

A CRITICAL VIEW OF PROGRESS.

BY F. S. MARVIN.

Using as far as possible Mr. F. S. Marvin's own words, I have tried in a previous article¹ to sketch the development of the gospel of progress through science which he preaches. A critical history of its growth would be a very different thing, and something much needed. I attempted, however, simply to present this doctrine as it is conceived by those who believe in it. I do not know how real it may seem to the majority of informed and sober people. To me, I confess, it seems flimsy and shallow; yet its very confusion and self-contradictions make its adequate criticism a complex, difficult task. This task I do not now propose to undertake exhaustively; I wish merely to mention a few very simple considerations which such a criticism would have to include.

In the first place, Mr. Marvin pretends to write history, and to prove this doctrine by the sanction of historic fact. He candidly tells us, it is true, that while "the growth of a general or European frame of mind" is perfectly evident, still, "it is one thing to believe in and realize this, and quite another to trace its workings in the manifold difficulties and turnings of practical life." Yet he has an easy way of surmounting this and similar difficulties. His method is just to disregard everything that does not support his "strong clear clue." "We are surely justified," he says, "in giving the first place in our treatment to those sides of human nature in which the historic development is most marked." And again: "From tool to tool, from flint axe to steam-engine, is a striking, palpable measure of man's achievement from his earliest beginnings to our own days. This must not be understood to confine the idea of progress within the limits of the mechanical arts or to suggest that mechanical tools are the highest product of human intelligence. . . . But man's tool-making is so characteristic and progressive, it brings together

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and exhibits in working order so many of his powers, that if we were isolating one aspect only of his activity, the series of his tools would best display the growth of mind." Mr. Marvin shows skill in achieving plausibility, but by this simple method one can make history "prove" anything one wishes. It has often been done; and accordingly the person who wants to be convinced rather than hypnotized must throughout Mr. Marvin's work rewrite it for himself as he reads. Evidently, these books are not "history" at all, though their disguise is singularly effective for capturing those who swallow propaganda whole.

A case in point is Mr. Marvin's treatment of religion. He is struck by the religious basis of ancient civilizations, such as that of Egypt, and he sees that the formation of strong and stable governments, extending over great areas, apparently had then to depend upon the development of the religious spirit. Accordingly he says that the religious spirit was valuable for the beginning it alone could make towards the organization of humanity for the conquest of nature; it alone was able to bring and hold together great societies around one centre of government, to inspire individuals with such passion for the social structure as to forget themselves for its sake. We owe, he continues, the same debt to Mediæval Christianity. At the break-up of the Roman Empire Christianity providentially stepped in, not merely to rebuild an old civilization, but to widen and strengthen its germ of permanent truth—that is, to implant in men's hearts the hope of a world-polity in which all humanity should be harmoniously united in the pursuit of a common social end. The consequence is that the Middle Ages, which apparently contributed nothing to progress through science, in reality gave us the very possibility of such further progress. It is true "that at the close of the Middle Ages man was not on the whole better equipped by his knowledge of the laws of nature than he was in the hey-day of Greek science. . . . But on the other side of the picture we see the social force and unity of the vanguard of mankind immensely strengthened by the process of these unscientific centuries; and this development was no less essential to the coming conquests of mankind than scientific knowledge itself." "The social unity of all mankind, the common action and purpose of the universe," we are told, "became articles of faith, guaranteed by the most powerful organization in the world." And mediæval Christianity culminated in the "demonstration" "that there is one principle which rules the heaven-

ly bodies in their certain courses and by the same law the souls of men. As surely as we see the former revolve in their orbits, so surely is mankind created to work together for the salvation of all." Thus the "ideal purpose" of the Papacy was "to bring together the two realms of man and nature under one Law of Love."

