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## Racial Doctrine and Social Evolution

IN the now not inconsiderable list of men of eminence in anthropological studies who have paid tribute to the work of Thomas Henry Huxley in the Huxley Memorial Lecture of the Royal Anthropological Institute, now approaching near to its fortieth year of delivery, no one, since the inaugural lecture in 1900 by Lord Avebury, the intimate friend of both Huxley and Darwin, has been more felicitous or more opportune in the choice and treatment of subject than was Prof. H. J. Fleure, when on November 9 he addressed the Institute on "Racial Evolution and Archæology" (see page 981). In making the classification and distribution of races the basis of his argument, he dwelt on an aspect of the study of man with which Huxley was closely concerned, and at the same time, by associating racial studies with the results of archæological and cultural research, he was able to draw certain inferences as to the forces making for the upward progress of mankind, which would have commended themselves to one whom Prof. Fleure and his colleagues without exception would regard as their master.

Prof. Fleure struck the keynote of his lecture when in his opening sentences, speaking of Huxley, he said : "His championship of the free conscience is more than ever needed to day, when in not a few countries the pursuit of the science of man is being seriously affected by non-scientific views." The evil, however, as Prof. Fleure went on to show at a later stage in his lecture, is even more grave than these words would suggest. It is not merely that racial theory is being constrained to lay false emphasis on the part played by the racial factor and by certain races in the advancement of civilization, as well as on the character and standing of those races, but also racial doctrine is made the

instrument of attack on that freedom of conscience, of which it was Huxley's conviction that the process of growth is in a very deep sense the essence of progress in the development of civilization. The call of the blood—in other words, the claims of the group—are made to transcend and override personal right to the exercise of individual judgment.

The conflict between authority and the right to individual judgment, in which Huxley and other great figures of the latter half of the nineteenth century were so long and strenuously engaged, had seemed to be won—fully in the field of science, where truth alone, without regard to prepossessions resting on extraneous consideration, was accepted universally as the acid test of validity. It is unnecessary to recall the course of events by which, since the Great War, science in certain countries has been harnessed to political ideals of varied complexion ; but the perversion of ethnological science to support the authority and supremacy of the group over freedom of thought and judgment has been tragic in its consequences, both socially and in the field of science.

In his survey, vast in space and time, of the evolution of races and of their migrations over the surface of the globe, and of the part played by these races, each in their turn, in the development of civilization, Prof. Fleure was in a position to demonstrate that the history of mankind is a story of the development of individuality and its emancipation from the chains of the social group, which, indeed, he suggested may perhaps be traced back as a relic of even pre-human days. In every phase of cultural growth, from the stage of the food-gatherer to the higher forms of

civilization, there is evidence of "an increasing purpose" So far from society being, as the political philosophers would have it, a system of restraints imposed upon the original freedom of man in his natural state, the history of human progress, as Prof. Fleure interprets the evidence, is the story of the emancipation of the individual conscience from the suppressive influence of group pressure, which favours mediocrity alone.

Nor does the theory of the superiority of the racially homogeneous group as a progressive force receive any support from racial history. As anthropologists generally hold, and as Prof. Fleure agrees, it is probable that no society, at least of any size, is composed of a racially homogeneous group, nor has been so composed since at least the days of the food-gatherers. Further, as Prof. Fleure went on to point out, in a society composed of racially heterogeneous groups, such as have been formed in the course of the kaleidoscopic movement of racial migration which has been taking place for thousands of years, there is evidence to show that adjustments and compromise have taken place between the different groups, each of which has had its own racial history behind it, and, possibly, each with its own characteristic mental attitude and outlook.

From the conflict, however, which thus arises, when the ritual of one part is set over against the ritual of another, discussion takes place, and as Prof. Fleure puts it, leads to the valuing of justice rather than ritual. This must have happened even with such a military caste as the Nordics, whom a perverted racial theory has elevated to a pinnacle which is less than deserved. For even in the larger groupings which seem to have come about through the domination of tillers by herders, especially when the latter have been of a militarizing tendency, the group developed with a diversity of tradition and with diverse ranks of a hierarchical society, and nearly everywhere the result has been that the immigrant rulers have had to accommodate themselves to the prejudices and customs of the subject masses.

It would appear, in fact, that the dogma of the political philosopher that the development of society is from status to contract, when interpreted in the light of the evidence of ethnology and archæology, must be taken to mean that in the development of civilized society the line of progress has been, not a class conflict, but in the direction of an ultimate adjustment of rights and

privileges among those varied sections of society, which may in fact be rooted in diverse racial origins and are certainly linked with differences of tradition and social outlook. Such an adjustment to be lasting cannot be imposed by superior authority but must be the result of free and unfettered discussion.

"What does not Britain owe", asks Prof. Fleure, "to the fact that Celtic, Teutonic and Romance cultural contributions to the common life have intertwined without complete dominance by any one of them?" He points out that, in the instance of Holland, which welcomed the persecuted, we marvel at the richness of development of individuality in a society orderly above the average of its time and not particularly distinguished as a whole.

On a view of the history of human development such as has been put forward by Prof. Fleure, there cannot be two opinions but that the verdict lies in favour of the racially heterogeneous rather than the homogeneous group. But what of the future? Will the unity of purpose and action of a society, which exacts uniformity in composition, culture and social ideal, prevail over the weaknesses inherent in its denial of what history has shown to be the evolutionary trend? On such a question we cannot do more here than refer to the conclusion at which Prof. Fleure has arrived. If the group working towards 'autarky' by the suppression of thought and intellectual intercourse loses its perspective, throwing out its best workers, thinkers and artists in the interest of mediocrity, strongly tinged with jealousy, it loses the means of keeping in contact with the ceaseless process of change. Further, by the suppression of the principle of freedom of conscience, it becomes an anti-scientific authoritarianism, because it denies that "which is the life-breath of science."

Such, then, is the verdict of detachment—the view of the anthropologist, who from his survey of the trends of development in civilization throughout the great expanses of space and time of man's history, is brought to the conclusion that in freedom alone, freedom of development and freedom of expression, does truth, material, moral and spiritual, emerge. To this may be added as a legitimate corollary that the aim of society must be to ensure not its own formal permanence, which is the triumph of the machine, but the maintenance of such conditions as will best keep open a way for man to the attainment of his ultimate destiny, whatever that may be.