

42.
Philosophical theories.

these I shall treat elsewhere. It may be a question capable of very opposite answers whether the philosophy of history, such as it has been offered in the brilliant generalisations of Kant, Herder, Hegel, and Buckle, has really aided the science of history proper; whereas no question can arise as to the indispensable service that has been rendered to historians by the criticism and conjectural emendation of texts and other monuments of antiquity. With Darwinism the matter stands differently: no person who peruses the great and increasing literature of the subject can deny the enormous assistance which the philosophical ideas of evolution have rendered to the cause of Darwinism—how the latter, when it appeared, found ready made, though then only slightly appreciated, the philosophical canons and terms which were so well fitted to its systematic enunciation and literary *mise en scène*. This was the independent work of Mr Herbert Spencer.¹ The other well-known

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—I seemed to be among the sombre grouse; and then, towards incubation, the characters of the sandgrouse and hemipod stood out before me. Rubbing these away in my downward work, the form of the tinamou looked me in the face; then the aberrant ostrich seemed to be described in large archaic characters; a little while and these faded into what could just be read off as pertaining to the sea-turtle; whilst underlying the whole the fish in its simplest myxinoid form could be traced in morphological hieroglyphics."

¹ The part and position which belongs to Mr Herbert Spencer in the history of evolution as a scientific doctrine has not yet received due attention or adequate recogni-

tion. There is, however, no doubt that the principal features of the genetic view of natural phenomena were clearly before his mind as early as 1852, when he wrote his short essay on "The Development Hypothesis" in 'The Leader,' republished in the first volume of his 'Collected Essays.' It has been pointed out by Romanes ('Darwin and After Darwin,' vol. i. p. 257) that though the attempts towards a genetic conception of organic nature were numerous, if not abundant, before Darwin, yet this view only broke through and became dominant on the appearance of the theory of natural selection. He says: "If we may estimate the importance of an idea by the change of thought which it effects, this