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### CHAPTER VII.

In the year 1899 Haeckel published a new work, which he intended as a kind of testament; for with the close of the nineteenth century the author desired to put a finishing touch to his life-work.

In the Preface Haeckel states with very remarkable modesty that his book cannot reasonably claim to present a complete solution of the riddles of existence; that his answer to the great questions can naturally be only subjective and only partly correct; that his attainments in the different branches is very unequal and imperfect; and that his book is really only a sketch book of studies of very unequal value. In this way the author naturally gains at once the confidence of his reader who is thus prepared to yield assent when the author makes pretense to sincerity of conviction and an honest search after truth. The reader's surprise at the contents of the book and at the manner of its presentation is, however, only increased by this ruse. All modesty has vanished, monistic doctrines are presented as absolute truth, every divergent opinion is contemptuously branded as heretical; in short, the book reveals a Darwinian orthodoxy of the purest type, with all the signs of blind bigotry and odious intolerance which the author imagines he discovers in his Christian adversaries. It is difficult to see where, in view of such a contradiction be-

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tween the work and its Preface, there is room for an honest striving after truth. Personally I do not wish to deny Haeckel all honesty of purpose, for it is my endeavor to understand the *whole* man. The one prominent feature of the "Weltraetsel" is the fact that, owing to a very marked deficiency in philosophical training, Haeckel has become so completely absorbed in his system that he has lost all interest in everything else and takes cognizance only of what suits his purpose. What he lacks above all, is the ability to appreciate even the "honest" opinion of others; hence, from the very outset he brings into the discussion that bitterness of which he complains in others (in the Weltraetsel he once makes this accusation against me). Notwithstanding all this, honest conviction may be present, but if so, it is joined with total blindness. But what is to be thought of his search after truth since he completely ignores his adversaries? For instance, in spite of Loofs' attacks, he continues to have his book reprinted without alteration, without submitting it to revision. The "Reichsbote" is perfectly in the right when it says: Haeckel, in fact, takes account only of what suits his purpose.

As regards the contents of the "Weltraetsel," it is not my intention to enter here upon a criticism of it but merely to discuss it as illustrating the general status of the theory of Descent. It is to be noted, in the first place, that it is really not a scientific book at all; for of its 472 pages, the first or "Anthropological Part," with which alone we are

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here concerned, occupies only 74 (from pages 27 to 100), even less than one-sixth of the whole, whereas the "Theological Part" is almost twice as long. The book is, in fact, rather a theologico-natural-philosophical treatise than a work of natural science. The scientific part is, however, the foundation on which Haeckel builds up his natural philosophy, and which he uses as the starting point of his criticism of theology. Hence it is worth our while to discuss it.

How then fares it with the anthropological basis of Haeckel's whole system? As an attentive student of his age the naturalist-philosopher of Jena must have perceived the true position of Darwinism, namely, that the foremost naturalists of to-day have no more than an historical interest in it. Since, in accordance with the well known tendency of old men to persevere in the position they have once assumed and not easily to accept innovations, Haeckel is still an incorrigibly orthodox Darwinian, we should naturally expect him to embody in this testament some new cogent evidence of the truth of Darwinism. But nothing of that nature is to be found in the book.

The first chapter of the "Anthropological part" is taken up with a "general history of nineteenth century culture," in itself a sign of peculiar logical acumen, that he should include this and the "struggle regarding world-views" in the "anthropological part" instead of embodying it in a general introduction. The remaining chapters treat: "Our Bodily Structure," "Our Life," "Our Embryonic-history," "Our Family-history." It is not to be supposed,

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however, that any arguments are here adduced, nothing but assertions; a large part of the chapter is taken up with historical sketches, in which Haeckel again proves himself utterly devoid of all appreciation of history and all sense of justice. He attributes the decay of the natural sciences to the "flourishing condition of Christianity" and dares to speak of the unfavorable influence of Christianity on civilization. Apart from the historical sketch, each chapter presents only the quintessence of Darwinism, fairly bristling with assertions, which are boldly put forth as incontrovertible truths. In view of the author's demand to have at least his sincere love of truth recognized, we can but throw up our hands out of sheer astonishment. To illustrate Haeckel's "love of truth" let it suffice to observe that in the second chapter he asserts that man is not only a true vertebrate, a true mammal, etc.—which indeed is passable—but even a true ape (having "all the anatomical characteristics of true apes"). With a wonderful elasticity he passes over the differences. What, indeed, is to be said, when he states as a "fact" that "physiologically compared (!), the sound-speech of apes is the preparatory stage to articulate human speech." It is so simply monstrous, that even Garner's famous book of ape-speech, cannot surpass it. As a third illustration of Haeckel's method of argumentation, if we are still justified in speaking of such a thing, we may mention his assertion (p. 97) as a "certain historical fact," "That man is descended directly from the ape, and indirectly from a long line of lower vertebrates." If, in

