"In 1852 Herbert Spencer demonstrated minutely, and in a very clear and philosophic manner, the necessity of the Doctrine of Fil­iation, and established it more firmly in his excellent "Essays," which appeared in 1858, and in his "Principles of Biology," which was published at a later date [1864 and 1867]. He has, at the same time, the great merit of having applied the theory of development to psychology, and of having shown that the emotional and intellec­tual faculties could only have been acquired by degrees and de­veloped gradually." (Ernst Haeckel, The History of Creation, translated from the German, 2 Vols., D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1884. Vol. 1, p. 119)

GAIL HAMILTON

"I had Munger and Herbert Spencer out with me, and it is not only that the Heavens are opened, which they have always been, but I can see that they are opened." (Letter from Gail Hamilton /Mary Abigail Dodge/ to John G. Whittier dated 1885. Quoted in Gail Hamilton's Life in Letters, edited by H. Augusta Dodge, 2 Vols., Lee and Shepard, Boston, 1901. Vol. 2, p. 862)


"Herbert Spencer and Matthew Arnold and John Fiske are the com­pany that I drive M. to bed with. How should I remember where Mary C. was to take her lessons? I don't know St. James from St. Herbert Spencer. But won't the family generally be glad when they have ploughed through Herbert Spencer and can lie down under the apple­trees and enjoy themselves?" (Letter from Gail Hamilton /Mary Abigail Dodge/ to John G. Whittier dated 1886. Quoted in Gail Hamilton's Life in Letters, edited by H. Augusta Dodge, 2 Vols., Lee and Shepard, Boston, 1901. Vol. 2, p. 866)

"But I have been so interested in Herbert Spencer of late that I subordinate every one else to him. And, my dear Mr. Whittier, it is absolutely surprising to see how that man is misunderstood. Why, dear, has it ever occurred to you that most people are numskulls? I don't know how to spell the word, but they don't know how to read. Patriotically, I can but be glad after a fashion to see that the English literary folk are as unscholarly and stupid and inaccurate and reckless as our American, and misunderstand and misrepresent Herbert Spencer. But I have seen the heavens opened!" (Letter from Gail Hamilton /Mary Abigail Dodge/ to John G. Whittier dated August 29, 1885. Quoted in Gail Hamilton's Life in Letters, edited by H. Augusta Dodge, 2 Vols., Lee and Shepard, Boston, 1901. Vol. 2, p. 865)
"He [Karl Marx] made much the same impression on me [when Harris called on him in the early 1880's] that Herbert Spencer made twenty years later; but Spencer was contemptuously angry under contradiction [i.e., when Harris contradicted him], whereas Karl Marx was inattentively courteous. But both had shut themselves off from hearing anything against their pet theory, one sided though it was. And just as Herbert Spencer was worth listening to on everything but "the field I've made my own", so was Karl Marx." (Frank Harris, His Life and Adventures; An Autobiography, The Richards Press, London, 1952. P. 177)
"The college [Harvard] is in the midst of a ferocious fight between the scientists and the classicists, the latter having become alarmed at the inroads of the former." (Letter from Edward L. Youmans to Herbert Spencer dated November 23, 1863. Quoted in John Fiske, Edward Livingston Youmans, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1894. P. 164)

"Dr. Thomas Hill, president of the college [Harvard], told me that he was not a subscriber to the serial and had not read First Principles; but he had prepared a sermon directed against its doctrines (no names being mentioned), which he considered but a reproduction of the French atheism of the last century." (Letter from E. L. Youmans to Herbert Spencer dated November 23, 1863. Quoted in John Fiske, Edward Livingston Youmans, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1894. P. 164)

"Prof. Wm. B. Rogers [of Harvard, apparently], who has constant fights with Agassiz about the development hypothesis, was another of those appreciative friends who acknowledged the value of your labours and expressed a desire to be of assistance to our project." (Letter from Edward L. Youmans to Herbert Spencer dated November 23, 1863. Quoted in John Fiske, Edward Livingston Youmans, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1894. P. 165)
"When one has read Spencer, one has digested the most nutritious portion of all human knowledge. Also the style is worth the labour,—puissant, compact, and melodious." (Letter from Lafcadio Hearn to Elizabeth Bisland, April 14, 1887. Quoted in Elizabeth Bisland, The Life and Letters of Lafcadio Hearn, 2 Vols., Houghton Mifflin and Company, Boston, 1906. Vol. 1, p. 392)

"I am an Evolutionist, and as thorough a disciple of Spencer as it is possible for one not a practical scientist to be ...." (Letter from Lafcadio Hearn to George M. Gould, April, 1887. Quoted in Elizabeth Bisland, The Life and Letters of Lafcadio Hearn, 2 Vols., Houghton Mifflin and Company, Boston, 1906. Vol. 1, p. 394)

"When one has read Spencer, one has digested the most nutritious portion of all human knowledge. Also the style is worth the labour,—puissant, compact, and melodious." (Letter from Lafcadio Hearn to Elizabeth Bisland dated April 14, 1887. In Elizabeth Bisland, editor, The Life and Letters of Lafcadio Hearn, 2 Vols., Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1906. Vol. 1, p. 392)

"Although I have played "aesthetically" with metaphysical ideas in my books, I believe that I have a fair knowledge of the whole system of Synthetic Philosophy, and that I may call myself a disciple of its author." (Letter from Lafcadio Hearn to Professor Yrjö Hirn, December, 1890. Quoted in Elizabeth Bisland, The Life and Letters of Lafcadio Hearn, 2 Vols., Houghton Mifflin and Company, Boston, 1906. Vol. 2, p. 20)

"The colossal brain which first detected the necessity of evolution as a cosmic law,—governing the growth of a solar system as well as the growth of a gnat,—the brain of Spencer, discerned that law by pure mathematical study of the laws of force. And the work of the Darwins and Huxleys and Tyndals is but detail—in that tremendous system which has abolished all preexisting philosophy and transformed all science and education." (Letter from Lafcadio Hearn to Basil Hall Chamberlain, April, 1895. Quoted in Elizabeth Bisland, The Life and Letters of Lafcadio Hearn, 2 Vols., Houghton Mifflin and Company, Boston, 1906. Vol. 2, p. 235)

"You know what my fantastic metaphysics were. A friend disciplined me to read Herbert Spencer. I suddenly discovered what a waste of time all my Oriental metaphysics had been.... In short, from the day when I finished the 'First Principles,' a totally new intellectual life opened for me; and I hope during the next few years to devour the rest of this oceanic philosophy." (Letter from Lafcadio Hearn to Henry Edward Krehbiel, date not given. Quoted in Elizabeth Bisland, The Life and Letters of Lafcadio Hearn, 2 Vols., Houghton Mifflin and Company, Boston, 1906. Vol. 1, p. 36)
"It would be difficult to overemphasize the influence of Spencer on Herndon's thinking. Herndon carefully annotated and indexed his copy of Spencer's *The Principles of Psychology* (London, 1855) and evidently used it frequently. It is now owned by Mrs. Bertie Trainer of Springfield, Illinois." (William Herndon was Abraham Lincoln's friend and law partner. He had the best private library in Springfield, and one of the best in the West. (p. 54)) (Donald David Donald, *Lincoln's Herndon*, Alfred A Knopf, New York, 1948. P. 59n.)
"I received the other day—sent, I suppose, by you, though I did not see the address—a copy of No. 1 of the Journal of Speculative Philosophy, containing a long criticism on me from a Hegelian point of view. You named it, I fancy, some time ago. It has some sharpness here and there, but I am not conscious of being hurt by it." (Letter from Herbert Spencer to Edward L. Youmans dated July 20, 1867. Quoted in John Fiske, Edward Livingston Youmans, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1894. P. 238)

"Early in the summer of 1866 William T. Harris submitted an article on Herbert Spencer to the North American Review. Charles Eliot Norton, associate editor with James Russell Lowell, asked Chauncey Wright to read it. Wright read it aloud to his close friend E. W. Gurney, Professor of History at Harvard. Gurney pronounced it "a howling wilderness," and Wright reported to Norton that it was "the mere dry husk of Hegelianism,—dogmatic, without the only merit of dogmatism, distinctness of definition." (Thayer, J. B., (editor): Letters of Chauncey Wright. 87.) Harris read Norton's letter of rejection to a group gathered in Brokmeyer's law office. Henry Brokmeyer, a Prussian immigrant whom Harris had met in St. Louis and who had started him reading Hegel, and said the time had come for the St. Louis movement to have an organ of its own. In January, 1867, the first number of The Journal of Speculative Philosophy appeared, with "Herbert Spencer" as the leading article." (Paul Russell Anderson and Max Harold Fisch, Philosophy in America, from the Puritans to James, D. Appleton-Century Company, New York, 1939. P. 474)

Chauncey Wright's reaction to a manuscript, apparently the one by William T. Harris, attacking Spencer along Hegelian lines: "It is the mere dry husk of Hegelianism,—dogmatic, without the only merit of dogmatism, distinctness or definition." (Letter from Chauncey Wright to Charles Eliot Norton, dated July 24, 1866. Quoted in James Bradley Thayer, ed., Letters of Chauncey Wright, Press of John Wilson and Son, Cambridge, Mass., 1878. P. 87)

"Whether it was the influence of Hegel, whom he discovered after migrating to St. Louis in 1857, or his rapid success as a teacher and administrator in the schools of that city, which sobered his radicalism, one cannot be certain. In any case, the idealism which had been nourished in him by transcendentalism ... flourished on the new-found German philosophy, and his opposition to the determinism and empiricism of Spencer became pronounced.... The agnostic and deterministic ideas of Spencer were proving popular in many circles, and the doctrines of Darwin were challenging the faith of orthodox Christians. Yet many Americans were eagerly seeking for a philosophic justification of faith in God, freedom, and immortality. Harris, by popularizing the absolute idealism of Hegel, provided them with able and authoritarian support for their cherished views." (Merle Curti, The Social Ideas of American Educators, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1935. P.312)
"I measure my words when I say that in my judgment Dr. William T. Harris had the one truly great philosophical mind which has yet appeared on the western continent." (Nicholas Murray Butler, Quoted in Paul Russell Anderson and Max Harold Fisch, Philosophy in America, from the Puritans to James, D. Appleton-Century Company, New York, 1939. P. 471)

"I suppose Hegelianism is rife in Edinburgh as it is in Oxford and Cambridge. This is one of those inevitable rhythms which prevail opinion, philosophical and other, in common with things at large. But our Hegelianism, or German Idealism in England, is really the last refuge of the so-called orthodox. As I have somewhere said, what could be a better defence for incredible dogmas than behind unthinkable propositions?" (Letter from Herbert Spencer to David Masson, dated April 26, 1902. Quoted in Life and Letters of Herbert Spencer by David Duncan, 2 Vols., D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1908. Vol. 2, p. 202)

"I not unfrequently think of the disgust you must feel at the fate which has overtaken Mind. That you, after establishing the thing and maintaining it for so many years at your own cost, should now find it turned into an organ for German idealism must be extremely exasperating.... Oxford and Cambridge have been captured by this old-world nonsense. What about Scotland? I suppose Hegelianism is rife there also." (Letter from Herbert Spencer to Alexander Bain, dated April 25, 1902. Quoted in Life and Letters of Herbert Spencer by David Duncan, 2 Vols., D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1908. Vol. 2, p. 201)

"... the stronger ignorance of Mr. Spencer's own existence avowed in 1881 by Michelet, the legendary mantle-bearer of Hegel." (John Emerich Edward Dalberg-Acton, First Baron Acton /Lord Acton/, Historical Essays & Studies, Macmillan and Co., Limited, London, 1907. P. 283)

"The influx of German immigrants during the second quarter of the nineteenth century afforded a more direct knowledge of German philosophy than the early transcendentalists possessed. One of the first men to introduce Hegel was Frederick A. Rauch, President of Franklin and Marshall College from 1836 to 1841. His book Psychology: or, A View of the Human Soul: Including Anthropology (1841) was a purer form of Hegelianism than anything which followed in the next generation. The St. Louis Movement, Hegelian in large part, came into being through the formation of the St. Louis Philosophical Society in 1866, by .... By the 1860's transcendentalism had run its course, although later idealism was in part a revival of it." (Paul Russell Anderson, Max Harold Fisch, Philosophy in America, from the Puritans to James, D. Appleton-Century Company, New York, 1939. P. 326)
"In the local societies, in the journals and in the colleges there was widespread preoccupation with the question of what type of philosophy was most congenial to the American spirit and its institutions. The Journal of Speculative Philosophy was criticized for the "Un-American character" of its contents. Harris replied that what was needed was not American thought so much as American thinkers, and that we should not have them until the great thinkers of the past—the Greeks and Germans especially—were as thoroughly digested as the works of Herbert Spencer. In the end he thought it would be found, as the poet Walt Whitman was saying, that "only Hegel is fit for America—is large enough and free enough." Whitman, in fact, saw in Hegel's philosophy "an essential and crowning justification of New World democracy," and was puzzled to account for its appearance in the Old World." (Paul Russell Anderson and Max Harold Fisch, Philosophy in America, from the Puritans to James, D. Appleton-Company, New York, 1939. P. 443)

"Up to this time [ca. 1850], the prevailing leaning in American philosophy had been toward some form of supernaturalism, except for the period of the Age of Reason during which a half-hearted naturalism was temporarily in the limelight. The majority view from the Puritans to Harris had inclined toward a priori analysis, had been highly saturated with traditional religious tenets, and had seen the world in terms, either literally or figuratively, of certain axiomatic truths on the basis of which its system of thought had been constructed. Those sharing this view were inclined to adjust experience to reason and the natural world to the supernatural. Their cosmology was neat even if only hypothetically or symbolically true; this neatness was conducive to a certain smugness which made its exponents somewhat unreceptive to a new scientific point of view which sooner or later they were forced to confront." (Paul Russell Anderson and Max Harold Fisch, Philosophy in America, from the Puritans to James, D. Appleton-Century Company, New York, 1939. P. 327)

"Instead of a bleak, evolutionary positivism of the kind that many Englishmen and Americans found congenial in the work of Herbert Spencer, who was also trying to reconcile science and religion, young men all over the Western world were provided [by the works of Hegel] with a rich, highly complex philosophical system that covered every corner of the universe in deep rich velvet, soft to the touch and warming." (Morton White, The Age of Analysis, Mentor Book, The New American Library, New York, 1955. P. 15)

In Spencer's conception of "physiological units" we have the first statement of particulate inheritance, and therefore a clear anticipation of the gene theory of heredity. (See Principles of Biology, Vol. 1, pp. 183, 253-254. This is indicated as in the revised edition of 1898, but may be the edition of 1866. Check in the latter.)

"Spencer has alone I think tried to account for variation on scientific grounds. I thought at the time his ways were good but not all in the right direction—-but I forget what they were!" (Letter from Joseph D. Hooker to T. H. Huxley dated March 27, 1888. Quoted in Leonard Huxley, Life and Letters of Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker, 2 Vols., D. Appleton & Company, New York, 1918. Vol. 2, p. 306)

"In particular, his theory of 'physiological units' was an anticipation of Darwin's theory of pangenesis, and the parent of all the various theories of vital units, promulgated during the last fifty years, as explanations of vital phenomena; particularly of the phenomena of specific transformations, of inheritance and variation." (Gilbert Charles Bourne, Herbert Spencer and Animal Evolution. The Herbert Spencer Lecture for 1909. The Clarendon Press. Oxford, 1910. Pp. 5-6.)


"I formerly thought that the "physiological units" of Herbert Spencer ('Principles of Biology,' vol. 1, chaps. iv and viii, 1863-64) were the same as my gemmules, but I now know that this is not the case." (Charles Darwin, The Variation of Animals and Plants under Domestication, 2nd ed., 2 Vols., D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1892. Vol. 2, p. 371n.)
Whether or not natural selection itself was accepted as the chief method by which evolution was achieved, any attempt to account for the process by natural means must inevitably include a knowledge of the laws governing the inheritance of minor variations. Herbert Spencer was amongst the first to realise this and his account of evolution, which appeared in his Principles of Biology (published in 1864 and in 1869), included what was virtually a complete theory of generation. In 1868, Darwin published The Variations of Animals and Plants under Domestication in which he suggested his hypothesis of pangenesis. Both Spencer's theory of physiological units and Darwin's theory of pangenesis were very reminiscent of the theories of generation which had been produced a hundred years before. Both covered the same range of phenomena and both were very speculative. They differed from the eighteenth century's theories in two respects. Since they were produced as part of an attempt to account for evolution, their emphasis was on the transmission of variations and not in the preservation of type. Secondly, although neither Spencer nor Darwin were familiar with the details of the cell theory, both authors assumed that the parental contributions to the new organism were cells or cellular structures. (Elizabeth B. Gasking, Investigations into Generation 1651-1828, The Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1966. Pp. 161-162)

In 1861, the physiologist Briicke emphasised the usefulness of assuming the existence of biological units (Elementarorganismen) ranking between the molecule and the cell. In July, 1863, Herbert Spencer adopted a somewhat similar hypothesis of "physiological units," lower in degree than the visible cell-units, but more complex than the chemical molecules. As there is much in his argument which seems useful to-day, we give a brief summary (see Principles of Biology (1st ed.), vol. 1. p. 181 et seq.)." (J. Arthur Thomson, Heredity, John Murray, London, 1908. Pp. 403-404)

To me it seems that whatever merit Häckel's views may have in this matter [the explanation of heredity], they certainly have no claim to be regarded as original; for I cannot see that his 'Plastidules' differ in anything but in name from Spencer's 'Physiological Units.' Why he does not acknowledge this, it is difficult to understand." (Ethel Duncan Romanes, editor, The Life and Letters of George John Romanes. New edition. Longmans, Green, and Co. London, 1896. Letter from Romanes to Charles Darwin, undated, but written in 1880. P. 98.)

