

**THE SOCIALIST LIBRARY, I.  
SOCIALISM AND POSITIVE  
SCIENCE (DARWIN-  
SPENCER-MARX)**

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The Socialist Library, I. Socialism and positive science (Darwin-Spencer-Marx) by Enrico Ferri

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**ENRICO FERRI**

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SPENCER-MARX)**



**The Socialist Library.—I.**

EDITED BY J. RAMSAY MACDONALD, M.P.

# SOCIALISM AND POSITIVE SCIENCE

(DARWIN—SPENCER—MARX)

BY

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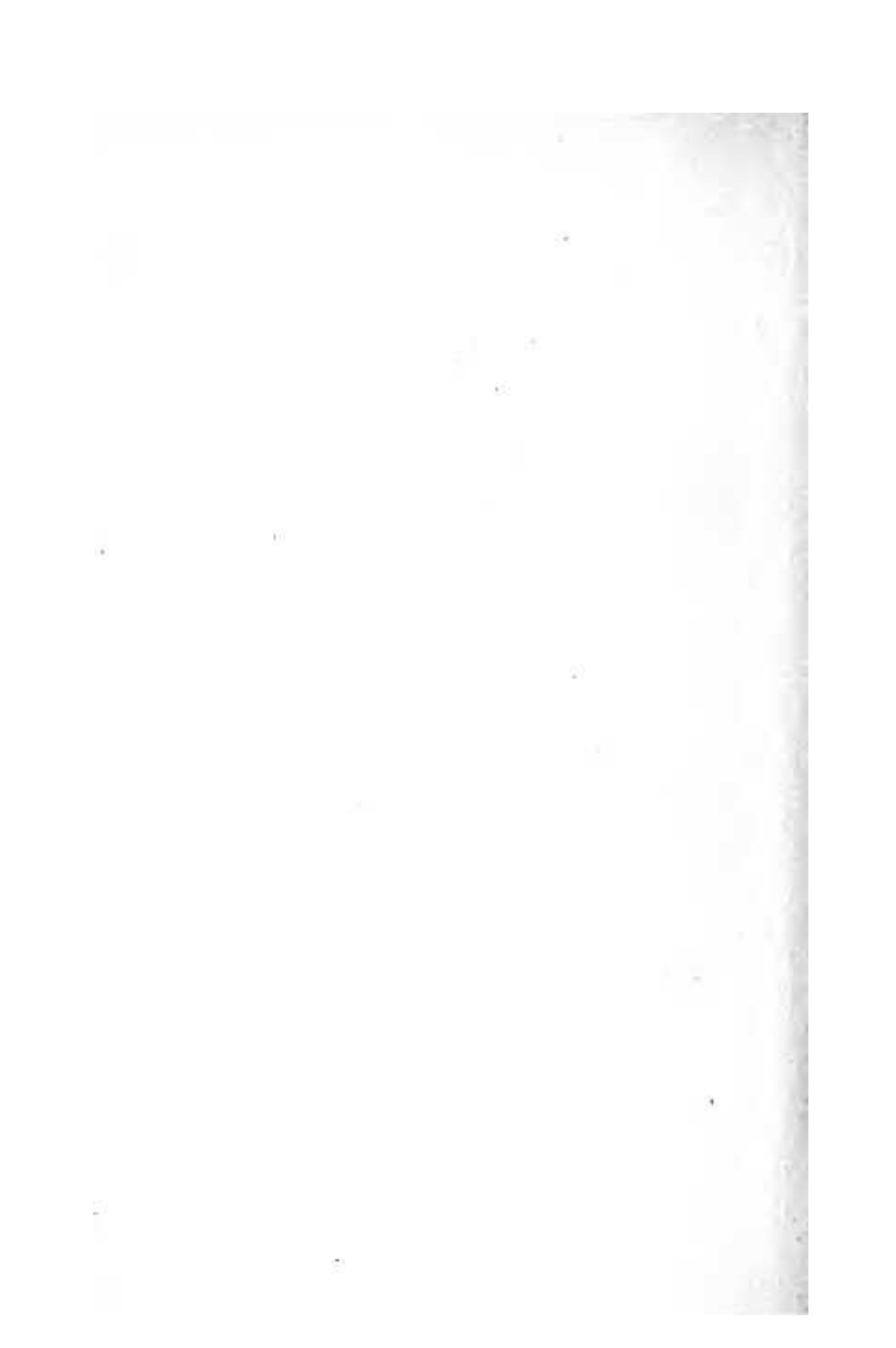
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## EDITOR'S PREFACE.

