

## EUGENICS AND COMMON SENSE

BY H. FIELDING-HALL

THERE is nothing, I think, that brings home to one more conclusively the unity of life, and therefore the unity of knowledge of that life, than the attempt to study any particular subject by itself and confine yourself to it alone. You find very soon that you cannot do so. No aspect of life can be separated from the rest and understood even in any small degree without some knowledge of the rest of life. No part of life stands alone. Every phenomenon of life is the result, not of one or two causes alone, but of the interaction of innumerable causes. To get near the understanding of only one item you must be able to estimate more or less truly all the forces that make life, and the objective of life. As with the eddy of a river, to estimate it you must know, not merely the eddy but much also of the river, its volume and its speed, the density of its waters, the configuration of its banks and its general direction. The observation of the eddy only would lead you into the wildest fallacies.

When I began over twenty years ago to study crime and its cause this fact soon became impressed upon me. To study crime alone would lead me nowhere. Crime was but an eddy in life's current, and to know the eddy I must know much of the current. I must understand something of life, of that humanity in which crime is but a defect, not necessarily of the criminal. I must do my best to master many aspects of that life.

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And among the first of the studies which I found it necessary to pursue was that which is called heredity. I must learn all I could about heredity, because at that time many scientific men declared that all crime was hereditary, inevitably bequeathed from father to son and therefore incurable and hopeless.

Now, my own experience and observation told me just the opposite; I was unable to find in life one single instance where I could confidently say that a tendency to crime was inherited. Every case I investigated showed me the reverse, — that it was not hereditary. Whatever might be inherited, it was not a tendency to crime. I therefore read and reread Lombroso and the writers of his school with great care and constant application to facts as I found them. And very soon I discovered the underlying fallacies, not of their facts but, even where their facts were true, of their reasoning from those facts. Lombroso and his school had studied only the eddy and ignored the stream; they had observed and measured the criminal when made, and neither normal human nature nor the criminal before he was made. They found certain stigmata on criminals; they inferred a connection between these and crime; they ignored the fact that the stigmata occur on the non-criminal. I think that, in Europe at least, this hereditary theory of crime is dead.

Now this method of arguing from a few facts gained in a very narrow field is a very common cause of error.

But my interest in heredity had been awakened and has never since died. It is a subject I am never weary of. It is true that, being neither a biologist nor a doctor, I cannot make discoveries of my own, but I try to keep abreast of all discoveries that are made, and to bring them to the touchstone of life. I do not dispute facts, but I examine most carefully the exact value of those facts. I collate them with facts of life arrived at in quite other ways than by biology, and I examine all reasoning based on those facts.

Thus this new 'science' of Eugenics has no more interested student than myself. I am aware that there must be something in heredity, I have no idea what it is; I am very desirous to learn; but on the other hand I will never allow my wish for knowledge to lead me into accepting what is not absolutely proved to be true. I would never condone a general inference from a restricted observation, and I would bring in every fact I have learned of other sides of life to correct biology. For instance, if biology asserts that it has established a theory to which sociology emphatically denies any truth in observed human nature, I would prefer the latter till the two could be reconciled. Because life is the stream and biology only an eddy.

## II

Let us turn then to Eugenics as at present taught and see what truth we can find in it. I shall quote some of its first principles from a leading Eugenic textbook and make some remarks on them, and then I shall give you some facts from life. Within an article it is impossible to do more than this, but I think it will suffice.

To begin with, is there such a thing as heredity? A father has blue eyes and so has his son. Is there a special energy

or force that did this? Suppose his son has brown eyes — did heredity stop acting? Was it, so to speak, turned off? That is absurd. The forces which caused the boy's eyes in one case to be like the father's and in the next case unlike, were the same. No one doubts that. No new force or energy had been introduced.