By this post I return you Häckel's essay on Perigenesis.... To me it seems that whatever merit Häckel's views may have in this matter, they certainly have no claim to be regarded as original; for I cannot see that his 'Plastidules' differ in anything but in name from Spencer's 'Physiological Units.' Why he does not acknowledge this, it is difficult to understand. Anyhow, the theories being the same, the same objections apply; and to me it has always seemed that this theory is unsatisfactory because to general." (Letter from George J. Romanes to Charles Darwin, undated but written in 1881. Mrs. E. Romanes, The Life and Letters of George John Romanes, Longmans, Green, and Co., London, 1896. P. 93)

"His Turner's lists of books read for the next three years (1881-1883), when he was 20-22 years old, include writings of Carlyle, Horace "in original Latin," Tacitus, Emerson, Parkman, Shelley, Dante, Herbert Spencer, Darwin, and Lucretius." (p. 8) "Herbert Spencer and Charles Darwin gave him further incentive to study the changing forces of history. "New poets," he wrote in the second commonplace book, "will read a lesson from Spencer & Darwin & sing Man and Nature." "Evolution & its accompanying features," he declared, "is now in the intellect, when it reaches the hearts of men, then may we not look for a new age, a renaissance in thought."" (p. 9) "As Shelley's plea for freedom for the oppressed stimulated the thought of Turner, so did the evolutionism of Lucretius, Emerson, Spencer, and Darwin shape his view of historical causation and the true meaning of history." (p. 10) (Wilbur R. Jacobs, Frederick Jackson Turner's Legacy, The Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif., 1965)

"But Spencer had no historical sense ...." (Hugh Elliot, Herbert Spencer, Constable & Company Ltd, London, 1916. P. 101)

"Herbert Spencer read the table of contents of a copy of John William Draper's The Intellectual Development of Europe, given to him by a student (?) of Draper and some of the marginal heads, and he thought that when he got around to it the text would "interest" him. Reference to a letter from Spencer to Draper dated July 15, 1863, "It bears on the face of it, an aspect of scientific comprehensiveness, which I am glad to see showing itself in the treatment of the subject--a subject which has hitherto been left in the hands of men who were little more than learned gossips."" (Donald Fleming, John William Draper and the Religion of Science, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1950. P. 75)

"Yet that societies are not artificially put together, is a truth so manifest, that it seems wonderful men should have ever overlooked it. Perhaps nothing more clearly shows the small value of historical studies as they have been commonly pursued. You need but to look at the changes going on around, or observe social organization in its leading peculiarities, to see that these are neither supernatural, nor are determined by the wills of individual men, as by implication historians commonly teach; but are consequent on general natural causes. The one case of the division of labour suffices to show this. It has not been by the command of any ruler that some men have become manufacturers, while others have remained cultivators of the soil." (Herbert Spencer, "The Social Organism," The Westminster Review, Vol. 73, pp. 51-68 [90-121 in something], 1860. P. 52)
In an article entitled "What Knowledge is of Most Worth?", written in 1859, Spencer took historians to task for presenting trivial rather than essential facts of the human past in their work: "That which constitutes History, properly so called, is in great part omitted from works on the subject. Only of late years have historians commenced giving us, in any considerable quantity, the truly valuable information. As in past ages the king was everything and the people nothing; so, in past histories the doings of the king fill the entire picture, to which the national life forms but an obscure background.... The thing it really concerns us to know, is the natural history of society." (p. 32) "The only history that is of practical value, is what may be called Descriptive Sociology. And the highest office which the historian can discharge, is that of so narrating the lives of nations, as to furnish materials for a Comparative Sociology; and for the subsequent determination of the ultimate laws to which social phenomena conform." (pp. 33-34) (Education; Intellectual, Moral, and Physical. Thinker's Library Edition. Watts & Co. London, 1949)

"I take but little interest in what are called histories, but am interested only in Sociology, which stands related to these so-called histories much as a vast building stands related to the heaps of stones and bricks around it." (Auto. II, 185)

Spencer sees the unity of world culture. He gives us many illustrations taken from all ages of European history. He is deeply familiar with European history, and makes masterful use of it.
"The biographies of monarchs (and our children earn little else) throw scarcely any light upon the science of society. Familiarity with court intrigues, plots, usurpations, or the like, and with all the personalities accompanying them, aids very little in elucidating the causes of national progress." (Herbert Spencer, "What Knowledge Is of Most Worth?", in Essays on Education, Etc., pp. 1-44, Everyman's Library, J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., London, 1911, p. 26)

"While anxious that their sons should be well up in the superstitions of two thousand years ago ...." (Herbert Spencer, "What Knowledge Is of Most Worth?", in Essays on Education, Etc., pp. 1-44, Everyman's Library, J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., London, 1911, p. 14)

"The births, deaths, and marriages of kings, and other like historic trivialities, are committed to memory, not because of any direct benefits than can possibly result from knowing them: but because society considers them parts of a good education ...." (Herbert Spencer, "What Knowledge Is of Most Worth?", in Essays on Education, Etc., pp. 1-44, Everyman's Library, J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., London, 1911, p. 3)

"While that kind of information which, in our schools, usurps the name History—the mere tissue of names and dates and dead unmeaning events—has a conventional value only: it has not the remotest bearing on any of our actions; and is of use only for the avoidance of those unpleasant criticisms which current opinion passes upon its absence." (Herbert Spencer, "What Knowledge Is of Most Worth?", in Essays on Education, Etc., pp. 1-44, Everyman's Library, J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., London, 1911, p. 10)

"Well, apply the same test to the great mass of historical facts, and you will get the same result. They are facts from which no conclusions can be drawn—unorganisable facts; and therefore facts of no service in establishing principles of conduct, which is the chief use of facts. Read them, if you like, for amusement; but do not flatter yourself they are instructive." (Herbert Spencer, "What Knowledge Is of Most Worth?", in Essays on Education, Etc., pp. 1-44, Everyman's Library, J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., London, 1911, p. 27)

(Spencer's attack on history as conventionally taught was part of a more general attack on education in general, including, for example, the emphasis on the teaching of the classics, which he thought contributed very little to an understanding of man's existence, place in nature, and evolution.)

"History, it has been said, is philosophy teaching by examples." —Thomas Babington Macaulay
"When I go see a ruined abbey or the remains of a castle, I do not care to learn when it was built, who lived or died there, or what catastrophes it witnessed. I never yet went to a battle-field, although often near to one: not having the slightest curiosity to see a place where many men were killed and a victory achieved. The gossip of a guide is to me a nuisance; so that, if need were, I would rather pay him for his silence than for his talk: much disliking, as I do, to be disturbed while experiencing the sentiments excited in me by the forms and colours of time-worn walls and arches. It is always the poetry rather than the history of a place that appeals to me." (Herbert Spencer, An Autobiography, 2 Vols., Watts & Co., London, 1926. Vol. 2, p. 187)

"To have before us, in manageable form, evidence proving the correlations which everywhere exist between great militant activity and the degradation of women, between a despotic form of government and elaborate ceremonial in social intercourse, between relatively peaceful social activities and the relaxation of coercive institutions, promises furtherance if human welfare in a much greater degree than does learning whether the story of Alfred and the cakes is a fact or a myth, whether Queen Elizabeth intrigued with Essex or not, where Prince Charles hid himself, and what were the details of this battle or the other siege—pieces of historical gossip which cannot in the least affect men's conceptions of the ways in which social phenomena hang together, or aid them in shaping their public conduct." (Herbert Spencer, An Autobiography, 2 Vols., Watts & Co., London, 1926. Vol. 2, p. 265)

"... the ordinary historian who, thinking of little else but the doings of kings, court-intrigues, international quarrels, victories and defeats, concerning all which no definite forecasts are possible, asserts that there is no social science ...." (Herbert Spencer, An Autobiography, 2 Vols., Watts & Co., London, 1926. Vol. 2, p. 253)

"... the facts with which historians fill their pages mostly yield no material for Science." (Herbert Spencer, The Study of Sociology, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1891. P. 386)

"Occupied as they [historians] had all along been in narrating the events in the lives of societies, they had paid little or no attention to the evolution of their organizations." (Herbert Spencer, An Autobiography, 2 Vols., Watts & Co., London, 1926. Vol. 2, p. 253)


"... the Humanities, to which the attention of the young is mainly given, are concerned with personalities. After the traditional doings of gods and heroes, of great leaders and their conquests, come the products of the poets, of the historians, of the philosophers. And when study of earlier ages is supplemented by study of later ages, we find the so-called history composed of kings' biographies, the narratives of their conflicts, the squabbles and intrigues of their vassals and dependents. In the consciousness of one who has passed through the curriculum universally prevailing until recently, there is no place for natural causation. Instead, there exists only the thought of what, in a relative sense, is artificial causation—the causation by appointed agencies and through force directed by this or that individual will. Small changes wrought by officials are clearly conceived, but there is no conception of those vast changes which have been wrought through the daily process of things undirected by authority." (Herbert Spencer, Facts and Comments, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1902. P. 34)

"My position, stated briefly, is that until you have got a true theory of humanity, you cannot interpret history; and when you have got a true theory of humanity you do not want history.... For myself, looking as I do at humanity as the highest result yet of the evolution of life on the earth, I prefer to take in the whole series of phenomena from the beginning as far as they are ascertainable. I, too, am a lover of history; but it is the history of the Cosmos as a whole. I believe that you might as reasonably expect to understand the nature of an adult man by watching him for an hour (being in ignorance of all his antecedents), as to suppose that you can fathom humanity by studying the last few thousand years of its evolution." (Letter from Herbert Spencer to Edward Lott, dated April 23, 1852. Quoted in David Duncan, Life and Letters of Herbert Spencer, 2 Vols., D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1908. Vol. 1, pp. 80-81) (Referring to first of these statements by Spencer, J. D. Y. Peel speaks of "His absurd attitude to history ....") (J. D. Y. Peel, "Spencer and the Neo-Evolutionists," Sociology, Vol. 3, pp. 173-191, 1969. P. 181)

"The births, deaths, and marriages of kings, and other like historic trivialities, are committed to memory, not because of any direct benefits that can possibly result from knowing them: but because society considers them parts of a good education ...." (Herbert Spencer, "What Knowledge Is of Most Worth?", in Essays on Education, Etc., pp. 1-44, J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., London, 1911. P. 3)

"No teacher with a spark of imagination or with an idea of scientific method can have helped dreaming of the immortality that would be achieved by the man who should successfully apply Darwin's method to the facts of human history." [Of course, in a very real sense, this is exactly what Spencer did.] (Henry Adams, "The Tendency of History," Annual Report of the American Historical Association, for the Year 1894, pp. 17-23, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1895. P. 19)

"History had to develop according to Spencer's own idea to have any interest for him. Where it did not so develop it was so much the worse for the history." (A. M. Fairbairn, "Herbert Spencer," The Contemporary Review, Vol. 85, pp. 1-11, 1904. P. 10)

"I would be hard to find another intellect of first class rank so devoid of historical sense and interest as was Spencer's...." (John Dewey, "The Philosophical Work of Herbert Spencer," The Philosophical Review, Vol. 13, pp. 159-175, 1904. P. 163)

"... how can we agree to eliminate from historical studies the biography of great men and the narrative of noble deeds?" (Said in relation to Spencer's conception of how history should be taught.) (Gabriel Compayre, Herbert Spencer and Scientific Education, translated from the French by Maria E. Findlayson, Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., New York, 1907. P. 39)

(For Spencer's views on history, see Duncan, Life and Letters of Herbert Spencer, Williams & Norgate, 1908. Vol. ?, p. 62; The Study of Sociology, pp. 31-35, 37-47; Education, pp. 39-43.)

"... Spencer's contempt for history and his dismissal of the particular ...." (J. D. Y. Peel, Herbert Spencer of Evolution, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1972. P. 1 [that is, Roman number 507])

"These facts [of the culture of societies], given with as much brevity as consists with clearness and accuracy, should be so grouped and arranged that they may be comprehended in their ensemble, and contemplated as mutually-dependent parts of one great whole. The aim should be so to present them that men may readily trace the consensus subsisting among them; with the view of learning what social phenomena co-exist with what other. And then the corresponding delineations of succeeding ages should be so managed as to show each belief, institution, custom, and arrangement was modified; and how the consensus of preceding structures and functions was developed into the consensus of succeeding ones." (Herbert Spencer, "What Knowledge Is of Most Worth?", in Essays on Education, Etc., pp. 1-44, Everyman's Library, J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., London, 1911. P. 29)
"I am constantly irritated by the new-fashioned historians and philosophers (including H. Spencer), who talk with contempt of histories that record battles. They are really and truly the most important events in the world's annals, however you look at them." (Letter from Alfred Lyall to ? written in 1882 at the time that a war Lyall had foreseen was coming on in Egypt. Quoted in Sir Mortimer Durand, Life of the Right Hon. Sir Alfred Comyn Lyall, William Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh, 1913. P. 266. Lyall was for many years a British administrator in India.)

Andrew D. White thought that Spencer's remarks on what history should be (in "What Knowledge is of Most Worth?") went too far. "... some of his statements seem to me to require limitation. He seems at times to confuse the study of history with the study of statistics, and thus to demand scientific proof when the nature of the material can only give moral proof." (p. 13) White defended the study of memoirs, court intrigues, and battles, which Spencer had criticized, saying that much of interest and value—practical value, like keeping up a people's courage during war—could be extracted from them. "Meeting our ethical necessity for historical knowledge with statistics and tabulated sociology entirely or mainly, is like meeting our want of food by the perpetual administration of concentrated essence of beef."

"Came back to Cambridge to-day and read more Herbert Spencer /Political Institutions/ in the train. I find History studied / as inductive Sociology more and more interesting, and quite wonder that I have neglected it so long." (Entry in the Journal of Henry Sidgwick for January 9, 1886. Quoted in Henry Sidgwick, A Memoir, by A. S. Arthur Sidgwick/ and E. M. S. Eleanor Mildred Sidgwick/ Macmillan and Co., Limited, London, 1906. Pp. 436-437)

"If the view which tends to split up history into a series of biographies represents one extreme, surely Mr. Spencer's reduction of history to a comparison of scattered elements represents another, as fatal and less interesting. If it is a mistake to think of the history of the English Reformation as if it were only the product of Henry VIII.'s change of wives, an account of the Great Rebellion, which relegates Charles I. and Oliver Cromwell to a thin column, is equally mistaken and misleading." (David G. Ritchie, The Principles of State Interference, Swan Sonnenschein & Co., London, 1891. P. 77)

"And we /Keller and his fellow graduate students/? had heard an eminent historian, George B. Adams, in the course of an attack on "sociology," qualify his strictures by saying that the view Spencer had given of society as a whole and in the articulation of its parts had made it / impossible for history ever again to be written as it had been before Spencer's time." (Albert G. Keller, Reminiscences (Mainly Personal) of William Graham Sumner, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1933. Pp. 31-32)
James Bryce noted the rise of a school which "... claims the name of Scientific ..." (p. 354), which "... seeks to raise, or reduce, history to the level of an exact science ..." (p. 354), and which "... regards the course of human affairs as determined by general laws ..." (p. 354). "The objection to this method and procedure as we see it practiced by the votaries of this school is that it is not scientific. Nothing accords less with scientific principles than to treat as similar things essentially dissimilar." (p. 355)

"Here is the historian seeing each event as irreducibly unique. But the features of human society are wholly different in different races and different countries. Even in the same countries they were a thousand years ago unlike what they are now. Their study is for this and other reasons incomparably more difficult than is the study of natural phenomena." (p. 355) Bryce then warns against broad generalizations. "No habit is more seductive." (p. 356) "So one may say that the longer a man studies either a given country or a given period, the fewer, the more cautious, and the more carefully limited and guarded in statement will his generalizations be." (p. 356)


"The more recent writers of this school (of scientific history) — its Coryphaeus was the late Mr. Herbert Spencer — but it has representatives in Continental Europe also — have not (so far as I know) contributed to history either any sound theories, or any illuminative suggestions which competent historians did not know already, and did not know better, because they were known as the result of a wide and critical mastery of details. What the school has given is a mass of general propositions couched in what sounds like scientific language, but the contents and substance of which are either threadbare truths so dressed up in solemn phraseology as to appear to be novelties, or theories too vague and abstract to be serviceable either as interpretations or as summaries of facts." (James Bryce, "On The Writing and Teaching of History," Commencement Address as Chancellor of Union College, Schenectady, N.Y., June, 1911, pp. 341-364, in University and Historical Addresses, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1913. Pp. 357-358)

"Of what services the school (of Herbert Spencer) has rendered to subjects other than history I will not venture to speak, but as respects the results attained in history and subjects cognate thereto, the view I have tried to convey to you is, I believe, that pretty generally held by historical students both here and in England. Perhaps the disappointment one feels in perusing books where one seeks for bread and seems to receive only stones may perhaps bias those of us who were trained in another school. Judge therefore for yourselves and see if you can extract new and profitable truths where we have not been able to discover them." (James Bryce, "On The Writing and Teaching of History," Commencement Address as Chancellor of Union College, Schenectady, N.Y., June, 1911, pp. 341-364, in University and Historical Addresses, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1913. P. 359)
"This type of history, now happily obsolete, or nearly so, has been well styled "drum and trumpet history." Among the pioneers who wrought the change [from this to scientific history/ Herbert Spencer holds a foremost place." (Arthur M. Lewis, An Introduction to Sociology, Charles H. Kerr & Company, Chicago, 1913. P. 59)

... his Spencer's "Descriptive Sociology," wherein the chronological sequence of events is faithfully abided by; yet what one might call his historical blindness was appalling. Nothing is more pitiful, nothing more calculated to make one doubt his genius, than the meagre notes he wrote while travelling in Egypt and Italy; to him the past was dead." (George Sarton, "Herbert Spencer, 1820-1920," Scribner's Magazine, Vol. 67, pp. 695-701. 1920. P. 699)

Reacting to Spencer's assertion that "The only history that is of practical value, is what may be called Descriptive Sociology," Coursault said: "Far from being a mere servant, a mere hewer of wood and drawer of water for the sociologist, the historian has an independent mission of his own and aids human development in a practical way that is just as necessary, useful, and honorable as the work of the sociologist." (Jesse H. Coursault, The Principles of Education, Silver, Burdett and Company, Boston, 1920. P. 184. Coursault was Professor of the History and Philosophy of Education at the University of Missouri.)

