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SOCIOLOGY AND COMPARATIVE POLITICS.

Those of us who had the good fortune to hear the inaugural lectures of Professors Hobhouse and Westermarck on the 17th December last will probably remember how wisely cautious both Professors were in the matter of offering definitions of Sociology. Professor Hobhouse indeed implied that Sociology is a science which has the whole social life of man as its sphere; and Professor Westermarck went so far as to say that Sociology might be regarded as the science of social phenomena; but I recollect very well that Professor Hobhouse suggested—at any rate as regards any more elaborate definition—that there might be at least as many definitions as there were sociologists in the room. Later, in the *Editorial* with which the first number of our “Sociological Review” opens, Professor Hobhouse gave us another compact formula, namely that Sociology is the science of society. The social life, he explained, constitutes a distinct field for investigation in the scientific spirit.

To such a terse formula as the science of social phenomena I take no exception. It is analogous to the definition of jurisprudence as the science of positive law. But though fully conscious of the difficulties and dangers of definitions—more especially of such as may be premature—I have found it necessary, for the purposes of the present paper, to attempt a somewhat more detailed definition—or, if you will—description of Sociology. I have noted as very weighty the remarks of Professor L. Stein of the University of Berne that “definitions do not anticipate sciences, but they succeed them,” and that “what Sociology is in need of to-day is not a definition but a programme.” It is, however, the main object of the present paper to suggest that the study of Comparative Politics should be admitted as part of the programme of this Society. It seems, therefore, inevitable that I should explain with, I hope, sufficient clearness what meaning I attach to the term Sociology; but I hope it will be understood that the definition I am about to suggest is devised

for the purposes of this paper only and is, of course, open to continuous revision as the science of Sociology extends.

Amongst the steps which I have taken to enable me to arrive at some conclusion which I could venture to lay before this Society was an examination of the three volumes of our papers published for 1904, 1905 and 1906. I have found there a rather amusing confirmation of what Professor Hobhouse told us in his inaugural lecture about the great diversity of opinions entertained as to the meaning of Sociology. In these three volumes I marked no less than sixty-one passages containing either a definition of Sociology or a description of its aim. It is true that in a few of these cases a writer or speaker either repeats himself or expresses concurrence with some one else; but speaking generally there are different shades, at least, of meaning in almost every passage and in many cases the views expressed are widely divergent and wholly irreconcilable. I have attempted to group them under various heads but an account of this attempt is not really necessary for my present purpose. I will only say that the definition I would ask you to adopt—tentatively and for the matter in hand only—is derived, with certain differences, from one framed by Professor J. Arthur Thomson, of the University of Aberdeen, on the basis of the definition of biology. It is this:—*Sociology is the scientific study of the origin, development, structure, functions, and decay of the ideas and institutions of mankind in successive stages of society.*

With the exception of those who may regard Sociology as the systematic elaboration of social and political ideals, I suppose almost every one would admit that this definition is sufficiently wide. It is, I think, consistent—except that it does not include the future as to which I shall have more to say below—with a description of Sociology given by Professor Hobhouse on the occasion of the able address by the late Dr. J. H. Bridges; and it seems to me quite in harmony with the official prospectus of this Society.

On several points it goes beyond the definition of Professor Thomson. *First*, I include *decay*—noticed in our official prospectus—which his definition omits. Not to speak of survivals—of customs or institutions which outlast their purposes or are applied to purposes for which they were not designed, the whole course of history is strewn with the wrecks of republics, kingdoms and empires. Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, the kingdom of the Hebrews, Greece, great Rome herself, the empire of Charlemagne, the feudal

and absolute monarchies of Western Europe, Mexico, Peru, the Delhi empire, the empire of Napoleon I.; with every one of these names is linked a fall or a decline and fall, a dissolution accomplished before our day, but leaving in every case some message, often a most pregnant one, for the students of the evolution of humanity. *Secondly*, I have added ideas to institutions, not merely because every institution has its subjective side, but mainly because the rudiments of social growth are first discernible in myth no less than in custom; in custom because it is the mother of all institutions; in myth because it is the wild imaginings and childish guesses and tales of primitive folk which later on are superseded by religion and philosophy. If we omit ideas we omit imagination, we omit religion and philosophy themselves, we close our doors to the theory of a dynamic psychology of the race. *Thirdly*, I refer expressly to the successive stages of society because the doctrine of evolution—I do not mean biological evolution in particular, but evolution in the widest sense of the term—seems to me to be the mainspring of Sociology, and we study the progress, and, as I have said, the decay, of phases of society in the hope that in the examination of their history the laws of their evolution will be disclosed.

