

DARWINISM AND HISTORY ¹

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1.

Evolution, and the principles associated with the Darwinian theory, could not fail to exert a considerable influence on the studies connected with the history of civilised man. The speculations which are known as “philosophy of history”, as well as the sciences of anthropology, ethnography, and sociology (sciences which though they stand on their own feet are for the historian auxiliary), have been deeply affected by these principles. Historiographers, indeed, have with few exceptions made little attempt to apply them; but the growth of historical study in the nineteenth century has been determined and characterised by the same general principle which has underlain the simultaneous developments of the study of nature, namely the “genetic idea”. The “historical” conception of nature, which has produced the history of the solar system, the story of the earth, the genealogies of telluric organisms, and has revolutionised natural science, belongs to the same order of thought as the conception of human history as a continuous, genetic, causal process – a conception which has revolutionised historical research and made it scientific. Before proceeding to consider the application of evolutionary principles, it will be pertinent to notice the rise of this new view.

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2.

With the Greeks and Romans history had been either a descriptive record or had been written in practical interests. The most eminent of the ancient historians were pragmatical; that is, they regarded history as an instructress in statesmanship, or in the art of war, or in morals. Their records reached back such a short way, their experience was so brief, that they never attained to the conception of continuous process, or realised the significance of time; and they never viewed the history of human societies as a phenomenon to be investigated for its own sake. In the middle ages there was still less chance of the emergence of the ideas of progress and development. Such notions were excluded by the fundamental doctrines of the dominant religion which bounded and bound men's minds. As the course of history was held to be determined from hour to hour by the arbitrary will of an extra cosmic person, there could be no self-contained causal development, only a dispensation imposed from without. And as it was believed that the world was within no great distance from the end of this dispensation, there was no motive to take much interest in understanding the temporal, which was to be only temporary.

The intellectual movements of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries prepared the way for a new conception, but it did not emerge immediately. The historians of the Renaissance period simply reverted to the ancient pragmatical view. For Machiavelli, exactly as for Thucydides and Polybius, the use of studying history was instruction in the art of politics. The Renaissance itself was the appearance of a new culture, different from anything that had gone before; but at the time men were not conscious of this; they saw clearly that the traditions of classical antiquity had been lost for a long period, and they were seeking to revive them, but otherwise they did not perceive that the world had moved, and that their own spirit, culture, and conditions were entirely unlike those of the thirteenth century. It was hardly till the seventeenth century that the presence of a new age, as different from the middle ages as from the ages of Greece and Rome, was fully realised. It was then that the triple division of ancient, medieval, and modern was first applied to the history of western civilisation. Whatever objections may be urged against this division, which has now become almost a category of thought, it marks a most significant advance in man's view of his own past. He has become conscious of the immense changes in civilisation which have come about slowly in the course of time, and history confronts him with a new aspect. He has to explain how those changes have

been produced, how the transformations were effected. The appearance of this problem was almost simultaneous with the rise of rationalism, and the great historians and thinkers of the eighteenth century, such as Montesquieu, Voltaire, Gibbon, attempted to explain the movement of civilisation by purely natural causes. These brilliant writers prepared the way for the genetic history of the following century. But in the spirit of the *Aufklaerung*, that eighteenth-century Enlightenment to which they belonged, they were concerned to judge all phenomena before the tribunal of reason; and the apotheosis of “reason” tended to foster a certain superior *a priori* attitude, which was not favourable to objective treatment and was incompatible with a “historical sense”. Moreover the traditions of pragmatism had by no means disappeared.

3.

