

# MUTUAL AID

## A Factor of Evolution

PETER KROPOTKIN

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We cannot omit, even in this rapid review, the thousands of scientific, literary, artistic, and educational societies. Up till now, the scientific bodies, closely controlled and often subsidized by the State, have generally moved in a very narrow circle, and they often came to be looked upon as mere openings for getting State appointments, while the very narrowness of their circles undoubtedly bred petty jealousies. Still it is a fact that the distinctions of birth, political parties and creeds are smoothed to some extent by such associations; while in the smaller and remote towns the scientific, geographical, or musical societies, especially those of them which appeal to a larger circle of amateurs, become small centres of intellectual life, a sort of link between the little spot and the wide world, and a place where men of very different conditions meet on a footing of equality. To fully appreciate the value of such centres, one ought to know them, say, in Siberia. As to the countless educational societies which only now begin to break down the State's and the Church's monopoly in education, they are sure to become before long the leading power in that branch. To the "Froebel Unions" we already owe the Kindergarten system; and to a number of formal and informal educational associations we owe the high standard of women's education in Russia, although all the time these societies and groups had to act in strong opposition to a powerful government.<sup>15</sup> As to the various pedagogical societies in Germany, it is well known that they have

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<sup>15</sup>The Medical Academy for Women (which has given to Russia a large portion of her 700 graduated lady doctors), the four Ladies' Universities (about 1,000 pupils in 1887; closed that year, and reopened in 1895), and the High Commercial School for Women are *entirely* the work of such private societies. To the same societies we owe the high standard which the girls' gymnasia attained since they were opened in the sixties. The 100 gymnasia now scattered over the Empire (over 70,000 pupils), correspond to the High Schools for Girls in this country; all teachers are, however, graduates of the universities.

done the best part in the working out of the modern methods of teaching science in popular schools. In such associations the teacher finds also his best support. How miserable the overworked and underpaid village teacher would have been without their aid!<sup>16</sup>

All these associations, societies, brotherhoods, alliances, institutes, and so on, which must now be counted by the ten thousand in Europe alone, and each of which represents an immense amount of voluntary, unambitious, and unpaid or underpaid work—what are they but so many manifestations, under an infinite variety of aspects, of the same ever-living tendency of man towards mutual aid and support? For nearly three centuries men were prevented from joining hands even for literary, artistic, and educational purposes. Societies could only be formed under the protection of the State, or the Church, or as secret brotherhoods, like free-masonry. But now that the resistance has been broken, they swarm in all directions, they extend over all multifarious branches of human activity, they become international, and they undoubtedly contribute, to an extent which cannot yet be fully appreciated, to break down the screens erected by States between different nationalities. Notwithstanding the jealousies which are bred by commercial competition, and the provocations to hatred which are sounded by the ghosts of a decaying past, there is a conscience of international solidarity which is growing both among the leading spirits of the world and the masses of the workers, since they also have conquered the right of international intercourse; and in the preventing of a European war during the last quarter of a century, this spirit has undoubtedly had its share.

The religious charitable associations, which again represent a

<sup>16</sup>The *Verein für Verbreitung gemeinnützlicher Kenntnisse*, although it has only 5,500 members, has already opened more than 1,000 public and school libraries, organized thousands of lectures, and published most valuable books.

whole world, certainly must be mentioned in this place. There is not the slightest doubt that the great bulk of their members are moved by the same mutual-aid feelings which are common to all mankind. Unhappily the religious teachers of men prefer to ascribe to such feelings a supernatural origin. Many of them pretend that man does not consciously obey the mutual-aid inspiration so long as he has not been enlightened by the teachings of the special religion which they represent, and, with St. Augustin, most of them do not recognize such feelings in the "pagan savage." Moreover, while early Christianity, like all other religions, was an appeal to the broadly human feelings of mutual aid and sympathy, the Christian Church has aided the State in wrecking all standing institutions of mutual aid and support which were anterior to it, or developed outside of it; and, instead of the *mutual aid* which every savage considers as due to his kinsman, it has preached *charity* which bears a character of inspiration from above, and, accordingly, implies a certain superiority of the giver upon the receiver. With this limitation, and without any intention to give offence to those who consider themselves as a body elect when they accomplish acts simply humane, we certainly may consider the immense numbers of religious charitable associations as an outcome of the same mutual-aid tendency.