After this somewhat elaborate explanation of a definition of Sociology it would be unconscionable to weary you with a definition of politics. I need hardly say that the politics of which I have to speak are not those of the daily press and the House of Commons. We have not to discuss the Licensing and Education Bills, the problem of unemployment, or old age pensions, or even matters of foreign policy—the Anglo-Russian agreement, the treatment of Macedonia or the Congo State. I am far from saying that none of these matters have sociological aspects; the contrary is true of every one of them. As Professor Hobhouse, in his *Editorial*, reminded us, the muse of Sociology never ceases to murmur: "*Homo sum, nihil humani alienum a me puto.*" But my concern to-night is with the politics not of the politician but of the philosopher. There was no passage in Professor Hobhouse's singularly able and fruitful *Editorial* that I read with greater satisfaction than that in which he said that our Journal will approach questions of living interest without party bias, and will endeavour to show that they can be approached in a scientific spirit. Were party to invade the discussions of this Society the first result would be that it would put science to flight. To what extent I may depart from the accepted signification of the term politics in political

philosophy, or—if you will—political science, will sufficiently appear as I go on. Here I will only say that I agree with Prof. Hobhouse in his remark made in the *Editorial* to which I have several times referred, that hitherto political philosophy closely resembles general philosophy in its method. The particular branch of politics with which I am now concerned—Comparative Politics—demands another method: the method of science. If we seek the guidance of Comparative Politics we do not enter on the direct quest of any ideal. We do not aim at determining the ends of civil society. We do not assume states of nature which never existed except in the imagination of philosophers and of those who accepted for a gospel the superstitions which they were taught; we do not invent social contracts which never were and never could have been made. In this study ours is the humbler, but as I at least believe, more promising, task of investigating with laborious conscientiousness the actual facts of political evolution.

The origin of Comparative Politics in one sense of the expression, is the same as the origin of Comparative Jurisprudence. In 1871, in the first of his lectures on *Village Communities in the East and West*, Maine observed:—"The enquiry upon which we are engaged can only be said to belong to Comparative Jurisprudence if the word 'Comparative' be used as it is used in such expressions as 'Comparative Philology' and 'Comparative Mythology.' We shall examine a number of parallel phenomena with the view of establishing, if possible, that some of them are related to one another in the order of historical succession. I think," he continued, "I may venture to affirm that the Comparative Method which has already been fruitful of such wonderful results, is not distinguishable in some of its applications from the Historical Method. We take a number of contemporary facts, ideas, and customs," (note, please, that Maine includes ideas) "and we infer the past form of those facts, ideas, and customs not only from historical records of that past form, but from examples of it which have not yet died out of the world, and are still to be found in it." Two and a half years later Freeman, in his valuable book on Comparative Politics, referring, as Maine had done, to Comparative Philology and Comparative Mythology, noted the birth of a third science, the offspring, he asserted, of the two earlier sciences, which applied the Comparative Method directly to the growth of culture itself, the object of research being the nature and origin of the customs, the social institutions, the religious ceremonies of the different nations of the earth. This third science,

he said, still lacked a name, and he added: "Let us hope that a name may be found for it, if not—which may be hopeless—within the stores of our own mother-tongue, yet at least within the range of the foreign words which have been already coined. It would be a pity if a line of inquiry which has brought to light so much, and from which so much more may be looked for, should end by cumbering the dictionary with some fresh word of new and barbarous formation." It appears from a note appended to the text that the barbarism of which he had so acute a fear was the now well-known and generally accepted term *Sociology*.

