

HUMAN NATURE AS A SCIENCE.

BY J. M. SUTTON.

It would take many volumes to exhaust the subject I have chosen. It is a subject of the most vital importance to mankind and yet but little known or studied. The study of human nature is an undeveloped science which, if cultivated, would be of more importance than the post mortem examination of all the monsters that peopled the earth before man made his entree. A science through which the great social problem, which has ever perplexed the brain of civilization, must be solved. When the habits and instincts of man shall have been studied as closely and diligently as have been those of the ant and the bee, the birds of the air and beasts of the field, then will our criminal codes, as such, be a thing of the past. The very word criminal will be an obsolete synonym for insanity. Criminal actions will appear in our medical works as acute or chronic maladies, as the case may be, and the proper remedies for their cure or prevention will be given. Our penitentiaries and prisons will be so many asylums where the best scientific skill will be brought to bear for the cure of that unfortunate class who are endowed by their ancestors with a malformed brain. In these asylums the chronic cases which will not yield to treatment will be retained for the protection of society and the convalescent will be discharged. This, no doubt, will seem chimerical to those who stop not to investigate, and vehemently denied by those who tremble at every radical suggestion, lest some favorite dogma or theory of theirs might suffer.

Although so little is known of the science of Human Nature, I believe that that little, if properly brought to the witness stand, will bear me out in the above conclusions. Let us call up some of the established physiological facts and apply them to this investigation:

First. The mental and physical traits of the parents are transmitted to their posterity for many generations.

This is a well known law of all organisms, in the vegetable as well as the animal creation, as far down in the scale as man has been able to investigate.

The higher in the scale the more apparent becomes this law. As the lower orders of animated creation more closely, or, we might say, absolutely conform to the laws of their being, no individual among them has any disease or peculiarity to transmit—at least any that would be perceptible during one geological age. Thus they inherit but one set of instincts which they transmit unchanged from generation to generation.

Not so with man with his multiplicity of instincts and mental propensities, and his complex physical organization. All these work in perfect harmony to constitute the perfect mental and physical man; and like a complicated machine, which is likely to be put in bad working order by an accident to any of its parts, he will, by the very law of his being, reproduce not only his kind, but with them his infirmities. Taking into consideration the great length of time since the advent of man on the earth, it is not strange that we now find such a diversity in his mental and physical, as well as his moral, condition.

Ordinary observation has long since established the fact that chronic ailments, whether moral or physical, are transmitted from parents to children through many generations. The same facts are confirmed beyond question by

scientific research. If the predisposition to crime is entailed on an individual before he was born, it is certainly a part of his nature and must have a modifying influence over his better propensities in the formation of his character. Just in proportion as the good or bad predominates, will be the character of that individual. Of course, there are many modifying influences that determine the real character. Chief among these are the social environments. An individual may have his evil instincts in excess, but being by circumstances thrown into society capable of developing the better part of his nature, may make a good citizen. And conversely, the good may be overcome by evil influences. The same is true of a man inheriting physical disease. A man may inherit the seeds of consumption, yet, under favorable climatic influence and proper occupation, may live to a good old age. It will be found, that all inherited diseases, whether moral, mental or physical, follow the same law.

It is not my present purpose to comment on the various phases of the science of human nature. I only desire to awaken an interest in the subject by attempting to point out the absurdity of our so-called criminal code. A man who has inherited insanity receives the sympathy of all. Provisions of the most ample nature are provided for his comfort and he has every known means applied to his case; while his still more unfortunate brother who has entailed on him a moral infirmity which impelled him to some deed described in our criminal code as a crime, is punished for his misfortune and taunted by society as an outlaw. His punishment is only calculated to crush every good instinct of his nature and aggravate his malady.

But we are told that man is a "free moral agent," that "good and evil is set before him," and that "he is at liberty to choose which he pleases." I admit all this to be true, but hold that the man who has inherited a preponderance of evil propensities, is naturally impelled to choose the evil if no modifying influences exist. All grant him the privilege of choosing the good, except the only one that has the power to prevent—and that one is his own nature. I am aware of the many apparent difficulties in the way of abolishing our criminal code and adopting one in conformity to the demands of humanity; but the only formidable difficulty is the accumulated prejudices of ages in favor of our present revengful mode of protecting society against the acts of malformed brains. For some cause, not easily explained, mankind prefer an old wrong to an unfamiliar right. Therefore, all reforms always have, and, perhaps, must continue to progress by almost imperceptible stages. If we will trace back through all the criminal codes to remote ages, we can see a continual approach toward the side of humanity. If we will examine the records of our criminal courts we will see that the proportion of convictions is continually decreasing. This is easily explained by the fact that humanity begins to revolt at the severity of the punishment inflicted by the law; yet, few jurors realize why the penalties of the law are not just. We often hear the lamentation "that a man cannot be convicted of high crime any more," and that "there is a strong sympathy among the people in favor of the criminal." This is the eternal principal of right asserting her way. It is this popular sympathy that has almost driven capital punishment from all civilized lands and will continue to amend our criminal codes until humanity shall assert her sway and the word criminal shall be blotted from our statutes.