All these facts show that a reckless prosecution of personal interests, with no regard to other people's needs, is not the only characteristic of modern life. By the side of this current which so proudly claims leadership in human affairs, we perceive a hard struggle sustained by both the rural and industrial populations in order to reintroduce standing institutions of mutual aid and support; and we discover, in all classes of society, a widely-spread movement towards the establishment of an infinite variety of more or less permanent institutions for the same purpose. But when we pass from public life to the private life of the modern individual, we discover another extremely wide world of mutual aid and support, which only passes unnoticed by most

sociologists because it is limited to the narrow circle of the family and personal friendship.<sup>17</sup>

Under the present social system, all bonds of union among the inhabitants of the same street or neighbourhood have been dissolved. In the richer parts of the large towns, people live without knowing who are their next-door neighbours. But in the crowded lanes people know each other perfectly, and are continually brought into mutual contact. Of course, petty quarrels go their course, in the lanes as elsewhere; but groupings in accordance with personal affinities grow up, and within their circle mutual aid is practised to an extent of which the richer classes have no idea. If we take, for instance, the children of a poor neighbourhood who play in a street or a churchyard, or on a green, we notice at once that a close union exists among them, notwithstanding the temporary fights, and that that union protects them from all sorts of misfortunes. As soon as a mite bends inquisitively over the opening of a drain—"Don't stop there," another mite shouts out, "fever sits in the hole!" "Don't climb over that wall, the train will kill you if you tumble down! Don't come near to the ditch! Don't eat those berries—poison! you will die!" Such are the first teachings imparted to the urchin

<sup>17</sup> Very few writers in sociology have paid attention to it. Dr. Ihering is one of them, and his case is very instructive. When the great German writer on law began his philosophical work, *Der Zweck im Rechte* ("Purpose in Law"), he intended to analyze "the active forces which call forth the advance of society and maintain it," and to thus give "the theory of the sociable man." He analyzed, first, the egotistic forces at work, including the present wage-system and coercion in its variety of political and social laws; and in a carefully worked-out scheme of his work he intended to give the last paragraph to the ethical forces—the sense of duty and mutual love—which contribute to the same aim. When he came, however, to discuss the social functions of these two factors, he had to write a second volume, twice as big as the first; and yet he treated only of the *personal* factors which will take in the following pages only a few lines. L. Dargun took up the same idea in *Egoismus und Altruismus in der Nationalökonomie*, Leipzig, 1885, adding some new facts. Büchler's *Love*, and the several paraphrases of it published here and in Germany, deal with the same subject.

when he joins his mates out-doors. How many of the children whose play-grounds are the pavements around "model workers' dwellings," or the quays and bridges of the canals, would be crushed to death by the carts or drowned in the muddy waters, were it not for that sort of mutual support! And when a fair Jack has made a slip into the unprotected ditch at the back of the milkman's yard, or a cherry-cheeked Lizzie has, after all, tumbled down into the canal, the young brood raises such cries that all the neighbourhood is on the alert and rushes to the rescue.

Then comes in the alliance of the mothers. "You could not imagine" (a lady-doctor who lives in a poor neighbourhood told me lately) "how much they help each other. If a woman has prepared nothing, or could prepare nothing, for the baby which she expected—and how often that happens!—all the neighbours bring something for the new-comer. One of the neighbours always takes care of the children, and some other always drops in to take care of the household, so long as the mother is in bed." This habit is general. It is mentioned by all those who have lived among the poor. In a thousand small ways the mothers support each other and bestow their care upon children that are not their own. Some training—good or bad, let them decide it for themselves—is required in a lady of the richer classes to render her able to pass by a shivering and hungry child in the street without noticing it. But the mothers of the poorer classes have not that training. They cannot stand the sight of a hungry child; they *must* feed it, and so they do. "When the school children beg bread, they seldom or rather never meet with a refusal"—a lady-friend, who has worked several years in Whitechapel in connection with a workers' club, writes to me. But I may, perhaps, as well transcribe a few more passages from her letter:—

"Nursing neighbours, in cases of illness, without any shade of remuneration, is quite general among the workers. Also, when a woman has little children, and goes out for work, another mother always takes care of them.