In the first quarter of the nineteenth century the meaning of genetic history was fully realised. “Genetic” perhaps is as good a word as can be found for the conception which in this century was applied to so many branches of knowledge in the spheres both of nature and of mind. It does not commit us to the doctrine proper of evolution, nor yet to any teleological hypothesis such as is implied in “progress”. For history it meant that the present condition of the human race is simply and strictly the result of a causal series (or set of causal series) – a continuous succession of changes, where each state arises causally out of the preceding; and that the business of historians is to trace this genetic process, to explain each change, and ultimately to grasp the complete development of the life of humanity. Three influential writers, who appeared at this stage and helped to initiate a new period of research, may specially be mentioned. Ranke in 1824 definitely repudiated the pragmatism which ascribes to history the duties of an instructress, and with no less decision renounced the function, assumed by the historians of the *Aufklaerung*, to judge the past; it was his business, he said, merely to show how things really happened. Niebuhr was already working in the same spirit and did more than any other writer to establish the principle that historical transactions must be related to the ideas and conditions of their age. Savigny about the same time founded the “historical school” of law. He sought to show that law was not the creation of an enlightened will, but grew out of custom and was developed by a series of adaptations and rejections, thus applying the conception of evolution. He helped to diffuse the notion that all the institutions of a society or a nation are as closely interconnected as the parts of a living organism.

4.

The conception of the history of man as a causal development meant the elevation of historical inquiry to the dignity of a science. Just as the study of bees cannot become scientific so long as the student's interest in them is only to procure honey or to derive moral lessons from the labours of "the little busy bee", so the history of human societies cannot become the object of pure scientific investigation so long as man estimates its value in pragmatical scales. Nor can it become a science until it is conceived as lying entirely within a sphere in which the law of cause and effect has unreserved and unrestricted dominion. On the other hand, once history is envisaged as a causal process, which contains within itself the explanation of the development of man from his primitive state to the point which he has reached, such a process necessarily becomes the object of scientific investigation and the interest in it is scientific curiosity.

At the same time, the instruments were sharpened and refined. Here Wolf, a philologist with historical instinct, was a pioneer. His *Prolegomena to Homer* (1795) announced new modes of attack. Historical investigation was soon transformed by the elaboration of new methods.

5.

"Progress" involves a judgment of value, which is not involved in the conception of history as a genetic process. It is also an idea distinct from that of evolution. Nevertheless it is closely related to the ideas which revolutionised history at the beginning of the last century; it swam into men's ken simultaneously; and it helped effectively to establish the notion of history as a continuous process and to emphasise the significance of time. Passing over earlier anticipations, I may point to a *Discours* of Turgot (1750), where history is presented as a process in which "the total mass of the human race" "marches continually though sometimes slowly to an ever increasing perfection". That is a clear statement of the conception which Turgot's friend Condorcet elaborated in the famous work, published in 1795, *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progres de l'esprit humain*. This work first treated with explicit fulness the idea to which a leading role was to fall in the ideology of the nineteenth century. Condorcet's book reflects the triumphs of the *Tiers etat*, whose growing importance had also inspired Turgot; it was the political changes in the eighteenth century which led to the doctrine, emphatically formulated by Condorcet, that the masses are the

most important element in the historical process. I dwell on this because, though Condorcet had no idea of evolution, the predominant importance of the masses was the assumption which made it possible to apply evolutionary principles to history. And it enabled Condorcet himself to maintain that the history of civilisation, a progress still far from being complete, was a development conditioned by general laws.

6.

The assimilation of society to an organism, which was a governing notion in the school of Savigny, and the conception of progress, combined to produce the idea of an organic development, in which the historian has to determine the central principle or leading character.

This is illustrated by the apotheosis of democracy in Tocqueville's *Democratie en Amerique*, where the theory is maintained that "the gradual and progressive development of equality is at once the past and the future of the history of men". The same two principles are combined in the doctrine of Spencer (who held that society is an organism, though he also contemplated its being what he calls a "super-organic aggregate"),² that social evolution is a progressive change from militarism to industrialism.

7.