Heredity therefore is not a thing in itself. It has no existence in fact; it denotes no constant actual living force. It is simply a noun derived from the adjective hereditary. Hereditary means handed down from parent to child, — simply that and nothing more. An estate is hereditary. The brown eyes were as truly hereditary as the blue, no more, no less. As all life proceeds from life, all life in every detail is hereditary. Try to realize and be certain of this; it will prevent you from falling into errors. It is commonly said, for instance, that certain qualities are hereditary and others are not. For instance, a genius suddenly appearing of commonplace progenitors is said not to be hereditary. But a genius is born, so he must be hereditary in the true sense; genius is not acquired.

Thus in common usage the word heredity is abused and twisted into meaning something it does not mean, namely, a tendency in children to reproduce the more or less unusual qualities of parents. It is assumed that there is such a general tendency. But it has never been proved.

So much for the word; now let us take some of the arguments. 'Man is an organism — an animal; and the laws of improvement of corn and of race-horses hold true for him also.' That is the first assertion; what truth is there in it? Let us consider. Man's body has developed in many thousands of years from being an animal, and in many ten thousands of years from being a plant; does that prove that he is still nothing

but a plant or an animal, that in his evolution he has not added very much to what went before, quite enough to upset any theories formed from what plants and animals do? Do the higher qualities of brain and emotion count for nothing at all? There seems no objection to Eugenists classing themselves with cabbages and dogs and cats, but does the rest of the world accept this for itself? Are you content to be described and treated as a beast, and a beast only? Each reader will answer that for himself no doubt, and I need not elaborate the point. It is the cheerful and veracious foundation of Eugenics.

Let us continue. The Eugenist takes man purely as a plant or as an animal; he wants to breed him just as animals are bred, so let us consider how plants and animals are bred and what the result has been. He says: 'Surely the human product is superior to poultry,' — the very foundation of his whole argument is that it is not; however, let us go on, — 'and as we may now predict with precision the characters of the offspring of a particular pair of pedigreed poultry so it may be some time with man.'

The writer here, and he subsequently elaborates the point, wants the reader to believe that scientific precision has been reached in breeding plants and animals, that no exceptions exist to their laws, and that consequently no such failures in breeding mankind could occur under the Eugenist system as occur at present.

But this statement is entirely untrue. There is no such certainty. Even as regards purely physical traits it is untrue, and it must be remembered that scientific breeding has been concerned only with these, to the exclusion of all else. There are an enormous number of failures. If, for instance, you mate the winner of the Derby with the winner of

the Oaks, shall you obtain colts and fillies which will unfailingly inherit the speed of their parents? Look at the stud-book for answer. Even in plants, where success is more general, the number of failures is enormous compared to the successes. The rule is not absolute or nearly so. The successes of Burbank cannot compare with his failures, and mendelism has many exceptions.

Still, let us go on. Let us assume with the Eugenists that we really are no different from cabbages and roses, or horses and dogs, — that every rule which applies to them applies to us, — and let us see what the scientific breeding of plants and animals has effected. What has been the result?

Well, the result has been astonishing. The simple little wild Persian rose, for instance, has been improved into the gorgeous blooms of our gardens; the small, rather sour apple has become the Albemarle Pippin; the wild dog has become the great Dane, the mastiff, the bull-dog, the pug; and the barb mixed with the Frisian horse has become the thoroughbred. In size, in beauty, in variety, in qualities useful to mankind, plants and animals have been improved out of recognition.

That is quite true. But what of the other qualities? What, for instance, of health and intelligence? Have these also increased *pari passu* with the increase in size? Go to a nursery gardener, to a racing stable, to a dog-fancier, and inquire. You will learn this: the extraordinary improvement in size and shape has been gained at the cost of all other qualities. Thoroughbred plants and animals are very tender, they require most assiduous attention, they have to be nursed like babies. They have no stamina, and they have no brains. They are so delicate that unless they are continually protected and doctored they are devoured by disease. A rose-grower's outfit now includes in-

numerable medicines without which his blooms would be destroyed. If you abandon a garden of any cultivated flowers for a few years, the vigorous and hardy wild plants will choke all your improved stock; nothing will be left save perhaps a few lucky plants which have managed to evolve as it were backwards and regain some of their virility by abandoning their acquired splendor. In free competition the improved plant does not stand the ghost of a chance with its unimproved brothers. The struggle ends inevitably and tragically.

