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The Influence of Geographical Conditions on Social Development: Discussion

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activity; it is the centre of their ideas and their practical life alike, for which no merely general and impartial world-survey is sufficient. Hence Education, if real, begins with a Regional Survey, as action with a regional usefulness. Hence such a regional type-museum and school of reference has to be not only geographic, but geotechnical. In the very difficulties of coping with the vast and perplexing division of labour, alike in science and in practical life, it finds its necessity and its justification as at least an attempted clearing-house of education, in which all specialisms may again meet. For it is not enough to postulate order and unity in nature, though that is the necessary and constant working assumption even of the most narrow specialist within his own field; we must demonstrate it in detail, and apply it in detail also. For if the evolutionist's promise of scientific synthesis is to be justified, it must descend from the region of philosophic abstraction to co-ordinate and interpret the whole facts of geography and history in that widest sense, in which these are no longer much neglected sub-sciences, but the all comprehensive account of the evolution of nature and human life throughout space and time.

The PRESIDENT: I now invite discussion on Prof. Geddes' paper. Perhaps Mr. Ravenstein would commence the discussion.

Mr. RAVENSTEIN: I feel quite sure that all those who have occupied themselves with similar questions will have agreed with much that Prof. Geddes has told us, and they certainly have appreciated the very interesting manner in which he has placed all these things before us. In discussing this dependence of men upon their surroundings, we must not go too far—and Prof. Geddes himself has said this—in concluding one thing from another; in concluding, for instance, that assassination must be traced to the occupation of some of our forefathers. We should be very careful about that. What I should like to say—and it is a thing many others have said—is, Do not be too sure about geographical environment. Undoubtedly it is a great influence, but we must not allow ourselves to be too much influenced by it. For instance, if we attempt to cultivate plants on an arid soil that require a rich soil, we are punished, and as we do not like being punished—and as mankind, take it at large, after all learns from experience—we avoid repeating those mistakes in order to escape the punishment. A specialist one day said, speaking about Ireland, “Certainly the Irish have been influenced by their insular position, but I do not say that if Ireland had been occupied by Anglo-Saxons its history would have been different.”

Mr. J. A. BAINES: As I came here simply as a learner, and have not examined the diagrams, I feel that I can contribute little to the discussion. I should like to be in a position to ascribe more importance than I do at present to the influence of geographical conditions upon social development, but so far as I have studied the matter, I find no ground for such broad conclusions as those stated. No doubt these influences are of great moment in the primitive stages of society, but with the advance of civilization they tend to disappear, and the influence of man on his environment increases. In fact, a good part of the lecture may fairly be taken as a sermon on the text of “*Ce coquin d'homme restera toujours le même.*”

Dr. MILL: What strikes me most with regard to the subject of Prof. Geddes' paper is, that it is a matter for further research. If the conditions on which the

conclusions arrived at in the paper are based could be investigated in a more general way, and with the direct object of discovering how far those principles can be justified and extended, it would be a very good thing. Hitherto geographical research has been carried on very much in a haphazard way. Different travellers and explorers, and also a few theoretical men, have studied the subject without knowing exactly what they wanted to find out, but if they had before them some such definite thesis as that which Prof. Geddes has laid down, I think a very great deal of information would be gathered.

The PRESIDENT: As no one else wishes to speak, I should like to say a few words on the importance to travellers of the remarks in Prof. Geddes' paper. I should hope that pains will be taken to draw the attention of young travellers to the conceptions which are set forth in Mr. Geddes' paper and his diagrams with reference to the effect of food upon animals and upon the inhabitants of different countries, and to the effect and reaction of the inhabitants upon the vegetation, and what effect that has had upon them. I believe that the inhabitants have improved the physical condition of some countries, but I also believe that they have done ten times as much harm throughout the world as they have done good, and the consequence has been, no doubt, that there have been retrograde changes in their habits and in their progress. I have not had time to study with any care Mr. Geddes' paper, and I therefore do not venture to say more on the subject; but I have been much fascinated with the ideas which are conveyed to students in that tower (referring to diagram), and I hope some day to have the pleasure of visiting it in Edinburgh, and of studying the method of Prof. Geddes in teaching his pupils. I am sure the meeting will wish to return a very hearty vote of thanks to Prof. Geddes for a very interesting and suggestive paper.

Prof. GEDDES: If I may say a single word, it is that I would ask any who are interested in this thesis, and are disposed to follow it further, to begin in the remoter corners of the earth, not in London or Paris; but to begin in the isolated places in Scotland, in Cyprus for instance, where one gets a much more real and clear view of these things naturally than one can get here on the great English plain. It is as with geology, one must go to the places where geological facts are obvious.

MR. SAVAGE LANDOR'S TRAVELS IN TIBET.—A REVIEW.*

By Colonel Sir T. H. Holdich, K.C.I.E., C.B., R.E.

THE geographical results of Mr. Savage Landor's gallant but unsuccessful attempt to reach Lhasa from the Manasarawar Lake region are comparatively unimportant. It was impossible that they should be otherwise. The country that he succeeded in traversing was not altogether a *terra incognita*, for that interesting lake region (the fountain-head of the biggest river systems of India) which centres in the twin lakes of Rakas-tal and Manasarawar, has been visited by Europeans before Mr. Landor's time, and the route from the lakes to Lhasa has been traversed

* "In the Forbidden Land." By A. Henry Savage Landor. 2 vols. Heinemann, 1898.