"As a consequence ... of his ignorance of history, he wrote mainly of a society which was in the unhistoric past. His conclusions for the future lack vitality and validity, because they are not enlightened by an understanding of the proximate evolution of the great European society in which he himself lived." (L. L. Bernard, "Herbert Spencer's Work in the Light of His Life," The Monist, Vol. 31, pp. 1-35, 1921. Pp. 6-7)

In criticizing Spencer's sociology, Robertson says: "... and still less will he study continuously the history of the higher societies ...." (J. M. Robertson, Explorations, Watts & Co., London, n.d., (ca. 1923). P. 127. This criticism appears to indicate a failure to read Principles of Sociology carefully.)

"Spencer, who approached the sociological problem with his un-failing energy of ratiocination, but with more than Comte's insufficiency of historical knowledge and the more serious defect of lack of interest in history, achieved rather an anatomy of social forms than a recognition of a universal process of causation in terms of mental action, of choices, of all that is signified on that side of things by the concept of "creative evolution."" (J. M. Robertson, A History of Freethought in the Nineteenth Century, Watts & Co., London, 1929. P. 343)
"... Spencer's method was the reverse of historic, and Spencer himself despised history as a subject fit only for the attention of "immature minds."" (F. J. C. Hearnshaw, "Herbert Spencer and the Individualists," in The Social & Political Ideas of Some Representative Thinkers of the Victorian Age, ed. by F. J. C. Hearnshaw, pp. 53-83, George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd., London, 1933. P. 53)

"In his Study of Sociology, Spencer does lip service to the historical method; but there is very little intelligent use of the historical method in his work ...." (Charles A. Ellwood, A History of Social Philosophy, Prentice-Hall, Inc., New York, 1938. P. 446)

"The thing that I used, in my simple youth, to call history, is now labelled 'political, military, religious, and constitutional history'. This is a dire blow to the poor Victorian: with the greatest desire to avoid narrow-mindedness, I still cannot rise to the duty of acquainting myself with and mastering the history of flint-knapping, or of Chinese music. There are some people--I think Mr. Wells is one of them, who find more pleasure in contemplating the development of cereal agriculture, or telegraphy, than in following the story of Julius Caesar, the Crusades, or Napoleon. And no doubt I ought to be mastering all the folio pages of Herbert Spencer's tabulated indices on the manners and customs of savage tribes, and following all the suggestions of The Golden Bough with enthusiasm, rather than reading La Noue and Montluc about the Huguenot Wars of France, or puzzling out the evidence concerning the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. From the point of view of the advocates of the 'Wider Oneness' in history, the fortunes of sixteenth-century England or France are relatively unimportant. I fear, therefore, that I must confine myself to collecting my premises and drawing my conclusions about a 'History' that is taken more or less in the old sense, and that does not include ...." (Sir Charles Oman, On The Writing of History, E. P. Dutton and Company Inc., New York, 1939. Pp. 5-6)


"It is a temptation to believe that Spencer's self-imposed alienation from society and his studied ignorance of history were employed as antiseptics against cultural contamination and the loss of perspective that he thought went with it." (Abram Kardiner and Edward Preble, They Studied Man, The World Publishing Company, Cleveland, 1961. P. 48n.)
When Spencer wrote, "Only in late years have historians commenced giving us, in any considerable quantity, the truly valuable information," he might have had in mind Thomas Babington Macaulay's The History of England. Chapter 3 of Vol. 1 of that work, entitled "State of England in 1685," (pp. 279-427) presented what seems to have been a good picture of the culture of England at that time. (Volume 1, Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, London, 1849, 1st edition.) (The full title of the work is The History of England from the Accession of James II.)

"Yet this commentary on the moral code—this History as we call it—men for ever read in vain! Poring with microscopic eye over the symbols in which it is written, they are heedless of the great facts expressed by them. Instead of collecting evidence bearing upon the all-important question—What are the laws that determine national success or failure, stability or revolution?—they gossip about state intrigues, sieges and battles, court scandal, the crimes of nobles, the quarrels of parties, the births, deaths, and marriages of kings, and other like trifles. Minutiae, pettifogging details, the vanity and frippery of bygone times, the mere decorations of the web of existence, they examine, analyze, and learnedly descant upon; yet are blind to those stern realities which each age shrouds in its superficial tissue of events—those terrible truths which glare out upon us from the gloom of the past. From the successive strata of our historical deposits, they diligently gather all the highly-coloured fragments, pounce upon everything that is curious and sparkling, and chuckle like children over their glittering acquisitions; meanwhile the rich veins of wisdom that ramify amidst this worthless debris, lie utterly neglected. Cumbersome volumes of rubbish are greedily accumulated, whilst those masses of rich ore, that should have been dug out, and from which golden truths might have been smelted, are left unthought of and unsought." (Herbert Spencer, Social Statics, John Chapman, London, 1851. P 49)

"Again, when we were in Edinburgh Castle, in the bedroom of Mary, Queen of Scots, where her son was born, and let down outside through the window, an old Scotchman was trying to rally his recollections about some details, and appealed to Spencer. "I am happy to say I don't know," he replied. The old man was thunderstruck, and said he wished he knew all about history. "I should hate to have my head filled up with it, for it would exclude better things." (Letter from Edward Livingston Youmans to his sister, Eliza A. Youmans, dated August 24, 1862. Quoted in John Fiske, Edward Livingston Youmans, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1894. Pp. 125-126)

"... no information concerning kings and popes, and ministers and generals, even when joined to exhaustive acquaintance with intrigues and treaties, battles and sieges, gives any insight into the laws of social evolution ...." (Herbert Spencer, The Principles of Ethics, 2 Vols., D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1904. Vol. 1, p. 519)
"Then, too, there is the fact that I ignore utterly the personal element in history, and, indeed, show little respect for history altogether as it is ordinarily conceived." (Letter from Herbert Spencer to James Knowles, probably late in 1896. Quoted in David Duncan, Life and Letters of Herbert Spencer, 2 Vols., D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1908. Vol. 2, p. 123)

"Though the greater parts of the facts from which true sociological generalizations may be drawn, are presented only by those savage and semi-civilized societies ignored in our educational courses, there are also required some of the facts furnished by the histories of developed nations." (Herbert Spencer, The Principles of Ethics. 2 Vols., D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1904. Vol. 1, p. 518)


Spencer's command of the wealth of relevant facts from European history is not matched or even approached by any contemporary historical sociologists.

Spencer had a very commanding grasp of the existing ethnographic data, and a better command of the history of Europe and Classical Antiquity than any modern ethnologist.

"... a student who took them [Spencer's tables in Descriptive Sociology] as guides in a course of historical reading would find his notion of what constituted history almost reversed; that is, he would find the class of facts of which nearly all histories are now composed relegated to a position not simply subordinate but almost insignificant; and another class which historians only notice incidentally, if at all, spread over the whole field." (Anonymous (E. L. Godkin), "Spencer's Descriptive Sociology," The National, Vol. 19, pp. 288-289, 1874. P. 289. This is a review of the first 2 volumes of Descriptive Sociology.)

"As an undergraduate at Oxford (1883-87) I was greatly interested in questions of social reform, but in probing them I came upon real or apparent difficulties, sociological and philosophical. I rather innocently took Herbert Spencer's evolutionary theories as the last word in science, and though attracted by T. H. Green's social and ethical outlook I could not see in his metaphysics a valid philosophical solution." (L. T. Hobhouse, "The Philosophy of Development," in Contemporary British Philosophy, Personal Statements (First Series), ed. by J. H. Muirhead, pp. 149-188, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1924. P. 150)

"The work of Herbert Spencer in particular did much to popularize the conceptions of sociology in this country, but at the same time gave a great impulse to the tendency to subordinate the new sciences /sic/ to biology.... Social questions came to be referred to the biological principles which underlay the life of society, for decision. It was held that the struggle for existence, natural selection and the survival of the fittest, were the key to all possible progress upon this earth." (L. T. Hobhouse, "The Roots of Modern Sociology," in Sociology and Philosophy, by L. T. Hobhouse, pp. 3-19, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1966. P. 11)

"This theory /that competition and survival by natural selection is the motive force of social evolution/ admits / of many applications: It may be used, as by Spencer himself, to exalt free competition in industry. It may be applied where, oddly enough, Spencer did not apply it at all, to the rivalry of communities. /How could Hobhouse say this?/ That is to say, that just as in a community there should be no legislation to interfere with the victory of the stronger, so as between two communities there should be no humanitarian sentimentalism which should interfere with the natural, healthy process by which the weaker goes to the wall." (L. T. Hobhouse, "The Roots of Modern Sociology," in Sociology and Philosophy, by L. T. Hobhouse, pp. 3-19, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1966. Pp. 11-12)

"Philosophically Mr. Spencer was not a materialist. But his metaphysical safeguards did not rescue the evolution theory from some of the most unfortunate consequences of a materialistic system. Evolution, as thus interpreted, meant, in its bearing on human life and action, essentially two things. It meant that the human mind must be regarded as an organ like the lungs or the liver /no comma/ evolved in the struggle for existence with the function of adjusting the behaviour of the organism to its environment. It was / to be thought of ... as a sort of glorified reflex action. Cunningly constructed as it was, it had no special significance in the evolutionary scheme and though it made man for a time the dominant animal, yet the ultimate goal of its efforts would be to establish an equilibrium which would prove, as Mr. Spencer candidly admitted, the first stage of decay." (L. T. Hobhouse, Development and Purpose, Macmillan and Co., Limited, London, 1913. Pp. xv-xvi)
"The appearance of an upward process in Spencer's concept of evolution then was illusory. It was due to the position of the human observer, who could not clearly see beyond the segment of the curve on which he himself happened to be placed.... So far as there was anything like progress, it was due to the internecine struggle for existence. But a little reflection suffices to show that if progress means anything which human beings can value or desire, it depends on the suppression of the struggle for existence, and the substitution in one form or another of social cooperation. There was here a conflict between the scientific and the ethical points of view which threatened social ethics with extinction." (L. T. Hobhouse, Development and Purpose, Macmillan and Co., Limited, London, 1913. P. xvi)

"Like Spencer, Hobhouse developed his sociological system as a part of a general philosophy of evolution. There is still more intimate similarity between the two systems, in that while Spencer conceived of the evolutionary process as one of progressive differentiation and adjustment, Hobhouse views it as a growth in correlation and harmony, and both look upon society as an organic unity. But here the resemblance ceases; Spencer held that the course of evolution moved on automatically, regardless of the interference of man, and believed that the latter could at the best have only an indifferent effect and was extremely likely to hinder the process. Hobhouse claims, on the contrary, that however much the evolutionary process may depend upon automatically working factors, such as the struggle for existence, social evolution has come more and more to rest upon conscious control by the human mind, and that, from this stage on, progress depends primarily upon the conscious direction of social conduct by the social mind." (Harry Elmer Barnes, "Some Typical Contributions of English Sociology to Political Theory. Part II. Leonard T. Hobhouse and the Neo-Liberal Theory of the State," The American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 27, pp. 442-485, 1921-22. Pp. 442-443)

In accounting for Hobhouse's disregard of Spencer's work Carter remarks: "In Spencer there is more than a suggestion of a mechanistic world and from mechanism Hobhouse turned away with complete distaste." (Hugh Carter, The Social Theories of L. T. Hobhouse, The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1927. P. 12.)

"... Hobhouse, who was greatly influenced by Spencer, ...." (T. B. Bottomore, Sociology, George Allen & Unwin Ltd, London, 1962. P. 174n.)

"... it was Hobhouse who made possible a convergence of ameliorism and sociology by finding a way to stand Herbert Spencer on his head. He contrived an evolutionary sociology which endorsed reformism without requiring society to progress in any particular direction." (Philip Abrams, The Origins of British Sociology: 1834-1914, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1968. P. 87)
"What Hobhouse had discovered was that one could accept Spencer's general understanding of the nature of scientific sociology without having to come to Spencer's own disagreeable political conclusions." (Philip Abrams, The Origins of British Sociology: 1834-1914, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1968, p. 87)

"In sum, given the defining properties of sociology as Hobhouse understood them, the science had to be built around a theory of evolution, but, imperatively, it had to be evolution without Spencer." (Philip Abrams, The Origins of British Sociology: 1834-1914, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1968, p. 91)

"But his [Spencer's] metaphysical safeguards did not rescue the evolution theory from some of the most unfortunate consequences of a materialistic system. Evolution, as thus interpreted, meant, in its bearing on human life and action, essentially two things. It meant that the human mind must be regarded as an organ like the lungs or the liver evolved in the struggle for existence with the function of adjusting the behaviour of the organism to its environment. It was to be thought of as a sort of glorified reflex action." (L. T. Hobhouse, Development and Purpose, Macmillan and Co., Limited, London, 1913, Pp. xv-xvi)

"So far as there was anything like progress, it was [according to Spencer] due to the internecine struggle for existence. But a little reflection suffices to show that if progress means anything which human beings can value or desire, it depends on the suppression of the struggle for existence, and the substitution in one form or another of social co-operation. There was here a conflict between the scientific and the ethical points of view which threatened social ethics with extinction." (L. T. Hobhouse, Development and Purpose, Macmillan and Co., Limited, London, 1913, P. xvi)

"... a true philosophy, a really concrete interpretation of our experience as a whole, must aim rather at a synthesis in which the analysis of first principles figures as the keystone of the arch of science. In this respect Mr. Spencer, whatever the defects of his method, seemed to me to have been justly inspired." (L. T. Hobhouse, Development and Purpose, Macmillan and Co., Limited, London, 1913, P. xviii)

"In the middle of the "Eighties," when the writer was first studying philosophy, the biological theory of evolution was already very generally accepted, and the philosophical extension of the theory by Mr. Herbert Spencer was, except in academic circles, in the heyday of its influence." (L. T. Hobhouse, Development and Purpose, Macmillan and Co., Limited, London, 1913, P. xv)
"Mr. Herbert Spencer's philosophies invade, one after another, all the chief territories of human knowledge. The little volume before us talks in common sense in plain language, but it is impossible not to see that it is a master of all arts and sciences, so far as it is given to one man in our day to answer to such a title, who is discoursing to us. A man's accuracy is tested by his statements, his breadth of view is shown by his illustrations. Every page of Mr. Spencer's writings is illuminated by those side lights which only a great scholar, in books, or nature, or both, can throw upon the subject with which he is dealing." (O.W.H. /Oliver Wendell Holmes/, Review of The Study of Sociology, by Herbert Spencer, The Boston Medical and Surgical Journal, Vol. 89, pp. 587-589, 1873. P. 587)

When Oliver Wendell Holmes' letter of greeting to Spencer was read aloud at the Farewell Dinner at Delmonico's Restaurant by William Maxwell Evarts: "I wish you could have seen how Spencer's face was illuminated and how he wriggled with delight during its reading. It was a revelation to me, the unconscious and surprised pleasure which he evidently received in listening." (Letter from Fordyce Barker to Oliver Wendell Holmes dated November 9, 1882. Quoted in A Bibliography of Oliver Wendell Holmes by Thomas Franklin Currier, edited by Eleanor M. Tilton, New York University Press, New York, 1953. P. 488)

"Theologians, statesmen, astronomers, physicists, biologists, including physicians and all the rest, find him handling their various specialties as if he had been in the pulpit, in the cabinet, in the observatory, in all laboratories of science and all workshops of art, and felt himself at home in all." (p. 587) "No specialist is safe from the omnivorous intelligence of Mr. Spencer. He picks everybody's pocket of his private store of knowledge and makes it serve a larger purpose than its owner ever dreamed of." (p. 588) (O.W.H. /Oliver Wendell Holmes/, Review of The Study of Sociology, by Herbert Spencer, The Boston Medical and Surgical Journal, Vol. 89, pp. 587-589, 1873)

"Every chapter of it is instructive and the spirit of it is that which should animate every man who calls himself a student of science; a willingness to embrace every new truth, even before it has received the baptism of general acceptance, and a tender respect for the memory of the half-truths which have helped the world along in their day, and are entitled to all the civilities of a decent interment." (O.W.H. /Oliver Wendell Holmes/, Review of The Study of Sociology, by Herbert Spencer, The Boston Medical and Surgical Journal, Vol. 89, pp. 587-589, 1873. P. 589)

"In an age like this of specialists and comminuted intellectual acquirements, it is a great pleasure to meet with a mind which is periscopic enough to survey the whole province of human knowledge." (O.W.H. /Oliver Wendell Holmes/, Review of The Study of Sociology, by Herbert Spencer, The Boston Medical and Surgical Journal, Vol. 89, pp. 587-589, 1873. P. 587)
"One cannot read this book without feeling that the writer is, or at least means to be, perfectly fair, candid, passionless, that his mind is as nearly achromatic, if we may recur to the simile / already used, as the media through which truth is seen can well allow a human intelligence to be." (O.W.H. / Oliver Wendell Holmes / Review of The Study of Sociology, by Herbert Spencer, The Boston Medical and Surgical Journal, Vol. 89, pp. 587-589, 1873. Pp. 587-588)

"... Mr. Justice Holmes retained to the very end of his long life a deep sense of gratitude to Herbert Spencer as the thinker who, above all others in his youth, had released that generation from philosophies set in a quasi-theological context and made it understand that there was an ultimate conflict between the individual and the state power which no amount of Hegelian moonshine could reconcile." (Harold J. Laski, The American Democracy, The Viking Press, New York, 1948. P. 56)

"Mr. Spencer has come nearer to the realization of Bacon's claim of all knowledge as his province than any philosopher of his time. (p. 84) " ... we look with amazement upon the reach and compass of his vast triangulation of the universe." (p. 84) "May he live to place the cap-stone on that pyramid of achievements which is already one of the wonders of the modern intellectual world!" (Letter from Oliver Wendell Holmes to W. J. Youmans dated November 6, 1882. / Read aloud at the Spencer Farewell Dinner by Fordyce Barker / Quoted in / Edward L. Youmans, editor / Herbert Spencer on The Americans and The Americans on Herbert Spencer, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1883)

The quotation you are looking for is in a case called Lochner v. New York, 198 U. S. 45, 25 Sup. Ct. 539, 49 L. Ed. 937 (1905). The case itself involved a New York law setting a 60 hour maximum work week for bakers. The case, in an opinion by Justice Peckham, held the law unconstitutional on the grounds that the statute forbids an employer from exercising his right to contract freely under the 14th Amendment. It was also stated that the law was not within the police power as the public interest was not affected.