It is exactly the same with improved birds and animals. In open competition for a livelihood thoroughbred stock would be doomed. It has no constitution, it cannot get a living for itself, cannot bear exposure, must be cared for like an invalid. Read for instance the history of the cavalry and mounted infantry horses in the Boer War. The fine-bred stock from England was useless. It died in heaps. It was only horses from places where they are brought up semi-wild, as in the Argentine and Australian runs, that were of any use. Even they did not compare with the Boer ponies.

A further fact, and one still more important to remark, is that all tame stock is incomparably inferior in intellect to wild stock. There is so little opportunity for people of civilized nations nowadays to observe wild animals that this fact is often overlooked. But the difference is startling. Look at a pack of wild dogs, as I often have. They hunt with a science and precision that tame fox-hounds have no idea of, even when directed by huntsmen and whips. A pack of wild dogs will mark down a stag — they always select stags with big heads if possible — in a piece of forest surrounded by grass. They will post sentries at the exits and the rest of the pack will go to the end and

beat the jungle through. When the stag breaks, the sentries at the exit give tongue and warn the rest who immediately run to their call.

There is no one who like myself has kept both wild and domesticated animals as pets who has not noticed that the latter are fools to the former. It is a commonplace of knowledge. Here is a story in illustration, from the life of the elder Dumas.

He had a dog and a fox both chained up near the house. One day he gave a bone to each, putting it just out of reach, to see what would happen. Well, at first, both acted in the same way, they strained at the chain. The fox, however, soon found out the uselessness of this and sat down to consider. Then he got up, turned round so as to add the length of his body to that of the chain, reached the bone with his hind leg, and having scraped it within reach, sat down to eat it. But the dog not only could not think of this himself, but even when he saw the fox do it, he could not imitate it.

The more scientifically bred animals are, the less brain they have. If you want a dog who will be an intelligent and sympathetic companion, which do you choose, the dog bred by 'science' or the dog bred by the natural selection of mutual love, the thoroughbred or the mongrel? All experience says the latter. Therefore, suppose the Eugenicists had their way and established a state, what would the inhabitants of that state be like in a few generations? They would be tall, broad, muscular, beautiful, delicate to a degree, useless save for athletic contests or beauty shows, always in the doctor's hands, — Eugenic doctor of course, — brainless, incapable of affection, almost wanting in courage, to a great extent sterile; and in the end, if the state did not die of inanition first, some more virile and intelligent race, say the Hottentots or

Andamese, would come and eat its inhabitants. The Eugenic Utopia would end in the digestive apparatus of a savage. *Sic transit gloria Eugenix*. Nothing could be more certain than that.

### III

Now, leaving plants and animals behind us, let us come to man, and see what Eugenists have discovered.

They declare that certain diseases are transmitted to children; greater authorities deny that disease ever is or ever could be so transmitted. So much for that. They have found a few notable cases where a feeble-minded progenitor, such as Jukes, produced generations like himself. They found a few cases where able and talented parents did the same; they have in some cases traced certain defects for several generations. *That is absolutely all.*

Of the much greater number of cases where the quality is not transmitted they make no mention. Let me therefore again repeat what Buckle said on such systems of argument; it should never be forgotten: 'We often hear of hereditary talents, hereditary vices, and hereditary virtues; but whoever will critically examine the evidence will see that we have no proof of their existence. The way in which they are commonly proved is in the highest degree illogical, the usual course being for writers to collect instances of some mental peculiarity found in parent and child and then to infer that the peculiarity was bequeathed. By this mode of reasoning we might demonstrate any proposition, since in all large fields of inquiry there are a sufficient number of empirical coincidences to make a plausible case in favor of whatever view a man chooses to advocate. But this is not the way in which truth is discovered; and we ought to inquire not only how many cases there are of heredi-

tary talents, and so forth, but also how many there are of such qualities not being hereditary.' Do the Eugenists do this?

