

**EVOLUTION
SOCIAL
AND ORGANIC**

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Evolution social and organic by Arthur M. Lewis

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ARTHUR M. LEWIS

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BY
ARTHUR M. LEWIS

THIRD EDITION



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CONTENTS

	Page
I THALES TO LINNAEUS.....	7
II LINNAEUS TO LAMARCK.....	24
III DARWIN'S "NATURAL SELECTION".....	38
IV WEISMANN'S THEORY OF HEREDITY.....	60
V DE VRIES' "MUTATION".....	81
VI KROPOTKIN'S "MUTUAL AID".....	97
VII A REPLY TO HAECKEL.....	115
VIII SPENCER'S "SOCIAL ORGANISM".....	133
IX SPENCER'S INDIVIDUALISM.....	149
X CIVILIZATION - WARD AND DIETZGEN...	168

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PREFACE.

The contents of this volume consist of the first ten lectures of the thirty-five in the Winter course of 1907-08. They were delivered in the Garrick Theater, Chicago, on Sunday mornings to crowded houses. On several occasions half as many people were turned away as managed to get in. If these lectures meet with as warm a reception when read as they did when heard, I shall be more than satisfied. For a fuller discussion of the Greek period, briefly dealt with in the first lecture, see Edward Clodd's "Pioneers of Evolution" to which work the early part of this lecture is greatly indebted.

Every lecture proceeds on the assumption, that a knowledge of the natural sciences, and especially the great revolutionizing generalizations which they have revealed, is indispensable to a modern education.

This position is by no means new. It pervades the classic literature of Socialism throughout. Liebknecht, speaking of Marx and himself says: "Soon we were on the field of Natural Science, and Marx ridiculed the victorious reaction in Europe that fancied it had smothered the revolution and did not

suspect that Natural Science was preparing a new revolution."

The only thing I have succeeded in doing which is at all new, is presenting these so-called heavy subjects in a way that attracts and retains a large and enthusiastic audience Sunday after Sunday eight months of the year.

These lectures, notwithstanding their phenomenal success, have aroused some opposition, in certain quarters among Socialists. This opposition arises almost wholly from the fact that the Socialists in question have yet to learn what their own standard literature contains. When they make that discovery they will be obliged to do one of two things, reject the Socialist philosophy or cease opposing its public presentation.

A second thought will show that they may do neither. There is a type of brain the specimens of which are very numerous, which seems to possess the faculty of keeping different kinds of knowledge and contradictory ideas, in separate, water-tight compartments. Thus, as these ideas never come together there is no collision.

The most conspicuous example of this is the man who accepts and openly proclaims the truth of the materialistic conception of history—the theory that, among other things, explains

the origin, functions, and changes of religion, just as it does those of law—yet the very man who boasts of his concurrence in this epoch-making theory, using one lobe of his brain, will, while using the other lobe, and with still greater fervency, maintain that the Socialist philosophy has nothing to do with religion at all, but is an “economic” question only. The left lobe knows not what the right lobe is doing. Dietzgen described these Comrades as “dangerous muddle-heads.” He might have omitted the adjective. A brain of this order renders its possessor harmless.

These well-meaning friends have offered a great deal of advice as to how to conduct our meeting without “driving people away.” Yet strangely enough our audience grew by leaps and bounds, until from seventy-five at the first lecture we are now crowding and often overcrowding one of the largest and finest theaters inside the loop. Meanwhile they followed their own advice and saw what was at the beginning a fine audience of five hundred grow less and less until it is less than fifty and sometimes falls below thirty. This does not seem to justify the cry that the working class is hungering for Christian Socialism.

Further volumes of these lectures will carry

the theories of Socialism into yet other fields of science and philosophy.

In conclusion let me ask a certain type of correspondents to save my time and their own. They say they agree with my views entirely; there is no question but I am right. And the lectures would be in place if delivered before university men. But workingmen (my top-lofty correspondents not included of course) have so many ignorant prejudices that fearless scientific teaching is not acceptable to them. The size of my audience is sufficient disproof of the last statement. As to the rest, it is just the existence of ignorant prejudices that makes the fearless teaching of science necessary. Again, I have yet to be convinced that there is any kind of knowledge which is good for university men, but unfit for workingmen. Moreover, I positively refuse to have one kind of knowledge for myself, and another to give out to my audience. This is the fundamental principle of priestcraft, and the working class has had far too much of it already.

On this ground—that there is nothing higher than reality, that Socialism is in harmony with all reality and that in the end reality must triumph—the future lectures of these courses will stand or fall.

Arthur M. Lewis.

Chicago, Dec. 27, '07.

EVOLUTION, SOCIAL AND ORGANIC

I.

THALES TO LINNAEUS.

"Early ideas," says Herbert Spencer, "are usually vague adumbrations of the truth," and however numerous may be the exceptions, this was undoubtedly the case with the evolutionary speculations of the ancient Greeks. The greatness of that remarkable republic finds one of its most striking manifestations in the fact that so many great modern ideas trace their ancestry back to Greece. Sir Henry Maine, the historical jurist, said that, "except the blind forces of nature, nothing moves that is not Greek in its origin." Compared with her dreamy oriental neighbors, Greece shone like a meteor in a moonless night. As Professor Burnet says, "They left off telling tales. They gave up the hopeless task of describing what was, when as yet there was nothing, and asked instead what all things really are now," while the Oriental shrunk from the search after