The idea of development assumed another form in the speculations of German idealism. Hegel conceived the successive periods of history as corresponding to the ascending phases or ideas in the self-evolution of his Absolute Being. His *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* were published in 1837 after his death. His philosophy had a considerable effect, direct and indirect, on the treatment of history by historians, and although he was superficial and unscientific himself in dealing with historical phenomena, he contributed much towards making the idea of historical development familiar. Ranke was influenced, if not by Hegel himself, at least by the Idealistic philosophies of which Hegel's was the greatest. He was inclined to

² A society presents suggestive analogies with an organism, but it certainly is not an organism, and sociologists who draw inferences from the assumption of its organic nature must fall into error. A vital organism and a society are radically distinguished by the fact that the individual components of the former, namely the cells, are morphologically as well as functionally differentiated, whereas the individuals which compose a society are morphologically homogeneous and only functionally differentiated. The resemblances and the differences are worked out in E. de Majewski's striking book, *La Science de la Civilisation*. Paris. 1908.

conceive the stages in the process of history as marked by incarnations, as it were, of ideas, and sometimes speaks as if the ideas were independent forces, with hands and feet. But while Hegel determined his ideas by *a priori* logic, Ranke obtained his by induction – by a strict investigation of the phenomena; so that he was scientific in his method and work, and was influenced by Hegelian prepossessions only in the kind of significance which he was disposed to ascribe to his results. It is to be noted that the theory of Hegel implied a judgment of value; the movement was a progress towards perfection.

8.

In France, Comte approached the subject from a different side, and exercised, outside Germany, a far wider influence than Hegel. The 4th volume of his *Cours de philosophie positive*, which appeared in 1839, created sociology and treated history as a part of this new science, namely as “social dynamics”. Comte sought the key for unfolding historical development, in what he called the social-psychological point of view, and he worked out the two ideas which had been enunciated by Condorcet: that the historian’s attention should be directed not, as hitherto, principally to eminent individuals, but to the collective behaviour of the masses, as being the most important element in the process; and that, as in nature, so in history, there are general laws, necessary and constant, which condition the development. The two points are intimately connected, for it is only when the masses are moved into the foreground that regularity, uniformity, and law can be conceived as applicable. To determine the social-psychological laws which have controlled the development is, according to Comte, the task of sociologists and historians.

9.

The hypothesis of general laws operative in history was carried further in a book which appeared in England twenty years later and exercised an influence in Europe far beyond its intrinsic merit, Buckle’s *History of Civilisation in England* (1857-61). Buckle owed much to Comte, and followed him, or rather outdid him, in regarding intellect as the most important factor conditioning the upward development of man, so that progress, according to him, consisted in the victory of the intellectual over the moral laws.

10.

The tendency of Comte and Buckle to assimilate history to the sciences of nature by reducing it to general “laws”, derived stimulus and plausibility from the vista offered by the study of statistics, in which the Belgian Quetelet, whose book *Sur l’homme* appeared in 1835, discerned endless possibilities. The astonishing uniformities which statistical inquiry disclosed led to the belief that it was only a question of collecting a sufficient amount of statistical material, to enable us to predict how a given social group will act in a particular case. Bourdeau, a disciple of this school, looks forward to the time when historical science will become entirely quantitative.

The actions of prominent individuals, which are generally considered to have altered or determined the course of things, are obviously not amenable to statistical computation or explicable by general laws. Thinkers like Buckle sought to minimise their importance or explain them away.

11.

These indications may suffice to show that the new efforts to interpret history which marked the first half of the nineteenth century were governed by conceptions closely related to those which were current in the field of natural science and which resulted in the doctrine of evolution. The genetic principle, progressive development, general laws, the significance of time, the conception of society as an organic aggregate, the metaphysical theory of history as the self-evolution of spirit, – all these ideas show that historical inquiry had been advancing independently on somewhat parallel lines to the sciences of nature. It was necessary to bring this out in order to appreciate the influence of Darwinism.

12.

In the course of the dozen years which elapsed between the appearances of *The Origin of Species* (observe that the first volume of Buckle’s work was published just two years before) and of *The Descent of Man* (1871), the hypothesis of Lamarck that man is the co-descendant with other species of some lower extinct form was admitted to have been raised to the rank of an established fact by most thinkers whose brains were not working under the constraint of theological authority.