Freeman held that the establishment of the Comparative Method was the greatest achievement of his time, marking one of the great stages in the development of the human mind—a stage at least as great and memorable as the revival of Greek and Latin learning. He acknowledges his obligations to Max Müller, Maine, G. H. Waitz and—very particularly—Mr. Tylor; but I cannot find in his *Comparative Politics* any trace of acquaintance with Comte, Darwin, Huxley or Spenser. I agree with Freeman that there was an immense intellectual advance in the last half of last century—an advance which, in those subjects at least with which I am concerned as a member of this Society, I should say was without parallel. But I do not think that anyone would now single out the discovery or use of the Comparative Method as the preponderating impetus in that advance. That Method has been a part only of a more general process traceable from an earlier date. The new light has spread somewhat gradually so that in the early seventies there was many a man of eminence who had not felt its glow. For my part, I would ascribe the dawn now perceptible in our mental sky—not indeed to the doctrine of evolution itself, for that was not new, but first to the vastly extended application of that doctrine under the stimulus of Darwinism, and, secondly, to the application—advocated already by Comte in the thirties—of the methods of science to the interpretation of the social and political history of mankind.

It is not only in their origin that there is a resemblance between Comparative Politics and Comparative Jurisprudence. Many points of similarity are to be expected because the field of Comparative Politics, though wide enough to include outlying regions of primitive custom where no state has yet been formed, and despotic states possessing, in the popular sense, no constitution, still in what I may call its inmost ring, coincides with the field of constitutional law. In the term Comparative Politics I must distinguish three separate meanings, related to each other in

historical order, and all significant for the purposes of Sociology. Each of these distinctions is equally applicable to Comparative Jurisprudence, and in that science also their historical order is the same. When we compare the political institutions of various nations, races and times, what is the immediate object which we propose to ourselves and, in order to attain that object how do we limit the range of our inquiries? You will remember that Austin identifies Comparative Jurisprudence with general jurisprudence which he contrasts with merely national bodies of law and practically limits to a philosophy dealing with the various legal principles common to the ample and mature systems of refined, that is, of highly civilised, communities. Similarly Mr. Bryce says of one form of Comparative Jurisprudence that it has "a palpably practical aim. It sets out by ascertaining and examining the rules actually in force in modern civilised countries, and proceeds to show by what means these rules deal with problems substantially the same in those countries." A very large part of the work of the Society of Comparative Legislation has the same object—the comparison of the laws of civilised countries at the present time. Now Comparative Politics may be treated in precisely the same way. In sociological discussion we may call this method statical. It is statical as applied to modern civilised communities though, of course, the statical method may be applied to any community or set of communities at any stage of development that may be selected. The application of this method in Comparative Politics to civilised communities may or may not be purely scientific. If it is purely scientific it possesses some conspicuous advantages. The evidence which may be examined is extraordinarily abundant, a great deal of it is readily accessible; doubts can be cleared up by communication with the living men who know. Modern civilised countries alone have reached what is as yet the last chapter in the natural history of mankind; and we may reasonably turn to them if we desire light on the actual or probable contents of the preceding pages. Those communities which have passed through the greatest number of stages, including the latest stages, in the long journey from savagery through barbarism to civilisation will assuredly still bear in their living frames many survivals of their past. Moreover their records will be found to state the essential problem of Sociology which is, How did the modern institutions of our time and civilisation come to be what they are? The examination of modern societies with excursions, I admit, into historical

research, has much scientific value; but it is most difficult to keep such an inquiry within the bounds of science. To say nothing of the bias which is almost inseparable from the estimate of any current facts, there is naturally a nearly irrepressible eagerness to seize upon the results of such an inquiry for philosophical, ethical and practical purposes and to make the immediate purpose not to discover facts, and to settle their classification and causes and relation to evolutionary processes, but, by the elaboration of general theories, new or old, or even by direct imitation, to improve our own political institutions or those of our neighbours or those of the world at large.

The other two forms of Comparative Politics of which I wish to speak may both be described as dynamic, but one of them is primarily limited to the affiliation of institutions, while the other, though it does not neglect affiliation, has a far wider horizon embracing not only political institutions which are derived by what I may call direct descent from rudiments common to the group, but all the political institutions of mankind whatever their origin, whatever the course of their development. As in biology we may examine the growth of a particular species or, on the examination of many species, arrive at biological laws, so one dynamic form of Comparative Politics investigates the political institutions of a group of races, say the Greeks, the Romans and the Teutons, while the other dynamic form, restricted in its operation only by the amount and character of the evidence available, searches alike in the historic and the prehistoric record and in the facts of modern life for indications of those laws of growth which, if we are right in holding that human society is no exception in the system of nature, must, with the advance of science, become more and more clearly discernible as the laws originating, transforming and completing throughout the ages the mass of political phenomena at large.