Arguing as the Eugenists do, you could prove anything. For instance, I know families where the men for generations have been wounded or killed in action. The Battyes of Indian fame are such a family. Let us argue about this like the Eugenists. 'When men are wounded they become defective; they are a great expense to the State for pensions and are no more good; when they are killed they can't fight any more and their widows and children have to be provided for. All this is a great burden to the country. Getting wounded or killed is undoubtedly a hereditary taint. Therefore we should breed our soldiers from stock which has never had any one killed or wounded among its predecessors, and therefore may be certain not to get into any danger should war break out.'

Again, as Lombroso and many others have shown, genius and great ability are usually associated with disease, the reason being that great men are often over-engined for their physique, which takes its revenge. Their diseases are really wounds received in warfare. The Eugenists would eliminate all disease and with it all ability. For instance they would have prevented Lord Bacon from being born. Now whether Bacon did or did not write Shakespeare's plays, he was one of the greatest men we have ever produced. He sheds a lustre on us yet. We would not change him for a wilderness of Eugenists. And what of the world romance of Browning and his wife?

Their arguments in this whole matter teem with fallacies. Because consumption often occurred in generation after generation it used to be assumed to be hereditary. We know now that it is not. What seems to be hereditary is

a certain diathesis, which under unfavorable circumstances may result in a feeble consumptive. in others may give us a Rhodes or a Keats. They know that, yet they argue in exactly the old way in other cases.

Thus in the biological field no discovery has yet been made of any certain law of inheritance even in the smallest matters of physique and appearance. An athlete not only does not always have athletic sons, but he often has none at all; and so with other matters. As to the greater matters of intelligence and virility, *nothing whatever is known*. And be it remembered that the progress of mankind is a progress of intelligence, not of physique. Have Eugenists still to learn this? Apparently they have.<sup>1</sup>

And now, leaving this little eddy called biology, let us go into the wide stream of life, and see what is known there. Let us consider the process by which man has evolved so far, and what the experience and observation of thousands of years have taught us. Let us look at what the Eugenist is pleased to call 'the present haphazard method of mating that obtains even among cultured people.' What is that method? Well, it is usually called falling in love.

There is between young men and maidens a general mutual attraction. They like to look at each other, to talk, to touch each other. It is far stronger with men than girls, but it is in both. It is, however, for the most part general and vague. Then at some time or other this general warmth is concentrated upon one object. He falls in love and she as a rule returns it. What is the meaning of this selection? Why

<sup>1</sup> If the reader wishes to read what perhaps the greatest living biologist, who is also a thinker, has to say of Eugenics, I commend to him the address of Professor William Bateson to the International Congress of Medicine in London. It is given in the *British Medical Gazette* for August 16, 1913.

does something within him pick her out unconsciously from all other women? Why does she echo to the call? It is the cry of Nature wanting children for her future, saying to him, 'She is thy mate. Only thus can be born such children as I desire, strong in emotion, in intelligence, in brain. Such are what I want.'

Therefore, to get her way Nature creates a passion and promises a happiness.

That is what the world knows, has always known, and never can forget. It knows that love is life. Suppose the Eugenists could have their way and banish love, who would care to live? What purpose would life have? It would have none. There would be no life, only an existence wearisome and dull. The world feels that love is beautiful, it sees in practice that it is true. Love makes the world, love keeps it, only to love shall it be given in the future. Therefore have poets sung it and storytellers told of it; therefore do eyes shine and cheeks burn for it. Therefore is it the soul of art, of music, of literature. Fancy the future Eugenic novel or play. Scene, a drawing-room, with a young woman in it. Enter to her a young man led by a Eugenist doctor, who says to her, 'My wise young lady, let me introduce to you Mr. Dash. He has been carefully selected as your mate.' And to him, 'Young man, behold the mother of your future children.' Does it not read charmingly?

You see that the Eugenist omits love. He knows nothing about it or about the world. I never realized how extraordinarily ignorant Eugenists were of human nature till I heard a recent Eugenic lecture. In that, among other things, the lecturer said that if nowadays there arose a new Cleopatra she would be relegated at once to the wards of an asylum; and his audience laughed with pleasure. It delighted them to

think how superior each of themselves was to such a famous woman, and they gloated over it.