One important effect of the discovery of this fact (I am not speaking now of the Darwinian explanation) was to assign to history a definite place in the coordinated whole of knowledge, and relate it more closely to other sciences. It had indeed a defined logical place in systems such as Hegel's and Comte's; but Darwinism certified its standing convincingly and without more ado. The prevailing doctrine that man was created *ex abrupto* had placed history in an isolated position, disconnected with the sciences of nature. Anthropology, which deals with the animal *anthropos*, now comes into line with zoology, and brings it into relation with history.³ Man's condition at the present day is the result of a series of transformations, going back to the most primitive phase of society, which is the ideal (unattainable) beginning of history. But that beginning had emerged without any breach of continuity from a development which carries us back to a quadrumanous ancestor, still further back (according to Darwin's conjecture) to a marine animal of the ascidian type, and then through remoter periods to the lowest form of organism. It is essential in this theory that though links have been lost there was no break in the gradual development; and this conception of a continuous progress in the evolution of life, resulting in the appearance of uncivilised Anthropos, helped to reinforce, and increase a belief in, the conception of the history of civilised Anthropos as itself also a continuous progressive development.

13.

Thus the diffusion of the Darwinian theory of the origin of man, by emphasising the idea of continuity and breaking down the barriers between the human and animal kingdoms, has had an important effect in establishing the position of history among the sciences which deal with telluric development. The perspective of history is merged in a larger perspective of development. As one of the objects of biology is to find the exact steps in the genealogy of man from the lowest organic form, so the scope of history

³ It is to be observed that history is (not only different in scope but) not co-extensive with anthropology *in time*. For it deals only with the development of man in societies, whereas anthropology includes in its definition the proto-anthropic period when *anthropos* was still non-social, whether he lived in herds like the chimpanzee, or alone like the male orang-outang. (It has been well shown by Majewski that congregations – herds, flocks, packs, &c. – of animals are not *societies*; the characteristic of a society is differentiation of function. Bee hives, ant hills, may be called quasi-societies; but in their case the classes which perform distinct functions are morphologically different.)

is to determine the stages in the unique causal series from the most rudimentary to the present state of human civilisation.

It is to be observed that the interest in historical research implied by this conception need not be that of Comte. In the Positive Philosophy history is part of sociology; the interest in it is to discover the sociological laws. In the view of which I have just spoken, history is permitted to be an end in itself; the reconstruction of the genetic process is an independent interest. For the purpose of the reconstruction, sociology, as well as physical geography, biology, psychology, is necessary; the sociologist and the historian play into each other's hands; but the object of the former is to establish generalisations; the aim of the latter is to trace in detail a singular causal sequence.

14.

The success of the evolutionary theory helped to discredit the assumption or at least the invocation of transcendent causes.

Philosophically of course it is compatible with theism, but historians have for the most part desisted from invoking the naive conception of a "god in history" to explain historical movements. A historian may be a theist; but, so far as his work is concerned, this particular belief is otiose. Otherwise indeed (as was remarked above) history could not be a science; for with a *deus ex machina* who can be brought on the stage to solve difficulties scientific treatment is a farce. The transcendent element had appeared in a more subtle form through the influence of German philosophy. I noticed how Ranke is prone to refer to ideas as if they were transcendent existences manifesting themselves in the successive movements of history. It is intelligible to speak of certain ideas as controlling, in a given period, – for instance, the idea of nationality; but from the scientific point of view, such ideas have no existence outside the minds of individuals and are purely psychological forces; and a historical "idea", if it does not exist in this form, is merely a way of expressing a synthesis of the historian himself.

15.