Mr. Marvin unobtrusively makes the transition from talk about the social benefits resulting from religious faith to talk about religion as being itself essentially socialistic propaganda. It is a remarkable transition, but the passages just quoted show that it has been made. Accordingly it is easy for Mr. Marvin when he reaches the nineteenth century to say that in this period, particularly during the last thirty years of it, there was real and great "religious" progress, and that it centered in "the growing devotion of religious people to good works, especially of an organized kind." "The progress of religion," he says, "consists essentially in bringing its conceptions more and more nearly into harmony with the highest moral ideas of mankind." Now "in our own and recent times both the public and the preachers are turning to the good will, the good life, the desire to help one's neighbors, as evidence of religion, apart from creed or formal practices. . . . The modern parish and diocese is a network of societies and agencies for improving the moral and social condition of its members."

Plainly here is falsification of two kinds. In the first place, Mr. Marvin misrepresents the well-known character and essential nature of mediæval Christianity. Christians did indeed preserve much of the old Greek and Roman civilization through the long period of barbarism and slow rebuilding; they did hasten the development of a new European civilization. Yet it can be said in a sentence that civilization was not the Church's aim. Whatever its failures and lapses, the Church did not aim at the creation of an Earthly Paradise. Often unwillingly and always with difficulty, the Church still did contrive to preach the depravity of the natural man and the sinfulness of all earthly and fleshly desires. Not social amelioration but the greater glory of God through the redemption of men's souls from temporal corruption was the Church's aim. Certainly a vague sense of human solidarity did arise in isolated instances from the reflection that God's grace might come equally to all men, irrespective of race or social condition, but this is a very different thing from saying that the Church taught as an article of faith "the social unity of all mankind." To recognize this it is enough to remember that

the Church never discouraged the private accumulation of wealth, that it never sought to relieve temporal injustice or oppression, that it never attempted to level social inequalities—that, in a word, it frankly left worldly affairs to the children of this world, being itself concerned with the totally different, eternal realm of the spirit. And so far as it failed of this general aim, failure did not come from any bias in favor of social amelioration.

In the second place, Mr. Marvin misrepresents the nature of religion itself. Did any man or woman—it may be asked, with no intention of flippancy—ever worship God in spirit and in truth for the sake of providing the children of the poor with pasteurized milk, or in order to found homes for orphans?—did any man or woman indeed ever worship God in spirit and in truth for the sake of making his neighbors across the street or next door more honest? A plain answer to this question puts the matter in a clear light. To any one who has known religion even at a distance the question will seem perhaps worse than absurd, yet it makes a fair summary of Mr. Marvin's assertions. The truth is that a religious person may partially express or give outward result to his religion through good works, even of "an organized kind." He may thus, for instance, help to support "fresh-air homes" for city children or, more questionably, he may see to it that his neighbors do not disobey the prohibition law or falsify their income-tax returns. But others may do these same things from quite other motives, from simple good will or benevolence, from devotion to efficiency, from the itch which allows no rest to the meddling busybody. Good works thus are not even certain evidence of religion, and are by so much the less religion itself. Religion itself is a condition of the inward man—an inner, personal experience in which the individual finds new life in the consciousness of the grace and the fatherhood of his God and in the assurance thereby given him of the eternal peace which passeth understanding. This means that essentially religion is not a social activity at all, and that, moreover, the very entrance-way to religion is a deep conviction of the relative emptiness of the mutable things of the outward world. This truth is as old and as generally known as it is fundamental; yet to many, perhaps to most, even the language here used will seem unreal. As far as this is so, if we are frank with ourselves we can only confess the obvious reason—that we are strangers to the religious experience. Perhaps some of us are unconscious strangers, if we have mistaken

for religion some meagre or pallid system of ethics. In either case such confession, however disagreeable, is at least serviceable to the cause of truth. And self-deception is the most innocent name one can give to all attempts at the transference of a creditable name to secular activities howsoever meritorious.

Mr. Marvin's treatment of the history of Christianity and of the nature of religion gives a new, rich meaning to two old-fashioned aphorisms by Benjamin Whichcote. "Among *Politicians*," Whichcote said, "the Esteem of Religion is profitable: the Principles of it are troublesome;" and "The grossest Errors are but Abuses of some noble Truths." These sayings are sufficient comment upon the nature of Mr. Marvin's perversion of truth in his well-intentioned effort to write history according to his own fancy. Yet in this quite as fully as in his general belief in progress through science Mr. Marvin faithfully mirrors a popular contemporary point of view. There is a connection here which will presently become plain. First, however, it is necessary to glance at several aspects of this general belief.