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view of the results of research during the last forty years any one can assert this as a "certain historical fact" and can still wish to be credited with honest conviction and love of truth, there remains, to adopt Haeckel's own expression, but one explanation for this psychological enigma, namely, intellectual *marasmus senilis*, which may very easily have set in with a man of sixty-six, who himself complains (p. 7) of "divers warnings of approaching age."

Thus, the anthropological part of the "Weltraetsel" contains nothing new; always the same old story, the same threadbare assertions without a shred of evidence to corroborate them.

The remaining parts also contain various scientific assertions, which are proposed as facts without being such, but these parts do not immediately pertain to our theme. Suffice it to say that, after reading Haeckel's "Weltraetsel," one would be led to think that there is no question of a "deathbed of Darwinism," but that on the contrary Darwinism, as remodeled by Haeckel, is more in the ascendant to-day than ever. Let us judge of its prestige by the reception accorded the "Weltraetsel."

One unaltered edition after the other, thousand after thousand, the book is given to the public. Hence it must meet with approval. It does indeed meet with approval, but the question is, from whom? Immature college and university students will doubtless receive it with reverential awe, just as they received the "Natural History of Creation" twenty-five years ago. Bebel accepts the book

as an infallible source of truth, and after him the social democrats and free-church members will add it to the list of their "body and stomach books," which alone will afford it a respectable clientele, at least in number. In no one of my "deathbed articles," however, have I as yet ever maintained that Darwinism was decadent in these circles. I know full well, that Darwinism has filtered down into that sphere and there satisfies the anti-Christian and anti-religious demands of thousands.

Nothing, however, really depends on these senseless blind adherents of Haeckel's unproved assertions. We are now intent upon investigating how the world of eminent thinkers and natural science regards the latest product of Haeckel's fancy. That alone is of importance in ascertaining the real status of Darwinism.

As regards, in the first place, the other parts of the book, it is well known that all of them were vigorously attacked. Loofs in particular exposed Haeckel's theology, according to its deserts, in the clear light of truth, and convicted Haeckel of "ignorance" and "dishonesty;" while the philosopher Paulsen made short work of the "Weltraetsel" from his own standpoint, ("if a book could drip with superficiality, I should predicate that of the 19th chapter"). Harnack also condemned the theological section in the "Christliche Welt," and Troeltsch, Hoenigswald, and Hohlfeld took Haeckel severely to task on philosophic grounds. The naturalists have thus far maintained silence.

Scientific journals, and, I believe, only the more pop-

ular ones, pass a varying judgment on the book according to the intellectual bent of their book reviewers; but no one of the eminent and leading naturalists has publicly expressed his opinion regarding it. They all maintain a very significant silence, which speaks for itself. Now, however, just at the proper time a book, *Die Descendenz-theorie* has appeared from the pen of the zoologist, Professor Fleischmann of Erlangen, in which Haeckel is severely condemned. (See Chapter IX.)

The press-notices of the Weltraetsel, which are quoted in the book will be considered presently. It appears that with reference to natural science, only "laymen" discuss the book and approve of Haeckel's views. This is a point of great importance since it proves satisfactorily that men of science will have nothing to do with the "Weltraetsel." The large number of replies would, however, not allow Haeckel's friends to remain silent. The most extensive defense forthcoming was a pamphlet published by a certain Heinrich Schmidt of Jena. It cannot be gathered from his book (*Der Kampf um die Weltraetsel*, Bonn, E. Strauss 1900) to what profession the author belongs, hence I am unable to judge whence he derives the right to treat Haeckel's opponents in summary a manner. It is significant to note what class of men, according to Schmidt, received the "Weltraetsel" with enthusiasm and joy. They are August Specht, the free-church editor of "Menschentum" and of the "Freien Glocken," Julius Hart, Professor Keller-Zuerich, the philosopher and "Neokantian" Professor Spitzer of Graz, the popular literateur W. Boelsche,