*Socialismo e Scienza Positiva* was published in Rome in 1894, and in the following year was translated into French (from which this translation is made), German and Spanish. In 1901 it was published in English in America.

After having been an adverse critic of the unscientific utopian socialism which preceded Marx, Ferri yielded in 1893 to Marx's influence, identified himself with the socialists in the Italian Chamber of which he had been a radical member since 1886, and began to write *Socialismo e Scienza Positiva*.

In his recently published book on *Democracy and Reaction*, Mr. Hobhouse points out how the conservative and aristocratic interests in Europe have armed themselves for defensive and offensive purposes with the law of the struggle for existence, and its corollary, the survival of the fittest. Ferri's aim in this volume has been to show that Darwinism is not only not in intellectual opposition to socialism, but is its scientific foundation.

In developing his argument, he brings his new faith into organic touch with the studies in criminology, especially social criminology, upon which he had written a great work in 1880, a portion of which has been published in the Criminology Series, edited by Dr. Douglas Morrison. No part of this present study is more suggestive than the frequent discussions which it contains upon the social

nature of crime, its connection with the characteristics of the various stages in social evolution, and the limits within which it can be cured by better economic arrangements.

In common with most Marxian socialists, Ferri attacks religion and capitalism, marriage (as we know it) and private property in the means of production, in the same breath. The socialist movement in this country has not only not considered these attacks to be essential to the success of socialism, but has largely disagreed with them. It may be true logically, as Ferri asserts, that once the evolutionary process is granted, it is as easy to swallow the gnat of eternal and self-existent force and matter, as it is to swallow the camel of an eternal and self-existent God. Neither belief may explain the origin of force, of creative power, of will to struggle. But the British socialist, as a rule, has said "Those things have nothing to do with socialism."

So also with marriage. Mr. Bryce suggested to the Sociological Society a few days ago (23rd March) that it was necessary to collect and classify, with a view of drawing scientific sociological inferences from them, the facts regarding the working of laws making divorce easy. These facts have not been collected and until they are, dogmatising in a *priori* fashion upon the sociological future of the marriage tie has not seemed to the British socialist a very profitable mental exercise. He has been content to record two well observed conclusions. The first is, that capitalism hinders the free play of simple affection in marriage to-day, and is thus responsible not only for many ghastly failures in matrimonial ventures, but also for offspring physically and morally unfit. This Ferri describes as "sexual selection the wrong way" (*sélection*

*sexuelle à rebours.*) The second is, that capitalist industrial methods are crushing the family out of existence, and whatever family theory may or may not be most in accordance with socialist conceptions, as a matter of actual fact, capitalism and family life cannot flourish together.

Ferri has conclusively shown that the natural basis of the family is menaced by the motives and the conditions of the capitalist régime. When that régime has been supplanted by another such as the socialist contemplates, the family will flourish on congenial soil and in pure air, and its moral and sociological value will decide what laws are to govern its form and determine its stability. Taking these things into consideration, one may, with formidable array of argument, contend that so far from the marriage bond being weakened by socialism, the supreme moral and sociological value of the family organisation will be then so clear, that the secular state will frown upon divorce as much as the Catholic Church does at the present moment.

The chief value of this study, however, is the claim that it so successfully makes, that the socialist conception of human progress and of the social conditions which are to be the characteristics of the next, the socialist, stage in that evolution, is not only in accordance with the processes which Darwin proved to be the method of the development of life from the moneron to man, but is those very processes themselves applied to human society with such modifications as are necessitated by the fact that they now relate to life which can consciously adapt itself to its circumstances and aid natural evolution by economising in experimental waste. Thus, socialism is naught but Dar-