Knowledge, said Bacon, is power; we may command nature in so far as we learn her laws and obey them. Such knowledge, then, opens up to us stores of power, or material wealth, not otherwise obtainable, and from this profitable character of science has come its popular justification and its immense prestige. In considering this fact a remark made by Thomas Hobbes is worth remembering. "In the first place," Hobbes wrote, "I put for a general inclination of all mankind, a perpetual and restless desire of power after power, that ceaseth only in death. And the cause of this, is not always that a man hopes for a more intensive delight, than he has already attained to; or that he cannot be content with a moderate power: but because he cannot assure the power and means to live well, which he hath present, without the acquisition of more." No one is likely to dispute these words, but they bring to light a problem. For the desire of power means primarily power for one's self, or at the very least power in which one can definitely participate. It is a common-place that we feel pride in our country's power so far as we benefit from it in material prosperity; that, on the other hand, our feeling tends to be one of resentment—making more or less violent "reformers" of us—in proportion as we are conscious of not receiving a fair share of the general wealth. This at any rate seems to be the very common rule. Moreover we want

wealth ourselves for our own private purposes, which are diverse. That is the fact which makes power a neutral thing, perhaps good for the individuals who fortunately possess it, but at least as likely to be evil in the long run for them, and altogether likely to be evil for the generality of mankind. For power always involves control over other human beings, the use of other men as instruments for one's own ends. This is the unescapable fact, though many habitually and conveniently forget it, no matter what the form of one's wealth may be, and, it may be added, no matter what the form of our political institutions. The demagogue proposes an easy remedy for the evils of power. He would simply make it "public," instead of private; and it is always possible that his appeal to the gullible will so succeed as to effect a redistribution of power from which the demagogue and his friends will benefit. But the very nature of material power is such that it can be made "public" in only a fictitious or verbal sense. A group of individuals must always control it, and in doing so must use other human beings as means to their own ends. Demagogues may be more conscientious and humane than other men, or they may not—but we have nothing save their own assertions for surety. A strong effort is apparently still on foot to convince the rest of the world that the new distribution of power in Russia is not succeeding. This may or may not be true; but the significant fact about the Russian experiment appears to be that already it has been discovered there that the sole condition of success is governmental compulsion to industrial work.² Granting that the government is composed of perfect and incorruptible beings, stable prosperity may thus in time result for the *community*. But prosperity conditioned by the tyrannical oppression of the individuals who make up the community can in the end prove only an empty mockery, no matter how widely it is distributed.

Mr. Marvin is more or less hypnotized by the contemplation of material power. He thrills with emotion whenever he speaks of its vast increase through science. This is, he says, "stupendous," which no one would deny. Yet Mr. Marvin is no sophistical advocate of the "public" control of power, nor yet is he blind enough to commit himself to the position that power is in itself a good thing. Concerning the latter, "it would be well for the world,"

² Since the above sentences were written it has become plain that even this measure has been unavailing.

he says, "if the unification of scientific theory had had its counterpart in the unification of sentiments and aims in life. But progress in inventions . . . has been as fruitful in producing more and more effective ways of destroying the life and work of man as it has been in protecting and promoting them. One hopeful fact, however, may be recorded. Nearly all the achievements of science in fabricating weapons of destruction can be converted with little change into constructive channels. The process of manufacturing the most deadly explosives is near akin to that of producing the most effective fertilizers of the soil. Dynamite prepares the way for railroads as surely as it levels forts." This fact may be admitted; but in recording it Mr. Marvin quite begs the question which he himself raises, and we shall presently see that there is little enough basis for hope that men's aims will soon cease to conflict with each other. In fact the more perfect the unification of such sentiments and aims in life as Mr. Marvin has in mind, the more certain are future conflicts amongst men.

