









Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2008 with funding from  
Microsoft Corporation



ON READING NIETZSCHE

*NOTABLE WORKS OF  
EMILE FAGUET*

---

LE SEIZIÈME SIÈCLE

LE LIBÉRALISME

LE SOCIALISME EN 1907

LE PACIFISME

POUR QU'ON LISE PLATON

# ON READING NIETZSCHE

BY  
EMILE FAGUET  
Member of the Académie Française

TRANSLATED BY  
GEORGE RAFFALOVICH



NEW YORK  
MOFFAT, YARD AND COMPANY  
1918

COPYRIGHT, 1918, BY  
MOFFAT, YARD AND COMPANY

---

*Published April, 1918*

FOREWORD.

NIETZSCHE found in Emile Faguet one of his most qualified critics. It takes a French critic to display the wares of even the clearest of Teutonic philosophers. Nietzsche was a clear, honest (even in his errors), merciless thinker. Emile Faguet, without Nietzsche's depth of creative and imaginative power, was nevertheless as clear and honest a thinker and, to be sure, as merciless. The catholic taste of the French, their disregard of shams and that chivalrous instinct which prompts them, while jealously preserving their individuality as a nation, to recognize the good points in those strange, neighbouring yet foreign, nations whom they know they cannot appreciate and whom as a rule they do not wish to appreciate, are all eminently shown in this and in the other works of Faguet.

Would the late "Immortal" rewrite his conclusion, one wonders, if he were alive to witness the apogee of the war which he saw, but at its darkest period, for France? From what I knew of him, I doubt it. Emile Faguet was replete with that common-sense which made France the intellectual light of the educated classes all over the world. He would not have accepted the superficial idea which caused many to see in Nietzsche the inspirer of the German leaders and in his works the Bible of the

## FOREWORD

German herds. German thinkers never quite knew what to make out of Nietzsche. Those who charge the author of *Zarathustra* with causing the war, acknowledge thereby that they have not read or have not understood him. Nietzsche was a symptom, not a cause. Moreover, Teutonic romanticism and lack of psychological acumen were his two chief bogeys. Nietzsche, with that Greek ideal ever before his dreamer's eyes, had no patience with Kultur. To card-index alleged scientific facts which lead nowhere but to a thirst for more "facts"—was that a Greek ideal? To clog the brains of a few men with unassimilated knowledge, and then inspire them to force it down the throat of the rest of mankind, that is Kultur—but was it Greek pre-Socratic culture? And where is the art, the beauty and the common-sense in the soul of German mental expansionists?

Nietzsche was and remains beyond the ken of most Germans, even though a hasty glance at his works may have led a few extreme German Kulturists to fancy they had in him an apologist for their ravings. Through his French critic he may perhaps appear clearer than he was in reality. If the Greeks' saying "*μεγα βιβλιον μεγα κακον*" (a great book is a great evil) applies to Nietzsche, one must admit that Faguet deprives his work of much of the danger thereof, for only the unknown dangers find us unarmed. If there be poison in Nietzsche's writings, Faguet serves the antidote along with it as it were, in the course of his running, sometimes rambling, commentary. Nietzsche's notions are sifted; the essentials are all here and the con-

## FOREWORD

tribution he brought to human thought is duly acknowledged. That contribution was real and will remain, long after the last trace of the present war has been eradicated by the work of human patience.

I have followed the French original as closely as the form of the Latin periods of Faguet allowed. A translator should try to preserve the flavour of the author's work, especially when such flavour is as delicate as that used by Faguet. As to the passages quoted from Nietzsche, I made my own version, exception made for those longer passages from *Thus Spake Zarathustra* and *Beyond Good and Evil* which I took from the translation in Messrs. Boni and Liveright's Modern Library. For those who wish to enjoy the "dangerous pleasure" of reading him and deciding for themselves, I should add that the only complete edition of Nietzsche's works in English which one may recommend is that undertaken by Dr. Oscar Levy, and published in this country by the Macmillan Co. Those in the Modern Library are published by arrangement between these two firms. A list of works will be found in an Appendix to this volume.

G. R.

North Cohasset, December, 1917.





# CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
FOREWORD . . . . .	4
I NIETZSCHE SEEKS HIMSELF . . . . .	I
II PREACHING HIS FAITH . . . . .	27
III CRITICISING THE OBSTACLES: FIRST OB- STACLES . . . . .	33
IV CRITICISING THE OBSTACLES: SOCIETY .	41
V CRITICISING THE OBSTACLES: RELIGION .	50
VI CRITICISING THE OBSTACLES: SCIENCE AND RATIONALISM . . . . .	73
VII CRITICISING THE OBSTACLES: MORALITY .	87
VIII THE THEORY . . . . .	126
IX DEVELOPING THE THEORY . . . . .	165
X DISTANT PERSPECTIVES OF THE DOCTRINE .	206
XI DIGRESSION: LITERARY IDEAS OF NIETZ- SCHE . . . . .	240
XII CONCLUSION . . . . .	267



# ON READING NIETZSCHE

## CHAPTER I.

### NIETZSCHE SEEKS HIMSELF.

OFTEN, if not always, while expressing his ideas, a philosopher merely analyzes his own character. Often, if not always, the philosopher's starting point is his own feelings. Then, gifted with the faculty of putting his feelings into thoughts, because he is a philosopher, he turns his feelings into ideas. Then, gifted with the synthetic faculty, he gathers all his ideas, which are but transformed feelings, into one general idea. Then perhaps, he looks around, perceives everything which, in the domain of ideas, thwarts and hampers his own general idea and criticizes it. His criticism is minute because he is a dialectician. It is bitter and bold because his general idea is at bottom nothing but a personal feeling to which he clings and even a passion which dominates him. Then, in the course of his critical operation, he discovers ideas which confirm his general thought and he welcomes them. His general thought becomes a system. Again, because he is honest, ideas come to him which contradict his

system. He does not dismiss them, because he loves ideas for their own sake but he throws them on the margin of his intellect, or at least he does his best more or less to bring them into his own system. Finally, he reaches the conception — which most of the time, he cannot realize nor even embrace — of a system which would exceed his own and could include in its greater breadth all the ideas that have come to him, those that were hostile and those that were dear to him. He conceives a system beyond his own system, a general idea beyond his own general idea. This system he sketches. Of this idea he gets a glimpse. As a rule, especially if he dies young, he remains on the threshold of this Promised Land, which he leaves to others.

Such, it seems to me, was the progress of Friedrich Nietzsche. At any rate, it shall be mine as I follow his steps and attempt to recognize them. Such is the plan I shall follow in reading Nietzsche with a certain method. It is a good or a bad one. I need a method to read him in a well-connected way after having read him so often, as he wrote — that is, at random, according to the day and the hour.

As much as one can surmise from what is known of him and what he said of himself, Nietzsche was honest, proud and aggressive. He had many other characteristics but one must confine one's self within the essentials in order to see clearly and to avoid the risk of disentangling nothing through wishing to perceive everything.

He was honest, hated hypocrisy and that approximative conscience which is nothing but a kind of

hypocrisy. He wished to see with a clear sight, absolutely and right down to their depths, others and himself, ideas and systems. Later he scoffed mercilessly at "that people," his own "which loves to be fuddled and makes a virtue of the lack of clearness." He exclaimed lyrically, thinking mostly of himself: "But at last we are getting clear; we have become clear!" This intellectual honesty, which is after all but a form of moral honesty, was with him uncompromising. It was that which later compelled him ever to lift the veils, ever to tear out the masks, ever to inquire "what else lies under this idea, what else is there beyond this first principle; what unacknowledged feeling, what unavowed tendency, which perhaps cannot be acknowledged?" It was that which compelled him to think, say and write down things which were contradictory and which contradicted his general thought, if they seemed true to him at the time he was conceiving them. It was that which gave to all he wrote the air of being a confession, a haughty one to be sure, but yet a public confession.

He was proud to the utmost. He was thoroughly convinced of the superiority of his intellect. He was haunted by the feeling, often enough a correct one, that all that he was thinking was being thought out for the first time. He was ever excited by the well-known itching which consists in always suspecting that what the majority of people think is stupid, that one can hardly err by being paradoxical and that paradox, being at least a flight out of the realm of stupidity, is a step towards truth.