From the more general influence of Darwinism on the place of history in the system of human knowledge, we may turn to the influence of the principles and methods by which Darwin explained development. It had been recognised even by ancient writers (such as Aristotle and Polybius) that

physical circumstances (geography, climate) were factors conditioning the character and history of a race or society. In the sixteenth century Bodin emphasised these factors, and many subsequent writers took them into account. The investigations of Darwin, which brought them into the foreground, naturally promoted attempts to discover in them the chief key to the growth of civilisation. Comte had expressly denounced the notion that the biological methods of Lamarck could be applied to social man. Buckle had taken account of natural influences, but had relegated them to a secondary plane, compared with psychological factors. But the Darwinian theory made it tempting to explain the development of civilisation in terms of “adaptation to environment”, “struggle for existence”, “natural selection”, “survival of the fittest”, etc.⁴

The operation of these principles cannot be denied. Man is still an animal, subject to zoological as well as mechanical laws. The dark influence of heredity continues to be effective; and psychical development had begun in lower organic forms, – perhaps with life itself. The organic and the social struggles for existence are manifestations of the same principle. Environment and climatic influence must be called in to explain not only the differentiation of the great racial sections of humanity, but also the varieties within these sub-species and, it may be, the assimilation of distinct varieties. Ritter’s *Anthropogeography* has opened a useful line of research. But on the other hand, it is urged that, in explaining the course of history, these principles do not take us very far, and that it is chiefly for the primitive ultra-prehistoric period that they can account for human development. It may be said that, so far as concerns the actions and movements of men which are the subject of recorded history, physical environment has ceased to act mechanically, and in order to affect their actions must affect their wills first; and that this psychical character of the causal relations substantially alters the problem. The development of human societies, it may be argued, derives a completely new character from the dominance of the conscious psychical element, creating as it does new conditions (inventions, social institutions, etc.) which limit and counteract the operation of natural selection, and control and modify the influence of physical environment. Most thinkers agree now that the chief clews to the growth of civilisation must be sought in the psychological sphere.

⁴ Recently O. Seeck has applied these principles to the decline of Graeco-Roman civilisation in his *Untergang der antiken Welt*, 2 vols., Berlin, 1895, 1901.

Imitation, for instance, is a principle which is probably more significant for the explanation of human development than natural selection. Darwin himself was conscious that his principles had only a very restricted application in this sphere, as is evident from his cautious and tentative remarks in the 5th chapter of his *Descent of Man*. He applied natural selection to the growth of the intellectual faculties and of the fundamental social instincts, and also to the differentiation of the great races or “sub-species” (Caucasian, African, etc.) which differ in anthropological character.⁵

16.

But if it is admitted that the governing factors which concern the student of social development are of the psychical order, the preliminary success of natural science in explaining organic evolution by general principles encouraged sociologists to hope that social evolution could be explained on general principles also. The idea of Condorcet, Buckle, and others, that history could be assimilated to the natural sciences was powerfully reinforced, and the notion that the actual historical process, and every social movement involved in it, can be accounted for by sociological generalisations, so-called “laws”, is still entertained by many, in one form or another.

Dissentients from this view do not deny that the generalisations at which the sociologist arrives by the comparative method, by the analysis of social factors, and by psychological deduction may be an aid to the historian; but they deny that such uniformities are laws or contain an explanation of the phenomena. They can point to the element of chance coincidence. This element must have played a part in the events of organic evolution, but it has probably in a larger measure helped to determine events in social evolution. The collision of two unconnected sequences may be fraught with great results. The sudden death of a leader or a marriage without issue, to take simple cases, has again and again led to permanent political consequences.

⁵ Darwinian formulae may be suggestive by way of analogy. For instance, it is characteristic of social advance that a multitude of inventions, schemes and plans are framed which are never carried out, similar to, or designed for the same end as, an invention or plan which is actually adopted because it has chanced to suit better the particular conditions of the hour (just as the works accomplished by an individual statesman, artist or savant are usually only a residue of the numerous projects conceived by his brain). This process in which so much abortive production occurs is analogous to elimination by natural selection.