It must be remembered that the goal of our progressive humanity is "the fullest life of which the individual is capable"; in other words, the attainment of a state of affairs in which the individual may freely satisfy all his desires, which are assumed to be naturally good. They are also numerous. "Man is a great deep," wrote S. Augustine, "whose very hairs, O Lord, thou hast numbered and they are not lost in thee; yet more easily numbered are his hairs than his affections and the motions of his heart"—*et tamen capilli eius magis numerabiles quam affectus eius et motus cordis eius*. This is true; men's desires, free rein being given them, are inordinate; they endlessly grow in intensity and in number. Old desires increase through satisfaction and new ones are added to them. Periods of satiety and disgust do not retard their march. Every one knows that commerce finds its readiest and largest, if not always its surest, profits in novelties; and the rapidity with which fashions, not alone in clothes, alter themselves is proverbial. This "expansion of the spirit," as Mr. Marvin loosely and admiringly calls it, is a restless longing for change and new excitements which from its very nature can never be satisfied, for satisfactions do only increase it.

One may wonder if "progress" of this kind is worth our effort, and if its contemporary apologists are really understood by their energetic and unreflective disciples. Yet this is not the only fact to

be taken into account in understanding its nature. One of the remarkable and almost neglected results of the union of science with industry has been an increase—it is said of well over four hundred *per cent.* in a hundred years—in the population of the western hemisphere. As our power of satisfying our desires has grown, so has the number of those who insistently desire. The development of organized industry, too, has been to a great extent dependent on this increase in the army of workers. We may easily develop means of controlling our numbers, but, if our population becomes stationary or dwindles, so inevitably will progress through science cease or recede. From this there is no escape; the fact is only evaded, not met, by loose conjecture, which can derive no sanction from history, concerning man's boasted inventive capacity. This capacity is marvelous, but it operates within strict limits, of which requisite man-power is one. Furthermore, applied science has thus far contrived for a brief space, as such things go, to improve the material well-being of a large minority of the population of about half the globe. This material betterment has been extraordinarily great, but for it we have already paid a price which we are only now beginning to realize. Even Mr. Marvin admits that in the early nineteenth century "the condition of the mass of the people of England was probably worse than it had been at any previous period," and this is certainly not the darkest part of the story. Then and later, industry has succeeded only through oppression, through the degraded and ruined lives of the multitude; and the attention paid to material benefits has had its natural consequence in materializing, narrowing, and debasing the lives of rich and poor alike. Yet what we have paid in these ways is perhaps nothing to what we shall still pay. We entered upon a new period of payment in 1914, which will be with us for many a weary year. "Competition of riches," wrote Hobbes, "honor, command, or other power, inclineth to contention, enmity, and war: because the way of one competitor, to the attaining of his desire, is to kill, subdue, supplant, or repel the other." And as such competition brought on the war, so did exact science make it the most destructive and cruel struggle within recorded history. Its economic consequences are already seen to be of the most pervasively dangerous kind. Yet the sort of "progress" possible through applied science by its very nature promotes just such wars.

If the aim of making mankind more comfortable were attain-

able, and if the price paid for material benefits were not far greater than the benefits themselves, there would be still the question whether this would contribute, as Descartes and countless others have thought, to the real betterment of humanity. Perhaps this question has already been answered, but it deserves explicit recognition. Wise men of all ages have laid it down that real human betterment can come only through the development of our spiritual capacities, and that all other things should serve as means to this end. Without being more precise, we may accept this as a truism which no one can seriously deny. It is easy to see that a starving man's greatest need is food, and a freezing man's, warmth, and that without these and similar elements of material well-being a man cannot, if he would, cultivate his higher faculties. It is also easy to say in consequence that if men are once made sufficiently comfortable and given sufficient leisure they will all straightway turn to the cultivation of their higher faculties. That is the argument, and Mr. Marvin like the rest looks forward to the attainment in this way through science of the spiritual betterment of the race. But argument is too dignified a word for such reasoning. Patently nothing of the sort actually happens, nor is there any good ground for hope that it may. What does happen is that concentration of attention upon material well-being blinds one to benefits of any other kind. The power to secure material advantages breeds, as has been said, simply the desire for more. The "sufficiency" of which Mr. Marvin and others fondly dream is never achieved, because this desire is infinitely expansive and can never be satisfied. Yet as far as it is satisfied it inclines men to believe there is no reality or meaning in spiritual values. Their materialized lives are good enough for them. Any one who has never learned and relearned this from his neighbors—any person so singularly fortunate may find in the life of our age more general illustrations of compelling force, not to speak of the assumptions underlying the exact sciences. One of the most significant, if not the most striking, of these illustrations is the decline of liberal education, most notable in America, but beginning to be evident in Europe as well. Everywhere it is being supplanted by vocational and technical training which meets the irresistible demand for something "practical." Nor only this, but the subjects of study most profitably yielding themselves to philosophic treatment, and of the greatest efficacy for educating the