The quotation you cite was by Justice Holmes in his dissent to the above noted opinion. The context is as follows:

"The liberty of the citizen to do as he likes so long as he does not interfere with the liberty of others to do the same, which has been a shibboleth for some well-known writers, is interfered with by school laws, by the Post Office, by every state or municipal institution which takes his money for purposes thought desirable, whether he likes it or not. The 14th Amendment does not enact Mr. Herbert Spencer's Social Statics. The other day we sustained the Massachusetts vaccination law ..."

Holmes based his dissent on the grounds that if the statute was thought to have a rational basis by rational men it ought not to be declared unconstitutional in order to embody a particular economic theory i.e. laissez-faire. (letter from Eleanor B. Zabel, March 13, 1966)
"Mr. Herbert Spencer is already a power in the world."
(Anonymous, Review of Illustrations of Progress by Herbert Spencer, The

... and Oliver Wendell Holmes doubted that "any writer
of English except Darwin has done so much to affect our
whole way of thinking about the universe."

Mark DeWolfe Howe, ed., Holmes-Pollock Letters. Har­

"The New York law establishing a ten-hour day for bakers
was invalidated in the famous Lochner Case (1905), 198 U.S. 45.
It is in this case that Justice Holmes made his celebrated
observation: 'The Fourteenth Amendment does not enact Mr. Her­
bert Spencer's Social Statics.'" (William Seagle, The History
"But Spencer taught me that, roughly speaking, what is, is the best possible at the moment, and can be made better only by Evolution, which can be promoted by gradual and experimental supercession, but not by blind destruction. Social questions are very complicated, and can be wisely settled only by the slow methods of trial and error." (Henry Holt, Garrulities of an Octogenarian Editor, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1923. P. 53)
In 1867 Spencer was asked to become a candidate for the professorship of Mental Philosophy and Logic at University College, London, but he declined. Several other such offers were tendered to him in subsequent years, but he always turned them down. (Auto. II, 146-70)

Spencer could not have been more unacademic. He had practically no formal schooling at all. Never took an examination. Never taught a course, hardly ever lectured. Turned down every offer of an honorary degree.

"With a few exceptions these proffered honours were declined." (Duncan, p. 588n.) Spencer, between 1871 and 1903, was offered 32 academic honours, including memberships, honorary degrees, professorships, Fellowships, presidencies. (Duncan, pp. 588-589)
Hooker called Spencer "One of our deepest thinkers ...." (Joseph D. Hooker, "Address of the President," British Association for the Advancement of Science, Report of the Thirty-Eighth Meeting, 1868, pp. lvi-lxxv. P. lxxiv)

"And now next morning some more [Joseph] Hookerian reminiscence. He speaks unreservedly of Spencer; says "Spencer is the mighty thinker among us. And what a splendid talker! He talks right at you like a book, and his language is so fluent and adaptive! He is all right now. The recognition of his genius is now complete. What a lucky thing it was that he failed in getting a consulate or some other public appointment when he began his Philosophy! Had he succeeded, we never should have heard of the Philosophy."" (Letter from Edward L. Youmans to his sister, Eliza Youmans, dated London, August 19, 1871. In John Fiske, Edward Livingston Youmans, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1894. P. 282)

"... I do not think that any one, except a deeply read man, can appreciate the immensity of Spencer's converse with all that man has done in the spread of knowledge, and of its influence in the development of every phase of his advancement from the savage to the highest civilisation." (Letter from Joseph D. Hooker to Inglis Palgrave dated December 23, 1903. Quoted in Leonard Huxley, Life and Letters of Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker. 2 Vols., D. Appleton & Company, New York, 1918. Vol. 2, p. 454)

"... we must improve man before we can perfect his institutions ...." (E. A. Hooton, Apes, Men, and Morons, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1937. P. 16)

Where, if anywhere, does Spencer face squarely the question of the kind of difference between the mind of man and the mind of subman? And if he did face the question squarely, what conclusion did he reach? Did he refer to Descartes, John Locke, and, perhaps, some other predecessors who insisted upon a difference of kind (I forgot to mention Tylor)? Or did he follow Darwin (The Descent of Man, Chaps. 3, 18) who maintained that the difference was merely one of degree?

Spencer's fullest discussion of the evolution of human intelligence appears to be that in Chapter 7, "Reason," in Vol. I of his Principles of Psychology. Although I did not find a clear-cut statement asserting that there is no fundamental distinction between the human mind and that of sub-human animals, this is the sense of what he is saying. There is a statement in which Spencer speaks disapprovingly of "the prevalent anxiety to establish some absolute distinction between animal intelligence and human intelligence ..." (p. 460). Early in the chapter Spencer says: "... the highest forms of psychical activity arise little by little out of the lowest, and cannot be definitely separated from them." (p. 453)

"... the supposed distinctions between different modes of Intelligence, marked as they eventually become, arise by degrees; and that there is a passage from the lowest to the highest without breach of continuity." (Herbert Spencer, "Mental Evolution," The Contemporary Review, Vol. 17, pp. 461-462, 1871. P. 461)
"... cardinal traits in societies are determined by cardinal traits in men, [and thus] it cannot be questioned that less-marked traits in societies are determined by less-marked traits in men ...." (Herbert Spencer, The Study of Sociology, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1891. P. 52)

"... the existing type of industrial organization, like the existing type of political organization, is about as good as existing human nature allows. The evils there are in it are nothing but the evils brought round on men by their own imperfections." (Herbert Spencer, The Study of Sociology, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1891. P. 252)

Spencer thought that a great deal of the changes in human conduct was the result of changes in human nature. Thus, individuals would gradually become more willing to accept those trammels on individual existence that social life, with its stress on altruism, forces on him. He did not realize how much the change in human conduct (culture) was purely cultural, not involving any change in human nature, and thus not removing that underlying chafing at social rules that the individual human organism will, from time to time, continue to feel. --RLC

"... forms of government are valuable only when they are products of national character. No cunningly-devised political arrangements will of themselves do anything. No amount of knowledge respecting the uses of such arrangements will suffice. Nothing will suffice but the emotional nature to which such arrangements are adapted—a nature which, during social progress, has evolved the arrangements. And wherever there is want of congruity between the nature and the arrangements—wherever the arrangements, suddenly established by revolution or pushed too far by reforming change, are of a higher type than the national character demands, there is always a lapse proportionate to the incongruity." (Herbert Spencer, The Study of Sociology, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1886. Pp. 275-276)

"... the change of nature undergone by the human species since societies began to develop, has been an adaptation of it to the conditions implied by harmonious social life ...." (Herbert Spencer, The Study of Sociology, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1891. Pp. 348-349)

"There can be no understanding of social actions without some knowledge of human nature ...." (Herbert Spencer, The Study of Sociology, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1891. P. 390)
Spencer believed that existing social institutions were about as good as human nature would allow. (E.g., The Study of Sociology, Ann Arbor edition, p. 229)

"... human nature, though indefinitely modifiable, can be modified but very slowly ...." (Herbert Spencer, The Study of Sociology, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1886. P. 120)

"So that wild races deficient in the allegiance-producing sentiment cannot enter into a civilized state at all; but have to be supplanted by others that can." (Herbert Spencer, Social Statics, John Chapman, London, 1851. P. 425)


Spencer believed that "the desire to appropriate, and to keep that which has been appropriated, lies deep, not in human nature only, but in animal nature" (Vol. II, p. 554). (Resort to human nature.)

"Admitting that social evolution can result only if the natures of citizens issue in appropriate conduct ...." (Herbert Spencer, The Study of Sociology, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1891. P. 413)

"... our existing industrial system is a product of existing human nature, and can be improved only as fast as human nature improves." (Herbert Spencer, The Study of Sociology, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1891. P. 254)

"... the existing type of industrial organization, like the existing type of political organization, is about as good as existing human nature allows. The evils there are in it are nothing but the evils brought round on men by their own imperfections." (Herbert Spencer, The Study of Sociology, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1891. P. 252)
"... existence, generation after generation, ... produces an adapted type of nature; partly by daily habit and partly by survival of those most fit for living under such control." (Vol. II, p. 369). Natural selection, Spencer thought, selects those personality traits most favorable to adjust to the prevailing conditions.

"And indications are not lacking that in the emotional sphere, as in the intellectual, an orthogenetic bias is ready to anticipate selective evolution. The trend of selection in the realm of emotions, of instinctive proclivities, of tastes we have already noted: it follows Spencer's hedonistic principle, according to which those races are best adapted for survival, in whom adjustment of agreeable feelings to beneficial action is most perfect." (Alfred J. Lotka, Elements of Physical Biology, Williams & Wilkins Co., Baltimore, 1925. P. 430)

"... the constitutional energy needed for continuous labour, without which there cannot be civilized life and the massing of men presupposed by it, is an energy not to be quickly acquired; but is to be acquired only by inherited modifications slowly accumulated." (Herbert Spencer, The Principles of Sociology, Vol. 2, 2nd. ed., D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1899. P. 270)

"... we have to get rid of the two beliefs that human nature is unchangeable, and that it is easily changed; and we have, instead, to become familiar with the conception of a human nature that is changed in the slow succession of generations by social discipline." (Herbert Spencer, The Study of Sociology, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1891. P. 145)

"... human nature, though indefinitely modifiable, can be modified but very slowly; and ... [thus] all laws and institutions and appliances which count on getting from it, within a short time, much better results than present ones, will inevitably fail." (Herbert Spencer, The Study of Sociology, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1891. P. 120)
"I shall be most glad henceforth, as ever, to help your great undertaking /First Principles specifically, and the System of Philosophy generally/ in any way I can. The more I contemplate its issues the more important does it seem to me to be, and I assure you that I look upon its success as the business of all of us. So that if it were not a pleasure I should feel it a duty to "push behind" as hard as I can." (Letter from Thomas Henry Huxley to Herbert Spencer dated October 10, 1860. Quoted in Leonard Huxley, Life and Letters of Thomas Henry Huxley, 2 Vols., Macmillan and Co., Limited, London, 1900. Vol. 1, p. 214)

"I know nothing of Necessity, abominate the word Law (except as meaning that we know nothing to the contrary), and am quite ready to admit that there may be some place, "other side of nowhere," par example, where \( 2 + 2 = 5 \), and all bodies naturally repel one another instead of gravitating together.... In other words, I believe in Hamilton, Mansell /sic/ and Herbert Spencer so long as they are destructive, and I laugh at their beards as soon as they try to spin their own cobwebs." (Letter from Thomas Henry Huxley to Charles Kingsley dated May 22, 1863. Quoted in Leonard Huxley, Life and Letters of Thomas Henry Huxley, 2 Vols., Macmillan and Co., Limited, London, 1900. Vol. 1, p. 242)

"The only complete and systematic statement of the doctrine /of evolution/ with which I am acquainted is that contained in Mr. Herbert Spencer's 'System of Philosophy;' a work which should be carefully studied by all who desire to know whither scientific thought is tending." (Thomas Henry Huxley, "On the Animals which are most nearly intermediate between Birds and Reptiles," Notices of the Proceedings at the Meetings of the Members of the Royal Institutions of Great Britain, Vol. 5, pp. 278-287, 1868. /P. 278n./) (Vol. 5 includes 1866-69; paper read on February 7, 1868)

"I have been his devil's advocate for a number of years, and there is no telling how many brilliant speculations I have been the means of choking in an embryonic state." (Letter from Thomas Henry Huxley to Dr. Anton Dohrn dated April 30, 1870. Quoted in Leonard Huxley, Life and Letters of Thomas Henry Huxley, 2 Vols., Macmillan and Co., Limited, London, 1900. Vol. 1, p. 333)
"The following is in reply to Mr. Spencer who had accused himself of losing his temper in an argument— " .... What your sins may be in this line to other folk I don't know, but so far as I am concerned I assure you I have often said that I know no one who takes aggravated opposition better than yourself, and that I have not a few times been ashamed of the extent to which I have tried your patience."") (Letter from Thomas Henry Huxley to Herbert Spencer dated November 8, 1868. Quoted in Leonard Huxley, Life and Letters of Thomas Henry Huxley, 2 Vols., Macmillan and Co., Limited, London, 1900. Vol. 1, p. 278)

"Mr. Herbert Spencer, a frequent visitor to Huxley's house in Marlborough Place, which Huxley built in 18727, was an authority on music." (Leonard Huxley, Life and Letters of Thomas Henry Huxley, 2 Vols., Macmillan and Co., Limited, London, 1900. Vol. 2, pp. 421-422)

"One incident of the move to a new house by the Huxley family, however, was more agreeable. Mr. Herbert Spencer took the opportunity of sending a New Year's gift for the new house, in the shape of a handsome clock, wishing, as he said, "to express in some way more emphatic than by words, my sense of the many kindnesses I have received at your hands during the twenty years of our friendship. Remembrance of the things you have done in furtherance of my aims, and of the invaluable critical aid you have given me, with so much patience and at so much cost of time, has often made me feel how much I owe to you." After a generous reference to occasions when the warmth of debate might have betrayed him into more vigorous expressions that he intended, he concludes:—"But inadequately as I may ordinarily show it, you will (knowing that I am tolerably candid) believe me when I say that there is no one whose judgment on all subjects I so much respect, or whose friendship I so highly value."") (Leonard Huxley, Life and Letters of Thomas Henry Huxley, 2 Vols., Macmillan and Co., Limited, London, 1900. Vol. 1, p. 385)

"The question of the expediency of any form of State Education is, in fact, a question of those higher politics which lie above the region in which Tories, Whigs, and Radicals "delight to bark and bite." In discussing it in my address on "Administrative Nihilism," I found myself, to my profound regret, led to diverge very widely (though even more perhaps in seeming than in reality) from the opinions of a man of genius to whom I am bound by the twofold tie of the respect due to a profound philosopher and the affection given to a very old friend. But had I no other means of knowing the fact, the kindly geniality of Mr. Herbert Spencer's reply to "Specialized Administration" assures me that the tie to which I refer will bear a much heavier strain than I have put, or ever intend to put, upon it, and I rather rejoice that I have been the means of calling forth so vigorous a piece of argumentative writing." (Thomas Henry Huxley, Critiques and Addresses, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1873. P. vi)
"It may be remembered that the 1872 address on "Administrative Nihilism" led to a reply from the pen of Mr. Spencer, as the champion of Individualism. When my father sent him the volume in which this address was printed, he wrote back a letter (Sept. 29, 1873) which is characterised by the same feeling. It expresses his thanks for the book, "and many more for the kind expression of feeling in the preface. If you had intended to set an example to the Philistines of the way in which controversial differences may be maintained without any decrease of sympathy, you could not have done it more perfectly."" (Leonard Huxley, Life and Letters of Thomas Henry Huxley, 2 Vols., Macmillan and Co., Limited, London, 1900. Vol. 1, p. 385)

"... a man of genius to whom I am bound by the twofold tie of the respect due to a profound philosopher and the affection given to a very old friend. But I had no other means of knowing the fact that, the kindly geniality of Mr. Herbert Spencer's reply ("Specialized Administration") assures me that the tie to which I refer will bear a much heavier strain than I have put, or ever intend to put, upon it, and I rather rejoice that I have been the means of calling forth so vigorous a piece of argumentative writing. Nor is this disinterested joy at an attack upon myself diminished by the circumstance, that, in all humility, but in all sincerity, I think it may be repulsed." (Thomas Henry Huxley, Preface to Critiques and Addresses, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1873. P. vi)

"We find him (T. H. Huxley) also reading over proofs for Mr. Herbert Spencer, who, although he might hesitate to ask for his criticism with respect to a subject on which they had a "standing difference," still "concluded that to break through the long-standing usage, in pursuance of which I have habitually submitted my biological writing to your castigation, and so often profited by so doing, would seem like a distrust of your candour—a distrust which I cannot entertain."" (Letter from Herbert Spencer to Thomas Henry Huxley dated January, 1886. Quoted in Leonard Huxley, Life and Letters of Thomas Henry Huxley, 2 Vols., Macmillan and Co., Limited, London, 1900. Vol. 2, p. 127)

"But you were infinitely better off than I in the matter of education. I had two years of a Pandemonium of a school (between 8 and 10) and after that neither help nor sympathy in any intellectual direction till I reached manhood. Good heavens! if I had had a father and uncle who troubled themselves about my education as / yours did about your training, I might say as Bethell said of his possibilities had he come under Jowett, "There is no knowing to what eminence I might not have attained."" (Letter from Thomas Henry Huxley to Herbert Spencer, dated November 25, 1886. Quoted in Leonard Huxley, Life and Letters of Thomas Henry Huxley, 2 Vols., Macmillan and Co., Limited, London, 1900. Vol. 2, pp. 145-146)
"Reading your account of me /in proofs of Spencer's Autobiography/, I had the sensation of studying a fly in amber. I had utterly forgotten the particular circumstances that brought us together. Considering what wilful tykes we both are (you particularly), I think it is a great credit to both of us that we are firmer friends now than we were then. Your kindly words have given me much pleasure." (Letter from Thomas Henry Huxley to Herbert Spencer dated January 18, 1887. Quoted in Leonard Huxley, Life and Letters of Thomas Henry Huxley, 2 Vols., Macmillan and Co., Limited, London, 1900. Vol. 2, p. 183)