W. Ule, and a few unknown great men, Dr. Zimmer, Th. Pappstein, R. Steiner, A. Haese; but stay, I came very near forgetting the great pillar, Dodel of Zuerich. But where is there mention of the professional colleagues of Haeckel whose testimonies could be taken seriously? Under the heading "Literary Humbug," which evidently has reference to the contents of his own work, Schmidt then meets numerous objections. Here vigorous epithets are bandied about, as, for instance, "absolute nonsense," "muddler," "foolish and senseless prattle," "idle talk," etc.; and from Dodel he copies the words with which the latter once sought to annihilate me: Job, verse 10, "Thou hast spoken like one of the foolish women." And he ventures to express indignation at Loofs' "invectives." As a compliment to Lasson he declares that he could easily conceive of the possibility of an ape ascending the professor's chair and speaking as intelligently as he (Lasson); which remark he probably intended as a witticism. He informs his readers that the criticism of Haeckel by men like Virchow, His, Semper, Haacke, Baer, and Wigand have been examined by professional specialists and proved practically worthless. This statement alone so clearly reveals Schmidt's lack of critical faculty and judgment that by it he at once forfeits his right to be taken seriously.

The whole book is nothing more than a collection of quotations from the reviews of the "Weltraetsel," interspersed with characteristic expressions like "idle talk," "nonsense," etc., as exemplified above. A really pertinent reply and refutation of objections is entirely beyond

Schmidt's range; he waives the demand for a direct reply, for instance, in the following amusing way (p. 28): "Two reasons, however, prevent me from being more explicit: In the first place I do not like to dispute with people who adduce variant readings and church-fathers as proofs and can still remain serious. In the second place I would not like to fall into the hands of a Loofs." In this manner it is indeed easy to evade an argument, which for good reasons one is not able to pursue. Loofs' criticism is so serious and destructive that it should be of the utmost concern to Haeckel's friends to refute it. Since they are unable to do so, they content themselves with references to Loofs' caustic style, which he should indeed have avoided. There are, nevertheless, cases in which one must employ trenchant phraseology, and Haeckel himself has given an occasion for it; a dignified style is simply out of the question in his case. Haeckel extricated himself with even greater ease, by declaring that he had "neither time nor inclination" for reply, and that a mutual understanding with Loofs was impossible because their scientific views were entirely different. Could anything be more suggestive of the words of Mephistopheles:

"But in each word must be a thought—  
There is,— or we may so assume,—  
Not always found, nor always sought,  
While words—mere words supply its room.  
Words answer wel l. when men enlist 'em,  
In building up a favorite system."

There are two other points in Schmidt's book that are of interest to us. The first of these is the manner in which

the author treats the Romanes incident. Romanes ranks, as is well known, among the first of Haeckel's authorities. Hence it is a very painful fact that, but a short time before the publication of the first edition of the "Weltraetsel," my translation into German of Romanes' "Thoughts on Religion" should have appeared. From this book it was evident that Haeckel and his associates could no longer count this man among their number since he—a life-long seeker after truth—had abandoned atheism for theism, and died a believing Christian. Troeltsch and the "Reichsbote" asked whether Haeckel had purposely concealed this fact, and Schmidt now explains that Haeckel first became acquainted with the "Thoughts on Religion" through him towards the end of January, 1900. Unfortunately he does not add that since then a number of new editions of the "Weltraetsel" have appeared, in which Haeckel could have explained himself in an honorable manner. Schmidt has therefore not been successful in his attempt to clear up this matter.

But how does he settle with Romanes? He says: "*We are assured* that the thoughts were written down by the English naturalist George John Romanes"; and again: "The thoughts are published by a Canon of Westminster, Charles Gore, to whom *they are said* to have been handed over after the death of Romanes in the year 1894." Then he has the audacity to place Romanes in quotation marks. And finally he asserts that they would abide by Romanes' former works as their authority, the more so, because these were not, like the "Thoughts," "published and glossed by a Canon only after his (Romanes') death." By

means of all this and of a comparison with the "Letters of the Obscurantists" he wishes to create the suspicion that there might be question here of forgery. Such an insinuation, (I employ Schmidt's own words) "cannot be characterized otherwise than as contemptible." "Here it is even worse than contemptible." I must beg my reader's pardon for overstepping the bounds of reserve with these caustic words, although they originated with Schmidt; but really the flush of anger rightfully mounts to one's cheeks when a man, from the mere fact that he is a disciple of the "great" Haeckel assumes the right to charge Canon Gore and indirectly myself with forgery. It is really very significant that these men should have to resort to such base and despicable expedients to extricate themselves from their unpleasant predicament. Apart from this, it was very amusing to me personally to think that for the sake of my unworthy self, Schmidt should have borrowed from his lord and master the epithet "pious," which Haeckel in his turn has drawn from his cherished friend Dodel. In all probability they will continue to hawk it about in order to bring me into disrepute with the rest of their kind. The few remarks Schmidt still finds it proper to make regarding the "Thoughts," betray his inability to understand the book. But as I stated in the preface it was a difficult book to read and understand. It is obviously not reading matter for shallow minds. I refer Schmidt to the biography of Romanes, published by his wife, (The Life and Letters of G. J. Romanes, London, Longmans, Green & Co., 1898), where he will find Romanes' religious development described by a