I have referred to these three forms of Comparative Politics, the statical limited to civilised communities, the first dynamic or affiliative form, and the second dynamic or purely evolutionary form, in order to remind you in a summary way of the contents and range of the science. But it would be inconsistent with past practice, and, much worse than that, a piece of useless pedantry, to insist on the rigid separation of these forms or methods in the practical work of investigation. Take, for instance, such a book as that of Professor John W. Burgess, of Columbia College, on Political Science and Comparative Constitutional Law. On the

whole, it is an illustration of the statical method limited in the way I have described. In treating Comparative Constitutional Law he selects the constitutions of Great Britain, the United States, Germany and France, and limits himself to these, and includes in his reasons for this course that these are the most important States in the world and that their constitutions represent substantially all the species of constitutions which have as yet been developed. His aim is an ethical one—to lay down principles of public law; and—quite unscientifically, though not necessarily unphilosophically—he excludes the less perfect systems, disregards the less important States, and passes by those which, in his opinion, are not typical. Nevertheless, his examination of the several constitutions to which he confines his book is largely historical; and this for the obvious reason that it is practically impossible to give an intelligible account of the present condition of such complex organisations as the constitutions of great countries without some reference to their past.

The well-known work of Bluntschli—*The Theory of the State*—marks the transition—in his case, I think, an unconscious transition—between the old political philosophy—very justly described by Professor Hobhouse as one of the roots of Sociology—and Comparative Politics in the scientific sense of the term. Bluntschli regards Political Science as the science of the conditions, nature and development of the State. But what is the State? Comparative Politics considered as a branch of Sociology, is concerned not with any ideal conception of the State, but with the political institutions of all times and races upon which the searchlight of modern inquiry can be brought to bear. Bluntschli says that General Political Science rests upon a universal conception of the State: but he adds on the very next page “Universal history shews us the different stages of development which mankind has lived through since its infancy; each stage has its own peculiar views of the State, its own political formation.” True indeed; but if this is true, where is the universal conception of the State? The Comparative method, he tells us, considers the most important states alongside of one another. He marks off the periods and races which are, in his opinion, significant—the Greeks and Romans in antiquity, the Teutons in the Middle Ages, the English, French and Prussians in modern times,—and then observes “General Political Science has thus to do with the common political consciousness of civilised mankind at the present time, and the fundamental ideas and essentially common institutions which appear in

various ways in different states." Evidently we have here a close analogy to—almost an identity with Austin's conception of Comparative Jurisprudence. Later on Bluntschli strikes a deeper note. "The actual State," he affirms, "is that in which we live and work. Political Science has to do with that alone, and such a State is to be completely explained from a consideration of human nature." Comparative Politics as a branch of Sociology certainly is not limited to modern states; but one method—and an important one—of verifying sociological conclusions is to prove their consistency with a true psychology.

There is much in the writings of Burgess and Bluntschli which leads me to say that, consciously or unconsciously, they are Platonists. They seem to be a search of an ideal political system which has never yet existed on this earth but which is discoverable—perhaps in *nubibus* or in *gremio philosophorum*. They differ from Plato and submit to the influence of modern ideas in their method of search. They collate and compare all that seems best or seems inevitable in certain existing systems. I have pointed out that Burgess cannot dispense with history. The same is true of Bluntschli. When he comes to discuss the forms of the State he is naturally led on to indicate the general character of their development. He traces monarchy—not it will be noted in Africa or in the East—but in Homeric Greece and Ancient Rome, in the forests of the Germany of Tacitus, in the Roman Empire, in the Frankish and Feudal States, in the absolutisms of France and Spain and the threatened but averted absolutism of England, and in the rise and spread of its constitutional form over nearly the whole of Europe. He deals similarly with aristocracy—or to be more accurate nobility—in ancient and modern times, as also with democratic forms of the State. Generally it may be said that he presents a sketch of political development in Western civilisation; and to this part of his work at least Sociology may lay claim.