"Now you may be sure that I should be glad enough to be associated with you in anything; but considering the innumerable battles we have fought over education, vaccination, and so on, it seemed to me that if the programme of the League /the London Liberty Club/ were wide enough to take us both for figure-heads, it must be so elastic as to verge upon infinite extensibility; and that one or other of us would be in a false position." (Letter from Thomas Henry Huxley to Herbert Spencer dated January 18, 1887. Quoted in Leonard Huxley, Life and Letters of Thomas Henry Huxley, 2 Vols., Macmillan and Co., Limited, London, 1900. Vol. 2, p. 183)

"Evolution as a philosophical doctrine applicable to all phenomena, whether physical or mental, whether manifested by material atoms or by men in society, has been dealt with systematically in the "Synthetic Philosophy" of Mr. Herbert Spencer. Comment on that great undertaking would not be in place here. I mention it because, so far as I know, it is the first attempt to deal on scientific principles with modern scientific facts and speculations. For the "Philosophie positive" of M. Comte, with which Mr. Spencer's system of philosophy is sometimes compared, though it professes a similar object, is unfortunately permeated by a thoroughly unscientific spirit, and its author had no adequate acquaintance with the physical sciences even of his own time." (Thomas Henry Huxley, "Advance of Science in the Last Half Century," Smithsonian Institution Annual Report, 1887 (1889), pp. 57-98. Pp. 85-86)

"I am afraid it /"The Industrial Struggle for Existence" in The Nineteenth Century, February, 1888/ has made Spencer very angry—but he knows I think he has been doing mischief this long time." (Letter from Thomas Henry Huxley to Sir John Donnelly dated February 9, 1888, Vol. 2, p. 188) "However, he and Mr. Spencer wrote their minds to each other on the subject, and as Huxley remarks with reference to this occasion, "the process does us both good, and in no way interferes with our friendship."" (Leonard Huxley, Life and Letters of Thomas Henry Huxley, 2 Vols., Macmilland and Co., Limited, London, 1900. Vol. 2, p. 188)

"Professor Huxley /In his exchange of letters with Spencer in the London Times in November, 1882/ came at the philosopher in a bullheaded way that must have seemed very unkind." (George, Henry, A Perplexed Philosopher, Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, New York, 1965. P. 94)
"Professor Huxley at times disavows materialism as positing only "matter and force and mechanism." It is idle to make such statements without explaining how the so-called Materialist defines the terms matter and force. Professor Huxley writes as if their connotations were perfectly certain and invariable. I know of no "Materialism" which is, so to say, more "materialistic" than his own. But, like too many of our English thinkers, he is more concerned to evade compromising names than to clear them up." (John M. Robertson, Modern Humanists, Swan Sonnenschein & Co., London, 1891. Pp. 235n.-236n.)

"It is the final expression of his T. H. Huxley's essentially negative mind, which kept him denying evolution till the proofs were sufficient to stagger even bigots; set him contending Spencer's so-called Nihilism without indicating a notion of what ought to be really done; and kept him opposing the exclusion of superstition from the schools, till he was fain himself to make a stand in order to exclude it from the forum. Thus may you contrive to have it formally on record that you were right, while the upshot of your career remains negation or practical nullity." (John M. Robertson, Modern Humanists, Swan Sonnenschein & Co., London, 1891. P. 243)

"Enclosed you will find a copy of a letter just published in the Athenaeum. As you will see, it is drawn from me by Prof. Huxley's lecture on "Evolution & Ethics," which, if you have seen it, you will recognize as a gross misrepresentation. But is quite consists with his late attitude. For some years past he has lost no opportunity for direct or indirect attack upon me." (Letter from Herbert Spencer to John Fiske dated August 3, 1893. Henry E. Huntington Library, Cat. No. HM 13755. Unpublished)


In the London Times between November 7 and 27, 1899, there is an exchange of letters between Huxley and Spencer over the question of private vs. public land ownership. Spencer's letters were dated November 7, 11, 15, 19 and 27. One of Huxley's letters was dated November 18.

"To hear Herbert Spencer and him sometimes engage in conversational controversy was something to be remembered, even by one as little qualified as myself to form any sound mental reasons for awarding the palm of debate." (Justin McCarthy, M.P., Reminiscences, 2 Vols., Chatto & Windus, London, 1899. Vol. 2, p. 310)
"I remember Huxley praising him one day, and when I objected he told me that Herbert Spencer had done almost as much for the theory of evolution as Darwin himself. I pointed out that the theory was more or less in the air of the time and that all good minds had had an inkling of it. He admitted that there was some truth in my contention, but stuck to his high estimate of Spencer. I could not agree with him. Coleridge, I argued, had grasped the theory of evolution half a century before Darwin; had even seen in talking of artistic creation that a man grows from the simple to the complex. Huxley seemed interested, but Spencer was a fetish to him." (Frank Harris, Contemporary Portraits, Second Series. Published by the Author, New York, 1919. P. 228)

"I was most interested that your recollection of Thomas Henry Huxley was much the same as Mrs. Webb's as expressed in her book, My Apprenticeship. I think the vulgarity comes out even in the Life; but, of course, toned down by skilful filial affection. Mrs. Webb told me that the difference, at a dinner-party, between Spencer's grave courtesy and Huxley's beak and claws was an object lesson in manners." (Letter from Harold J. Laski to Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., dated July 6, 1925. Quoted in Holmes-Laski Letters. The Correspondence of Mr. Justice Holmes and Harold J. Laski, 1916-1935, 2 Vols., edited by Mark DeWolfe Howe, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1935. Vol. 1, p. 759)

"The two [Spencer and Huxley] rapidly became intimate. In one sense, it was a friendship between a plenum and a vacuum. Spencer thought busily to keep his head full of speculation. Huxley thought just as busily to keep his head antiseptically free from speculation. Huxley was full of facts. Spencer was full of ideas that craved facts." (William Irvine, Apes, Angels, and Victorians, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1955. P. 30)

"It was necessary that on my biological writings I should have the criticisms of an expert, and these were kindly given to me by Prof. Huxley; but I did not ask his criticisms on my psychological, sociological, and ethical writings, nor on my writings of a miscellaneous kind." (p. 148) "Out of sixteen published volumes he [Huxley] saw the proofs of three only, to which must be added the proofs of some small fragments." (p. 149) (Herbert Spencer, Facts and Comments, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1902)

"... the position he [Huxley] takes, that we have to struggle against or correct the cosmic process, involves the assumption that there exists something in us which is not a product of the cosmic process, and is practically a going back to the old theological notions which put man and nature in antithesis." (Herbert Spencer, letter to J. A. Skilton, June 29, 1893, quoted in David Duncan, Life and Letters of Herbert Spencer, Williams and Norgate, London, 1911. P. 336)
In 1857 and thereabouts, Spencer and Huxley had long walks together. "Involved as the hypothesis of organic evolution was in most of my thinking, it not unfrequently cropped up in our talk, and led to animated discussions in which, having a knowledge of the facts immensely greater than mine, he habitually demolished now this and now that argument which I used. But though continually knocked down, I continually got up again. The principle which he acted upon was that of keeping judgment in suspense in the absence of adequate evidence. But acknowledging, though I did, the propriety of his course, I found myself in this case unable to adopt it. There were, as it seemed to me, but two imaginable possibilities—special creation and progressive development; and since the doctrine of special creation, unsupported by evidence, was also intrinsically incredible, because incongruous with all we know of the order of Nature, the doctrine of development was accepted by me as the only alternative. Hence, fallacious as proved this or the other special reason assigned in support of it, my belief in it perpetually revived." (Auto. I, 505).

In a letter to Spencer, Huxley, who had been reading and criticizing proofs of Spencer's First Principles wrote: "It seems as if all the thoughts in what you have written were my own, and yet I am conscious of the enormous difference your presentation of them makes in my intellectual state. One is thought in the state of hemp yarn, and the other in the state of rope." (Letter from Thomas Henry Huxley to Herbert Spencer, dated September 3, 1860. Quoted in Leonard Huxley, Life and Letters of Thomas Henry Huxley. 2 Vols., D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1900. Vol. 1, p. 229)

"During the London years [T. H.] Huxley had hold him [Patrick Geddes] not to waste time reading Spencer; so he read Spencer and seized upon the latter's emphasis on anabolism and katabolism, the processes of building up and tearing down, as fundamental to all forms of life. From this starting point Geddes read and observed, reasoned and guessed, till he convinced himself of a number of things in contradiction to currently held ideas of organic evolution in general, and the evolution of sex in particular." (Philip Boardman, Patrick Geddes, Maker of the Future. The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1944. P. 126)

"Once [between 1874 and 1878] on returning from an inter-term vacation [from the School of Mines in London] nominally devoted to the study of chicken embryos, he reported to [T. H.] Huxley enthusiastically that in addition to he had found time to read Herbert Spencer's Principles of Biology. "You'd have done far better to spend all your time on embryology!" came the snorting rejoinder. Whereupon Geddes immediately reread Spencer to find out why Huxley disapproved of him ...." (Philip Boardman, Patrick Geddes, Maker of the Future. The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1944. P. 34)
"In my undergraduate days at Oxford (Webb was born in 1867, not 1862) the influence of (Thomas Hill) Green, whose death had taken place only a few years previously, and whose posthumous Prolegomena to Ethics had just been published, was at its height, and for my own generation of Oxford men the starting-point of our various philosophical developments is usually to be sought in the idealistic criticism of Mill and Herbert Spencer for which Green stood. This is true for the 'realists,' 'personal idealists,' and 'pragmatists' among us... as well as for those who may seem to be more closely affiliated to Green's own type of philosophy." (Clement C. J. Webb, "Outline of a Philosophy of Religion," in Contemporary British Philosophy, Personal Statements (Second Series), ed. by J. H. Muirhead, pp. 335-359, The Macmillan Company, New York, n.d. Pp. 337-338)

"When I rub my eyes and look at things candidly, it seems evident to me that this world is the sort of world described by Herbert Spencer, not the sort of world described by Hegel or Bergson. At heart these finer philosophers, like Plato, are not seeking to describe the world of our daily plodding and commerce, but to supply a visionary interpretation of it, a refuge from it in some contrasted spiritual assurance, where the sharp facts vanish into a clarified drama or a pleasant trance. Far be it from me to deride the imagination, poetic or dialectical; but after all it is a great advantage for a system of philosophy to be substantially true." (George Santayana, "The Unknowable," The Herbert Spencer Lecture for 1923, The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1923. P. 4)

"Spencer was not without honour in his own country, yet our national indifference to philosophy and to all systematic thinking, and the subserviency of a great part of our professional philosophers to the great German metaphysicians, have undoubtedly prevented his receiving from his countrymen during his lifetime the full measure of recognition that is due to his splendid services to science and philosophy." (Unsigned, Obituary of Herbert Spencer, Nature, Vol. 69, pp. 155-156, December 17, 1903. P. 155)

"In Ethics I found (Smith was born in 1862) little help to me; the English Moralists repelled me, Mill and Spencer were used by me and others as mere butts of criticism, Green and Bradley passed over my head, Kant alone seemed to afford a solid framework of ethical theory (but a framework only)." (J. A. Smith, "Philosophy as the Development of the Notion and Reality of Self-Consciousness," in Contemporary British Philosophy, Personal Statements (Second Series), ed. by J. H. Muirhead, pp. 225-244, The Macmillan Company, New York, n.d. P. 229)

"In fact, when we hear him \[\text{Spencer}\] saying of consciousness that it "contains no element, relation or law that is like any element, relation or law in the external body," it seems to be hardly distinguishable from idealism. And here Mr. Spencer belongs. He is an idealist, though a materialistic idealist." (Augustus Hopkins Strong, D.D., Philosophy and Religion, A. C. Armstrong, New York, 1888. P. 50)

"... the philosophy he [Thomas Hill Green] was working out when his early death interrupted him is best described, if a brief description is needed, as a reply to Herbert \[\text{Spencer}\] by a profound student of Hume." (R. G. Collingwood, An Autobiography, Oxford University Press, London, 1939. Pp. 15-16)

"In admitting that there is something in our mind, which is not the result of our own \[\text{A posteriori}\] experience, Mr. Herbert Spencer is a thorough Kantian, ...." (Friedrich Max Müller, "Lectures on Mr. Darwin's Philosophy of Language," Fraser's Magazine, n.s., Vol. 7, pp. 525-541, 1873. P. 539)

"Hence it is that our academic philosophers, who, just now, are followers of Hegel--in accordance with the generalization that "Good German philosophers, when they die, go to Oxford"-- ...." (C. W. Salesby, Evolution The Master-Key, Harper & Brothers Publishers, New York, 1906. P. 342)

"I could not accept his [the anatomist Robert Owen's] Platonic notion of an ideal vertebra, of which he considered each actual vertebra an embodiment ...." (Herbert Spencer, in The Life and Letters of Herbert Spencer, edited by David Duncan, 2 Vols., D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1908. Vol. 2, p. 316)
"Effectual practice depends on superiority of ideas; methods that answer are preceded by thoughts that are true." (Herbert Spencer. Where does he say this? Social Statics? The Study of Sociology?)

"It is never the knowledge which is the moving agent in conduct; but it is always the feeling which goes along with that knowledge, or is excited by it." (Herbert Spencer, The Study of Sociology, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1891. P. 359)


"I am glad to see that you take the same view as I do with respect to the supreme importance of true political theory, especially for you in the United States. I do not believe that a true theory will do much good, but one may at any rate say, contrariwise, that an untrue one does a great deal of harm; and at present much mischief is going on among you as a result of untrue theories." (Letter from Herbert Spencer to Edward L. Youmans dated June 13, 1881. Quoted in John Fiske, Edward Livingston Youmans, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1894. P. 371)
ILLUSTRATIONS

The cover of the Illustrated London News (Vol. 123, December 12, 1903) has a photograph of Herbert Spencer that I had not seen before (January 20, 1977). It is a formal portrait, and a good one. Spencer looks to be in his seventies when it was taken. Under the photo appears the caption "Copyright Photograph, Ernest H. Mills."

INCEST

Spencer perceived that the incest taboo was not innate. (Vol. I, p. 637, 1st ed.)

INDEPENDENT THINKER

Spencer is a very independent thinker. He never cites another theoretician (except, rarely, to disagree with him). He develops his own arguments, buttressing them with ethnographic evidence and fact rather than with scholarly opinions.
"As the concept of "social forces" was introduced by Ward in 1883, it amounted to the first impressive challenge of the fatalistic implications of Herbert Spencer's rendering of the evolutionary theory. Whether Spencer would have accepted the categorical statement or not, many and for a while the most aggressive of his disciples got the impression from his interpretation of evolution that the development of society is beyond voluntary control. It was supposed to be determined rather by those physical laws of the redistribution of forces found working in the lower scale of nature. It was inferred that human volition can neither hasten nor retard the pace of this social evolution." (Albion W. Small, "Fifty Years of Sociology in the United States," The American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 21, pp. 721-864, 1916. P. 755)

"... governmental evolution is essentially a result of social necessities. On tracing its earliest stages from savage life upwards, it becomes manifest that even a ministry is not the mere invention of a king. It arises everywhere from that augmentation of business which goes along with increase in territory and authority: entailing the necessity for deputing more and more work. Under its special aspect it seems to be wholly a result of the king's private action, but under the general aspect it is seen to be determined by the conditions of his existence. And it is so with governmental institutions at large. Without tracing these further it will suffice to quote the saying of Macintosh--'Constitutions are not made but grow.'" (p. 355) ("What Is Social Evolution?" The Nineteenth Century, Vol. 44, pp. 348-358, 1898)
Spencer saw the events of human history as the result of the interplay of social forces, rather than the achievement of individuals consciously striving for a result. This is a scientific theory. It says that there is a general flow to the culture process. It makes use of individual as its agents, as it must. But it directs them rather than being directed by them. As an interpretation of the course of events it is sound, and superior to one that makes man the prime mover, because it predicts the outcome of social trends much better than any Great Man Theory would be able to. But there is also a political philosophical component to Spencer's views on this point. He argues that individuals should not attempt to interfere with the normal flow of events because they will only thwart, even if only temporarily, the orderly course of things. But here his philosophy is inconsistent with his science. In their attempted "interference" with the normal social process, individuals are acting only as social forces direct them. They could not act otherwise. Thus Spencer is, in effect, arguing that individuals should act in opposition to the determinism that directs them.