NOTES AND REMINISCENCES, LAYING OUT AND ESTABLISHING THE OLD IMMIGRANT ROAD INTO SOUTHERN OREGON, IN THE YEAR 1846.

BY LINDSAY APPELGATE.

(Continued.)

A portion of the country we proposed to traverse was at that time marked on the map "unexplored region." All the information we could get relative to it was through the Hudson Bay Co. Peter Ogden, an officer of that company, who had led a party of trappers through that region, represented that portions of it were desert-like, and that at one time his company was so pressed for the want of water that they went to the top of a mountain, filled sacks with snow, and were thus able to cross the desert. He also stated, that portions of the country through which we would have to travel, were infested with fierce and war-like savages, who would attack every party entering their country, steal their traps, way-lay and murder the men, and that Rogue River had taken its name from the character of the Indians inhabiting its valleys. The idea of opening a wagon road through such a country at that time, was scouted as preposterous. Those statements, though based on facts, we thought might be exaggerated by the Hudson's Bay Co., in their own interest, since they had a line of forts on the Snake river route, reaching from Fort Hall to Vancouver, and were prepared to profit by the immigration.

One thing which had much influence with us was the fact that the question as to which power, Great Britain or the United States, would eventually secure a title to the country, was not settled; and in case a war should occur and Britain prove successful, it was important to have a way by which we could leave the country, without running the gauntlet of the Hudson's Bay Co.'s forts and falling a prey to Indian tribes which were under British influence.

On the morning of the 20th of June, 1846, we gathered on the La Creole, near where Dallas now stands, moved up the valley and encamped for the night on Mary's river, near where the town of Corvallis has since been built.

June 21—Moved up the valley and encamped among the foot-hills of the Calapooia mountains.

June 22—This day we traveled along the base of the Calapooias, our course being nearly southeast, passing near a prominent peak since called Spencer's Butte. In a little valley near the butte, on the south side, we discovered Indians digging camas. On perceiving us most of them secreted themselves in the timber. One of our party succeeded in capturing an old Indian, and representing to him by signs the course we wished to follow, the old fellow preceded us two or three miles, and put us on a dim trail which had been marked by twisting the tops of the brush along the route. It had only been used as a foot-trail and but seldom at that. It led us out into a prairie at the base of the main Calapooia chain. Crossing the prairie we found the little trail where it entered the mountains with difficulty, and being guided by the broken brush, reached at sundown a little stream on the Umpqua side, where we encamped for the night in a beautiful little valley where the grass was good and the ground almost covered with the finest strawberries I had ever seen.

The next morning, June 23, we moved on through the grassy oak hills and narrow valleys to the north Umpqua river. The crossing was a rough and dangerous one, as the river bed was a mass of loose rocks, and, as we were crossing, our horses occasionally

fell, giving the riders a severe ducking. On the south side we encamped for the night.

On the morning of the 24th, we left camp early and moved on about five miles to the south branch of the Umpqua, a considerable stream, probably sixty yards wide, coming from the eastward. Traveling up that stream almost to the place where the old trail crosses the Umpqua mountains, we encamped for the night opposite the historic Umpqua canyon.

The next morning, June 25th, we entered the canyon, followed up the little stream that runs through the defile for four or five miles, crossing the creek a great many times, but the canyon becoming more obstructed with brush and fallen timber, the little trail we were following turned up the side of the ridge, where the woods were more open, and wound its way to the top of the mountain. It then bore south along a narrow back-bone of the mountain, the dense thickets and the rocks on either side affording splendid opportunities for ambush. A short time before this, a party coming from California, had been attacked on this summit ridge by the Indians and one of them had been severely wounded. Several of the horses had also been shot with arrows. Along this trail we picked up a number of broken and shattered arrows. We could see that a large party of Indians had passed over the trail traveling southward only a few days before. At dark we reached a small opening on a little stream at the foot of the mountain on the south, and encamped for the night.

On the morning of the 26th, we divided our forces, part going back to explore the canyon, while the remainder stayed to guard the camp and horses. The exploring party went back to where we left the canyon on the little trail the day before, and returning through the canyon, came into camp after night, reporting that wagons could be taken through.

We found everything all right on the morning of the 27th, although the Indians had hovered around us all night, frightening our horses a number of times. From the tracks, we could see that they had approached very closely to our encampment. Making an early start we moved on very cautiously. Whenever the trail passed through thickets we dismounted and led our horses, having our guns in hand ready at any moment to use them in self-defence, for we had adopted this rule, never to be the aggressor. Traveling through a very broken country, the sharp hills separated by little streams upon which there were small openings, we came out at about noon into a large creek, a branch of Rogue river, now called Grave creek, on which we rested about two hours. During the afternoon our course was over a more open country—through scattering pine and oak timber. Towards evening, we saw a good many Indians posted along the mountain side and now and then running a head of us. About an hour by sun we reached a prairie of several hundred acres, which extends down to very near the bank of Rogue river. As we advanced towards the river, the Indians in large numbers occupied the river bank near where the trail crossed. Having understood that this crossing was a favorite place of attack, we decided as it was growing late, to pass the night in the prairie. Selecting a place as far from the brush as possible, we made every preparation for a night attack.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

THE GNAT while flying, vibrates his wings 15,000 times per minute.