If Bluntschli is in transition, Freeman—so far as I am aware—was the first English writer to use the term Comparative Politics in a sense in which Sociology would desire to annex it. His immediate aim was strictly scientific. "For our present purpose," he said, "we must throw ourselves into a state of mind to which political constitutions seem as absolutely colourless as grammatical forms—a state of mind to which the change from monarchy to democracy or from democracy to monarchy seems as little a matter of moral praise or blame as the process by which the Latin language

changed into the French or the process by which the High German parted off from the Low. For the purposes then of the study of Comparative Politics, a political constitution is a specimen to be studied, classified, and labelled, as a building or an animal is studied, classified, and labelled by those to whom buildings or animals are objects of study." Of course, when we consider the great part often taken by conspicuous men in effecting changes of political institutions, it is impossible to eliminate moral factors: but here we leave the domain of science for that of history. For scientific as distinguished from historical inquiry the mental attitude described by Freeman appears to me to be correct. But he at once proceeds to limit the range of the Comparative Method in precisely the same way in which it was limited by Maine in his well-known controversy with the McLennans on the subject of the Patriarchal Theory. Freeman distinguishes likenesses between any two political institutions as they may result from direct transmission—such as often occurs in the case of conquered provinces or of colonies—from simple imitation, from similar causes producing similar effects, or from derivation from a common source. It is with this last class of likenesses only that, according to his view, the study of Comparative Politics is concerned. He accepts the theory, taken mainly from the science of language, that the now parted nations once formed one nation, and holds that at the dispersion each band took with it not only a common tongue, a common mythology, a common store of the arts of life but also certain principles and traditions of political life common to the whole family. These offshoots of a common stock, and these alone are the object of Comparative Politics as he expounds the matter: likenesses not due to derivation from a common source he almost entirely disregards. He does not question—indeed he actually asserts—the strong probability that "much that is common to the various branches of the Aryan family comes from sources common to the Aryans along with other divisions of mankind." But he confines himself in the ancient world to Greeks and Romans, and in the ancient, mediæval and modern worlds to Teutons, leaving wider inquiries to others, and contented to be sure of his footing on his own ground. He deals with the State itself, the head of the State, the King, and its body, the Assembly; and finds in Hellenic, Italian and Teutonic antiquity alike, the germs alike of the monarchic, the aristocratic, and the democratic principles of government. Everywhere he puts the tribe before civic or national institutions; he contrasts the Hellenic and Italian

conception of the State as a city with the modern conception of a national State and asserts broadly that "the Teutons passed from the tribal stage into the national stage without ever going through the city stage at all." He traces the idea of kingship from the Homeric king, Zeus-born and Zeus nourished, down to the constitutional monarchies of modern times. He distinguishes between primary and representative assemblies and in primary assemblies finds everywhere a general assembly of the people, a smaller council of hereditary nobles, of elders serving for life, or of magistrates or senators clothed with temporary authority. He recognises of course the comparatively modern device of representation, and contends that the functions of legislator, judge, juror and witness, now so distinct, were originally intermingled, and that all grew out of the Assembly, which being itself the people exercised every kind of political power.

I do not think it is to be regretted that Freeman limited himself to the affiliation of institutions. At the time when he wrote the idea of evolution had not been widely recognised as sweeping over a far greater range than the idea of derivation. Nor had the anthropological data been then collected and collated in their present abundance, enabling us to move in every direction far beyond the centre of Western civilisation, even although from that civilisation light beams wherever else we may be led by the spirit of reason and inquiry. There is this great advantage in the study of Greek, Roman and Teuton institutions that we are at any rate on historical ground, and on ground thoroughly explored by generations of able scholars. The value under modern conditions of classical education is no part of my present theme; but even if we are to suppose that a mediæval system has now outlasted its original purposes, it is at all events a most important and sociologically a most valuable result of its survival that the labours of scholars have kept alive, as part of our common intellectual heritage, a vivid and lasting memory of the only two civilisations which have ever existed that are really comparable with our own. It is as a starting point that such a work as Freeman's helps us in Sociology. The affiliation of institutions traced by a competent scholar in one part of the world suggests numerous points for evolutionary inquiry and its results based upon sound, if not all-embracing, historical investigation may serve as a standard with which to compare conclusions already suggested or to be suggested by the examination of further evidence.

Passing now from Freeman to Herbert Spencer, who, whatever

view may be held of him as a metaphysician, was certainly a great apostle of evolution, we are no longer concerned with the fortunes of a part only of one great race in one continent; we are called to the survey of all races in all continents, indeed in all parts of the globe.

