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MATTER TO MAN

A NEW THEORY OF
THE UNIVERSE

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FROM MATTER TO MAN.

CHAPTER I.

THE ORIGIN OF EXISTENCE.

THE preliminary problem in all human speculation has ever been, the origin of existence, and it still frets the natural philosopher; but the solution is partly determined by the definition of the problem, and its accuracy for to-day depends almost wholly upon the meaning which present intelligence attaches to the term *origin*.

Every origin in the universe necessarily includes both the thing made and that out of which it is made. For as nothing begets nothing, so something must be begotten of something. As no definition of origin, therefore, however orthodox, can be accurate which assumes a creation of something from nothing, origin in so far as it refers to the universe is meaningless. Hence, origin is only a term which describes a particular transition stage of existence between

present states of being and preceding states of being, no matter how far our steps may be retraced. This, however, is not the common belief.

A well-known scientist, more noted for his orthodoxy than his accuracy, recently said, "Creation, strictly speaking, is inconceivable to us, yet it is a *fact*. The system of visible things in which we live was certainly not the author of itself."*

Now, "creation" was a word invented by the most learned men of a bygone age, to express the notion that something may be created out of nothing. This was a simple matter to them, for the ignorant man's imagination is illimitable, and vacuities naturally beget vacuities. As this miracle however is, from the indestructibility of matter, impossible, creation is a fallacious and ignorant hypothesis, yet we are assured it is a "fact." A "fact" again is a word denoting something demonstrable; but as creation is not demonstrable, our mentor's vocabulary again requires revision.

Further, although it may be quite true that the system of visible things in which we live is no more the author of itself than any man is the author of himself, yet it is equally certain that as day but succeeds day, and peer succeeds peer, so existence is but an endless succession of "living pictures," a panorama having no author, because requiring none, other than that each picture had a picture preceding

* The Duke of Argyle on "Prof. Huxley on the War-path," *Nineteenth Century*, January 1891.

it. The system of visible things to-day thus virtually has its authorship in the system of visible things yesterday, and to-morrow that again of to-day, and so on interminably, either backwards or forwards. For the *present* is always both the end of, and the beginning to, existence: an eternal hub of being, whether earth or men existed or not.

Again, the application of the restricted term *author*—a term derived from the puny operations of men on this planet—to universal operations, is another instance of erroneous teaching, for we are comparing what cannot be compared. Tracing the origin of things to their furthest ken on orthodox lines, we arrive, it is alleged, at an author who did the impossible and inconceivable thing of creating the present system of visible things from nothing. But, unfortunately for this deduction, it also warrants us, who see further than our fathers, to ask the equally legitimate and more pertinent question, "Who amid the eternal sequences was the author of this author?" and the mere fact that we can ask such a startling genealogical question and get no intelligible answer, disposes of the supposition in its entirety. Problems of this nature are not quite so easy, nor are they in quite the same category as tracing the pedigree of a peer.

A common question is: Was the beginning a chaos?—a time when there were no planets, stars or solar systems, when all was a crude, unformed, inert mass of matter waiting a Creator? But the answer