"It is only by fulfilling their individual wills ... that citizens produce those aggregate results which exhibit uniformities apparently independent of individual wills. ... No such results could be produced did they not fulfill their wills." (Herbert Spencer, The Study of Sociology, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1891. P. 413)

"To understand any fact in social evolution, we have to see it as resulting from the joint actions of individuals having certain natures. We cannot so understand it without understanding their natures ...." (Herbert Spencer, The Study of Sociology, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1891. P. 117)

"Nothing comes out of a society but what originates in the motive of an individual, or in the united similar motives of many individuals, or in the conflict of the united similar motives of some having certain interests, with the diverse motives of others whose interests are different." (Herbert Spencer, The Study of Sociology, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1891. P. 382)

"Each man in whom dissatisfaction is aroused by institutions which have survived from a less civilized past, or whose sympathies make certain evils repugnant to him, must regard his feelings thus excited as units in the aggregate of forces by which progress is to be brought about; and is called on to expend his feelings in appropriate deeds. An analogy will best show how there may be reconciled the two propositions that social evolution is a process conforming to natural laws, and yet that it results from the voluntary efforts of citizens." (Herbert Spencer, The Study of Sociology, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1891. P. 412)
"Incongruity between character and institutions is the disturbing force, and a revolution is the act of restoring equilibrium. Accidental circumstances modify the process, but do not perceptibly alter the effect. They precipitate; they retard; they intensify or ameliorate; but, let a few years elapse, and the same end is arrived at, no matter what the special events passed through." (Herbert Spencer, Social Statics, John Chapman, London, 1851. P. 433)

"If such and such events had not occurred, say you, the result would have been otherwise; if this or that man had lived, he would have prevented the catastrophe. Do not be thus deceived. These changes are brought about by a power far above individual wills. Men who seem the prime movers, are merely the tools with which it works; and were they absent, it would quickly find others." (Herbert Spencer, Social Statics, John Chapman, London, 1851. P. 33)

"Nothing comes out of a society but what originates in the motive of an individual, or in the united similar motives of many individuals, or in the conflict of the united similar motives of some having certain interests, with the diverse motives of others whose interests are different. Always the power which initiates a change is feeling, separate or aggregated, guided to its ends by intellect; and not even an approach to an explanation of social phenomena can be made, without the thoughts and sentiments of citizens being recognized as factors." (Study, p. 349) 1886 ed., p. 382

"... the thoughts and actions of individuals, being natural factors that arise in the course of the evolution itself, and aid in furthering advancing it, cannot be dispensed with, but must be severally valued as increments of the aggregate force producing change." (Study, p. 365)

"Similarly, before there arise in human nature and human institutions, changes having that permanence which makes them an acquired inheritance for the human race, there must go innumerable recurrences of the thoughts, and feelings, and actions, conducive to such changes. The process cannot be abridged; and must be gone through with due patience. Thus, admitting that for the fanatic some wild anticipation is needful as a stimulus, and recognizing the usefulness of his delusion as adapted to his particular nature and his particular function, the man of higher type must be content with greatly-moderated expectations, while he perseveres with undiminished efforts. He has to see how comparatively little can be done, and yet find it worth while to do that little: so uniting philanthropic energy with philosophic calm." (Herbert Spencer, The Study of Sociology, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1886. Pp. 402-403)
"I am chiefly concerned, however, to repudiate the conclusion that the "private action of citizens" is needless or unimportant, because the course of social evolution is determined by the natures of citizens, as working under the conditions in which they are placed. To assert that each social change is thus determined, is to assert that all the egoistic and altruistic activities of citizens are factors of the change; and is tacitly to assert that in the absence of any of these--say political aspirations, or the promptings of philanthropy--the change will not be the same. So far from implying that the efforts of each man to achieve that which he thinks best, are unimportant, the doctrine of social evolution implies that such efforts, severally resulting from the natures of the individuals, are indispensable forces." (Herbert Spencer, "A Note on the Preceding Article" /actually two, by J. E. Cairnes/. The Fortnightly Review. Vol. 17, n.s., pp. 214-216, 1875. P. 215)

"So far from implying that the efforts of each man to achieve that which he thinks best, are unimportant, the doctrine implies that such efforts, severally resulting from the natures of the individuals, are indispensable forces." (Herbert Spencer, The Man versus the State, Watts & Co., London, 1950. P. 137)

"The recognition of these effects of individual differences, in skill, aptitude, intelligence, etc., especially in early stages, may rightly go along with the assertion that all those great components of a society which carry on the various industries, making the life of the whole possible, all those specialised classes which have established and maintained the interdependence of the producing structures, by facilitating and regulating the exchange of their products, have arisen from the play of aggregate forces, constituted of men's desires directed by their respective sets of circumstances." (p. 356) ("What Is Social Evolution?" The Nineteenth Century, Vol. 44, pp. 348-358, 1898)

"Talking one day with the late E. L. Youmans, the great popularizer of Spencerianism in the United States, a man of warm and generous sympathies, whose philosophy seemed to me like an ill-fitting coat he had accidentally picked up and put on, he fell into speaking with much warmth of the political corruption of New York, of the utter carelessness and selfishness of the rich, and of their readiness to submit to it, or to promote it wherever it served their money-getting purposes to do so. He became so indignant as he went on that he raised his voice till he almost shouted. Alluding to a conversation some time before, in which I had affirmed and he had denied the duty of taking part in politics, I said to him, "What do you propose to do about it?" Of a sudden his manner and tone were completely changed, as remembering his Spencerianism, he threw himself back, and replied, with something like a sigh, "Nothing! You and I can do nothing at all. It's all a matter of evolution. We can only wait for evolution. Perhaps in four or five thousand years evolution may have carried men beyond this state of things. But we can do nothing." (Henry George, A Perplexed Philosopher, Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, New York, 1965. P. 136n.)
Despite his personal objection to despotism and his championing of individualism, Spencer saw that the evolution of culture was closely associated with strong autocratic rule. (Vol. II, p. 361).

"In his later writings, particularly in his "Study of Sociology," Mr. Spencer, as already stated, has modified, without retracting, these views on state interfering as put forth in his "Social Statics."" (Lester Frank Ward, Dynamic Sociology, 2 Vols., D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1883. Vol. I, p. 152)


"But, by a strange process of social evolution, what was called individualistic radicalism in 1842 (the year Spencer wrote his The Proper Sphere of Government) had come to be regarded as anti-socialistic conservatism in 1902 (the date of Spencer's last book, Facts and Comments!" (F. J. C. Hearnshaw, "Herbert Spencer and the Individualists," in The Social & Political Ideas of Some Representative Thinkers of the Victorian Age, ed. by F. J. C. Hearnshaw, pp. 53-83, George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd., London, 1933. P. 69)

"Spencer did not seem to realize that, in demonstrating the possibility of a social science, in stressing the constant factors in human nature and its terrestrial environment, in depreciating the influence of great men, and, above all, in treating society as akin to an organism, he was laying the axe to the roots of his individualism." (F. J. C. Hearnshaw, "Herbert Spencer and the Individualists," in The Social & Political Ideas of Some Representative Thinkers of the Victorian Age, ed. by F. J. C. Hearnshaw, pp. 53-83, George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd., London, 1933. P. 68)

"... many otherwise loyal adherents of Spencerianism have refused to follow their teacher into the extremes of his political thought; and, secondly, because of the opinion, widely diffused among them, that his social doctrines, espoused long before the working out of his general system, have since been cleverly dovetailed into that system, and form no proper part of it." (William Henry Hudson, An Introduction to the Philosophy of Herbert Spencer, revised edition, Watts & Co., London, 1906. P. 65n.)
"And having settled that question of the limited role that government should play to his own satisfaction in his early literary career, it was naturally difficult for him to re-open it, not to say to reverse his conclusion in later years after a more comprehensive survey of the field before him." (Lester Frank Ward, Dynamic Sociology, 2 Vols., D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1883. Vol. 1, p. 151)

"... Spencer's early education and thorough individualist influences had emphasized for him the demand for a high degree of individual freedom from social control by state or other agencies of society. Spencer's liberalism, it is to be remembered, was a part of the development of industrial, middle-class capitalism, which did not recognize the dawning aspirations of the working class, nor realize the coming of a larger conception of democracy." (Walter Greenwood Beach, The Growth of Social Thought, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1939. P. 123)

"I am still reading hard; all my spare time in the day and sometimes half the night. I am now approaching the end of Herbert Spencer's system of philosophy. It has been a hard nut to crack, but I wanted first of all to get a good groundwork of the latest science to build upon. And Herbert Spencer must not merely be read; he must be learned." (Letter from Henry Arthur Jones to Emery Walker dated February 19, 1878. Quoted in Doris Arthur Jones, The Life and Letters of Henry Arthur Jones, Victor Gollancz Ltd, London, 1930. P. 39)

"Much of Spencer's way of thinking and many of his ideas have become a part of the very atmosphere we breathe and cannot but accept, and much of his work must form a part of every future system of philosophy that shall attempt the unification of the sciences." (Anonymous, "Herbert Spencer" obituary, Nature, Vol. 69, pp. 155-156, 1903. P. 156)

"En la historia del pensamiento de la segunda mitad del siglo pasado constituye un rasgo característico para la catalogación de cada autor su posición respecto de la doctrina de Spencer." (Leopold Von Wiese, Sociología, translated by Rafael Luengo Tapia, Colección Labor, Sección VIII, No. 323, Editorial Labor, S.A., Barcelona, 1932. P. 81)

"You cannot open a competent book in any of three or four departments of thought, but you find the most fruitful discussions turning about the hypotheses of Spencer. I take it that this is one of the greatest possible services of a great man—to produce definitely directed effort, even though his private views go down in the result." (James Mark Baldwin, "Mr. Spencer's Psychology," The American Naturalist, Vol. 31, pp. 553-557, 1897. P. 555)
"About H. Spencer's philosophy, I am so far in agreement with you that on me, as on you, the early readings of his books made an impression that has never left me; though he has latterly fallen out of fashion; and perhaps his close compact reasoning may seem arid to a later generation." (Letter from Alfred Lyall to Miss Oakeley, Garden of the Victoria College at the McGill University in Canada, dated 1903. Quoted in Sir Mortimer Durand, Life of the Right Hon. Sir Alfred Comyn Lyall, William Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh, 1913. P. 399)


"... I do not think that any one, except a deeply read man, can appreciate the immensity of Spencer's converse with all that man has done in the spread of knowledge, and of its influence in the development of every phase of his advancement from the savage to the highest civilisation." (Letter from Joseph D. Hooker to Inglis Palgrave dated December 23, 1903. Quoted in Leonard Huxley, Life and Letters of Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker, 2 Vols., D. Appleton & Company, New York, 1918. Vol. 2, p. 454)

"No philosopher of modern times, not Kant himself, has exercised in his lifetime so wide a dominion. Only here and there, among men of a very different stamp, in men like Byron or Rousseau or Tolstoi, do we see that strange power of captivating the imagination of an age, of speaking with a voice that goes out into all lands." (D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson, On Aristotle as a Biologist: With a Prosemeion on Herbert Spencer, The Herbert Spencer Lecture for 1913, 31 pp., The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1913. P. 3)

I spoke with Linda Guttworth, the granddaughter of Joseph Bruder, at the New York Academy of Sciences in October(?), 1969. She is a student of Mervyn Meggitt's, and had told Meggitt that her grandfather had read Spencer, and would occasionally read her passages from Spencer when she was about 10 years old. Mrs. Guttworth said that Joseph Bruder, A. A. Brill (translator of Freud), and Bela Schick (1877-1967) (inventor of the Schick test), were all M.D.'s of central European origin who were interested in social science and who had read Herbert Spencer. Mrs. Guttworth suggested I get in touch with Katherine Schick, widow of Bela Schick, whose address is Park Avenue and 85th Street in New York.
"The better known works of Herbert Spencer also stirred me up. When Herbert Spencer died I wrote for the Saturday Evening Post an account of his life and works, one of the few things I ever asked George Lorimer, the magazine's editor, to print. Herbert Spencer, along with Whitman, Emerson and Dickens, became at the turn of the century one of my spiritual inspirations." (The Autobiography of William Allen White. The Macmillan Company. New York, 1946, P. 326.)

"By the time of his death his ideas, in a modified form no doubt, had become so largely assimilated into our thought and our forms of speech that we had half forgotten their originator." (James Sully, My Life and Friends, T. F. Unwin, Ltd. London, 1918. P. 294)

"We are standing now on heights which his struggles and his labors won for us," wrote Durant, and "we seem to be above him because he has raised us on his shoulders." 179

"The theories of Darwin and Spencer are doubtless not demonstrated; they are to some extent hypothetical, just as all the theories of physical science are to some extent hypothetical, and open to doubt. Judging from the immense numbers of diverse facts which they harmonise and explain, I venture to look upon the theories of evolution and natural selection in their main features as two of the most probable hypotheses ever proposed. I question whether any scientific works which have appeared since the Principia of Newton are comparable in importance with those of Darwin and Spencer, revolutionising as they do all our views of the origin of bodily, mental, moral, and social phenomena." (W. Stanley Jevons, The Principles of Science, 2nd ed. Macmillan and Co., Limited, London, 1900. P. 762)


"Of course, in a general way I quite understand and agree with that Spencer has done but little service to science. But I believe that he has done great service to thinking, and all the mathematicians in the world would not convince me to the contrary, even though they should all deliver their judgment with the magnificent authority of a " (Letter from George J. Romanes to Charles Darwin, dated February 6, 1880. Mrs. E. Romanes, The Life and Letters of George John Romanes, Longmans, Green, and Co., London, 1896. P. 96) /the unidentified person might be named in this letter as published in Darwin's Life and Letters, where I believe it is included also./
"There are many of his younger contemporaries—men who were eager students at the time when his earlier works appeared—who owe to his "Essays," to his "Social Statics," and to his "Principles of Psychology" some of the most permanent and fruitful elements of their intellectual equipment. They may not be professed adherents of the Synthetic Philosophy as a whole, they may never even have studied it, but they are just as much Spencerians as other men are Kantians or Aristotelians; that is, they find in the leading ideas of the master the speculative inspiration which determines and directs the march of their own philosophic thought."


"The whole rising generation of naturalists around 1876, when Osborn entered Princeton dropped the Bible and eagerly read Herbert Spencer, whose philosophy and biology became a new gospel; the successive editions and translations of his works were second only to those of Darwin. Among American students Spencer was still supreme as late as 1891 when I came to Columbia. As for his influence among laymen, I well remember Judge Carter, of Fort Bridger, Wyoming, and his shrine of Spencer's complete writings, encased with a photograph of the great closet philosopher. Now Spencer has become merely an historic figure in the history of natural philosophy; he is no longer a living force." (Evolution and Religion in Education. Henry Fairfield Osborn. Charles Scribner's Sons. New York, 1926. P. 72.)

"No other mind in our generation has attempted to grapple so seriously with so many great subjects as Mr. Spencer has done; no other one thinker has so impressed himself upon all serious investigators in each of the great branches of scientific knowledge. Very few professional biologists are more frequently quoted than Mr. Spencer in works on biology; few, if any, professional psychologists are so frequently quoted in works on psychology; few, if any, professional writers on ethics are so frequently quoted in discussions of morals. This one fact is a significant index of Mr. Spencer's range and power. Even if it be true that the expert in each of the sciences mentioned disagrees with Mr. Spencer's conclusions on vital points, it is an astonishing achievement for any one man to have so impressed himself upon the best thought in so many fields of mental activity that all whose life work is concerned with these subjects find it necessary to define their relations to one such comprehensive thinker." (Franklin H. Giddings, Review of Spencer's Principles of Sociology, Vol. 3. Science, Vol. 5, n.s., pp. 732-733, 1897. Pp. 732-733)
"The appeal of Spencer to the generation born after the Civil War was extraordinary. Ardent young minds, for whom the candles of theology were burnt out and who were seeking new light to their feet, were drawn to him irresistibly. Young rebels who had thrown off the guidance of their elders and were bent on discovering fresh paths through the tangle of dead faiths—indeed souls like Hamlin Garland and Jack London and Theodore Dreiser who were to become leaders of the realistic revolt against the genteel tradition in life and letters and faith—went to school to him to prepare themselves for the great work of freeing the American mind from the old theological inhibitions. Young men in colleges no longer read Butler's Analogy, as their fathers had done before the war, but turned with zest to Spencer's Data of Ethics to discover a more scientific theory of conduct. Everywhere the influence of the great Victorian penetrated, and wherever that influence spread the old theological prepossessions disintegrated. It is probably no exaggeration to say that Spencer laid out the broad highway over which American thought traveled in the later years of the century." (Vernon L. Parrington, Main Currents in American Thought, Vol. 3: The Beginnings of Critical Realism in America: 1860-1920, Harcourt, Brace, & Co., Inc., New York, 1930. Pp. 197-198)

"Instinctively the new writers of the latter half of the 19th century began a search for older allies. There were a few of these to be found in America, but not enough of them to serve as the basis of a new literary movement. For most of their support the rebels had to look eastward across the Atlantic. They were especially attracted by the English evolutionary scientists and pamphleteers. Most of the young writers read the works of this whole English group, beginning with Darwin, whose observations were too rigorously set forth to please their slipshod literary tastes. They could not find much to use in Darwin's books, except his picture of natural selection operating through the struggle for life; most of their Darwinism was acquired at second hand. Huxley they seem to have read with less veneration but more interest, chiefly because of his arguments against the Bible as revealed truth and because of his long war with the Protestant clergy. Young writers, feeling that the churches were part of a vast conspiracy to keep them silent, believed that Huxley was fighting their battle. It was Herbert Spencer, however, who deeply affected their thinking. Spencer's American popularity during the last half of the nineteenth century is something without parallel in the history of philosophic writing." (Malcom Cowley, "Naturalism in American Literature," in Evolutionary Thought in America, edited by Stow Persons, pp. 300-333. Yale University Press, New Haven, 1950. P. 302)

"There remains room for a full biographical study of Spencer which places him and his work in their time and draws on a wide reading of the literature about him as well as his relationships, e.g., with Lewes, George Eliot, his American promoters, and the wide current of nineteenth-century naturalism. He was as pervasive in the decades in which he flourished as a Malthus or a Chambers was in his own." (Robert M. Young, Darwin's Metaphor, Nature's Place in Victorian Culture, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985. P. 270n.)
"Among the many letters of congratulation and praise received by my father, none gave him keener pleasure than a letter from Herbert Spencer probably in 1891 asking him to go and see him. The Times criticism of the play The Dancing Girl by Jones, first produced on the London stage in 1891 referred to the lines where Sybil Craig, in speaking of Herbert Spencer, says, "I've found out." Guisebury, "What?" Sybil, "That he teaches exactly the same thing as Dante. Dante says, 'In His will is thy peace,' Spencer says, 'You must bring yourself into perfect agreement with your environment or get crushed!'" Herbert Spencer was very pleased at this quotation from his teaching, and H. A. J. derived the kee nest pleasure from the talk he had with the great man. He told him how, as a boy not out of his teens, he had commenced reading all his works, and how deeply and lastingly he was indebted to their teaching for his intellectual development. My father said constantly, "Any clear thinking I've done I owe to Herbert Spencer."" (Doris Arthur Jones, The Life and Letters of Henry Arthur Jones, Victor Gollancz Ltd, London, 1930. P. 114) (Jones wrote 87 plays between 1869 and 1922, of which 49 were performed.)