His insatiable thirst for independence proceeded from his pride. He could bear no yoke, either from men, from circumstances or even from habits. Very significant was his remark on short habits. "My nature is altogether organized for short habits, even in the needs of physical health, and generally, as far as I can see, from the highest to the lowest. I always fancy that such and such a thing will satisfy me permanently. . . . One day, and it is gone. The short habit has had its time. . . . Already something new knocks and clamors at my door. . . . It is thus with me, whether in dishes, in ideas, men, towns, poetry, music, theories, arrangements for the day, or in my taste in wise men. . . . On the other hand, I hate lasting habits. They make me think of a tyrant, who would rule over me. I begin to fancy that the atmosphere of my life has darkened as soon as events shape themselves in such a way that lasting habits seem as if they would inevitably follow. In the depths of my soul, I feel even grateful for my physical misery and my sickness since they provide me with a hundred means of escape through which I can steal away from lasting habits."

Finally, out of his honesty and pride combined, there was born in Nietzsche a sane daring, a frank valor, a dauntlessness of opinion that made him quarrelsome, aggressive, pugnacious, an arrant contradictor, ever fighting and prone to exaggeration. He was not unlike a man that tells you before you speak: "You are wrong." And after you have spoken: "I knew it but now I am assured of it."

And who was truly sure of it before as much as after. He was not unlike the man of whom we say: "He is coming up the stairs; he is getting ready to contradict me." He was not unlike the man of whom we say: "I am going to take up the opposite of my opinion before him because he speaks well and I like to hear him express my own views." . . . All the exaggerations of Nietzsche come from there. There was in him much of the temperament of a Joseph de Maistre.

Thus had nature made him. Since he was born unwittingly a German, his first school was that of romanticism, of pessimism and of Wagner and until he gained full conscience of himself, he worshipped them. Goethe, by those sides of his nature which are accessible to the young and to the crowd, Schopenhauer and Wagner were his first teachers and idols. If not saturated, at least he was impregnated with German romanticism, so different from our own — I do not mean that it is either better or worse — which is made up especially of sensibility and emotion, of *gemüthlichkeit*,<sup>1</sup> of dreamy, tender and pitying melancholy and in which feeling greatly overpowers imagination.

He was more deeply penetrated with pessimism. That is a natural result of that long practiced and smouldering romanticism. That feeling of the incurable misery of all things leads one either to wish

<sup>1</sup> This and the other italicized words throughout the volume were underlined by Nietzsche in the manuscripts of his works with the exception of a few cases when Faguet wished to call especial attention to one of his subject's main points, usually a paradox. — (Translator's Note.)

or to insist that they should cease to be, or to destroy them, as it were, within one's self so as to avoid feeling them, and to take refuge in an indifference which is analogous to the Nothingness or is at least a near-approach to Non-Being.

He was enthusiastic, for a long period, over the music of Wagner, which throws one into a kind of ecstatic state, which is vital and depicts life, but which paints it in its nervous, enervated, tired phases and especially in its longing for rest.

In short, he caught the romantic diathesis. He caught it complete, without missing any symptom thereof. A Frenchman cannot very well conceive this diathesis. French romanticism was French. The further away one examines it, the better one sees it and the more one is persuaded of this truth. It was clear, orderly, quick and passionate. Most of its great representatives threw themselves into action. It was optimistic with its two great leaders and pessimistic with the others only by fits and starts. No great philosopher was found to express the little pessimism it contained. Neither Comte nor Renan, nor Taine even were pessimists. Finally, it had no special musician, apart perhaps from one. French romantic music proper does not exist. Therefore if we take French romanticism as the type of romanticism, we must give the German romanticism another name. And if we take German romanticism as the type of the Nineteenth Century romanticism we must find another name for French romanticism. This I would feel inclined to do.



We have in France, no idea of what a young German romantic could have been about 1870. He was hemmed in on all sides by romanticism, saturated with it through every influence; he received it through poetry, fiction, philosophy, music, conversation and patriotism. He flattered himself with the thought that romanticism was something essentially German, a part of the national glory and patrimony. Such precisely was Friedrich Nietzsche a little before 1870.

It was his diathesis. It was not his temperament. He shook himself free from it. . . . It was not his temperament. It was not his temperament, I should say. It was somewhat his temperament and M. Fouillée perceived that fact very well. It was somewhat his temperament in this sense that he was sickly, often sad and also prone to exaggeration and to fall in love with anything colossal and gigantic, that he was a little disorderly and hardly able to bring *material* order in his ideas, that he was also very personal even in the bad sense of the word and did not dislike the literature that is a confidence, an outpouring and a confession. I am prepared to grant all this. After all, there must have been something romantic in his make-up since he remained relatively romantic for so long a period. Yet, the basis, or if you prefer — since I do not quite know what the basis was — some very considerable parts of his make-up were very different and contradictory. He was quick of thought, perhaps even too quick. He was fond of clearness. He liked order albeit not altogether wittingly. In his

B

pride he was an aristocrat. Art is always aristocratic of course, but romantic art is nevertheless more popular, appealing as it does more to the emotions than to ideas and especially more than to exalted ideas. Again, Nietzsche was independent and aggressive. It may be merely circumstantial but it is important to note that, aside from other considerations, the fact that the whole of Germany was soaked in romanticism was a sufficient reason for him to turn rapidly the other way. He freed himself.

He freed himself first, I think, through France and then through Greece, perhaps through both at the same time. At all events, since that does not matter much and we must take them in order, let us begin with France. Let us note, moreover, that he was led to France and to Greece by his great friend Goethe who loved one as much as the other. The influence of Goethe upon Nietzsche cannot be exaggerated. One cannot be sure enough of it to say that all Nietzsche is to be found in Goethe, but we certainly find Goethe at every turn in the road followed by Nietzsche — at the chief landmarks of his evolution. *The Traveler and his Shadow* is one of Nietzsche's titles. He traveled in the great shadow of Goethe, attempting sometimes with some success to "jump out of his shadow." In this case it was a possible feat.

Be that as it may, he addressed himself to France. He read Montaigne, whose charming loquacity he praised. "A loquacity which springs from the joy of turning the same subject ever in a new fashion

is what we find in Montaigne." He read Pascal, whom he quotes a hundred times. He read La Rochefoucauld, and as a matter of fact was his last editor, with plentiful commentaries. He read Corneille, whom he understood thoroughly and whom we shall meet again in his company in the course of this volume. He read La Bruyère, Voltaire and Vauvenargues. He read Chamfort, in whom he traced Schopenhauer. Nietzsche hated Chamfort and, at the same time, excused him for having belonged to the party of the Revolution. He found in Chamfort "a man rich in deep ideas and who touched the very bottom of the soul, gloomy, suffering, fiery and the most witty of all moralists." He represents him as "having remained a stranger to the French," but where did Nietzsche discover that? He read Fontenelle, whom he admired, I think, too much, as a man whose witty sayings and paradoxes have become so many truths. He read Stendhal, as one may well have expected. Since he would go no further than our XVIIIth century, he was bound to read Stendhal, who was of it. He judged Stendhal to be "of all Frenchmen of that century, perhaps, the man whose eyes and ears were richest in thoughts."

All this fascinated him and showed him where lay his true intellectual nature. He was classical. Here are the formulas of classical art, new or seemingly new to him, which gush forth under his pen. No personal literature. "An author must become silent when his work begins to speak. Reality, nothing but reality, yet not all that is reality."

Precisely as the good prose writer uses only words that belong to the language of conversation but is most careful not to use all the vocabulary of that language — thus precisely is a select style formed — in that way shall the good poet of the future represent nothing but real things, neglecting altogether vague and obsolete objects. In this, the ancient poets showed their strength. Nothing but reality, yet not at all the whole of it. Rather a selected reality. Scattered in the works of Nietzsche, one could find an almost complete theory of classical art, especially of French classical art. It is at least certain that *clearness, precision, order* and *selection* afforded him a kind of ravishing revelation. He evidently swore to himself to offer a sacrifice to these new idols or rather to consider as idols everything that did not pertain to these gods.

Did France lead him to Greece, or did Greece lead him back later to France? The following quotation could illustrate either of the two contentions or again that which claims that he studied both Greek and French classics at the same time. "When one reads Montaigne, La Rochefoucauld, Fontenelle,—especially his *Dialogues of the Dead*,—Vauvenargues and Chamfort, one is nearer to antiquity than with any group of six authors of any other nation. Through these six writers, the soul of the last centuries of the ancient era has come to life again. Joined together, they form an important link in the great endless chain of the Renaissance. Their books rise above change in national taste and those philosophical shades with which it is thought now-

adays that each book should glitter in order to achieve fame. They contain more true ideas than all the books of German philosophy together. To voice a very intelligible praise, I should say that written in Greek, *their works would have been understood by the Greeks*. On the contrary, how much could a Plato have understood of the writings of our best German thinkers, say of Goethe or Schopenhauer, not to mention the repugnance he would have felt at their method of writing—I mean in what they have which is obscure, exaggerated and sometimes dry and stilted? These are faults which these two writers show least of all German thinkers, and yet they show them overmuch! Goethe, as a thinker, has embraced the clouds more willingly than one should wish he had. Schopenhauer threaded his way almost invariably among the symbols of things rather than among the things themselves. On the contrary, what clearness and delicate precision in these Frenchmen! The most subtle of the Greeks could have been compelled to approve of this art. There is one thing they would even have admired and worshiped—the French slyness of expression. They were very fond of that sort of thing without achieving great success in it.”