"If, in the working classes, they would not help each other, they could not exist. I know families which continually help each other—

with money, with food, with fuel, for bringing up the little children, in cases of illness, in cases of death.

"The 'mine' and 'thine' is much less sharply observed among the poor than among the rich. Shoes, dress, hats, and so on,—what may be wanted on the spot—are continually borrowed from each other, also all sorts of household things.

"Last winter the members of the United Radical Club had brought together some little money, and began after Christmas to distribute free soup and bread to the children going to school. Gradually they had 1,800 children to attend to. The money came from outsiders, but all the work was done by the members of the club. Some of them, who were out of work, came at four in the morning to wash and to peel the vegetables; five women came at nine or ten (after having done their own household work) for cooking, and stayed till six or seven to wash the dishes. And at meal time, between twelve and half-past one, twenty to thirty workers came in to aid in serving the soup, each one staying what he could spare of his meal time. This lasted for two months. No one was paid."

My friend also mentions various individual cases, of which the following are typical:—

"Annie W. was given by her mother to be boarded by an old person in Wilmot Street. When her mother died, the old woman, who herself was very poor, kept the child without being paid a penny for that. When the old lady died too, the child, who was five years old, was of course neglected during her illness, and was ragged; but she was taken at once by Mrs. S., the wife of a shoemaker, who herself has six children. Lately, when the husband was ill, they had not much to eat, all of them.

"The other day, Mrs. M., mother of six children, attended Mrs. M—g throughout her illness, and took to her own rooms the elder child. . . . But do you need such facts? They are quite general. . . . I know also Mrs. D. (Oval, Hackney Road), who has a sewing machine and continually sews for others, without ever accepting any remuneration, although she has herself five children and her husband to look after. . . . And so on."

For every one who has any idea of the life of the labouring classes it is evident that without mutual aid being practised among them on a large scale they never could pull through all their difficulties. It is only by chance that a worker's family can live its lifetime without having to face such circumstances as the crisis described by the ribbon weaver, Joseph Gutteridge, in his autobiography.<sup>18</sup> And if all do not go to the ground in such cases, they owe it to mutual help. In Gutteridge's case it was an old nurse, miserably poor herself, who turned up at the moment when the family was slipping towards a final catastrophe, and brought in some bread, coal, and bedding, which she had obtained on credit. In other cases, it will be some one else, or the neighbours will take steps to save the family. But without some aid from other poor, how many more would be brought every year to irreparable ruin!<sup>19</sup>

Mr. Plimsoll, after he had lived for some time among the poor, on 7s. 6d. a week, was compelled to recognize that the kindly feelings he took with him when he began this life

<sup>18</sup> *Light and Shadows in the Life of an Artisan*. Coventry, 1893.

<sup>19</sup> Many rich people cannot understand how the very poor can help each other, because they do not realize upon what infinitesimal amounts of food or money often hangs the life of one of the poorest classes. Lord Shaftesbury had understood this terrible truth when he started his Flowers and Watercress Girls' Fund, out of which loans of one pound, and only occasionally two pounds, were granted, to enable the girls to buy a basket and flowers when the winter sets in and they are in dire distress. The loans were given to girls who had "not a sixpence," but never failed to find some other poor to go bail for them. "Of all the movements I have ever been connected with," Lord Shaftesbury wrote, "I look upon this Watercress Girls' movement as the most successful. . . . It was begun in 1872, and we have had out 800 to 1,000 loans, and have not lost 50*l.* during the whole period. . . . What has been lost—and it has been very little, under the circumstances—has been by reason of death or sickness, not by fraud" (*The Life and Work of the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury*, by Edwin Hodder, vol. iii, p. 322. London, 1885–86). Several more facts in point in Ch. Booth's *Life and Labour in London*, vol. i; in Miss Beatrice Potter's "Pages from a Work Girl's Diary" (*Nineteenth Century*, September 1888, p. 310); and so on.