"The last time I saw Spencer was in his bedroom at Brighton, and amid the details of our conversation, every one of which is naturally fresh in my memory, there is one that I specially recall. Just back from America, I told him of the deep interest I found everywhere taken there in his work, and spoke of the immense range of his influence upon the world's thought. His reply was: "I am satisfied; I am satisfied."" (William Henry Hudson, An Introduction to the Philosophy of Herbert Spencer, revised edition, Watts & Co., London, 1906. P. 24)

"... Paul More was, as far as he was aware, wholly converted to romanticism, while nevertheless deeply impressed by the philosophy of Herbert Spencer ...." (p. 63) "... the really characteristic qualities of their author ... which at the same time had made him a disciple of Herbert Spencer." (p. 66) (Robert Shafer, Paul Elmer More and American Criticism, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1935)

"The ideas of which Mr. Spencer is the greatest living exponent are to-day running like the weft through all the warp of modern thought, and out from their abundant suggestiveness have come the opinions of many who do not profess any especial "allegiance" to Mr. Spencer ...." (John Fiske, "Sociology and Hero-Worship," The Atlantic Monthly, Vol. 47, pp. 75-84, 1881. P. 77)

"I have just been reading two essays of Herbert Spencer's, one on the Nebular Hypothesis, the other on 'Illogical Geology,' which are masterly; subtle; convincing beyond anything of the kind I have ever read." (Letter from Anne Gilchrist to William Haines dated March 18, 1867. Quoted in Herbert Harlakenden Gilchrist, editor, Anne Gilchrist, Her Life and Writings, T. Fisher Unwin, London, 1887. P. 166)
Leonard Courtney wrote in his Journal of an audience granted by King Edward to about 25 distinguished foreigners: "As we trooped out Professor Stein, head of the Berne Bureau, was telling me what an ardent disciple he was of Herbert Spencer, and how his daughter had translated the Autobiography." (G. P. Gooch, The Life of Lord [Leonard] Courtney, Macmillan, London, 1920. P. 550)

"This first visit to the theatre [in London in 1871, when he was 18 years old] made a tremendous impression. H. [Henry] A. [Arthur] Jones said, "I left off writing a novel I was engaged upon, and gave most of my leisure to seeing plays and reading Herbert Spencer." (Doris Arthur Jones, The Life and Letters of Henry Arthur Jones, Victor Gollancz Ltd, London, 1930. P. 34)

"Before the days of Spencer the world of scientific thought was mostly without form and void.... / Guided by the pole star of Evolution, Spencer sailed out alone on the ocean of Speculation and discovered a new empire of Law ...." (George Jacob Holyoake, Bygones Worth Remembering, 2 Vols., T. Fisher Unwin, London, 1905. Vol. 2, pp. 34-35)


An anonymous reviewer of Spencer's Autobiography wrote: "... an intellectual system ... that has entered into the very fibre of the age ...." (Anonymous, "Review of Herbert Spencer's An Autobiography, The Athenaeum, No. 3993, pp. 583-584, May 7, 1904. P. 583)
"Since the 1880's, the temptation to dismiss Spencer because of his advocacy of this erroneous mechanism [the inheritance of acquired characteristics] has overwhelmed most biologists, psychologists, and historians." (Robert M. Young, "The Development of Herbert Spencer's Concept of Evolution," Actes du XIe Congrès International d'Histoire des Sciences, Warsaw, 1967, Vol. 2, pp. 273-278. P. 276)

"Mr Spencer's doctrine of evolution in all its numerous ramifications is absolutely dependent upon a belief in the hereditary transmission of acquired characteristics." (Unsigned, "The Exploded Quack," Blackwood's Magazine, Vol. 201, pp. 717-727, 1917. P. 724)

Early in his thinking Spencer thought he had found in the (supposed) inheritance of acquired characteristics a mechanism sufficient to account for evolution. Thus having what he deemed an adequate explanation, he felt no need to cast about for one. Had he felt such a need, this might have led him to the principle of natural selection.

Spencer engaged in a "protracted controversy" (Goldenweiser) with August Weissmann over the theory of the inheritance of acquired characteristics.

"Spencer's views pose a revealing contrast to Darwin's. He firmly believed that the inheritance of acquired characteristics was far more important in the highest stages of evolution than natural selection. He related this point to his grand scheme of universal evolution and its application to man and society; his scheme in fact depended on the validity of use-inheritance. His essay on Darwin's retreat was marvelously catty, and he developed the point further in a series of essays which began with one entitled "The Inadequacy of Natural Selection." Spencer pointed out the difficulties involved in making the analogy from artificial to natural selection and reproduced the usual objections based on the uselessness of incipient structures and on swamping, but he had a more basic motive for opposing natural selection in the evolution of man, and it is for this reason that he returned again and again to the issue: 'I have, indeed, been led to suspend for a short time my proper work, only by consciousness of the transcendent importance of the question at issue. As I have before contended, a right answer to the question whether acquired characters are or are not inherited, underlies right beliefs, not only in Biology and Psychology, but also in Education, Ethics, and Politics.'" (Robert M. Young, Darwin's Metaphor. Nature's Place in Victorian Culture, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985. P. 118)
In the pages of The Athenaeum in 1884 (March 1, pp. 282-283; March 8, pp. 312-313; March 15, pp. 348-349; March 22, pp. 378-380; March 29, pp. 411-412) George J. Romanes, an anonymous reviewer, Samuel Butler and E. Ray Lankester engaged in a prolonged debate over priority, and the acknowledgement of priority, regarding the theory advocated by Butler that mental traits developed during life and proved to be adaptive, could be passed on to offspring, and thus become established in the process of organic evolution. Credit had been variously claimed for Darwin, Charles Kingsley, Prof. Hering, etc. Then (April 5, p. 446) Spencer put an end to the discussion by quoting nine passages from the 1855 edition of his Principles of Psychology proposing this mechanism well before the others had.

"I still hold that inheritance of functionally-produced modifications is the chief factor throughout the higher stages of organic evolution, bodily as well as mental (see 'Principles of Biology,' § 166), while I recognize that the truth that throughout the lower stages survival of the fittest is the chief factor, and in the lowest almost exclusive factor." (Herbert Spencer, "Mental Evolution in Animals," Letter to The Athenaeum, No. 2945, p. 446, 1884. P. 446)

"... the inheritance of acquired characters, which it is now the fashion in the biological world to deny, ...." (Herbert Spencer, "The Inadequacy of Natural Selection," The Contemporary Review, Vol. 63, pp. 153-166, 439-456, 1893. P. 454)


"Though The Origin of Species proved to me that the transmission of acquired characters cannot be the sole factor in organic evolution, as I had assumed in Social Statics and in The Principles of Psychology, published in pre-Darwinian days, yet I have never wavered in the belief that it is a factor and an all-important factor." ("Weismannism Once More." The Contemporary Review. October, 1894. p. ?)

Spencer speaks of a "nomadic instinct" (Vol. II, p. 271). Believing as he did in the inheritance of acquired characteristics, it was difficult for him to decide when an attitude or a manner of life had ceased to be purely cultural and had passed into the genetic makeup of a people.
INHERITANCE OF ACQUIRED CHARACTERISTICS

Spencer's belief in the inheritance of acquired characteristics did not leave his social theory unmodified. He believed, for example, that a mode of life, or a terrain which favored a diffuse form of government would, over many generations, foster feelings of independence on the people, these attitudes would become part of the biological nature of the population. He wrote: "... the specialties of character which ... led certain kinds of men in early stages to ... resist, even under stress of war, the rise of single political heads, are innate ..." (Vol. II, p. 368). But only in very rare instances does he attribute any cultural form to biology. Most of the time he derives them from the exigencies of social life.

Spencer's reliance on the factor of the inheritance of acquired characteristics was not so separate from natural selection as Spencer himself supposed. After all, the inheritance of acquired characteristics is one of the sources of variation. In addition to "fortuitous" variations of unknown origin, there are those variations in members of a species which are due to physical adaptation of the organism to its environment functionally produced during the life of the animal involved. The theory of the inheritance of acquired characteristics states that such variations (or modifications) can be transmitted to the next generation, and thus become the raw material for evolution. But these variations become established and extended throughout a population only by the agency of natural selection. —RLC

"Mind, I have no a priori objection to the transmission of functional modifications whatever. In fact, as I told you, I should rather like it to be true. But I argued against the assumption (with Darwin as I do with / you) of the operation of a factor which, if you will forgive me for saying so, seems as far off support by trustworthy evidence now as ever it was." (Letter from Thomas Henry Huxley to Herbert Spencer dated June 4, 1886. Quoted in Leonard Huxley, Life and Letters of Thomas Henry Huxley, 2 Vols., Macmillan and Co., Limited, London, 1900. Vol. 2, pp. 133-134)


A. J. Balfour said that Spencer had applied the theory of the inheritance of acquired characteristics "so persistently in every department of his theory of man, that were it to be upset, it is scarcely too much to say that his Ethics, his Psychology, and his Anthropology would all tumble to the ground with it." (A. J. Balfour, address as Lord Rector of Glasgow University, November, 1891, quoted in David Duncan, Life and Letters of Herbert Spencer, 2 Vols., D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1908. Vol. 2, p. 46)
... according to Mr. Spencer ..., the transmission of an improvement of natural capacity, mental as well as bodily, by exercise and training is not only a reality but a chief determining factor in the evolution of the race. It is by this agency that each generation transmits (on the average) a slight increment of brain-power to its successor, and that the continuous exercise of intelligence, of moral feeling, and so forth, through a succession of generations leads to a perceptible improvement of these powers."


(Alfred Russel Wallace, "Are Individually Acquired Characters Inherited?", *Fortnightly Review*, Vol. 59, pp. 490-498, 655-668, 1893. A good rebuttal of Spencer's contention that it is necessary to rely heavily on the inheritance of acquired characteristics in order to explain organic evolution.)

"I had a note from Spencer the other day asking information about Garden plants—he is still floundering on at acquired habits, &c. He makes no progress. In my apprehension, if it were a truth Nature would not be so d d sensitive about it." (Letter from Joseph D. Hooker to T. H. Huxley dated April 16, 1893. Quoted in Leonard Huxley, *Life and Letters of Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker*, 2 Vols., D. Appleton & Company, New York, 1918. Vol. 2, p. 348)

"If it is true that such characters are transmitted, then the foundation of the theory is secure; but the transmission of acquired characters is by no means proved. Herbert Spencer has preferred to occupy himself in building a magnificent edifice upon this foundation, rather than employ his acute intellect in testing its firmness and security in every possible way." (Edward Bagnall Poulton, "Theories of Evolution," an address delivered to the Boston Society of Natural History on February 7, 1894, and printed in the *Proceedings of the Society*, Vol. 26, p. 327; in *Essays on Evolution 1889-1907*, pp. 95-119, The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1908. P. 99)

"It /Spencer's argument/ is wholly fallacious in assuming that this "factor" /the inheritance of acquired characteristics/ and "natural selection" are at all exclusive of, or even separate from, each other. The factor thus assumed to be new is simply one of the subordinate cases of heredity. But heredity is the central idea of natural selection. Therefore natural selection includes and covers all the causes which can possibly operate through inheritance. There is thus no difficulty whatever in referring it to the same one factor /natural selection/ whose solitary / dominion Mr. Spencer has plucked up courage to dispute." (The Duke of Argyll /George Douglas Campbell/, *Organic Evolution Cross-Examined*, John Murray, London, 1898, Fp. 11-12)
"Erasmus Darwin in England, however, has the priority, in that he first brought forward the principles which Lamarck more effectively supported. But to Herbert Spencer belongs the chief credit, because he has taken that part of the earlier theory which acceptable to modern biological thought, and upon this basis has formed his great theory of evolution. Lamarck believed in an innate tendency toward perfection in animals. Now, that is a view which very few zoologists at the present time, if any, would dare to sustain. In fact, an evolution due to an innate principle of perfection is not very far removed from special creation,—a doctrine which opposes any theory of evolution. Herbert Spencer, therefore, rejecting all those elements of Lamarck, which the scientific world could not possibly accept, has taken that which was likely to commend itself to science, and upon it has formed his great theory of evolution; so that the Lamarckian Theory, as presented to the world to-day, comes before it in Spencerian language, and in the closest relation to Spencerian thought. In saying this, however, I do not by any means intend to be understood as supporting Spencer's theories or views upon which he bases them." (Edward Bagnall Poulton, 'Theories of Evolution,' an address delivered to the Boston Society of Natural History on February 7, 1894, 2nd printed in the Proceedings of the Society, Vol. 26, p. 327; in Essays on Evolution 1889-1907, pp. 95-119, The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1908. P. 98)

"Therefore it would really be more correct to designate the former hypothesis [the inheritance of acquired characteristics] by the name either of Erasmus Darwin, or, still better, of Herbert Spencer." (George John Romanes, Darwin and After Darwin. Vol. 1: The Darwinian Theory, third edition, The Open Court Publishing Company, Chicago, 1901. P. 255)

"... Herbert Spencer was perhaps the keenest and most convinced upholder of the affirmative position [of the inheritance of acquired characteristics] ..." (J. Arthur Thomson, Heredity, John Murray, London, 1908. P. 205)

"... Herbert Spencer was right when he said that no one can be an evolutionist who does not believe that new traits somewhere and somehow acquired can be transmitted. Otherwise there could be no change whatever in any organism from generation to generation or from age to age: in a word there would be no evolution." (Luther Burbank, His Methods and Discoveries and Their Practical Application, Vol. 2, Luther Burbank Press, New York and London, 1914. P. 32)

"... his [Spencer's] whole philosophical system [sic] depended on the truth of the doctrine of the inheritance of acquired characteristics." (Emanuel Rädli, The History of Biological Theories, translated from the German by E. J. Hatfield, Oxford University Press, London, 1930. P. 249)
The instability of the homogeneous, which Spencer referred to as one of the motive principles of evolution in general, and which he invoked, for instance, in seeking to account for the differentiation of society into nobles and freemen, seems to me to be a false principle altogether. After all, it took a million years of culture history before this particular social differentiation was established. What has characterized the homogeneous is its stability. (RLC)

"... our existing industrial system is a product of existing human nature, and can be improved only as fast as human nature improves." (Herbert Spencer, The Study of Sociology, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1891. P. 254)

"... the impracticability of better forms [of industrial organization] results from the imperfections of existing human nature, moral and intellectual." (Herbert Spencer, The Study of Sociology, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1891. P. 250)

"... if changed modes of life change the characters of citizens, their changed characters presently cause responsive changes in their institutions." (Herbert Spencer, The Study of Sociology, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1891. P. 412)

"... before there arise in human nature and human institutions, changes having that / permanence which makes them an acquired inheritance for the human race, there must go innumerable recurrences of the thoughts, and feelings, and actions, conducive to such changes. The process cannot be abridged; and must be gone through with due patience." (Herbert Spencer, The Study of Sociology, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1891. Pp. 402–403)

"With a given phase of human character there must, to maintain equilibrium, go an adapted class of institutions, and a set of thoughts and sentiments in tolerable harmony with those institutions." (Herbert Spencer, The Study of Sociology, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1891. P. 395)
"A fresh influence brought into play on a society, not only affects its members directly in their acts, but also indirectly in their characters. Continuing to work on their characters generation after generation, and altering by inheritance the feelings which they bring into social life at large, this influence alters the intensities and bearings of all other influences throughout the society." (Herbert Spencer, The Study of Sociology, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1891. P. 106)

"... the increasing action and reaction of institutions and character, each slowly modifying the other through successive generations." (Herbert Spencer, The Study of Sociology, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1891. P. 337)
"... his patient, powerful, and comprehensive intellect ...."

"... the greatest thinker our planet has ever known ...."

"... in my opinion Herbert Spencer possessed the finest brain and the most marvellous intellect ever yet vouchsafed to human being." (Grant Allen, "Personal Reminiscences of Herbert Spencer," The Forum, Vol. 35, pp. 610-628, 1904. P. 610)

"... his life was signalised by absolute consecration to the pursuit of truth, by magnanimous disinterestedness as to rewards ...." (J. Arthur Thomson--Herbert Spencer. J. M. Dent & Co. London, 1906. p. ix)

It might perhaps be said of Spencer that he was too ready to measure the theoretical limits of human knowledge by the actual limits of his own. This comes out in the last section of Ch. 6A, "The Dynamic Element in Life," in The Principles of Biology.