He was growing away, more and more, not only from German romanticism but from Germany itself. No doubt he was beginning to ask himself whether there “were any German classics.” That is, whether there were German writers whose genius was sufficiently general and universal, who were sufficiently out of actuality, while establishing their

reputation during their own lives, who had sufficiently conquered the future by the greatness of their thought and the imperishable force of their expression to remain, to grow greater or at least not to decline fifty years after their death. Perhaps he was beginning to answer in the negative, as he wrote later in *Human, All too Human*. "Of the six great ancestors of German literature, five are now unquestionably growing old or have already grown old. . . . I am placing Goethe apart. . . . But what can I say of the five others? Even before his death, Klopstock was venerably old and so thoroughly so that his *Republic of the Savants*, the mature work of his old age has never been seriously taken by any one to this very day. Herder had the misfortune always to write books which were too new and yet already out of date. In the eyes of the more subtle and more daring men like Lichtenberg, the chief work of Herder seemed somewhat obsolete from the day of its publication. Wieland who had abundantly lived and generated life was wise enough to forestall by death the decline of his influence. Lessing still stands to-day but only among the young and ever younger savants. Schiller has dropped out the hands of the young men to fall into those of the little boys, of all the little German boys. It is one way of getting old for a book to fall back upon less and less ripe generations."

The fact is Nietzsche was more and more shedding his Germanism and he felt himself attracted towards the lands where clearness ruled and to-



wards the straight-lined horizons. At that time, that is about 1870, he discovered Greece. It would be interesting to know whether, as a schoolboy, at the gymnasium, he had already some inclination towards Hellenism. I do not know and after all the interest is only one of curiosity. The only education that counts is the second one, that which we give ourselves. The real tastes, the deep tastes, those that survive through life are formed between the twentieth and the thirtieth years. It was therefore about 1870, as he admitted it most clearly himself in his Preface to the *Origins of Greek Tragedy* and in his comments on that work, that he felt a deep taste, a truly passionate love, a sort of devotion for Greece. To him it was a new light. I am sure he must have said to himself:

Devenere locos loetos et amoena vireta . . .  
Purior hic campos oether et lumine vestit  
Purpureo.

This was the period of Nietzsche's great intellectual and even moral crisis. The whole of his final development dates from that crisis. He wished to discover the deep roots of the tragic art among the Athenians, its psychological springs, the state of mind which that art presupposed in those who practiced it, either as authors and interpreters, or as audiences. Gradually he conceived an idea, false I believe, but original, interesting and most fruitful in consequence, of the Greek soul, temperament and race. This idea he toyed with. It penetrated and intoxicated him. From it he was

to build up a whole system of philosophy, of sociology and morality. All Nietzsche is truly in the *Origins of the Greek Tragedy*.

Here is the general idea Nietzsche formed of the tragic art of the Greeks and of the Greek soul. We can trace it in spite of much clumsiness, groping and obscurity.

A race there was whose people cared for nought but beauty and life. Especially they loved life, a strong and exuberant, a mighty and joyful, an enthusiastic and exultant life. This we may call their Dionysian soul. But they loved also beauty, purity of line, dignity of attitude, majesty of the brow and serenity of the eye. That we may call their Apollonian soul.

These two aspirations meet and unite as it were in the Olympian conception. Olympus is a dwelling place for superior beings, at once strongly alive and nobly beautiful, exultant in the joy of being alive and, in the will to live, *immortal*. We have too often repeated this word *immortal* and thereby lost the sense of its meaning. *Immortal*,—that is insatiable of life, wishing for a life eternal and wanting an ever inexhaustible life. These dwellers in Olympus delight also in being beautiful, in being tall, strong, noble and harmonious. They take delight in themselves and in an indefinite progression of beauty in themselves; they realize beauty and apply themselves ever more to realize it. The Olympian is a higher being who unites in his person the Dionysian and the Apollonian states.

He is the model of the Greek. In his own life



and art, the Greek tries to approach that ideal. He seeks, in his tragedy, the synthesis or at least the union between the Dionysian and the Apollonian states of mind. He places the Dionysian state in the chorus (this is very doubtful) and the Apollonian in the characters. At any rate, he seeks a form of art where life and beauty can be realized and deeply welded, where beauty is shown alive, moving and active and where life is shown beautiful, ever beautiful and with all the forms of beauty, music, rhythm, verse, restful attitudes, intimate union of beauty and life, intimate union of the Apollonian and the Dionysian states of mind and the near-realization of Olympianism.

Even, in his own life, the Greek still sought to realize that union of his dream. Watch his conquering activity, political activity, colonizing activity, administrative activity. Withal there was art always; the art of the poets, of the sculptors, of the architects and the art of the painters. Greece poured out and wished to pour out together her life and her art over the Universe. To live and to live beautifully, to make the world live and make it live beautifully — such seems to have been her constant preoccupation and her changeless will.

We may therefore consider the Greek tragedy as the intermediary, one could risk saying as the mediator, between the Greek Heaven and the Greek Earth. That tragedy offers to men an approximate view of this union between the Apollonian and the Dionysian states which the immortals are realizing above. It places before them

the example of this union between the Apollonian and the Dionysian states which they must realize here below. Through the medium of the Olympian tragedy, the Olympians say to men: "Be yourselves Olympians; Life and Beauty in the Heavens, Life and Beauty upon Earth; Celestial Life and Beauty taught to the Earth by Tragedy."

Does not all this put many things in the tragedy of the Greeks? Did the Athenians seek anything else in tragedy but an opportunity to get cloyed with tears, as Homer said, and to satisfy their sentimentalism?

Not at all, Nietzsche replies. It is sufficient to read both Plato and Aristotle to realize how the Greeks understood tragedy in the main, *even when they disagreed*. Plato expelled the poets from his Republic because he feared that they might with their sentimentalism cause the strong and joyful race to become effeminate. Aristotle, ever in contradiction with Plato, defended tragedy on the ground that, by applying the sentimentalism of its audiences to false notions, it *purged* them of that very sentimentalism and gave them back to life, energetic, joyful and strong. This means that both men wanted an energetic race, in love with life and that both well understood that art must not cause life to become languid and relaxed.

Nietzsche moreover went *beyond* Plato and Aristotle — to use a Nietzschean expression. He says that this very taste of the Greek race for an art which, albeit Dionysian and Apollonian, was pathetic, was sad and laid bare human horror and

misery, that this taste reveals a strong and nimble race which did not shirk from a display of misery and sorrow, which did not demand happy endings, or optimistic lies, which had enough self-confidence to contemplate human wretchedness to find therein an æsthetic pleasure and not to be dismayed thereby. That race may have thus needed temporary diversion from its optimism in order to find it again whole and intact the next moment. Perhaps it felt a masculine and fierce joy in looking upon human woe, in feeling its threat, in feeling itself threatened by it and yet marching to action at the risk of seeing that woe befall it. Perhaps it derived a virile and sane pleasure from saying before Goethe "Over the tombs, forward!" At any rate, that race sought in art no solace, no narcotic or stupefying draughts but, like the strong of the earth, I do not know what bitter and tonic beverage. . . .

Thus possessed of a view of Greek art which is very much open to discussion but which he used as truth, Nietzsche meditated upon this revelation and became unsettled concerning all he had been taught. He had been brought up on German romanticism, that is on an art made of sadness, melancholy and a sentimentalism full of pity. He believed he had discovered a race and an art that were nimble, joyful, energetic, in love with life not with death, Apollonian in their calm periods, Dionysian in their moments of exaltation, looking towards life even when Apollonian, that is to say, remaining Dionysian even when they were Apollonian. . . . That was of course almost the opposite of romanticism.

He had been taught pessimism, that is, at heart and in a general way, the belief that life is bad. Now he thought he saw an art and a race drunk with love of life and deeply optimistic. More than that, an art and a race which impressed pessimism into the service of optimism and therefore eclipsed both and wiped out especially the pedantic and childish oppositions of one to the other, their false antinomy, an art and a race which, *beyond* optimism and pessimism met life, life in all its fulness, otherwise life in beauty.