characters of men, are prevailingly taught in an illiberal manner, aped without discrimination from the exact sciences, by teachers with eyes only for facts to students with eyes only for trade values.

It seems to me that in the light of these considerations Mr. Marvin's loose talk about the unifying efficacy of science loses all plausibility. Men are not necessarily united or filled with brotherly love by being brought, physically, more closely together. This has been known indeed rather to kindle antipathies which, if repressed, sooner or later break forth with preternatural vigor. This at the most produces a dull uniformity of manner and appearance which bears no relation to the unity of which Mr. Marvin speaks. Nor are these results attained by teaching men the interrelations of phenomena and so, amongst other things, taking their attention from their human problems while emphasizing their kinship with beasts. Again, the modern worker's realization of the dependence of others upon his execution of his task is not so likely to fill him with love of humanity as with the sense of power. In proportion as he realizes the necessity of co-operation amongst men he tends to turn that need to his own private advantage, holding up his industry or society at large for a higher material reward. No one blames him for doing this who does not also blame his employers, who are playing exactly the same game; but surely to the fact no one can be blind, and indeed there can be no reasonable expectation of a different state of affairs. Moreover, granting Mr. Marvin's claim that science has united us all in the common pursuit of "conquering" nature, this is a singularly different thing from that human unity which he ecstatically visualizes. From this unity of effort competition can never be eliminated because of the object of strife—and the greater the unity the greater always must be the competition. Material rewards are always either yours or mine, and we will only unite to share them in order to obtain an advantage over a third competitor. Chaucer's Pardoner long ago knew all about this, and his story does not grow old or stale. The only sort of common effort which promotes human unity, in any significant sense of the phrase, is strife after a spiritual reward, which alone is not vitiated by vulgar competition—which alone may be shared by all men alike without dimming its lustre or lessening its value for each one. Here alone the strife is not against one's fellows, but against one's self.

Indeed, Mr. Marvin is himself strangely conscious that science has not accomplished what he is so anxious to claim for it. As he somewhat ambiguously puts it in a passage already quoted, "the unification of scientific theory has not had its counterpart in the unification of sentiments and aims in life." On one occasion he throws out a hint that this defect will be remedied when the "humane sciences," slower in developing than the mechanical ones, shall have attained their full growth. Whether through wisdom or accident, however, he nowhere develops this hint. Instead, he finally puts all his eggs into another basket. It might be supposed that in his recognition of a need for an "unification of sentiments and aims in life" Mr. Marvin, whatever else he may mean by this phrase, means also that he perceives man's real trouble to lie after all within himself. It might be supposed that here he inconsistently recognizes the necessity of a regimentation of men's desires, of a self-discipline resting upon discrimination between good and evil in human nature. Such a reasonable supposition would, however, be far distant from the truth. The truth is that Mr. Marvin does in the end implicitly abandon the whole case which he so laboriously builds up for progress through science; he does admit that the power or wealth made available by science is in itself at least a neutral thing, constantly being turned to "unsocial" uses; and he does admit that science provides no check upon the "unsocial" use of wealth.