Both with Freeman and with Spencer we are in a climate of science. Spencer is as emphatic as Freeman in insisting on a scientific medium for our vision. In pursuing sociological inquiries into political institutions "we must," he says, "as much as possible, exclude whatever emotions the facts are calculated to excite, and attend solely to the interpretation of the facts." In this pursuit he is untrammelled by the limits of time or space or race voluntarily accepted by others whom I have mentioned. He does not confine himself to mature political systems; he does not deal with Aryan institutions either alone or primarily. A characteristic illustration of his method may be taken from his account of the militant type of society. He expounds certain conditions, manifestly *à priori*, which "have to be fulfilled by a society fitted for preserving itself in presence of antagonist societies." Then he goes on to say "on inspecting sundry societies, past and present, large and small, which are, or have been, characterized in a high degree by militancy, we are shewn, *à posteriori*, that amid the differences due to race, to circumstances, and to degrees of development, there are fundamental similarities of the kinds above inferred *à priori*." And in exemplification he instances modern Dahomey, Russia, ancient Peru, Egypt, Sparta, imperial Rome, imperial Germany, and—as he puts it—England itself "since its late aggressive activities."

I am afraid that Herbert Spencer, when on his favourite theme of the contrast between industrial and military societies, does not always maintain that scientific detachment of mind which he regards as essential to the right interpretation of political phenomena. At any rate his description of the industrial type of society seems open to the criticisms that it is a description of a state of society which has never yet existed and appears unlikely to come into existence in the near future; and that it omits to note that predatory instincts are not destroyed by the discovery of new methods of depredation, and that gambling, and commercial speculation, nay, even certain forms of commerce itself may be as ruthlessly callous to social and domestic misery as ever the military spirit was to mutilation and slaughter.

At the end of his discussion of political institutions Herbert Spencer goes even further and abandoning science for guesswork

asks "through what phases political evolution is likely hereafter to pass." I mention his admiration for industrialism with its implication of the political doctrine of *laissez faire*, because it appears to me to disclose a bias which colours a great deal of his political philosophy. There are other difficulties, both general and special, in estimating the true value of that philosophy. A general difficulty is the deductive character of his system as a whole, supplemented though it be by inductive illustrations. The doubt frequently occurs whether induction has been carried far enough. The special difficulties are explained by Herbert Spencer himself. He was not able to spare more than two years for the investigation of political organisations generally. The task would need a lifetime and he felt that his results would be imperfect. But he found himself compelled to deal with political evolution as part of the general theory of evolution; and hoped for justification from the stability of his leading conclusions after inevitable errors had been knocked away. He utilised, in addition to other materials, those gathered during fourteen years in the *Descriptive Sociology* compiled by his assistants; so that, besides other doubts, when we come across a seemingly dogmatic assertion with nothing better than *a priori* support, there is the uncertainty whether, after all, sufficient proof may not be buried somewhere or other in the ponderous tomes of the *Descriptive Sociology*.

Apart from the theory, on which I have already touched, that industrialism tends to supplant militarism, the leading conclusions are that primarily political development is a process of integration, and that as small, incoherent, social aggregates gain in mass, become integrated and pass from uniformity to multiformity, political organisation becomes more and more defined. The biological analogy, which Herbert Spencer presses so far in the portion of his work which he entitles "Inductions of Sociology," thus remains supreme; as indeed was necessary; for the transformation from homogeneity to heterogeneity, with certain accompanying consequences, is the dominant principle in the Spencerian philosophy.

Nowadays it might perhaps be said that it is superfluous to take trouble to prove such obvious facts as those of political integration and differentiation. The wandering bands supported by the chase, the shepherds and herdsmen moving over wide pastures, the tribes settled down in village communities to till the soil, the villages coalescing to form cities, and the tribes being gradually transformed into nations or states,—the stuff that great Empires or

federations are made of—all this is matter of common knowledge; so too are the formation of castes, and guilds, the classification of society into ruling houses, nobility, freemen, serfs or other dependants, and in ancient times, slaves, or later into royal families, nobles, citizens or the middle classes, and the people or the proletariat, the severance of legislative, judicial and executive functions, and of the official bodies which exercise them. If some such description of political integration and differentiation were now to be regarded as almost too trite to need justification, it must be remembered that in making it I have only very partially followed Spencer, though I have, I believe, adhered to his leading conclusions; that in the past forty years the spread of Darwinism and the integration of Germany and Italy have strongly emphasised the biological analogy; and that Spencerian ideas, more or less amalgamated with other metal, have long been part of the current coin of periodical literature. Even if it be granted that political integration and differentiation were before Spencer's day already patent to some historical observers Spencer deserves the credit of showing their connection with the general theory of evolution as he stated it.