He had been taught a music which had almost intoxicated him but which he now judged debilitating. Then he thought he had discovered a race and an art in which music only served to accompany lively exaltations of the sense of life or to regulate virile, joyful or martial dances. He felt himself much shaken.

Do not let us believe that this brought him no regret, that he did not look back or that his state of mind became, in that crisis, all of a sudden the Dionysian one. I have warned you that the chief characteristics of Nietzsche were not all his character. In spite of his pride and warlike disposition he knew the sorrows of the man who breaks away from his country, or his party, or his coterie. Every man endowed with any individuality has known this sadness. In spite of all his pride, he had had, thank Heaven, some share of the tractableness, the respect for one's teacher, the *famulism* which characterizes every German schoolboy. His heart knew anguish when he had to think for himself. "I know a

man who had accustomed himself from childhood to think well of the intellectuality of men, that is of their genuine inclination towards matters of the intellect . . . and to hold on the contrary, *a very poor opinion of his own intellect* — judgment, memory, readiness of wit, imagination. He granted himself no favor when he compared himself to others. Yet, in the course of years, he was compelled, *first once*, then a hundred times to change his opinion on this point. One might think he was overjoyed and greatly satisfied in so doing. As a matter of fact, there was something of that feeling, but, as he said once, there was also bitterness of the worst kind, a bitterness I have not known in my previous years; because since I appreciate others and myself with more accuracy in connection with intellectual needs my own mind seems to me less useful. With him, I can no longer think myself able to do any good work because the mind of others does not agree to accept it. I now see forever before me the frightful abyss which lies between the man who is willing to help and the man who needs help. That is why I am tortured by the unhappiness to possess alone my own mind and to enjoy it as much as it is bearable. But to give is better than to possess. What can the richest of all men do when he lives in the solitude of a desert?"

We cannot meditate too deeply upon this passage if we wish to understand Nietzsche well. It is full at once of modesty and haughtiness, of the deception of pride and of that feeling of solitude which is at the same time the pride and the misery of superior

men. This explains the usual bitterness of Nietzsche. No feeling is strong unless born of suffering. If Nietzsche was personal and lonely with impertinence and insolence, it may be first of all, if you like, because his nature prompted him to exaggerate. Then, if you like, and as M. Fouillée remarked, it was because Germans do delight in magnifying a point in the same way, as, say, Renan loved to tone it down. Especially it was because he had tremendously suffered with his isolation and with his individuality which set him up against the ideas of the multitude. Therefore he was taking his revenge in a way when exaggerating that individuality, that originality, that isolation, when arming it to back himself up and free himself from suffering, when magnifying it almost angrily against himself, saying: "Yes, I think alone against all the others and that shall no longer make me suffer." It is thus with the man who was once shy with women, and having conquered his shyness, takes a victor's pleasure in being too bold with them. It is thus with the orator who began by being paralyzed with fright on the platform and, having cured himself of that trouble, becomes too much of an improviser because of a voluptuousness that was born of his past terror.

After all, if Nietzsche did break away with a sorrow that most honored him, he did it with that courage which lay truly at the bottom of his nature. He shook off the influence which had weighed him down with a push of his shoulders, sharp, harsh and final. He cured himself of his ailments — these are



his own expressions — with a spontaneous, a very energetic and radical medication. “It was great time to *take leave*. This was at once made plain to me. Richard Wagner, seemingly the most triumphant of them all, but in reality a decrepit and desperate romantic, collapsed suddenly, irretrievably annihilated as if before the Holy Cross. Was there no German then with eyes to see, with pity in his conscience to bewail this horrible spectacle? Am I then the only one he caused to *suffer*? Never mind. The unexpected event threw for me a sudden light on the place I had just left and brought me also that shudder which one feels after having unconsciously run a very great danger. When I took up my lonely road again *I shivered*. A little later I fell ill, more than ill, tired of the continuous disillusion in the midst of all the things that still raised the enthusiasm of us poor men of today . . . tired with disgust of all that is feminism and disorderly exaltation in that romanticism, of all that idealistic lying and of that softening of the human conscience which had conquered there one of the bravest, tired in fine,—and that was not the least of my hardships,—with the sadness of a merciless suspicion. I foresaw that, after that disillusion, I was to be sentenced yet to increase my caution, to despise more deeply, to be more absolutely alone than ever. It was then I took side, not without anger, *against* myself and *with* everything which was justly hurting me and painful to me. . . . This event in my life—the story of a sickness and a cure, for it ended in a cure—was it but an event personal to me only? Was

that merely my own 'human, all too human'? To-day I am tempted to think it was not. . . . I recommend my travel books to those whom a past distresses and whose mind is sufficiently real for them to suffer also of the mind of their past. Before all, I recommend them to you whose task is the hardest, you the scarce men, daring intellectuals, you the most exposed of all, whose duty it is to be the conscience of the modern soul and who must, as such, possess its science, you in whom is gathered all there can be to-day of sickness, poisons and danger. To you whose destiny it is to be more ill than any other individual, because you are more than mere individuals, you whose solace it is to know the path to a new health and, alas, to follow that path. . . ."

He often turns back to this crisis and seeks to explain it. He seeks especially to explain that past error of which he flatters himself so highly to have recovered. However much courage we may have or we may put in proclaiming past errors, we like nevertheless to show that we had erred for a few good reasons and that therefore, while in the wrong, yet we were not so very far from being in the right. He has explained his pessimism-romanticism as being the Dionysian instinct gone astray, the latent Dionysian instinct existing in him and erring only in seeing a manifestation of himself where there was none. It is a half-mistake, which might have led deplorably far, but yet a half-mistake. Precisely as the Greeks, even in the midst of their optimism, in reality admitted a pessimism of art which may have served merely to reinforce but



which certainly helped to stimulate and excite their fundamental optimism as we have seen, in the same way it may be that it was an error to take the German pessimism of 1860 for something analogous to the pessimism of art of the Greeks, for something that may be auxiliary to optimism and even a *function* of optimism.

That is the error in which Nietzsche thinks he fell and he flatters himself that he erred in that much only: "I was considering . . . the philosophical pessimism of the XIXth century as the symptom of a superior force of thought, of a more reckless daring, of a fulness of life more triumphant than that proper to the XVIIIth (Hume, Kant, Condillac). I took the tragic knowledge to be the true luxury of our civilization, its channel of lavishness, the most precious noble and dangerous one. And yet, owing to its opulence, a permissible luxury. In that same way I understood German music as the expression of a Dionysian power of the German soul. One can see that I misjudged them, both in philosophical pessimism and in the German music, that which gave it its true character, its romanticism. Every art and every philosophy can be considered as remedies. . . . But there are two sorts of patients. There are those that suffer from a superabundance of life and there are those that suffer from impoverishment of life. Those that suffer from superabundance of life want a Dionysian art and also a tragic vision of inner and outer life. . . . The Dionysian not only takes pleasure in the spectacle of what is terrible and disquieting; he loves

the terrible fact in itself as well as all the luxury of destruction, disaggregation and negation because of an overflow which he feels in himself and which he thinks sufficient to turn every desert into a fertile land. . . . Those that suffer from impoverishment of life ask from art and philosophy mere calm, silence, a smooth sea — or else also intoxication, convulsions, torpor and madness. This double need is satisfied by romanticism in art and philosophy and also by Schopenhauer and Wagner, to mention these two romanticisms, the most famous and the most expressive among those I had then *wrongly interpreted*, not at all however, to their disadvantage:"<sup>1</sup>

Certainly there was ground for mistake. Since superabundant and degenerate ones ask precisely the same things, it is hard to know from what they ask, from what is given them and from what they accept, whether they are degenerate or superabundant. It is hard to tell if the Greek tragedy is a sign of superabundance in those who cheer it and if the drama of Wagner, which follows its every feature, is a sign of degeneracy in those that applaud it. Therefore Nietzsche's mistake was a very easy one.

The difference, says Nietzsche, is romanticism. Quite so; but on the one hand, it is very hard to define romanticism and, on the other, the point in question is the psychic disposition of those who

<sup>1</sup> *Gay Savoir*, page 370. I have recast his passage to make it clearer, without, I think, betraying its meaning in any way.

listen. It is likely that the Greeks would have heard Wagner in a classical spirit, satisfied therein their superabundance of life and derived none but Dionysian inspirations. Again, since nothing is more difficult to gauge than the psychic moods with which Europeans listened to Wagner's music in the year 1865 whether it was in the classical or in the romantic spirit, I must repeat that Nietzsche's error was an easy one to fall into. It was so easy that, not only was he right in presenting it as a semi-error of judgment, but it is even possible that it was no error at all.

