

REVIEWS OF TILLE'S
"VON DARWIN BIS NIETZSCHE"
AND
"VOLKSDIENST"
in English

Assembled by Eugene Günther

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Review of “Von Darwin Bis Nietzsche”

by C. Closson

Von Darwin bis Nietzsche: ein Buck Entwicklungsetkik.

By DR. ALEXANDER TILLE. Leipzig: C. C. Naumann, 1895.

8vo. pp. xx + 241.

THE present treatise of Dr. Tille's is an attempt to summarize the various applications of the selectionist doctrines that have been made to the fundamental problems of ethics, but it of necessity includes much that belongs to the domain of sociology rather than to that of ethics, or that is common to the two. The work does not attempt to trace the growth of selectionist ethics beyond the work of Friederich Nietzsche, which work the author — with a disposition to overestimate both the originality and the importance of Nietzsche's work in this connection — regards as marking the advance of evolutionary ethics and selectionist sociology from the stage of speculation to that of an assured scientific position. This limitation of the scope of the inquiry accounts for the exclusion of certain recent writers, but hardly justifies the omission of such a critic of selectionist theories as Ritchie, or of such an advocate of conscious selection as Stanley, the work of both of these writers being largely concerned with the problems of evolutionary ethics. Much less do they justify the Teutonic exclusion of the claims of French writers, set forth in the following dictum :

“In the cultivation of this field [the application of the selectionist doctrine to ethical problems], Germans and English have exclusively shared. Only in scientific statistics (naturwissenschaftliche Statistik) which will in the future be of significance for Darwinian social ethics, have the French cooperated.”

In point of fact, the profound significance of selectionist theories for social ethics was very early insisted upon by Mme. Royer in her translation of Darwin, with something the same overconfidence in their direct and unmodified applicability that seems to be characteristic of Dr. Tille himself; and that at the same time the necessity of substituting the conception of social selection for that of natural selection as the basis of the new evolutionary ethics and sociology was with great foresight pointed out by the anthropologist Paul Broca. The fact is further that Dr. de Lapogue, in addition to his contributions to *naturwissenschaftliche Statistik*, has, in a series of essays beginning with 1886, applied the conception of social selection to the fundamental problems of ethics, of history, and of sociology with such originality and insight, and has had such an influence upon other thinkers as to entitle him to be regarded as one of the principal founders of the selectionist school of sociology.

Fragmentary and ill proportioned, however, as is Dr. Tille's work in some respects, it is nevertheless to be regarded, from the point of view of the sociologist as well as of the ethical student, as a valuable compilation of the views of the selectionist school and as a suggestive, though often extreme and arbitrary criticism of ideals and institutions which do not subserve the ends of natural selection as the author conceives

it to work. The author fully acknowledges his obligations to Häckel and to C. M. Williams, upon whose *Review of the Systems of Ethics* founded on the Theory of Evolution he has in considerable measure relied. The working out of selectionist theories and their application to the problems of human well-being he traces from the Malthusian theory through the writings, among others, of Darwin, Galton, Wallace, Spencer, Huxley, Häckel, Weisman, Morrison, Balfour, Alexander, Radenhausen, Büchner and Nietzsche, in a series of chapters, the titles of which will indicate some of the main points of view from which the author considers the interrelations of different schools and writers. The first chapter, *Entwicklungslehre und Entwicklungsethik*, treats the broader outlines of the subject. *Die Überwindung des Glückutilitarismus* brings the Benthamite doctrine into comparison with the positions of Leslie Stephen and of Wundt. *Der physiologische Utilitarismus* considers the work of Spencer, Fiske, Williams, Hoffding and Bebel. *Nächstenmoral und Gattungsmoral* states, or overstates, the opposition between ethics based upon the claims of one's fellow beings as such and ethics based upon the conception of race improvement. *Die deutsche Entwicklungsethik* recalls first the remarkable anticipations of Wilhelm Jordan, and then describes the work of Häckel, von Carneri, and Starke. *Humanität und Darwinismus* follows the theories of Radenhausen and Büchner. The final chapter, *Das neue Ideal*, is a somewhat overappreciative statement of the work of Friederich Nietzsche.

Review of “Volksdienst”

by Dr. O. Thorn.

From “*THE PRESENT STATUS OF SOCIOLOGY IN GERMANY III.*”

There is an anonymous writer who attempts to unite his social instincts with his individualistic inclinations so as to construct an objective social system. The title of the book betrays the author's social instincts. The individual has for him no independent value. He is worth considering and entitled to existence only in so far as he is of service to the whole. Of the era of civilization which his book is to introduce, the author declares: “It recognizes the individual only as an aristocrat, i.e., in so far as he is actually better than the rest by virtue of his personal qualities.” (p. 109). These qualities appear only in social services, in work for the people. An aristocrat is therefore only he who performs useful and valuable labors for his nation.

The essential doctrines of this author may be condensed into a few sentences. He recognizes two forces which hold a society — primarily, a nation — together, and make it great; first, industrial force, and second, procreative force. The latter is the more important. If natural increase of population is so great that there is overcrowding, colonization is necessary and salutary, for among other things war will cease, because national boundaries will come to include more than the territories of the fatherland.

The author's attitude toward private property further shows his way of mediation between socialistic and individualistic tendencies. On the one hand he urges that with private property the “joy of life” begins; on the other hand he recommends the abolition of hereditary rights. The state should be the sole heir of all decedents. Only what one has himself earned he should be allowed to retain for life.

The only possible form of government in his social-aristocratic state is thought by the author to be a republic, for under such a government the most deserving will always be placed at the head of affairs by their grateful fellows. He reduces his social-aristocratic ethics to the following code:

- 1) Thou shalt labor.
- 2) No work, no pay!
- 3) No duty, no right!
- 4) The sexual command — Thou shalt not sell thy person!

We see that the decalogue is here compressed into four articles, of which 2) and 3) are identical, and are not commands but perceived facts. Thus the new ethic has but two commandments and these were in principle familiar to every philistine in the eighteenth century.

