

REVIEWS.

Social Origins; by ANDREW LANG. *Primal Law*; by J. J. ATKINSON. New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1903. Pp. xi + 311.

MR. LANG performs an office of great value to science by the volumes which he issues at intervals setting forth and criticising the results of anthropological research. His own part of the present volume is a digest of this character, dealing principally with recent theories of the origin of totemism and of its relation to the exogamous divisions of tribal society. With those theories he connects a theory of the origin of society, propounded by his cousin, James Jasper Atkinson, now deceased, who lived long in New Caledonia. Native customs excited Mr. Atkinson's interest and led him to take up the study of anthropology, a fruit of which is the theory expounded in *Primal Law*.

Mr. Atkinson's speculations are connected with certain sections of Darwin's *Descent of Man*. In the preparation of that work Mr. Darwin's attention was attracted by the discoveries made by Morgan, Lubbock, and McLennan, as regards the constitution of primitive society. Mr. Darwin frankly declared himself (secs. 974-77) unable to conjecture how such social structure could have been evolved from such associations as exist among man's cognates in the mammalia. Mr. Atkinson undertakes to explain the process by the aid of anthropological data, in the narrow sense of the term. He starts with animal groups such as are found among the higher mammalia—as, for instance, a troop of baboons. Among these, as among the mammalia in general, the strongest male claims and holds by his individual prowess exclusive rights to the possession of the females. The young males are not driven out altogether, but remain members of the troop, keeping at a shrewd distance from the jealous male sovereign. Society was the result of an accommodation between the pretensions of the young males and the pretensions of their sire, so that the troop, instead of being a single marital group, became converted into a community compounded of marital groups. *Primal Law* is the male fiat which ordained the terms of this accommodation of interests, expressed in prohibitions from

which are derived the rule of exogamy and also the peculiar avoidances between relatives required by customary law among savages. Although purporting to be an explanation of social origins, the work is really little more than a conjecture how exogamy and avoidance originated.

Mr. Atkinson's treatment of the subject is not clear, and even with the help of Mr. Lang's annotations it is sometimes difficult to follow the course of his argument. He died before he was able to give his manuscript final revision, and to this may be attributed much of the vagueness which appears. Mr. Atkinson did not claim to have established his theory, but presented it as a plausible hypothesis which he believed further research would verify. The chief merit of the essay is that it is an attempt to fill a serious gap now existing in the theory of development; its chief defect is an inadequate conception of the problem, which defect is common to most speculations based upon purely anthropological data.

This point must be made clear in order to show the sociological importance of the matter, which is now so obscured that works of this character are apt to be regarded as having merely an antiquarian value of no special interest to the sociologist. It should be borne in mind that the theory of the descent of man, as formulated by Darwin and worked out in detail by Haeckel and others, accounts for man as an animal and not as a social being. Darwin, with his habitual candor, pointed out this gap in the theory. He ascribed to natural selection the formation of the human species, and to sexual selection the formation of the subspecies usually designated as the different races of mankind. But he admitted (sec. 214) that the development of social and moral qualities is not accounted for by natural selection, and he was careful to say (sec. 1006) that in order to obtain from sexual selection the effects he attributes to it, its operation must be referred to a pre-social period, when man was on a par with other animals in habits of associations. The difficulties in the way of any theory tracing society as an outgrowth of such gregariousness as is found among species nearest to man in physical structure, are so great that Lester F. Ward¹ holds "that man is not naturally a social being, that he has descended from an animal that was not even gregarious by instinct." Sociologists, as a rule, regard society as being the product of human intelligence, accounting for it through the operation of sympathy, imitation, and other emotional states, together with rational appreciation of the advantages of social life. But this only brings up the problem of

¹ *Outlines of Sociology*, p. 90.

descent in a new form, viz.: What was the nature of the influences causing a particular species to attain exceptional brain development, culminating in human intelligence? Natural selection and sexual selection account for the proto-human stock, but, as the theory of descent now stands, there they stop and do not account for the development of humanity.

Upon this problem Mr. Atkinson's speculations throw no light whatever. Indeed, he assumes "the rise of superior intellectual faculties" in order to account for the beginning of the process of social integration whose course he describes. The great, the fundamental, problem is thus left out of the reckoning.

The suggestion of greatest promise in regard to the solution of this problem has been advanced by Edward John Payne in his *History of the New World Called America*.¹ Briefly stated, this suggestion is that man is descended from a simian species, which, becoming converted from arboreal to terrestrial habits of life, was exposed to such vicissitudes that only those displaying superior capacity for associated effort were able to survive. Hence a social species was evolved by natural selection, just as social species have been evolved in other animal orders. Language was developed from brute outcry as an incident of the life of community, and as an organ of collective activity. The process reacted upon the individual units, thus promoting the development of the brain and the increase of intelligence. Sense of personality was originally collective, and sense of individual personality emerged by a process of analysis. Mr. Payne traces this process in great detail,² with copious illustrations drawn from linguistic characteristics. Although he himself does not make the inference, yet the evidence he adduces leads directly to the conclusion that human nature has been formed by the life of the community, just as the nature of the social bees has been formed by the life of the hive.

Mr. Payne bases his theory upon linguistic evidence. It cannot be regarded as established until anthropological, psychological, philological, and historical data are satisfactorily co-ordinated in support of it. There are lines of favoring evidence in all these fields, but space will not permit more than mere mention, as follows: The physical characters distinguishing the anthropoid apes from man are late phases of ontogeny, resemblance of the embryo forms being much closer in an earlier than in the latest stage. According to the law of biogenic recapitulation, the anthropoid apes belong to a stage of individual physical

¹ Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1899.

² Vol. II, pp. 105-290.

development more advanced than that of man, indicating in the case of the proto-human species an arrest in that line of development explained by the subordination of individual life to the life of the community. There is widely distributed evidence of a feeble sense of individuality among primitive men and of the complete ascendancy of collectivism. The cumulative weight of this evidence is so great that Stuckenberg in his *Sociology*^{*} is moved to say that man was "socialized before he was individualized." Ancient law knows next to nothing of individuals; it is concerned with groups. Words defining individual rights and relations are among the latest refinements of speech, and in many languages are still rudimentary or quite undeveloped.

It is almost obvious that the sociological bearings of this theory are profoundly important. A few corollaries may be noted. The theory indicates, as the fundamental proposition of sociology: human intelligence did not produce society; society produced human intelligence. As the fundamental proposition of political science, man did not create the state; the state created man. Aristotle's dictum that man is born a citizen thus appears to be the absolute truth of the case.

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American Municipal Progress: Chapters in Municipal Sociology. By PROFESSOR CHARLES ZUEBLIN. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1902. Pp. 380. 12mo. Cloth, \$1.25.

AMERICAN municipal progress! With our periodicals and daily prints teeming with accounts of corruption in so many American cities, it has probably not occurred to many that American municipal government has been progressing. It is exceedingly fortunate, therefore, that Professor Zueblin calls attention to this fact and points out the directions in which advance has been made; for, no matter how far our cities are from ideal conditions, the important fact to be kept in mind, especially by those pessimistically inclined, is that conditions are far better than they were a generation ago, and that we are going forward, and not backward, at a steady pace.

Professor Zueblin has not attempted to deal with the whole range of city affairs, but has confined himself to municipal functions—what cities are doing—leaving others to deal with such problems as the relation of city and state, and municipal organization. The field thus selected for investigation is probably the one most interesting to the

^{*} Vol. II, p. 45.