Be that as it may, here is Nietzsche, after many attempts, much suffering and courage — this I mean most seriously — utterly cut off from pessimism, romanticism and Wagner, thoroughly smitten with the French of the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries and with the Greeks of the days of Sophocles and absolutely passionate for two things; intense life and beauty.

Let us pause awhile and ask what it is he had gained. It was not a new system but a new tendency. It was not precisely a new mentality but a new heart. He loved elsewhere. He had thereafter a mastering tendency that had not possessed him before and that was the opposite of the previous one.

That is not altogether true, for these things are never true. Only the snakes shed their skins, and there is no animal that changes its instinct. Nietzsche was ever a lover of novelty, and a little also of eccentricity. He should have reflected upon

the fact that he never followed Kant or Hegel. He had been with Schopenhauer because Schopenhauer was the latest arrival. He was with Wagner precisely for the same reason. Nietzsche always retained a taste for something new that would somewhat astonish the Philistine. We see where he is now — what is he? A man who seeks to be up-to-date, an innovator, a revolutionary and still a rebel. How is he to achieve this? In an excellent way: through a new thought that would be his own. He seeks novelty in originality and in individuality. He is quite right. Yet he is still obeying one of the earlier instincts of his nature.

This is what we should say. One of Nietzsche's inborn tendencies inclined him to adopt, towards his twenty-fifth year, a general tendency which was assuredly not his previous one.

However, Nietzsche found himself; at least he found a general tendency for his feelings. Henceforth he shall love with passion everything that is intense life and splendid beauty and he shall love everything that may contribute to the realization here below of intense life and beauty. He shall experience suspicion, then aversion, then hatred, then anger against everything he thinks likely by its nature to hinder or delay that realization.

## CHAPTER II.

### PREACHING HIS FAITH.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE is therefore going to preach to the whole world and especially to himself, love of life, love of intense life, love of beauty, love of beauty made of strength, and to proclaim ecstatically — for it is his way, he was born a lyrical poet, a Dionysian poet—"To Life! Ever more life! Let us put more life in the world! Long live Goethe!" Nietzsche is hardly more than a nervous and frantic Goethe.

As it is, he thinks he has discovered that if the world has a meaning, it has but a meaning *in beauty*. It can only be understood as a manifestation of a desire for the beautiful and in a final analysis, only the artists understand the world. For, after all, if we want to understand the world as a manifestation of justice, we are very soon convinced of the uselessness of our effort. It is quite certain that, outside the human brain, there is not a particle of justice in the world. If we want to understand the world as a manifestation of morality, our hopes are very soon shattered. If we want to understand the world as a manifestation of goodness and to repeat after Plato: "God created the world out of Goodness," we are close to the ludicrous. It is plainly ab-

surd to conceive a power that creates beings out of Goodness to make them suffer. When, however, we look upon the Universe as a manifestation of Beauty, the objections vanish, the contradictions of thought are solved, the absurdities disappear and what scandalized our reason and our conscience is also dissipated. There is no further question of "evil on earth" if we say that the Universe has its *raison d'être* in its beauty and only in its beauty. God is justified if he is an artist.

"We must rise resolutely to a metaphysical conception of art and remember that proposition previously set forth that the world and existence *may only appear justified in so far as they constitute an æsthetic phenomenon*. In that sense the object of the tragical myth for instance is precisely to convince us that *even what is horrible and monstrous is but an æsthetic game, played with itself by the Will in the eternal fullness of its gladness*." The world unintelligible as justice, morality or goodness, becomes intelligible as beauty. Later Nietzsche was to say the opposite of this; but we shall see; it is possible that Nietzsche's contradictions may be solvable. To march towards life, beauty and joy is therefore going in the same wise as the world; it is to follow it, to adhere to it; it is especially, *not* to enter with it this conflict and this struggle which tear up the best among us. How important this is! Not to leave the earth, not to turn one's back to the earth, not to deny the earth, to remain faithful to the earth: "Brothers, I intreat you, *remain faithful to the earth*; place no faith in those that speak to you



of supra-terrestrial hopes. Willy nilly they are prisoners. They are contemners of life, moribunds and poisoned men themselves. They belong to those of whom earth is tired. Let them depart! Brothers, remain faithful to earth with all the force of your virtue. Let your generous love and your knowledge serve the *meaning of the earth*. I beg of you. I intreat you. Let not your virtue fly away from terrestrial things and beat its wings against walls eternal. Alas there has always been so much misguided virtue! Bring back, as I am doing, misled virtue to the earth."

Therefore, our certain duty, is to develop ourselves, to expand ourselves wholly in all our potentialities; it is to succeed in becoming fully what we feel ourselves to be. "What we want, we, is *to become ourselves*." It is a matter of saying *yes* to life, always to answering it *yes*. That is, not to accept it, for that is merely a way of submitting to it, but to live it lovingly and passionately to embrace it. "This last *yes*, addressed to life, a joyful *yes*, overflowing with petulancy, is not only the highest but also the deepest vision, that which truth and science confirm and maintain with the greatest strictness. Nothing that is should be suppressed; nothing is superfluous. . . . In order to understand this, one must be possessed of courage and, as a condition of this courage, of an excess of strength, because in the same measure in which courage dares carry itself forward does strength come near to truth. Knowledge and affirmation of truth are a necessity for the strong man just as the weak man, prompted by

weakness, feels the necessity of cowardice and of flight before reality, feels the necessity of what he calls the ideal."

Come to think of it, pessimism, idealism, Christianity, all these states of *renouncement* to the world as it is are nothing else but suicides. They are, at least, secessions. Man withdraws from the real into the ideal as the people of the city went to the Holy Mount. He calls "holy" this place merely because he withdraws thereon but there is no reason whatsoever thus to name it and only as a tomb is it hallowed. We are part of the Universe, and I do not see very well what could give us the right to judge it. It exists and we exist. Our business is to accept it with joy and to go where it goes, perhaps helping it to get there by adding to its expansion, to its broad and passionate development, to the glory of its movement, of its rhythm and of its action. To bring to it rather a dissonance is, besides being a childish attempt, not, it seems to me, very rational. No, I do not want the stubborn, pouting and sullen man; "I want the proudest, the most alive, the most assertive man. I want the world, I want it such as it is, I want it again and I want it for ever. Insatiably do I cry : again!—not only for myself but for the whole performance and the whole spectacle, and not only for the whole spectacle but, when all is said and done, because the spectacle, is necessary to me, I am necessary to it and because I make it necessary."

Of course, this mood of the soul necessitates a struggle because it is not enough to accept the world



for the world to accept you. The fact that one loves it compels one to conquer it.

Precisely! We must be ready for love and for struggle, for love of the world and for a struggle against it out of love for it: "One produces only on condition that one is rich in antagonisms; one remains young only on condition that the soul does not slacken, does not aspire to rest. . . . Nothing has become more alien to us than this *desideratum* of the past, to wit, the *peace of the soul*. Nothing brings us less envy than the cud-chewing morality and the thick happiness of a *clear conscience*."

But this rule of life will soon be turned against you. It is very likely that, in seeking life, life's extension, life ever more alive you may meet pain, sufferings, a wound and a fatal one too.— Very well and precisely! Complete and true optimism carries the harm along with itself. It accepts it joyfully, it embraces and envelops it in itself until this continuous absorption causes it to disappear. "*Dangerously must we live!*" (This is one of the finest sayings ever uttered by human lips.) We must live in the dangers in order to relish life in its fulness and even to know what life is: "Believe me, the secret to reap the most fruitful existence, the highest enjoyment of life, is to live dangerously. Erect your cities beside the Vesuvius. Send out your ships into unexplored seas. Live in a state of war with your fellowmen and with yourselves. Be brigands and conquerors so long as you cannot be possessors, you who seek knowledge. Soon the time will have passed when you

were satisfied to live in the forests as so many frightened stags."

Were death a certainty, it remains game for your optimist. For what is death? A proof that you sought it. Therefore a proof that you have lived. Therefore it is part of life as a proof thereof, as its stimulant, as its aim and its reward. In sooth, death, thus understood, is replete with life and in its last glitter, it is the *supreme* glitter: "The finest life for the hero is to grow ripe for death through constant fight." Therefore, O Grief, where is thy sting? I see it very well and to it I render my thankfulness. But, O Death, where is thy victory? I fail to see it. Death does not triumph; I it is who triumph in it.—I do not think one could go further into optimism, "beyond good and evil." It is an optimism that envelopes and carries with itself both good and evil beyond the human horizon and that, like Hercules, conquers death itself by this very fact, by the fact that it transmutes it and turns it into an apotheosis of life.