“changed into hearty respect and admiration” when he saw how the relations between the poor are permeated with mutual aid and support, and learned the simple ways in which that support is given. After a many years’ experience, his conclusion was that “when you come to think of it, such as these men were, so were the vast majority of the working classes.”<sup>20</sup> As to bringing up orphans, even by the poorest families, it is so widely-spread a habit, that it may be described as a general rule; thus among the miners it was found, after the two explosions at Warren Vale and at Lund Hill, that “nearly one-third of the men killed, as the respective committees can testify, were thus supporting relations other than wife and child.” “Have you reflected,” Mr. Plimsoll added, “what this is? Rich men, even comfortably-to-do men do this, I don’t doubt. But consider the difference.” Consider what a sum of one shilling, subscribed by each worker to help a comrade’s widow, or 6d. to help a fellow-worker to defray the extra expense of a funeral, means for one who earns 16s. a week and has a wife, and in some cases five or six children to support.<sup>21</sup> But such subscriptions are a general practice among the workers all over the world, even in much more ordinary cases than a death in the family, while aid in work is the commonest thing in their lives.

Nor do the same practices of mutual aid and support fail

<sup>20</sup> Samuel Plimsoll, *Our Seamen*, cheap edition, London, 1870, p. 110.

<sup>21</sup> *Our Seamen*, n.s., p. 110. Mr. Plimsoll added: “I don’t wish to disparage the rich, but I think it may be reasonably doubted whether these qualities are so fully developed in them; for, notwithstanding that not a few of them are not unacquainted with the claims, reasonable or unreasonable, of poor relatives, these qualities are not in such constant exercise. Riches seem in so many cases to smother the manliness of their possessors, and their sympathies become, not so much narrowed as—so to speak—stratified: they are reserved for the sufferings of their own class, and also the woes of those above them. They seldom tend downwards much, and they are far more likely to admire an act of courage . . . than to admire the constantly exercised fortitude and the tenderness which are the daily characteristics of a British workman’s life”—and of the workmen all over the world as well.

among the richer classes. Of course, when one thinks of the harshness which is often shown by the richer employers towards their employees, one feels inclined to take the most pessimist view of human nature. Many must remember the indignation which was aroused during the great Yorkshire strike of 1894, when old miners who had picked coal from an abandoned pit were prosecuted by the colliery owners. And, even if we leave aside the horrors of the periods of struggle and social war, such as the extermination of thousands of workers’ prisoners after the fall of the Paris Commune—who can read, for instance, revelations of the labour inquest which was made here in the forties, or what Lord Shaftesbury wrote about “the frightful waste of human life in the factories, to which the children taken from the workhouses, or simply purchased all over this country to be sold as factory slaves, were consigned”<sup>22</sup>—who can read that without being vividly impressed by the baseness which is possible in man when his greediness is at stake? But it must also be said that all fault for such treatment must not be thrown entirely upon the criminality of human nature. Were not the teachings of men of science, and even of a notable portion of the clergy, up to a quite recent time, teachings of distrust, despite and almost hatred towards the poorer classes? Did not science teach that since serfdom has been abolished, no one need be poor unless for his own vices? And how few in the Church had the courage to blame the children-killers, while the great numbers taught that the sufferings of the poor, and even the slavery of the negroes, were part of the Divine Plan! Was not Nonconformism itself largely a popular protest against the harsh treatment of the poor at the hand of the Established Church?

