EXPANDING CONSCIOUSNESS AND DEMOCRACY

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From the point of view of a student of evolution it would seem that much of the trouble in the world to-day results from the age-old conflict between two major impulses of life. These are the impulses of each individual organism to live its own life in unhampered freedom, and the impulse of each individual to seek association with its own group. Life tends to vary, to differentiate, to individualize, a tendency which is in continued conflict with the "herd instinct," the impulse of individual organisms to come together for protection and aggression.

Evolution implies that through the long history of life new types have come into existence through descent, with slight modifications, of new individuals from pre-existing individuals. Life would long ago have vanished from the earth in the face of the difficulties and dangers in its environment, had it not been for this overwhelming urge of each individual organism to live and to reproduce.

While, however, life was limited to one-celled and self-sufficient organisms, there could be little advance in evolution. Later single cells came together to form many-celled larger units, with their enlarged possibilities. In each of these the component cells divided the labor of preserving the larger organism, and hence the existence of each individual cell came to depend on the existence of the other cells. And it is possible that in these larger many-celled organisms may have arisen the first diffused beginnings of the impulses which are sometimes classified together as the herd instinct.

From such cooperative beginnings the evolutionist traces the long succession of increasingly compact groups up to their culmination in the swarm, the herd,