Yet he still maintains that the goal of progressive society is a condition where each individual may freely satisfy to the utmost his natural desires, and he insists—rightly, of course—that for the attainment of such an aim physical science is supremely needful. He is confident, however, that material wealth can easily be turned to purely "social" uses, and he consequently makes the condition of progress and its direct agent—not science—but social sympathy. He speaks of the two as if they were inseparable partners, though he is not guilty of actually confounding them with each other. "Side by side with the growth of science," he says, "which is also the basis of the material prosperity and unification of the world, has come a steady deepening of human sympathy, and the extension of it to all weak and suffering things. . . . Science, founding a firm basis for the co-operation of mankind, goes widening down the centuries, and sympathy and pity bind the courses together." The general intention of such words, at least,

is plain enough; yet it takes no great amount of reflection to see, even from Mr. Marvin's admissions alone, that science and sympathy bear no organic relation to each other except that of enemies. Vivisection is a fair example of what happens when they meet on common ground. But if the spirit of theoretical science is one from which all feeling is rigidly banished, it may still be claimed that the purpose of applied science is humanitarian in nature. It exists only to serve human desires; but on the other hand it has grown only because it is profitable. "Exploit" would here be a more accurate word than "serve." The transparent disguise of humanitarian activity has been insisted upon just to render the personal profit respectable. And that humanity has not yet quite sunk below the uneasy feeling that personal profit is, after all, ignoble is proved by the general boast of scientists themselves that they never derive such profit from their discoveries, but leave that for other men.

Aside, however, from the friendly relation between science and sympathy which Mr. Marvin characteristically implies, he finds definite proof of the increase and spread of social sympathy in state regulation of the conditions of labor, and, even more, in such organizations as the Boy Scouts, the Girls' Friendly Society, and the Student Christian movement—analogous, apparently, to our Y. W. C. A. and Y. M. C. A. He says that "such bodies are very characteristic of recent times; they are largely religious in spirit, and their religion has certain common features. . . . They are without exception humanitarian in a definite and formative sense. They all train their members to believe, and to act in the belief, that the good of others is our own good also, that we develop our powers by such action, and that this in fact is the nature and genesis of all true progress in the world. . . . It should be clear to the student of history that this expansion of the essential and immemorial principle of all morality is on a wider scale and affects more sides of life than anything we have seen before. . . . This fact of triumphant association is indeed so indubitable and so impressive that we might be inclined to rest in it alone as sufficient evidence of the progress of humanity."

This throws light on Mr. Marvin's attempt, already noticed, to identify religion with humanitarian propagauda. Like other observers, he has been impressed with the altogether remarkable force often exerted by religion in reshaping and even in quite

remaking the life of the individual. This compelling sanction he covets for the new gospel of social sympathy, and he seems seriously to believe that by using the name he can secure the thing. Of that we must remain at least gravely doubtful. We do not now have any hopeful facts from which to judge; the only really successful instances of co-operation which can be pointed out are those which directly minister to self-interest. Plainly these are not examples of the working of sympathy. Nor is it easy to see how sympathy, often weak when it does exist and always an extremely capricious emotion quickly spent in proportion as it is violently felt, can ever be so deepened and extended—indeed fundamentally remade—as to form a positive and efficacious guiding principle for society. Like other emotions, too, sympathy demands a concrete object; it tends to become vague and unreal as its object is distant or abstract. A man is aroused to violent action at the sight of a dog or a horse being cruelly treated; the same man reads of the massacre of fifty thousand Armenians without, as we say, turning a hair. He may murmur to himself a few biting words, but he is not actually moved. Those Armenians are concrete objects, but they are distant. By so much the less, then, have we any reason to expect men to feel active sympathy for humanity at large. Even granting that this emotional *tour de force* should become sporadically possible, it takes only a slight knowledge of the world for realization that sympathy is blind and indiscriminate. The truth is that inculcation of social sympathy opens the way for much fine talk unaccompanied by action—for sheer sentimentalism—and thus it is certain of popularity; but it leaves the individual and society quite unchanged, and so effects no positive result except its encouragement to self-deception. However, it is to be wished that we would sometimes ask ourselves if, supposing a condition of universal brotherly love were attainable, this would be a desirable state. No one can answer this question completely, howsoever gifted with imagination, because none can definitely picture such a state of affairs. I shall not here make the attempt; yet a few things are plain. Such a society from its very nature would be soft, spineless, and poor. It would be poor both spiritually and materially; with easy-going nonchalance it would neither penalize the slothful nor reward the industrious. It would be completely indiscriminate in all its judgments, the ooze of fraternal sentiment blurring every outline