"No man ever held more tenaciously than he to a judgment because it was his; it is the "defect of his quality" of invincible resolution." (J. M. Roberston, Explorations. Watts & Co., London, n.d. (1923 ca.). P. 133)

"There is no doubt that Spencer is the profoundest thinker of all these men [Lewes, Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, etc.] but Darwin impresses me with his strength more than any man I have ever seen." (Letter from John Fiske to Abby Morgan Brooks, November 13, 1873. Quoted in Ethel F. Fiske [sic], The Letters of John Fiske, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1940. P. 271)

"His [Spencer's] mind seems to us eminently a constructive one, scarcely rivalled in its power of linking together vast regions of phenomena by some deep-reaching principle, but less apt at recognising the limitations and counteractions of a principle in any given instance." (James Sully, "Mr Spencer's Essays," The Examiner, July 4, 1874. Pp. 710-711. P. 710)

"Everything he [Spencer] read was grist for his mill. (He did not really read books; he mined them.)" (Robert A. Nisbet, Social Change and History, Oxford University Press, New York, 1969. P. 200)
"I have given up literary criticism, and hand on my pen to younger men. Two, perhaps three, contemporary English writers are worthy to attempt it. Elizabeth Barrett Browning ...; Herbert Spencer, who is not a good writer, but who is the deepest thinker in Europe; / and then George Eliot ...." (Letter from Hippolyte Taine to Charles Ritter dated July 19, 1877. Quoted in Life and Letters of H. Taine, 3 Vols., abridged and translated from the French by E. Sparvel-Bayly, Archibald Constable & Co Ltd, London, 1908. Vol. 3, pp. 184-185)


"In these days of increasingly straitened specialism, it is well that we should feel the influence of a thinker whose powers of generalisation have seldom been equalled and perhaps never surpassed." (C. Lloyd Morgan, "Mr Herbert Spencer's Biology," Natural Science, Vol. 13, pp. 377-383, 1898. P. 377)

"Of historical and literary knowledge, such as one usually gets from books, Spencer had a great deal, and of an accurate and well-digested sort; he had some incomprehensible way of absorbing it through the pores of the skin,—at least, he never seemed to read books." (John Fiske, "Reminiscences of Huxley," pp. 199-226, in Essays Historical and Literary, 2 Vols., The Macmillan Company, New York, 1902. Vol. 2, pp. 205-206)

Spencer had " ... a mind which proved itself to be one of the most powerful and original that the world has ever known ...." (F. J. C. Hearnshaw, "Herbert Spencer and the Individualists," in The Social & Political Ideas of Some Representative Thinkers of the Victorian Age, ed. by F. J. C. Hearnshaw, pp. 53-83, George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd., London, 1933. P. 57)

"As we have referred to the religious convictions of intellectual giants like Clerk Maxwell and Lord Kelvin, so we would in fairness illustrate a different position by reference to Herbert Spencer, who also belonged to the kingdom of genius. Disagree with his views as one may, one cannot doubt either the magnitude of his intellect or his passionate sincerity." (J. Arthur Thomson, Introduction to Science, Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1911. P. 217)
"I cannot help feeling some regret that Mr. Spencer has not adhered more closely to the resolution above expressed [in a letter to Edward L. Youmans dated April 10, 1866], not to waste time and strength in controversies. His rejoinders are always delightful to read, but they must often have consumed hours which had been better devoted to the great work." (John Fiske, Edward Livingston Youmans, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1894. P. 209n.)

"If an abstract logical concept could come to life, its life would be like Spencer's,—the same definiteness of exclusion and inclusion, the same bloodlessness of temperament, the same narrowness of intent and vastness of extent, the same power of applying itself to numberless instances." (William James, Memories and Studies, Longmans, Green, and Co., New York, 1911. P. 141)


"Nature, in making him, had concentrated all her energies, so to speak, on intellect. And she succeeded wonderfully. He was pure intellect, and little more: the apotheosis of reason in a human organism." (Grant Allen, "Personal Reminiscences of Herbert Spencer," The Forum, Vol. 35. pp. 610-628, 1904. P. 611)

"He [Herbert Spencer] possessed the rare ability to grasp the whole field of knowledge and to co-ordinate its elements into a unified whole. Probably only Aristotle, among all the world-renowned intellectuals, was his peer as a thinker." (Newell LeRoy Sims, The Problem of Social Change, Thomas Y. Crowell Company, New York, 1939. P. 82)

Speaking of sight-seeing: "... not looking at things through the spectacles of authority, I often find but little to admire where the world admires, or professes to admire, a great deal." (Letter from Herbert Spencer to Edward L. Youmans dated May 3, 1868. Quoted in John Fiske, Edward Livingston Youmans, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1894. P. 234)

"The annals of British philosophy can hardly present a similar instance of laborious perseverance in a sphere where no profit and very scant honour is to be won, under external difficulties so great, and, for the whole of his early life, in the face of discouragement and neglect so oppressive." (Frederic Harrison, Realities and Ideals, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1908. P. 390)

"... his power of separating the essential from the accidental, as well as his success in grasping the main features of a subject divested of frivolous and subordinate details." (p. 775) "... he possesses a thinking faculty of rare comprehensiveness as well as acuteness ...." (pp. 775-776) (Anonymous, Review of Illustrations of Progress by Herbert Spencer, The Atlantic Monthly, Vol. 13, pp. 775-777, 1864)

"When, further, we have realized the supreme originality and abnormal capacity of the mind of Herbert Spencer; ..." (J. M. Robertson, Explorations, Watts & Co., London, n.d. (ca. 1923). P. 120)

"Always I was more originative than receptive. Occupation with other people's thoughts was so much less interesting than occupation with my own." (Auto., I, 146; SPEECH)

"He likes to walk and to talk and to teach, and will sit down in the wet anywhere, and at any time, to give an explanation. He is a good teacher, but it is late—that last of 1878—late to be still taking lessons." (Letter from Edward L. Youmans to his sister, Eliza A. Youmans, dated December 31, 1878. Quoted in John Fiske, Edward Livingston Youmans, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1894. P. 355)

"He has none of the Romantic's love of the unique, the individual, the inexpressible; for him the unrelated fact is valueless, even irritating." (J. W. Burrow, "Herbert Spencer: The Philosopher of Evolution." History Today, Vol. 8, pp. 676-683, 1958. P. 681.)

"Again, all must feel that it is not merely to a man that homage is being done; it is rather to a great mind .... It is this brain-power, conceived to a large extent as impersonal, that we would recognize and honor. Mr. Spencer's personality is, as it were, swallowed up in his intellectuality." (Remarks prepared by Lester P. Ward for the Spencer Farewell Dinner, but unspoken for lack of time—the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, who preceded Ward on the program, spoke longer than expected.) Quoted in Edward L. Youmans, editor, Herbert Spencer on the Americans and The Americans on Herbert Spencer. D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1883. Pp. 76-77)
"Another new acquaintance was Mr. Mayall, an English microscopist; he gave me accounts of his visit to the Louvre with Herbert Spencer, who, after looking steadily at the "Immaculate Conception" of Murillo, said, "I cannot like a painted figure that has no visible means of support." (Autobiography of Andrew Dickson White, 2 Vols., The Century Co., New York, 1914. Vol. 2, p. 417)

"In Spencer's power of getting at broad general truths we find a sufficient answer to the somewhat captious objection that in matters of detail he often errs. Every specialist, I suspect, can find mistakes in Herbert Spencer's detailed references to special subjects. But his mistakes are never such as to affect the truth of his general views." (Richard A. Proctor, "Herbert Spencer as a Thinker," The Open Court, Vol. 1, pp. 145-147, 1887-88. P. 145)

"Not until setting down as above the successive stages of thought, was I myself aware how naturally each stage had prepared the way for the next, and how each additional conclusion increased the mental proclivity towards further conclusions lying in the same direction. It now seems that there was an almost inevitable transition to that coherent body of beliefs which soon took place." (Auto. II, 13)

"There are some minds to which the marvellous and the unaccountable strongly appeal, and which even resent any attempt to bring the genesis of them within comprehension. There are other minds which, partly by nature and partly by culture, have been led to dislike a quiescent acceptance of the unintelligible; and which push their explorations until causation has been carried to its confines. To this last order of minds mine, from the beginning, belonged." (Auto. I, 177)

"... he always seemed to me to be like those great chess players, whose far-sighted combinations of movement and position amaze and perplex the ordinary professors of the game, and to be of all thinkers, ancient or modern, the one whose power of analysing, decomposing, and combining the complex web of Matter, Motion, and Force, is the most incontestable and assured ...." (John Beattie Crozier, "Mr. Herbert Spencer and the Danger of Specialism," The Fortnightly Review, Vol. 75, n.s., pp. 105-120, 1904. P. 106)

"La verdad es, que Spencer evadía y desdenaba toda investigación profunda. Quien mide el valor de las obras espirituales según su riqueza en ideas profundas e intuiciones de una verdad inefable, podrá juzgar trivial al filósofo de Derby. Siempre se mantiene en la superficie. Pero ¿qué relaciones más grandiosas descubre en esta misma superficie! / ¡qué nexos de lo cósmico con los procesos vitales, con la vida espiritual y social!" (Leopold Von Wiese, Sociología, Colección Labor, Sección VIII, No. 323, Editorial Labor, Barcelona, 1932. Pp. 76-77)
"When we have studied his works very closely, we find ourselves impressed, not only by his superior science, by the immense variety of his precise and positive information, now almost indispensable to the philosopher, but especially by the firmness of his thought, by his self-mastery, by his solidity of method, and his lucidity of exposition. His mind is drilled and disciplined by scientific research; he does better than descant upon method, he practices it."


(He could buttress them with supporting evidence.) Spencer had extraordinary powers of generalization and synthesis. With regard to this characteristic of Spencer's Galton wrote: "The power of Spencer's mind that I most admired, was that of widely-founded generalisations. Whenever doubt was hinted as to the sufficiency of his grounds for making them, he was always ready to pour out a string of examples that seemed to have been, if not in his theatre of consciousness when he spoke, at all events in an ante-chamber of it, whence they could be summoned at will." (In Duncan, p. 502)

As Lester F. Ward pointed out (in words not quite compact enough to quote) Spencer's preeminence as a philosopher lay in the fact that he combined and extraordinary knowledge of facts, with unexcelled, even unequalled, powers of synthesizing and generalizing these facts. Ward noted that this combination is very rare in philosophy: the best analytical minds or synthetic minds generally are not well acquainted with facts, while the minds who take pains to acquire vast information, seldom can integrate and generalize it.

"Being ... an impatient reader, even of things which in large measure interest me and meet with a general acceptance, it has always been out of the question for me to go on reading a book the fundamental principles of which I entirely dissent from." (Auto. I, 253)

"His [Spencer's] mastery of all branches of human knowledge has been justly styled "encyclopedic." His causality has never been equaled. To him were thus secured the two essential conditions for accomplishing the permanent object of philosophy—the synthesis of science. Without the comprehensive survey which his laborious investigations have secured for him, his great combining powers would have been profitless; without those powers, no museum of facts, however well learned, would have yielded the broad principles of a cosmical philosophy." (Lester F. Ward, *Dynamic Sociology*, 2 Vols., D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1894. Vol. 1, p. 142)
"If we compare Herbert Spencer, in any one branch of science, with some chief master in that department, we find him at once less and greater: less in knowledge of details and in mastery of facts and methods; greater in that he sees outside and beyond the mere details of that special subject, and recognizes the relation of its region of inquiry to the much wider domain over which his own philosophy extends." (Richard A. Proctor, "Herbert Spencer as a Thinker," The Open Court, Vol. 1, pp. 145-147, 1887-88. P. 145)

"In considering the philosophy of Herbert Spencer, I scarcely know whether I am more moved by his strength and power or by his grace and versatility, until I reflect that these latter qualities are but tokens of the former. He could not pass with so firm and free a tread over so wide a range of thought were it not for the energy of mind which has enabled him to take all thought for his domain." (Richard A. Proctor, "Herbert Spencer as a Thinker," The Open Court, Vol. 1, pp. 145-147, 1887-88. P. 145)

"Nevertheless, it is doubtful if anyone could have reached better logical conclusions by the use of Spencer's methods, and the healthy skepticism which one may entertain regarding his conclusions should not prevent one from having the highest respect for the constructive logic and the brilliant fertility of imagination displayed in Spencer's history of society." (Harry Elmer Barnes, "Some Typical Contributions of English Sociology to Political Theory," The American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 27, pp. 289-324, 1921. P. 307)

"In 1881 the British Association for the Advancement of Science met in Escrick. Spencer attended. At a party during the meetings Liddell apparently overheard this: 'Hostess to Herbert Spencer: 'I shall always believe that flowers have consciousness.' Herbert Spencer: 'If you are determined to adhere to the proposition that it is possible to dissociate the existence of consciousness from the physiological processes of nervous organisation, I must differ from you entirely.'" (A. G. C. Liddell, Notes from the Life of an Ordinary Mortal. John Murray, London, 1911. P. 194)

"In later days Morley never tired of talking about the afternoon dinner parties at Blackheath (the home of John Stuart Mill). Once, he told me, Mill invited Herbert Spencer to expound the fundamental ideas of his philosophy. When the dinner was over the exposition took place. It lasted twenty minutes. The host was very much pleased and remarked to Morley on Spencer's powers of expression. Morley agreed; but Fawcett (an economist), an intensely practical person, was horribly bored." (F. W. Hirst, Early Life & Letters of John Morley, 2 Vols., Macmillan and Co., Limited, London, 1927. Vol. 1, p. 53)
"One thing, probably, he lost by his refusal to undergo a university training—the correction which university intercourse might conceivably have supplied to the one-sidedness which in him was the concomitant of abnormal force of purpose. He was too apt, like most energetic minds, to be the sworn partisan of his hypotheses, bringing to bear on them a much less searching criticism than he gave to those of other men. Could he have had this corrected without suffering that loss of power which so often seems to follow on a university life, the gain to him and to us all would have been great." [J. M. Robertson, *Explorations*, Watts & Co., London, n.d. (ca. 1923). P. 115]

"It is marvelous that a single mind should have been able to make so many happy hits in so rapid and, in a good sense, superficial survey of all these fields—psychology, biology, and sociology. But it was, I think, rather that he had a stupendously great idea than that he had a stupendously great mind. He was armed with the thought which all the natural sciences are tending to prove true; but the same sciences are showing that almost all the ways in which he took this idea to work were not true. This means that Mr. Spencer's personal tendencies were in the direction of his gifts, toward a deductive, hypothetical, inexact way of treating scientific details." [James Mark Baldwin, "Mr. Spencer's Psychology," *The American Naturalist*, Vol. 31, pp. 553-557, 1897. P. 556]

"He did not live and write to please the crowd; he lived and wrote what he believed to be right and true. He had no cowardly fear of majorities. He knew how to "stand up straight before God." He not only accomplished a work "unexampled in the history of human thought," but he also led a moral life. First and foremost in his marvellous personality was his marvellous mind—probably the greatest the world has ever seen. Sitting by his side and watching the magic of his intellect, was to see difficult problems illumined as with x-rays. His presence produced the impression, not so much of dignity, as of serenity born of his vast knowledge (not of the consciousness of it, but / of the knowledge itself.) In whatever department of thought, every worker, whether he knows it or not, is agreeing or disagreeing with Herbert Spencer." [E. T. C. Werner, *Autumn Leaves, An Autobiography*, Kelly & Walsh, Limited, Shanghai, 1928. Pp. 635-636]

"Among Philosophers, as among scientific men, there are original and independent minds, of an order above those who explain, comment upon, and develop truths already discovered or foreseen, and make them known to all. These original minds are, so to speak, creators, who are felt, on approaching them, to be like men of another race, in power, depth, and unity of thought. Whether their discoveries remain permanent acquisitions, or whether they only give a new aspect to insoluble problems, they are recognised in the sovereign fashion which is due to them; they cannot touch any question without setting their mark upon it. Mr. Herbert Spencer appears to us to be a man of this order." [Th. Ribot, *English Psychology*, Translated from the French, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1897. (Original French edition ca. 1871) P. 124]
"Spencer's theories are often founded on his own personal experience, which is by no means a rich one. He generalises from himself, and his inferences are impaired by the limits of his data. He has recently injured a very noble theme by drawing too much upon this personal source. His Data of Ethics, which he intends to be the crowning work of his life, is wanting in that loftier inspiration which a richer and healthier life-experience would have conferred upon it. He emphasises habits and practices which our lower natures are only too ready to emphasize to themselves, and skims lightly over the motive power of man's higher nature. There is, of course, much in the book that is admirable, but from the cause referred to it falls short of being a great book. This, of course, is between ourselves, as I do not wish to quarrel with old Spencer."

(Letter from John Tyndall to Professor H. Debus dated August 3, 1879.


"I think, considering all he has done, this [his inability to read more than an hour at a time or work for more than three hours a day] is quite unique in literary history. He has an odd way of making his own knowledge and habits the measure of all sound education. For example, he assured my wife that it was a perfect waste of time learning languages; for his own part, he is happy to say he never could be brought to learn any except a smattering of French. He thinks people should read less and think more; that much reading is usually a mistake." (W. E. H. Lecky, quoted in A Memoir of the Right Hon. William Edward Hartpole Lecky, by His Wife (Elizabeth Lecky), Longmans, Green, and Co., New York, 1909, p. 121)

"During twenty years of intercourse, I can hardly remember hearing him speak of an individual except for some practical purpose, or else to illustrate some general principle. His talk was of generalities. He generalized incessantly; almost everything he said was a generalization.... I often used to wonder, when I uttered some most commonplace statement, what universal principle or philosophic remark it would draw forth from Spencer, and I was seldom disappointed. George Eliot once made a good repartee to him on one such occasion. The talk had turned on fly-fishing; and she asked Spencer, who was a devoted, though not I believe a very successful, fly-fisher, what sort of fly he preferred to fish with. "Oh," said the philosopher, "I lay little stress on the particular kind of fly; I make my own; and all I aim at is to give what the fish expects—the vague representation of an insect fluttering about over the surface of the water." "I see," said George Eliot; "you're so fond of generalizing that you fish with a generalization." (Grant Allen, "Personal Reminiscences of Herbert Spencer," The Forum, Vol. 35, pp. 610-628, 1904, P. 617)
"Always I was more originative than receptive.... Anything like passive receptivity is foreign to my nature; and there results an unusually small tendency to be affected by others' thoughts. It seems as though the fabric of my conclusions had in all cases to be developed from within—refused to be built, and insisted upon growing. Material which could be taken in and organized, or re-organized, so as to form part of a coherent structure in course of elaboration, there was always a readiness to receive. But ideas and sentiments of alien kinds, or unorganizable kinds, were, if not rejected, yet accepted with indifference and soon dropped away."

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Van Wyck Brooks regards the rejection of Spencer's *Education* by Ticknor & Fields when offered them in 1860 by Youmans as "one of the first signs of the passing of Boston as the intellectual centre of the country. As a result of this first refusal, all these works of science, which dominated the mind of the coming epoch, were published by the Appletons of New York," *New England: Indian Summer* (New York, 1940), 110." (Charles M. Haar, "E. L. Youmans: A Chapter in the Diffusion of Science in America." *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 9, pp. 193-213, 1948. P. 209)