Yet I had other thoughts and among them these:—How mediocrity hates eminence! When the Eugenists seize Cleopatra, what will Mark Antony be doing? When the Eugenists shall have built their lethal chamber for the feeble-minded, who should be its first inhabitants?

Love is the motive power of the world. It is the purifying and regenerating power. Even 'degenerates' who should really love each other would have more intelligent children than a healthy couple mated without love. Children are the sparks struck out as by flint and steel which meet. The stronger their momentum when they meet, the greater and brighter the flash. All the world save the Eugenists knows that.

Love is the one thing which makes life worth living. It has its reward. And if you neglect or sin against it the punishment is sure. Nemesis comes slowly but it comes surely.

Though the mills of God grind slowly  
Yet they grind exceeding small.

Whenever an individual or a class or a

nation has sinned against love, has it not paid? Has it not paid the utmost penalty of death? No lesson is more certainly written on the page of history than is this.

Whenever an individual has married without love, his children, if he have any, are useless. When a class has denied love and instituted marriage for money, for position, for family, it has decayed and disappeared. Whenever by its marriage customs a people has sinned against love, how great has been the penalty! Look at the decadence of India since the mating of children without love was introduced by religion. India once led the world. It does not so lead now. And why? Principally for that reason.

Remember what was written in the Kural thousands of years ago: 'That only lives which is instinct with love. That which has not love is but a rotten carcass covered with skin. And from putridity what will you get but maggots?'

So would the Eugenists have marriage.

This is often called the age of science, and truly. We have Christian Science, and Eugenics. What next?

# PAGAN MORALS

BY EMILY JAMES PUTNAM

## I

As M. Bergson remarks, it is very fatiguing to be a human being. If we compare ourselves with the other animals we see how hard our case is. We have in the first place to stand upright, a feat for which we are not yet completely adapted. And then we are obliged to do more or less thinking, however skillfully we may reduce the amount. Above all we are compelled by a number of constraining influences to be to a certain degree consciously 'good.' Whenever we begin to think about the perplexing question of goodness, to wonder why we are almost all driven more or less spasmodically to strive for it and to complain because it is so elusive, so hard to attain even with the best will in the world, so uncertain in its aims and claims and sanctions, so troublesome and yet so indispensable, we are driven back to the Greeks.

The man in the street is not likely to name as the foremost attribute of the Greeks their moral success, and yet he ought to. They, first of men, made a discovery about morals which must be our salvation if we are to be saved, and their interest in the subject is obscured for us only by the multiplicity of their claims on our attention. If, like the Hebrews, they had stripped life of all its *agréments*, if they had had no sense of beauty or of humor, no splendid achievements of pure literature, of politics, or of science, we should see them, as we see the Hebrews, con-

sumed by their concern for righteousness.

Among people like the English-speaking communities who instinctively avoid whenever possible the pain and strain of thought, a happy literary formula comes easily to have the paralyzing effect of a taboo. The freest minds are the source of the most compelling formulas, and they therefore quite unintentionally rivet new bonds upon their contemporaries in the place of those they strike off. Thus Matthew Arnold, a man given to thinking for himself, provided his age with a number of catchwords which dispensed those who used them from giving any further thought to the subjects to which they apply. I suppose no one reads Matthew Arnold to-day, but his most striking formulas have passed into the tradition of English speech and go marching indefinitely on. One of the most telling and most misleading is his famous chapter-heading, 'Hebraism and Hellenism.' There are in the chapter itself paragraphs which if carefully read go far to minimize the antithesis suggested by the title. But a man who is writing under so taking a caption can hardly help being carried on by auto-suggestion to the symmetrical rounding out of its implications. Thus Arnold begins by stating plumply that 'the final aim of both Hellenism and Hebraism, as of all great spiritual disciplines, is no doubt the same: man's perfection or salvation. The very language which they both of them use in schooling us to reach this aim is often