well-informed hand. This development began as early as 1878, hence during the time of his intimate friendship with Darwin. In this book on pages 372 and 378 Schmidt will also find the words in which, before his death, Romanes begged that, if he were personally unable to publish the "Thoughts," they should be given to his friend Canon Gore after his own death. But why waste so many words on Mr. Schmidt, for since all these things must be doubly disagreeable and painful to him and Haeckel, he will very probably resort without delay to personal insinuation and accuse Mrs. Romanes of forgery.

To us, however, who thoroughly appreciate the situation, it is a matter of great moment that of one of the few really eminent naturalists, to whom Haeckel thought to be able to lay full and exclusive claim, for the last twenty years of his life should have been moving towards the Christian faith in his eager search for truth and should die not a monist, but a convinced Christian. Neither did he die an old man, to whom the adherents of monism would certainly have the effrontery to impute feeble-mindedness, but at the early age of forty-six years. Nor was his a sudden deathbed conversion—an impression which Schmidt attempts to create (p. 62) in order to be able with H. Heine to relegate the conversion to the domain of pathology—but followed after many years of diligent and honest study and research. The other point of which we must treat here, is the manner in which, after the example of Dr. Reh, Schmidt attempts in the "Umschau" to exonerate Haeckel in the

matter of the "History of the three cliches." To begin with, it is at the very least dishonest on the part of Schmidt to say that, "in default of scientific arguments, theological adversaries have for the last thirty years been using it as the basis of their attacks." That is untrue, the "theological adversaries" have not had knowledge of it for that length of time. On the contrary Haeckel's own scientific colleagues were the first to discover and publish the matter some time in the seventies, and in consequence excluded Haeckel from their circle. Why does Schmidt not mention here the names of Ruetimeyer, His, and Semper? Furthermore Schmidt writes as if Haeckel had satisfied his colleagues in the matter of his forgery by declaring soon after (1870) that he had been "guilty of a very ill-considered act of folly." Why does Schmidt not mention the fact that the weighty attacks of His (*Our Bodily Form and the Physiological Problem of its Origin*, Leipzig, 1875) dates from the year 1875, five years after Haeckel's forced, palliative explanation? Besides, this incident of the three cliches is only one instance; the other examples of Haeckel's sense of truthfulness are for the most part entirely unknown to his "theological adversaries," who have nowhere to my knowledge made use of them; but *all* of them have been brought to light and held up before Haeckel by naturalists, namely, by Bastian (1874), Semper and Kossmann (1876 and 1877), Hensen and Brandt (1891), and Hamann (1893). Does this in any way tend to establish Schmidt's honesty? (Dr. Dennert has entered into a more searching

criticism of Haeckel in his book, *Die Wahrheit ueber Haeckel*. 2 Aufl Halle a. S., 1902.)

In a word, the manner in which the "Weltraetsel" was received and in which Haeckel has been defended by Schmidt, are valuable indications of the decay of Darwinism. I repeat that I am speaking of course of the leading scientific circles. Those who hold back are never lacking, and one cannot be surprised that, in the case of Darwinism, their number is considerable: for on the one hand, to understand it an extraordinarily slight demand is made on one's mental capacity; and on the other hand it is a very convenient and even a seemingly scientific means of obviating the necessity of belief in God. These facts appeal very strongly to the multitude.

In concluding this section, we shall quote a positive testimony to the decay of Darwinism. On page 3 of his "Outlines of the History of the Development of Man and of the Mammals" (Leipzig, W. Engelmann, 1897) Prof. O. Schultze, Anatomist in Wuerzburg, says: "The idea entertained by Darwin, that the development of species may be explained by a natural choice—Selection—which operates through the struggle of individuals for existence, cannot permanently satisfy the spirit of inquiry. Even the factors of variability, heredity, and adaptation, which are essential to the transformation of species, do not offer an exact explanation."