With such spiritual leaders, the feelings of the richer classes necessarily became, as Mr. Plimsoll remarked, not so much blunted as “stratified.” They seldom went downwards towards the poor, from whom the well-to-do-people are separated by their

<sup>22</sup> *Life of the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury*, by Edwin Hodder, vol. i. pp. 137–138.

manner of life, and whom they do not know under their best aspects, in their every-day life. But among themselves—allowance being made for the effects of the wealth-accumulating passions and the futile expenses imposed by wealth itself—among themselves, in the circle of family and friends, the rich practise the same mutual aid and support as the poor. Dr. Ihering and L. Dargun are perfectly right in saying that if a statistical record could be taken of all the money which passes from hand to hand in the shape of friendly loans and aid, the sum total would be enormous, even in comparison with the commercial transactions of the world's trade. And if we could add to it, as we certainly ought to, what is spent in hospitality, petty mutual services, the management of other people's affairs, gifts and charities, we certainly should be struck by the importance of such transfers in national economy. Even in the world which is ruled by commercial egotism, the current expression, "We have been harshly treated by that firm," shows that there is also the friendly treatment, as opposed to the harsh, *i.e.* the legal treatment; while every commercial man knows how many firms are saved every year from failure by the friendly support of other firms.

As to the charities and the amounts of work for general well-being which are voluntarily done by so many well-to-do persons, as well as by workers, and especially by professional men, every one knows the part which is played by these two categories of benevolence in modern life. If the desire of acquiring notoriety, political power, or social distinction often spoils the true character of that sort of benevolence, there is no doubt possible as to the impulse coming in the majority of cases from the same mutual-aid feelings. Men who have acquired wealth very often do not find in it the expected satisfaction. Others begin to feel that, whatever economists may say about wealth being the reward of capacity, their own reward is exaggerated. The conscience of human solidarity begins to tell; and, although society life is so arranged as to stifle that feeling by thousands of artful means, it often gets the upper hand; and then they try to find an outcome for that deeply human need by giving their fortune, or

their forces, to something which, in their opinion, will promote general welfare.

In short, neither the crushing powers of the centralized State nor the teachings of mutual hatred and pitiless struggle which came, adorned with the attributes of science, from obliging philosophers and sociologists, could weed out the feeling of human solidarity, deeply lodged in men's understanding and heart, because it has been nurtured by all our preceding evolution. What was the outcome of evolution since its earliest stages cannot be overpowered by one of the aspects of that same evolution. And the need of mutual aid and support which had lately taken refuge in the narrow circle of the family, or the slum neighbours, in the village, or the secret union of workers, reasserts itself again, even in our modern society, and claims its rights to be, as it always has been, the chief leader towards further progress. Such are the conclusions which we are necessarily brought to when we carefully ponder over each of the groups of facts briefly enumerated in the last two chapters.

## CONCLUSION

IF WE take now the teachings which can be borrowed from the analysis of modern society, in connection with the body of evidence relative to the importance of mutual aid in the evolution of the animal world and of mankind, we may sum up our inquiry as follows.

In the animal world we have seen that the vast majority of species live in societies, and that they find in association the best arms for the struggle for life: understood, of course, in its wide Darwinian sense—not as a struggle for the sheer means of existence, but as a struggle against all natural conditions unfavourable to the species. The animal species, in which individual struggle has been reduced to its narrowest limits, and the practice of mutual aid has attained the greatest development, are invariably the most numerous, the most prosperous, and the most open to further progress. The mutual protection which is obtained in this case, the possibility of attaining old age and of accumulating experience, the higher intellectual development, and the further growth of sociable habits, secure the maintenance of the species, its extension, and its further progressive evolution. The unsociable species, on the contrary, are doomed to decay.