It is no part of my present intention to offer a criticism of Spencer's political philosophy. I have alluded to him merely in illustration of the evolutionary aspect of comparative politics. But I may perhaps be permitted to offer an illustration, not by way of criticism, but by way of confirmation of the view that specialisation of function is a concomitant of political progress. So far as I can recall a mental process which occurred now some thirty years ago, the extremely rapid severance between different government departments in India generally and more particularly in my own Province, the Punjab,—a severance which I then took, as I take it now, to be covered by Spencer's formula—was one of the chief circumstances which induced me to say in a law-book, which I wrote about that time, that "the doctrine of evolution has overstepped the domain of merely physical science, and has asserted its authority, not only in the realm of law, but in the whole territory of social existence." In the Punjab political differentiation has been quite strikingly exhibited. After the second Sikh war the government of the country was entrusted to a Board of Administration consisting of Henry Lawrence, John Lawrence, and Mr. Mansel. Lord Dalhousie's despatch constituting the Board declared that "every civil functionary from the Board to the *Kardar*"—the *Kardar* was the Sikh local official whose place has been taken by the *Tahsildar*

or sub-collector—" will be vested with judicial, fiscal, and magisterial powers." When I came to the Punjab in 1871 patriarchal rule was already on the wane, the Board had been severed into a Lieutenant Governor, a chief court then of three, now of five judges, and a so-called Financial Commissioner who was really the Revenue minister for the Province. The District Officer was not so much of a king in his own district as he had been some years before : and he now sometimes complains that he is the servant not only of the Local Government, as no doubt he should be, but of some fifteen separate Government Departments. This multiplication of official functionaries is called the growth of departmentalism. Observe that I do not say whether it is a good thing or a bad thing. I merely note its consistency with the laws of political development.

I mentioned early in this paper that my main object this evening was to suggest that Comparative Politics should be admitted as part of the programme of our Society. I have put forward a tentative definition of Sociology—subject to amendment with the advance of the science—and I have described at some length the science of Comparative Politics, as I understand it, in its statical, affiliative and evolutionary aspects. The tentative definition includes the scientific study of the institutions of mankind in successive stages of society. I hope that by putting the definition and the description together I may have succeeded in my aim ; and may have convinced you that the scientific examination of political evolution on the basis of ascertained facts ought to be one of the objects of Sociology.

I must, however, add the caution that we must avoid over-sanguine anticipations of the results to be obtained by the application of the Comparative Method in politics. We may indicate broadly successive stages of political growth—tribal, præ-feudal, feudal, monarchic, constitutional, democratic—but the process of evolution itself is not perfect, and we must not allow ourselves to suppose that every society has necessarily in the past gone through every stage which, on a generalised survey of political evolution as a whole, would be regarded as earlier than the stage in which we find it. More easily could we maintain the converse proposition that every mature society has, in its progress, at one time or another, overleapt some recognised stage.* But it is a great gain if

* The passage in the text was suggested by the following excellent remarks of Sir Frederick Pollock and the late Professor F. W. Maitland. They are copied from Sir Frederick Pollock's *Commentary on Maine's Ancient Law*, pp. 22 and 178.

Sir Frederick Pollock writes : "We constantly speak of one rule or custom as belonging to a more advanced stage of ideas than another ; but this does not mean that in every society where it is found it must have been preceded in fact by a less advanced institution belonging to the next lower grade of culture. Imitation of neighbours or conquerors, or peculiar local conditions may materially shorten a given stage in the normal development or even cut it out altogether. What we do mean is that the order is not found reversed. Chalk is not everywhere in England, nor red sandstone ; but where red sandstone is we know that chalk is not below it. Iron was known in Africa so early that Africa may be said not to have had a bronze age ; but this does not make it more credible that any tribe should ever have abandoned iron for bronze. In like manner there may have been tribes that had law-givers almost or quite as soon as they had judges. But no one has heard of a nation which, having acquired a body of legislation, reverted to customary law."

