his daring, or his resolution.

Dirt has been defined as "matter in the wrong place": badness might be often defined as goodness misapplied. Courage ill-directed is foolhardiness; caution in excess is cowardice; firmness overstrained is obstinacy.

Many of our inherited qualities are what we call "potentialities": they are "possibilities," capabilities, strong, or potential for good or evil.

Love of praise may drive a man to seek fame as a philanthropist, a tyrant, a discoverer, or a train-robber.

Love of adventure and love of fame had as much to do with the exploits of Gaude Duval and Morgan, the buccaneer, as with those of Drake or Clive.

Nelson was as keen for fame as Buonaparte: but the Englishman loved his country; the Corsican himself.

Doubtless Torquemada had as much religious zeal as St. Francis; but the one breathed curses, the other blessings.

Pugnacity is good when used against tyranny or wrong; it is bad when used against liberty or right.

Men of brilliant parts have failed for lack of industry or judgment. Men of noble qualities have gone to ruin because of some inborn weakness, or bias towards vice. Our minds "are of a mingled yarn, good and ill together." Many of life's most tragic human failures have been "sweet bells jangled out of tune and

harsh." Ophelia was not the first woman, nor the last by many millions, to perish through reaching for flowers that grow aslant the brook. If virtue is often cowardice, frailty is often love; and the words of Laertes to the "churlish priest" might frequently be spoken for some poor "Bottom Dog" in reproach of the unjust censure of a Pharisee: "a ministering angel shall my sister be, when thou liest howling."

We must remember, then, that the happiness or unhappiness of our nature depends not so much upon any special quality as upon the general balance of the whole.

Poor Oscar Wilde had many fine qualities, but his egotism, his vicious taint, and, perhaps, his unfortunate surroundings, drove him to shipwreck, with all his golden talents aboard. Every day noble ships run upon the rocks; every day brave pennons go down in the press of the battle, and are trampled in the blood and dust; every day lackeys ride in triumph, and princes slave on the galleys; every day the sweet buds go to the swine-trough, and the gay and fair young children to shame or the jail.

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