Going next over to man, we found him living in clans and tribes at the very dawn of the stone age; we saw a wide series of social institutions developed already in the lower savage stage, in the clan and the tribe; and we found that the earliest tribal customs and habits gave to mankind the embryo of all the institutions which made later on the leading aspects of further progress. Out of the savage tribe grew up the barbarian village

community; and a new, still wider, circle of social customs, habits, and institutions, numbers of which are still alive among ourselves, was developed under the principles of common possession of a given territory and common defence of it, under the jurisdiction of the village folk-mote, and in the federation of villages belonging, or supposed to belong, to one stem. And when new requirements induced men to make a new start, they made it in the city, which represented a double network of territorial units (village communities), connected with guilds—these latter arising out of the common prosecution of a given art or craft, or for mutual support and defence.

And finally, in the last two chapters facts were produced to show that although the growth of the State on the pattern of Imperial Rome had put a violent end to all mediæval institutions for mutual support, this new aspect of civilization could not last. The State, based upon loose aggregations of individuals and undertaking to be their only bond of union, did not answer its purpose. The mutual-aid tendency finally broke down its iron rules; it reappeared and reasserted itself in an infinity of associations which now tend to embrace all aspects of life and to take possession of all that is required by man for life and for reproducing the waste occasioned by life.

It will probably be remarked that mutual aid, even though it may represent one of the factors of evolution, covers nevertheless one aspect only of human relations; that by the side of this current, powerful though it may be, there is, and always has been, the other current—the self-assertion of the individual, not only in its efforts to attain personal or caste superiority, economical, political, and spiritual, but also in its much more important although less evident function of breaking through the bonds, always prone to become crystallized, which the tribe, the village community, the city, and the State impose upon the individual. In other words, there is the self-assertion of the individual taken as a progressive element.

It is evident that no review of evolution can be complete, unless these two dominant currents are analyzed. However, the self-assertion of the individual or of groups of individuals, their



struggles for superiority, and the conflicts which resulted therefrom, have already been analyzed, described, and glorified from time immemorial. In fact, up to the present time, this current alone has received attention from the epical poet, the annalist, the historian, and the sociologist. History, such as it has hitherto been written, is almost entirely a description of the ways and means by which theocracy, military power, autocracy, and, later on, the richer classes' rule have been promoted, established, and maintained. The struggles between these forces make, in fact, the substance of history. We may thus take the knowledge of the individual factor in human history as granted—even though there is full room for a new study of the subject on the lines just alluded to; while, on the other side, the mutual-aid factor has been hitherto totally lost sight of; it was simply denied, or even scoffed at, by the writers of the present and past generation. It was therefore necessary to show, first of all, the immense part which this factor plays in the evolution of both the animal world and human societies. Only after this has been fully recognized will it be possible to proceed to a comparison between the two factors.

To make even a rough estimate of their relative importance by any method more or less statistical, is evidently impossible. One single war—we all know—may be productive of more evil, immediate and subsequent, than hundreds of years of the unchecked action of the mutual-aid principle may be productive of good. But when we see that in the animal world, progressive development and mutual aid go hand in hand, while the inner struggle within the species is concomitant with retrogressive development; when we notice that with man, even success in struggle and war is proportionate to the development of mutual aid in each of the two conflicting nations, cities, parties, or tribes, and that in the process of evolution war itself (so far as it can go this way) has been made subservient to the ends of progress in mutual aid within the nation, the city or the clan—we already obtain a perception of the dominating influence of the mutual-aid factor as an element of progress. But we see also that the practice of mutual aid and its successive developments

have created the very conditions of society life in which man was enabled to develop his arts, knowledge, and intelligence; and that the periods when institutions based on the mutual-aid tendency took their greatest development were also the periods of the greatest progress in arts, industry, and science. In fact, the study of the inner life of the mediæval city and of the ancient Greek cities reveals the fact that the combination of mutual aid, as it was practised within the guild and the Greek clan, with a large initiative which was left to the individual and the group by means of the federative principle, gave to mankind the two greatest periods of its history—the ancient Greek city and the mediæval city periods; while the ruin of the above institutions during the State periods of history, which followed, corresponded in both cases to a rapid decay.