and swiftly unmaking painfully built up standards of character. Indeed it is difficult to resist the conclusion that the relapse to savagery would be swift and complete. These are strong statements, but I can see no ground for assuming that such a society would retain the institutions on which civilization has hitherto rested. It could not do so but, more than this, it would not wish to. Those institutions rest at every point upon the recognition of actual differences amongst men which it would be a chief purpose of completely humanitarian society to ignore. Thus the institutions upon which organized community life depends would inevitably vanish. Further, I can see no ground for assuming that such a society would preserve any characteristics not demonstrably necessitated by a condition of brotherly love, and savage tribes now exist in which the social bond is extraordinarily strong.³ It is, however, important that we should not lose ourselves in necessarily vain dispute concerning the precise character of such a society, but that we should awaken to a realization of our almost total ignorance of the condition into which many "social reformers" of the present day would plunge us if they could.

Mr. Marvin, in a sentence already quoted, says that Darwin transferred the centre of our interest from the life of the individual to the growth of the species. This is likely to be long a source of confusion. We now talk in terms of the species and indulge in hazy visions of its growth, yet we continue to think and live as individuals. It has become the fashion, for instance, to regard society as an organism, a conception for which there is no justification in either science or reason, and one which lends a factitious interest to matters with which we can have no concern. Granting for the moment that Mr. Marvin's view of progress is sound, we can ourselves have no share in its fruition. We are but means to an end which is not realized in our own age or in the life of any individual. Yet so far as men take any active

³ Not without interest here are some remarks in Kant's *Idea for a Universal History*, a treatise with which Mr. Marvin plays fast and loose in an effort to pretend that it fully supports his own views. Kant writes: "Without those, in themselves by no means lovely, qualities which set man in social opposition to man, so that each finds his selfish claims resisted by the selfishness of all the others, men would have lived on in an Arcadian shepherd life, in perfect harmony, contentment, and mutual love; but all their talents would forever have remained hidden and undeveloped. Thus, kindly as the sheep they tended, they would scarcely have given to their existence a greater value than that of their cattle." (The translation is Edward Caird's, *The Critical Philosophy of Kant*, vol. II, p. 550.)

interest in this supposed process they do so because they conceive themselves as partaking in its benefits. Thus Mr. Marvin's view encourages men to entertain hopes which have no possibility of fulfilment; and the hopes, concerning as they largely do material satisfactions, encourage men to blame others rather than themselves and their own notions of the world for their inevitable disappointments. The one concrete result of this mischievous confusion between two opposed view-points which is now discernible is a fairly successful attempt to undermine such freedom of the individual as has thus far been painfully attained.

Here, then, are some of the considerations facing an ardent believer in "the evolution of that collective human force which is growing and compassing the conquest of the world," in "a common human society, working together for the conquest of nature and the improvement of life." These considerations suggest that while change is a constant characteristic of our material circumstances, and that while exact science enormously accelerates such change, there is nothing in the nature of "progress" in the process. They suggest that we completely pay for everything which we seem to achieve, and that, in this sphere, after all our exertions we end where we have begun. They suggest that humanity's true line of activity lies inward, not outward, where effective exertion is more difficult but yet more hopeful. One can picture the commanding officers of that army for which Mr. Marvin speaks: eager, well-meaning men and women, honest and conscientious according to their lights, industrious, cheerful, with the fixed professional smile of the "community expert," with the perfect bedside manner of the fashionable practitioner, living consecrated lives for the good of society and the welfare of all, so intent upon their sacred purpose that they have never had time or inclination to reflect upon their fitness for their self-appointed task—have never had time to look within themselves and so to learn the eternal riddles of human nature. One envies them their brisk self-confidence, one does not for an instant doubt their many and unusual virtues, yet one still asks, can these be truly the vanguard of humanity?