More emphasis is laid on the decisive actions of individuals, which cannot be reduced under generalisations and which deflect the course of events. If the significance of the individual will had been exaggerated to the neglect of the collective activity of the social aggregate before Condorcet, his doctrine tended to eliminate as unimportant the roles of prominent men, and by means of this elimination it was possible to found sociology. But it may be urged that it is patent on the face of history that its course has constantly been shaped and modified by the wills of individuals,⁶ which are by no means always the expression of the collective will; and that the appearance of such personalities at the given moments is not a necessary outcome of the conditions and cannot be deduced. Nor is there any proof that, if such and such an individual had not been born, some one else would have arisen to do what he did. In some cases there is no reason to think that what happened need ever have come to pass. In other cases, it seems evident that the actual change was inevitable, but in default of the man who initiated and guided it, it might have been postponed, and, postponed or not, might have borne a different cachet. I may illustrate by an instance which has just come under my notice. Modern painting was founded by Giotto, and the Italian expedition of Charles VIII, near the close of the sixteenth century, introduced into France the fashion of imitating Italian painters. But for Giotto and Charles VIII, French painting might have been very different. It may be said that “if Giotto had not appeared, some other great imitator would have played a role analogous to his, and that without Charles VIII there would have been the commerce with Italy, which in the long run would have sufficed to place France in relation with Italian artists. But the equivalent of Giotto might have been deferred for a century and probably would have been different; and commercial relations would have required ages to produce the *rayonnement imitatif* of Italian art in France, which the expedition of the royal adventurer provoked in a few years”.⁷ Instances furnished by political history are simply endless. Can we conjecture how events would have moved if the son of Philip of Macedon had been an incompetent? The aggressive action of Prussia which astonished Europe in 1740 determined the subsequent history of Germany; but that action was

⁶ We can ignore here the metaphysical question of freewill and determinism. For the character of the individual's brain depends in any case on ante-natal accidents and coincidences, and so it may be said that the role of individuals ultimately depends on chance, – the accidental coincidence of independent sequences.

⁷ I have taken this example from G. Tarde's *La logique sociale* (p. 403), Paris, 1904, where it is used for quite a different purpose.

anything but inevitable; it depended entirely on the personality of Frederick the Great. Hence it may be argued that the action of individual wills is a determining and disturbing factor, too significant and effective to allow history to be grasped by sociological formulae. The types and general forms of development which the sociologist attempts to disengage can only assist the historian in understanding the actual course of events. It is in the special domains of economic history and *Culturgeschichte* which have come to the front in modern times that generalisation is most fruitful, but even in these it may be contended that it furnishes only partial explanations.

17.

The truth is that Darwinism itself offers the best illustration of the insufficiency of general laws to account for historical development. The part played by coincidence, and the part played by individuals – limited by, and related to, general social conditions – render it impossible to deduce the course of the past history of man or to predict the future. But it is just the same with organic development. Darwin (or any other zoologist) could not deduce the actual course of evolution from general principles. Given an organism and its environment, he could not show that it must evolve into a more complex organism of a definite predetermined type; knowing what it has evolved into, he could attempt to discover and assign the determining causes. General principles do not account for a particular sequence; they embody necessary conditions; but there is a chapter of accidents too. It is the same in the case of history.

18.

Among the evolutionary attempts to subsume the course of history under general syntheses, perhaps the most important is that of Lamprecht, whose “kulturhistorische” attempt to discover and assign the determining causes.

German history, exhibits the (indirect) influence of the Comtist school. It is based upon psychology, which, in his views, holds among the sciences of mind (*Geisteswissenschaften*) the same place (that of a *Grundwissenschaft*) which mechanics holds among the sciences of nature.

