CORRESPONDENCE

The Eugenics Society is not responsible for opinions expressed by correspondents.

ON THE NATURE OF PREJUDICE

To the Editor, The Eugenics Review

Sir,—As I was for five years a practitioner in Notting Hill, I would like to comment on points made by James Gregor.*

His opinion that man always has, and (almost) always will, share with all social animals a tendency to racial exclusiveness "as the obverse of preferential association", is poorly sustained by his text. Though he cites sixty-two references, nearly all his historical examples refer to more or less developed societies, in which other social and political antagonisms serve to perpetuate and even initiate prejudice. Apart from these, he refers only to insects, anthropoid apes, and "primitives" (whatever that may mean), and to the latter once only in quite general terms.

As his whole case rests on an alleged innate psychological trend, not primarily dependent on education or miseducation, one would expect some analysis of existing tribal and nomadic societies, where class divisions are developed little or not at all. How does he explain the traditions of friendship and hospitality to outsiders, and in many cases of intra-tribal taboos which actually compel marriage outside the kinship group? Even at later stages of inter-tribal warfare and conquest, our own history shows a rapidity of assimilation of the invading or conquered group which argues strongly against any universal exclusion of those outside the tribe as "not men".

Even contemporary examples of racially mixed but utterly tolerant communities are ignored, for instance the whole of the British West Indies; and no analysis whatever is made of the effect of deliberate attempts to perpetuate or initiate racial superstitions for political and class motives (Germany, South Africa), or of social factors which obstruct serious measures against them (U.S.A.).

As long as racial superstition persists, it will be used by some politicians, and deplored as original sin by the more passive sociologists. But like public hanging, slavery and capital punishment for children, it will in time be utterly discredited, because of active and informed opposition. Despite the very best intentions, Mr. Gregor neither activises nor informs, and above all grossly underestimates what can be done when the will and the belief are really there.

JULIAN TUDOR-HART
M.B., D.C.H.

135 Elgin Crescent,
London, W.11

To the Editor, The Eugenics Review

Sir,—It is difficult indeed to provide a brief rejoinder to Dr. Tudor-Hart's well intentioned remarks, largely because I am not at all sure what his objections are.

First, he charges me with maintaining that man shares with all social animals a tendency to "racial exclusiveness", something I did not pretend to do. Then he scolds me for not having sustained such a notion. What I clearly said was that man shared with social animals the disposition to identify with only select members of its own species. I went on to maintain that among *men* one manifestation of such preferential association was racial preference.

Secondly, the good Doctor objects that I have not discussed the phenomena of preferential association among "primitives". Since he had the candour to add that he did not know what the term "primitive" meant, I should have imagined this would have tempered his criticism. As the term is generally understood it would include the Tuareg and Fulani (referred to in the text when it was germane to the discussion) and certainly, even the strictest definition, would include the ancient Aryan invaders of India, the Papuans and the natives of Mexico. Dr. Tudor-Hart objects that I do not refer to any specific primitives—but when I do he does not recognize the reference.

That the article does not concern itself, specifically, with exclusiveness as it manifests itself among the most primitive of peoples is a consequence of the fact that sociologists

* THE EUGENICS REVIEW. 1961. 52, 4.