Professor Maitland said : "Even had our anthropologists at their command material that would justify them in prescribing a normal programme for the human race, and in decreeing that every independent portion of mankind must, if it is to move at all, move through one fated series of stages, which may be designated as Stage A, Stage B, Stage C, and so forth, we should still have to face the fact that the rapidly progressive groups have been just those which have not been independent, which have not worked out their own salvation, but have appropriated alien ideas, and have thus been enabled, for anything that we can tell, to leap from Stage A to Stage X without passing through any intermediate stages. Our Anglo-Saxon ancestors did not arrive at the alphabet, or at the Nicene Creed, by traversing a long series of stages ; they leapt to the one and to the other."—*Domesday Book and Beyond*, p. 345.

we know for certain that particular stages are earlier than others, and if we give that knowledge practical effect. With societies, as with individuals, mental progress—and therefore the progress of institutions corresponding to ideas—proceeds at extraordinarily different rates of speed. Not only do direct transmission and imitation transform normal growth but like conditions leading to like functions are found at very different stages of culture. The conception, however, of a normal political growth, which must be carefully handled if the results are not to be noxious and dangerous, has a deep political importance in such an Empire as ours, comprising, as it does, races in very various stages—perhaps in every stage—of political development. In proportion as we grasp and apply the principles to be gathered from Comparative Politics we shall be likely to avoid the perilous anachronism of imposing on the less advanced societies political institutions for which they are not prepared.

That is at least one ethical and political consequence which may follow from the study advocated ; and there may be others. I have dwelt on the necessity of treating Comparative Politics in a

purely scientific spirit but I would guard against the possible misapprehension that the study, as I conceive of it, is without ethical import. As with the whole field of Sociology so also is it with this part of it. Scientific inquiry, as such, has no practical aim; it seeks truth and truth alone; but its practical results are enormous. Faith in Sociology means faith in scientific method, and I have faith in the application of scientific methods to politics. Whatever we may discover to have been the tendencies of the past, whatever we may suppose to be the tendencies of the present, we are the lords and masters, not the slaves, of the laws of nature. To know them aright is to be able to command them; and it is here that we see the ethical import of scientific political inquiries. Your ideal may be monarchical, aristocratic, democratic, what you will, but science declares that you must measure your ideal against facts; and, for any practical and lasting realisations, must utilise the laws which it points out: unless indeed by ignoring those laws you bring on greater mischief where you seek amelioration. In politics, as in our relations with physical nature, suffering is the penalty of ignorance.

We must admit, of course, that the moral and political world does not stand still. Unceasing change is one of the laws not merely of organic evolution but of the universe. The earth did not pause upon its axis or in its course around the sun while Newton was identifying terrestrial and celestial mechanics. We cannot put off dealing with the evils of the day until we have before us the scientific conclusions of Sociology. The dangers of vicious systems of education, of poverty rebelling against its miseries, of class interests driven to fierce rivalry by the desire or possession of wealth, of crushing monopolies, of armaments designed for the slaughter of thousands of men in the prime of life by war between civilised countries,—these must be faced with the time-worn weapons of *à priori* doctrines and empirical conclusions drawn from statistics and imperfect observation of current affairs; and also—not to overstate the case—from the consolidated experience of social and political necessities which is part of the social heritage of civilisation. But granting that this experience, amassed but not yet fully organised, is, in some degree, a means of deliverance, is it too much to hope that at last, after groping our way with many stumbling through the blindness and the darkness of the ages, we perceive, I will not say daylight but the far-off glimmer of a dawn promising an eventual illumination to enable us to see, with some approach to certitude, what are the true lines of advance? And if

these true lines can be ascertained will it not be the duty of ourselves or of posterity to make them practically serviceable by the conversion and use of popular sentiment—the strongest force in the world, a force stronger than ironclads or repeating rifles or machine guns because it is ultimately that force itself which forbids or commands, ratifies or reprobates their use for destruction and massacre? I for one will not abandon the hope to which I have referred until it is conclusively demonstrated that Sociology is merely one more of the mind-begotten phantoms which have deluded philosophers and misled the crowd. Until that demonstration is forced upon me I shall continue to believe that the application of scientific methods to the interpretation of social and political facts will increase the strength of humanity in its unceasing contest with the giant evils which oppress mankind.

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