History, by the same comparison, corresponds to biology, and, according to him, it can only become scientific if it is reduced to general concepts (*Begriffe*). Historical movements and events are of a psychical character, and Lamprecht conceives a given phase of civilisation as “a collective psychical

condition (*seelischer Gesamtzustand*)” controlling the period, “a diapason which penetrates all psychological phenomena and thereby all historical events of the time”.⁸ He has worked out a series of such phases, “ages of changing psychological diapason”, in his *Deutsche Geschichte*, with the aim of showing that all the feelings and actions of each age can be explained by the diapason; and has attempted to prove that these diapasons are exhibited in other social developments, and are consequently not singular but typical. He maintains further that these ages succeed each other in a definite order; the principle being that the collective psychological development begins with the homogeneity of all the individual members of a society and, through heightened psychological activity, advances in the form of a continually increasing differentiation of the individuals (this is akin to the Spencerian formula). This process, evolving psychological freedom from psychological constraint, exhibits a series of psychological phenomena which define successive periods of civilisation. The process depends on two simple principles, that no idea can disappear without leaving behind it an effect or influence, and that all psychological life, whether in a person or a society, means change, the acquisition of new mental contents. It follows that the new have to come to terms with the old, and this leads to a synthesis which determines the character of a new age. Hence the ages of civilisation are defined as the “highest concepts for subsuming without exception all psychological phenomena of the development of human societies, that is, of all historical events”.⁹ Lamprecht deduces the idea of a special historical science, which might be called “historical ethnology”, dealing with the ages of civilisation, and bearing the same relation to (descriptive or narrative) history as ethnology to ethnography. Such a science obviously corresponds to Comte’s social dynamics, and the comparative method, on which Comte laid so much emphasis, is the principal instrument of Lamprecht.

19.

I have dwelt on the fundamental ideas of Lamprecht, because they are not yet widely known in England, and because his system is the ablest product of the sociological school of historians. It carries the more weight as its author himself is a historical specialist, and his historical syntheses deserve the most careful consideration. But there is much in the process of development which on such assumptions is not explained, especially the

⁸ *Die kulturhistorische Methode*, Berlin, 1900, p. 26.

⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 28, 29.

initiative of individuals. Historical development does not proceed in a right line, without the choice of diverging. Again and again, several roads are open to it, of which it chooses one – why? On Lamprecht's method, we may be able to assign the conditions which limit the psychical activity of men at a particular stage of evolution, but within those limits the individual has so many options, such a wide room for moving, that the definition of those conditions, the "psychical diapasons", is only part of the explanation of the particular development. The heel of Achilles in all historical speculations of this class has been the role of the individual.

The increasing prominence of economic history has tended to encourage the view that history can be explained in terms of general concepts or types. Marx and his school based their theory of human development on the conditions of production, by which, according to them, all social movements and historical changes are entirely controlled. The leading part which economic factors play in Lamprecht's system is significant, illustrating the fact that economic changes admit most readily this kind of treatment, because they have been less subject to direction or interference by individual pioneers.

Perhaps it may be thought that the conception of *social environment* (essentially psychical), on which Lamprecht's "psychical diapasons" depend, is the most valuable and fertile conception that the historian owes to the suggestion of the science of biology – the conception of all particular historical actions and movements as (1) related to and conditioned by the social environment, and (2) gradually bringing about a transformation of that environment. But no given transformation can be proved to be necessary (predetermined). And types of development do not represent laws; their meaning and value lie in the help they may give to the historian, in investigating a certain period of civilisation, to enable him to discover the inter-relations among the diverse features which it presents. They are, as some one has said, an instrument of heurctic method.

20.

The man engaged in special historical researches – which have been pursued unremittingly for a century past, according to scientific methods of investigating evidence (initiated by Wolf, Niebuhr, Ranke) – have for the most part worked on the assumptions of genetic history or at least followed in the footsteps of those who fully grasped the genetic point of view. But

their aim has been to collect and sift evidence, and determine particular facts; comparatively few have given serious thought to the lines of research and the speculations which have been considered in this paper. They have been reasonably shy of compromising their work by applying theories which are still much debated and immature. But historiography cannot permanently evade the questions raised by these theories. One may venture to say that no historical change or transformation will be fully understood until it is explained how social environment acted on the individual components of the society (both immediately and by heredity), and how the individuals reacted upon their environment. The problem is psychical, but it is analogous to the main problem of the biologist.