Nietzsche gave up about half of his writings to the glorification of life, love of life, of all that is life. I shall insist no longer. It is not analytical and does not need to be analyzed. It is affirmative and lyrical. However fine from the point of view of art, it is not meant to be commented upon or discussed. It is Nietzsche in presence of the objections and discussing himself that we must see and follow. Let us begin.

### CHAPTER III.

#### CRITICISING THE OBSTACLES: FIRST OBSTACLES.

ALTHOUGH the idea already shows through, Nietzsche remained until then in the domain of feeling. Struck, as an artist, with the beauty of Greek life, as he saw it, he was in love with beauty and free life, with beauty and free power and he reached the following general feeling concerning existence. We must live with all our energies and create a beauty that lives in ourselves and, outside ourselves, through a daring and heroic use of all our energies. That is well. But Nietzsche saw clearly and far. He now met all the obstacles which, in human nature and in the history of humanity, are opposed to life understood and felt in this wise. These obstacles are numerous. He saw them all, I think, and attempted to destroy and to smash them all, not one after the other—that never was his way—but all of them, attacking, according to his mood, now this one now that one, sometimes two or three together in the ceaseless fight of a skirmisher and of a scout. He criticised the obstacles. That is to say, he applied himself to show the inanity, the childishness, the absurdity or the mischievousness of everything in human institutions and in human opinions which

contradicted or thwarted optimism, and prevented man from living freely, gaily, powerfully, heroically and beautifully.

Of course, these obstacles are innumerable and we shall consider with him merely the chief ones.

A first obstacle, an inner one as it were, is man's diffidence in his search for truth, the diffidence of man towards the *knowledge* of how to unravel, to circumvent, to catch and to conquer truth. We are not honest thinkers. We are afraid of truth; perhaps, as Pascal said, we hate truth. Knowledge frightens us. We do not approach it with honesty. It is because we know that it has its dangers. Of course it has them. It has them in proportion to its delights. One could write a story that never was written, that of the Don Juan of Knowledge. It would be neither the story of Montaigne, of Sainte-Beuve nor that of Renan. Neither of the three reached the last chapter. The complete life story of the Don Juan of Knowledge would be as follows. "He lacks love for the things he discovers. But he is possessed with brains and with sensuality and he enjoys the hunt and the intrigues of knowledge which he pursues as far as the highest and furthest stars. Here it ended for Montaigne, Sainte-Beuve and Renan. At length there is nothing left for him to hunt unless it be that which is absolutely painful in knowledge, as the drunkard ends by drinking absinthe and nitric acid. For this reason he will end in a desire for hell. It is the last knowledge that seduces him. Perhaps that also shall disappoint him like everything else he has learned.

There he should remain for all eternity. Nailed to deception and himself become the marble guest, he shall long for the banquet of the eventide of knowledge, a feast which can never more fall to his share. For the whole world of things can not find one single mouthful to feed this hungry man."

One can well understand, therefore, this fear of being deceived which stops man at the very outset of his personal search for truth. We find here once more the general cowardice of mankind. But we must not be cowardly; we must not be fearful of defeat, because, to fear defeat, is to be defeated before the fight. It is to be beaten, not to risk losing. One must set out in quest, valiantly and with love of knowledge. With a previous love of knowledge like that prince who was in love with the distant princess whom he had never seen. We must tell ourselves that life's only sense is the quest of truth, and that we can find it good only from the moment we take it as such: "No, life did not deceive me! On the contrary, I find it, year after year, richer, more desirable and mysterious, since the day when the *great deliverer* came to me, I mean that thought that life could be *an experience* to him who seeks knowledge instead of a duty, a fatality and a fraud. Let knowledge be something else for others, as for instance, a resting couch or the road to a resting couch, or again a pastime or a lounging. To me it is a world of dangers and victories, where heroic sentiments also have their place for dancing and playing. *Life is a means to knowledge*. With that principle in one's heart,

one may not only live daringly but also *live joyfully and laugh for sheer joy*. How could one understand how well to laugh and well to live if one were not first of all skilled in war and victory?"

In seeking knowledge, one must not only be honest and loyal; one must also feel the scruples of honesty. We must love truth for itself, whatever it may turn out to be, to such an extent that we do not love it for ourselves but *against ourselves*. We must ever contradict ourselves.—This might be a sufficient explanation for the innumerable contradictions of Nietzsche; he contradicts himself out of loyalty; he does not strike out an objection which he raises against himself.—We must always welcome the opposite of our thought and scrutinize what worth this opposite may have: "Take an oath never to hold back or to keep silence before yourself concerning what can be raised in contradiction to your thoughts! This is part of the thinker's first duty. Every day you must make war also against yourself. A victory or the taking of a but-tress are no longer your own affair but the business of truth—and your own defeat, that also is no longer your affair."

But this honesty in the quest of knowledge is exceedingly rare among men. As a rule they want to deceive themselves and to be deceived. Now what is it they derive from this? It saves them from pain personally, true, but very likely it entails general pain which is eternal. For it is probable that man is born to understand, at least, all he needs in order to live. Animals know and understand every-



thing they need to understand, and to know so as to satisfy their own needs, and even the comforts of their lives. It is therefore likely that man should seek all the truth susceptible to make him happy. Yet he is unhappy, says he. Let him seek then with frankness and courage, without loving error, without trusting in error, without thinking it useful, without this fear of truth which is a strange timorousness. This obstacle to life in power is the first one that should be demolished, the first one of which we must show up the inanity, the childishness, the vileness and, properly speaking, the ineptness. Let us have at least the courage to open our eyes.

At all events, Nietzsche leads the way. No thinker is more honest. None more than him goes to the heart of things, at least to what he thinks is the heart of things, without troubling himself about the fear that, in the heart of things, may be found something unpleasant, painful, hateful or that there may even be nothing at all.

Another obstacle prevents one from reaching, on the one hand, truth and knowledge, on the other, life in strength, freedom and beauty. This obstacle is habit, which in this case is called tradition. Humanity lives on its past to which it clings by force of habit; and this past is and can be nothing but error. Man is brought up by these errors. They have become as a foundation of his nature from which he can not easily shake himself free. These errors persist and stretch themselves out. Coming into contact with truths they also combine with them and

produce new errors which may be more serious, like every error that is mixed with truth and obtains thereby new credit: "Man was brought up by his errors. . . . First of all he never saw himself but incompletely." Thereupon he conceived a rule of life that could not be applied or could only be ill-applied and helped to give him an incomplete idea of himself. . . . "Secondly he attributed imaginary qualities to himself" as for instance the faculty to know the future, or the faculty of free will or the faculty to understand the supernatural. These errors were productive of rules of life which still subsist and which deceive him. "Thirdly he felt himself in a false situation towards the animals and the whole of nature." He felt himself to be different from them. That brought him to believe in an antagonism between him and the rest of nature, which was an error or an imperfect view and which set man in the wrong direction.<sup>1</sup>

"Fourthly man has invented ever new codes of goodness. He has considered, during a period of time, each of them in turn to be eternal and absolute with the result that now it was this instinct, now that other that occupied the first place and was ennobled by reason of this appreciation." In this wise, the very series of these successive codes of morality caused general error or general confusion which remained in the human mind, darkening it or at least preventing it from being enlightened.

One could add several others to these four initial

<sup>1</sup> Here I am less certain of my interpretation.



or as good as initial errors. Who could therefore evince any surprise at the fact that man lives in error or ever returns to the error which was his from the cradle, which had to be and could not but be his? The habit is there, not to mention heredity. *The habit is there, which preserves in cultured mankind what was natural and necessary in primitive mankind.*

It is not only habit. Think of language. Language is the prison of the mind. It confines the thought of the men of today within the thought of the men of times past, since it allows the men of today to express their thoughts but in the words of the men of old, since the only means of exit it gives my thought is the window through which emerged the thoughts of my ancestors, since, in last analysis, it compels me thus to take the thought of Descartes to express my own. Language is therefore the keeper of ancient errors or, it may be, of ancient truths. At all events it is conservative and anti-liberator. It is "a great danger for intellectual freedom. *Every word is a prejudice.*"

When we realize that even in silence we speak nevertheless, that the inner thought becomes precise only through an inner word and in it, that it only found itself when it found the word for it, that as soon as I think, I speak, and that before I thought in words I was more attempting to think than effectively thinking, we can understand the extent to which the first errors, natural and necessary as they were, enjoy a very broad sway, one that can be shaken off with great difficulty and that is, over

the mind of man, almost imprescriptible. For these primitive errors are lasting and self-lasting since they pertain to weaknesses of our nature that may be eternal. Their force lies in habit, in tradition and in the necessity we find to express them to a certain extent even when we intend to express another idea or even one that opposes it.