As to the sudden industrial progress which has been achieved during our own century, and which is usually ascribed to the triumph of individualism and competition, it certainly has a much deeper origin than that. Once the great discoveries of the fifteenth century were made, especially that of the pressure of the atmosphere, supported by a series of advances in natural philosophy—and they were made under the mediæval city organization,—once these discoveries were made, the invention of the steam-motor, and all the revolution which the conquest of a new power implied, had necessarily to follow. If the mediæval cities had lived to bring their discoveries to that point, the ethical consequences of the revolution effected by steam might have been different; but the same revolution in technics and science would have inevitably taken place. It remains, indeed, an open question whether the general decay of industries which followed the ruin of the free cities, and was especially noticeable in the first part of the eighteenth century, did not considerably retard the appearance of the steam-engine as well as the consequent revolution in arts. When we consider the astounding rapidity of industrial progress from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries—in weaving, working of metals, architecture and navigation, and ponder over the scientific discoveries which that industrial progress led to at the end of the fifteenth century—

we must ask ourselves whether mankind was not delayed in its taking full advantage of these conquests when a general depression of arts and industries took place in Europe after the decay of mediæval civilization. Surely it was not the disappearance of the artist-artisan, nor the ruin of large cities and the extinction of intercourse between them, which could favour the industrial revolution; and we know indeed that James Watt spent twenty or more years of his life in order to render his invention serviceable, because he could not find in the last century what he would have readily found in mediæval Florence or Brugge, that is, the artisans capable of realizing his devices in metal, and of giving them the artistic finish and precision which the steam-engine requires.

To attribute, therefore, the industrial progress of our century to the war of each against all which it has proclaimed, is to reason like the man who, knowing not the causes of rain, attributes it to the victim he has immolated before his clay idol. For industrial progress, as for each other conquest over nature, mutual aid and close intercourse certainly are, as they have been, much more advantageous than mutual struggle.

However, it is especially in the domain of ethics that the dominating importance of the mutual-aid principle appears in full. That mutual aid is the real foundation of our ethical conceptions seems evident enough. But whatever the opinions as to the first origin of the mutual-aid feeling or instinct may be—whether a biological or a supernatural cause is ascribed to it—we must trace its existence as far back as to the lowest stages of the animal world; and from these stages we can follow its uninterrupted evolution, in opposition to a number of contrary agencies, through all degrees of human development, up to the present times. Even the new religions which were born from time to time—always at epochs when the mutual-aid principle was falling into decay in the theocracies and despotic States of the East, or at the decline of the Roman Empire—even the new religions have only reaffirmed that same principle. They found their first supporters among the humble, in the lowest, down-trodden layers of society, where the mutual-aid principle is the

necessary foundation of every-day life; and the new forms of union which were introduced in the earliest Buddhist and Christian communities, in the Moravian brotherhoods and so on, took the character of a return to the best aspects of mutual aid in early tribal life.

Each time, however, that an attempt to return to this old principle was made, its fundamental idea itself was widened. From the clan it was extended to the stem, to the federation of stems, to the nation, and finally—in ideal, at least—to the whole of mankind. It was also refined at the same time. In primitive Buddhism, in primitive Christianity, in the writings of some of the Mussulman teachers, in the early movements of the Reform, and especially in the ethical and philosophical movements of the last century and of our own times, the total abandonment of the idea of revenge, or of “due reward”—of good for good and evil for evil—is affirmed more and more vigorously. The higher conception of “no revenge for wrongs,” and of freely giving more than one expects to receive from his neighbours, is proclaimed as being the real principle of morality—a principle superior to mere equivalence, equity, or justice, and more conducive to happiness. And man is appealed to to be guided in his acts, not merely by love, which is always personal, or at the best tribal, but by the perception of his oneness with each human being. In the practice of mutual aid, which we can retrace to the earliest beginnings of evolution, we thus find the positive and undoubted origin of our ethical conceptions; and we can affirm that in the ethical progress of man, mutual support—not mutual struggle—has had the leading part. In its wide extension, even at the present time, we also see the best guarantee of a still loftier evolution of our race.