And so Nietzsche fights and intreats us to fight the philosophical timorousness, the insufficient philosophical honesty, the obscurity which often is but a subtle artifice to which our diffidence accommodates itself and the philosophical dishonesty of which lures us. He fights and begs us to fight habit and tradition which are very often again mere forms of timorousness, and finally the verbal suggestions that mislead us, make us say the contrary of what we wish to say or only half of what we wish to have said by ourselves and understood by others.

Such are the first obstacles he found to the truth he was bringing forth.

## CHAPTER IV.

### CRITICISING THE OBSTACLES: SOCIETY.

ANOTHER obstacle to the diffusion of the true doctrine lies in our present societies. Let us state from the outset that this is the cause which brought some people to consider Nietzsche an anarchist, although he was far from being one and was in truth precisely the opposite. He was no anarchist. He was not anti-social. But he saw very clearly that all modern societies, and all societies established from long ago were directly opposed to his creed and by their very constitutions hampered his creed. Present day societies, no matter which one we take, absolute monarchies, restricted monarchies, democracies, none of them aims to foster life in beauty or to help man to live freely, powerfully, and beautifully. If they aim at anything, which is after all doubtful, it is at causing to live the largest possible number of men. Such is certainly the aim, subconsciously conceived and felt, of their general bearing.

Vaguely thinking of this, at least not thinking of anything else, they can but aim at assuring to all men an exceedingly mediocre life, a small, mean and restricted life which does neither disturb, nor encroach, nor expand, a life so arranged that all are cramped and restricted and that no one may pre-

vent the others, first from being born and then from possessing they also, each his own little corner, his little place, his small field of evolution. The ideal of each of these societies resembles that of the architect or of the director of a hospital who would measure most minutely the indispensable amount of air cubics and then say: "By gaining five more centimeters on each one I shall get four extra beds in, maybe five."—It is hard to live freely, beautifully, powerfully and superabundantly with this system and with this practice.

Human societies are most evidently careless of the quality of their ordinary citizens and of their soldiers alike. What matters to them is the quantity. They wish neither to do big things, nor beautiful things nor even perhaps good things. They wish to do numerous things. It seems that this pertains to their very constitution, apart from any political system. They feel, or think they feel that men constitute themselves in society to guarantee each other against a possible enemy and to live in peace and happiness, not at all to *live dangerously*.—One uses the term "constitute themselves in societies" and it really matters very little that this is historical nonsense; the point is only one of goal and of ideal aim. Consequently men constitute themselves into societies rather to call to life the largest possible number of people and to maintain them alive than to make them live with beauty, power and danger. After all, the very fact that the largest possible number of people are called to life restricts the space as we have seen and sets up in itself an obstacle to

life beautiful. "Altogether too many men are born; the State was invented for the superfluous ones. See how it attracts them, the superfluous ones! How it entwines them, how it chews and rechews them!" Modern Societies—and they may be termed "modern" back to a fairly distant past—are by their nature anti-Nietzschean and Nietzsche cannot prevent himself from being somewhat anti-social (and especially seeming to be). Most certainly, why not admit it? He must have had his moments of anti-societism and said: "Life such as I conceive it may quite possibly be that of the savage and may be only realized fully or brilliantly in the 'natural state' or in that primitive state, with its loosely organized societies that is sometimes referred to as the natural state. In the end, it is the social invention itself that stands against me."

He may have said that to himself, albeit I do not find it anywhere in his writings, and Nietzsche wrote down everything he thought with much courage and daring. He may have thought that sometimes and, personally, I know him to have been too intelligent and do not doubt that he made that reflection. But he was persuaded, perhaps wrongly so, that there had been a race, meaning the Greek race, that was organized into a society and yet created a free, beautiful and powerful life, and he did not tarry over the anti-social idea. He left to a few disciples of his, who may have been logical, the task or the pleasure of deducting that idea from his premises.

Modern Society it is of which he has made a pene-

trative, subtle and harsh criticism. He attacked at once, vigorously and disdainfully, modern society, the utilitarian society, the society whose dream is to give to a very large number of human beings a small, narrow, ugly and disgusting happiness. That society is the pet aversion of Nietzsche. It is his *bête noire*, of if you like, his black herd. He pursued it with fiery jeers that are admirable. That society confessedly wants two things that are eminently anti-natural, that is, justice and equality. It tends to a goal that is eminently anti-æsthetic, that is again anti-natural, to mediocrity and to flatness. Listen to the *tarantulas*. Listen to them speaking of justice, that is, of spite and vengeance: "It is precisely what we call justice when the world is filled with the storms of our vengeance." . . . "Thus prattle the tarantulas among themselves." . . . "We want to wreak our vengeance upon all those that are not down to our own measurements and to cover them with our outrages." . . . "To this do the tarantulas pledge themselves in their hearts." . . . And again: "And 'Will to Equality'—that itself shall henceforth be the name of virtue; and against all that hath power will we raise an outcry!" . . . "They are people of bad race and lineage; out of their countenances peer the hangman and the sleuth-hound. Distrust all those that talk much of their justice! Verily, in their souls not only honey is lacking." . . . "My friends, I will not be mixed up and confounded with others. There are those that preach my doctrine of life, and are at the same time preachers of equality, and tarantulas."

. . . "With these preachers of equality will I not be mixed up and confounded. For thus speaketh the justice *unto me*: 'Men are not equal.'"

Nietzsche has never done with the tarantulas. He considers Socialists as the "most honest, the narrowest and most noxious race of the Universe." He holds them to be in love with uniformity, mediocrity and ugliness, and most foreign to life, most hostile to life and most destructive to life. The democrat stands before him as some strange friend of the shadows and of damp dark places, the least Apollonian person in the world. The socialist is for him — and he is right — but a logical democrat, a creature of night whose only cure is to blow upon anything that may even slightly resemble the sun.

An unpleasant factor is that those that could be powerful, those that are marked to lead, those whom the Greeks would have named *aristoi*, even they, accept a certain solidarity with the tarantulas. They think or seem to believe first in the necessity for the latter's existence, then in the legitimacy of their desires and finally they associate with them. It is wrong: "Life is a source of joy; but wherever the mob comes to drink, all the fountains are poisoned. . . . I asked one day, nearly choked by my own query: What! Does Life need the mob? . . . And I turned my back upon the dominators when I realized what it was these days they called domination: bargaining and trafficking on equal terms with the mob."

Thus is established a strange modern State, the State resting on the mob, the State-Mob, one could



say and this State, which is anti-natural and anti-æsthetic thinks itself adorable, affirms that it is adorable and makes others adore it. It is "the new idol." It invites worship on the strength of a lie, similar to that which led people to the ancient sanctuaries of oracles. If it be not a lie, at least it is a counter-truth in which the State-Mob may believe and in which the mob does believe. It says it is the people, calls itself the people while it is precisely the opposite. "The State is the coldest of all the cold lies. It lies coldly and here is the lie which crawls from its mouth: 'I, the State, I am the People!' . . . It is a lie! *They were creators, those that founded the nations and suspended a new faith and love above them: Thus they were serving life. But they are destructors, those that set traps for the large number and call that a State; they suspend a sword and a hundred appetites above them.*"

Here is, in truth, the modern State. It persuades the people that it springs up from the people and is the people. It uses this pretext to lower the people by adulation instead of raising it towards something lofty. Instead of awakening and stimulating the people, it lulls them to sleep. Instead of disciplining the people, it scatters and pulverizes them or lets them remain in their natural scattered and pulverized condition. And it is in order to accomplish this that it wishes to be worshiped and that it "roars, monster that it is." . . . "There is nothing greater than me upon earth and I am the disposing finger of the Lord."



Where does all this, if you please, lead us? Where can it lead, where is it bound to lead? Modern societies, with their taste for the greater number, for the ever greater number, for mediocrity and for platitude and the State-Idol with its taste for uniformity and its natural hatred for all individual superiority, the *State-Rabble* in a word — these mean nothing else but the more or less slow suicide of humanity: “The State, such as we have defined it, is in every place where all men, good and bad, are absorbing poisons. The State is wherever all men, good or bad, are ruining themselves. The State is *wherever slow suicide of all men is called life.*”

If we imagine what this regime will make of mankind if no change takes place, we foresee them in the distant, even possible in the near, future: “I pass among these people and keep my eyes open; they are become smaller and continue to become ever smaller. This is due to their doctrine of happiness and virtue. Limpingly they advance and thus prove an obstacle to those that wish to hurry. . . . A few of them intend; but the most of them are intended. . . . They are round, honorable and kindly to each other, as the grains of sand are round, honorable and kindly towards the grains of sand. Modestly to embrace a small happiness, this they call resignation. In the same breath they are already squinting modestly in the direction of a new small happiness. They have after all but one desire: that no one shall harm them; this they call virtue but it is cowardice. . . . To them virtue is what renders one

modest and tame. Thus they made of the wolf a dog and even of man the best domestic animal of man. . . . This is mediocrity, albeit named moderation."

See them well as they will be to-morrow. They will have discovered happiness. They will be sure of that and, as a matter of fact, they will have discovered what they are now seeking and is not at all difficult of discovery. They are now beforehand calling it happiness, and it is a thing that should sicken one: "Lo, I show you the last man. 'What is love, creation, desire? What is a star?' So asketh the last man and blinketh." "We have discovered happiness" the last men say "and they blink. They have given up the regions where life is hard because they need warmth. One still loveth one's neighbor and rubbeth against him, for one needeth warmth. . . . They still work, for work is a pastime. But they take care that this pastime shall not hurt them. They want neither poverty nor riches; either of them is too burdensome. Who would care still to issue orders? And who obeys? Both actions cause care. No shepherd and one single flock! All want the same thing. All are equal. Whoever thinketh differently goeth voluntarily into the mad house.—We have discovered happiness, the last men say; and they blink."

It seems that such are truly the modern State, its principles, its present and its future. If it be the case, does it not turn its back to culture, to art, beauty and civilization and, generally, to what is usually called human life? May it not be that we

are standing between two stages of barbarism with our "chair in the middle"? One of them is behind us, a violent, restless and chaotic barbarism. The other awaits us; it is enervated, decrepit, soft and lives in stagnant air. This progress vaunted by our generation — is it not that of the quicksand or of the mire that rises in gentle and imperceptible motion from our legs to our waist and from our waist to our shoulders? We see it rising with precision and sureness and then proudly we exclaim: "Oh, oh! Something is rising!" But it is not necessary that we should inquire whether it is not we who are going down — that is not impossible — and whether the time is not nearing when some one will say: "and there remained but mire."

Nietzsche at least is sure of it, and, having examined human society, he thus concludes for the time being: "this also is an obstacle to my faith. This is contrary to life, beauty and light." This is an easy descent into the night, *facile descensus Averno*. Either we must have no society or else we need one that were precisely the opposite of this. We shall go into this later on. For the time being let us note one sure, well-gotten point: this society is another obstacle.

## CHAPTER V.

### CRITICISING THE OBSTACLES: RELIGION.

ARE the belief in the supernatural phenomenon, the faith in God and the immortality of the soul, the metaphysics and the religious signs of human strength or of human weakness; do they denote health or sickness in the human race; do they comfort or depress it? This is not one of the queries that Nietzsche sought most deeply to answer, but ask himself the question he did nevertheless and, as always, with anguish. He answered it, as always again, with final decision. Metaphysics and religions are, to begin with, a sign of weakness in humanity and they increase and enhance this weakness from which they spring. Hardly any one will deny that the religions are born of the terror of ignorant men in the presence of the forces of nature. It is therefore primarily from a weakness that the religions are born. It is useless to insist on this point. But from being terrifying, the religion became beneficent and this necessitates closer scrutiny.

From being terrifying the religions have become beneficent. This means first that men took to supposing the existence of good and favorable powers by the side of the evil and hostile powers that surrounded them. It means again that they bethought

themselves to propitiate the hostile forces by means of words and respectful actions and to convert them into favorable and beneficent powers. Do you not see on all sides the weakness that trembles, the weakness that flatters and the weakness that beseeches? *The Instinct of Weakness*, the consciousness of his weakness — this is what creates in man the *need* of religion. This need creates its own organ and the organ shall last so long as the need persists. Religion and metaphysics show the need of general certainty, of universal certainty wherein shall fit the particular certainties, or of fundamental certainty upon which shall rest the certainties of current use. Therefore it is a lack of will which we find, historically speaking at the origin, and morally speaking at the root, of every religion and every metaphysics. For the will needs no certainty. It proceeds to its goal of its own accord and simply because it is and because it is by nature inclined to spring up and to spread.

There are therefore those that are inclined to admit that the need to believe is a form of the need to act. The need to believe is a form of the need to rest or at least to lean on something. "We can measure the degree of the strength of our faith — or more exactly the degree of its weakness — by the number of principles that our faith refuses to see shaken because they are used as *supports*. . . . Man is thus made: one can refute a thousand times an article of his faith. If he needs it he will always continue to hold it true. . . . This desire of certainty also . . . is the desire for a support, for a

prop, in short, *that instinct of weakness* which, if it does not create the religions, the metaphysics, and the principles of all kinds, at least preserves them. It is a fact that around all these positive systems rises the fog of a certain pessimistic darkening, either fatigue, fatalism, deception, or fear of a new deception, or again display of resentment, bad humor, exasperated anarchism (interior anarchism, a powerlessness in ruling one's self which becomes angry?) or again symptoms whichever they may be of the feeling of weakness, or masquerades resulting from that feeling. . . . Faith is always more *in demand*, need of faith is ever more urgent, as the will fails. . . . Hence we should perhaps conclude that the two great religions of the world, Buddhism and Christianity, might have very well found their origin and especially their sudden development in a colossal access of sickness of the will."

Let us make a remark here which will confirm this. Man being *ordinarily* in a certain state of weakness it follows that even his states of strength, his periods of health and energy, inspire him with the belief in God. When man is utterly conscious of his weakness he turns to God. But when man is astonished at his own strength, whenever he happens to have any, he attributes it to God. "The states of power inspire in man the feeling that he is independent of the cause of these states, that he is not responsible for them. They come unsought and therefore we are not their authors. The consciousness of a change in ourselves without our having wanted it requires an outside will. Man has not



dared to attribute to himself all the surprising and strong moments of his life. He has fancied those moments to be passive and thought he was submitting to them and governed by them. . . . Thus he made two parts of himself, one pitiful and weak and he called it man, the other very strong and surprising and he called it *God*."

Therefore everything led man to religion. He was led by his weakness and by his strength, by his accidental strength in proportion even to his ordinary weakness and also by his ordinary weakness in proportion to his accidental strength; because if he were always weak he could not feel his weakness and it is his accidental strength that causes him to feel and to fathom his customary weakness. Here is seemingly the origin of the religions sufficiently explained since one can explain from what precedes why they are and why it is hardly possible that they should not be.

Add to this instinct which craves religions, to this double instinct which creates religions, or rather to this double-headed instinct doubly creative of religions, add the creators themselves, that is the organizers of the religious instinct. Either through rapid intuition or deep reflection these do a thing which is very simple in itself but has consequences that are incalculable. They think out the state, the natural also the acquired, then and especially the ordinary and general state of a people in that state: Firstly they discipline it, secondly they divinize it. They give it the backing of a theological and theocratic idea.

They discipline it: from what was common practice they make a rule (practice observances and rites), a secondary thing important nevertheless for what we do because we are in the habit of doing it grows wearisome. What we do because it is the rule and the duty is attractive and even comforting. The rite destroys weariness by imparting dignity to wearisome actions.

They divinize the ordinary life of a people. They persuade men that their ordinary lives have a meaning and a beautiful meaning, a divine meaning, a mysterious meaning that is pleasant to a superior power and desired by it.

The Jews are a plundering and pillaging nation. That life does not satisfy them every day. A man comes to them, telling them that there is a God, who loves them and them alone, who hates all the nations that are not their own and who delights in seeing the other nations pillaged, betrayed and ravaged by them. At once the life of this nation takes on a meaning, and a beautiful meaning. It becomes the good, a moral good, an ideal for which one is ready to sacrifice one's life, at all events something beautiful which can no longer prove distasteful or tiring or futile. This man that said this to that nation transposed an instinct of that people and sent it soaring, with the result that the nation first of all found itself in the thought of this man, which was necessary, and found itself again in beauty with extraordinary consequences for its moral welfare and its happiness.

To this same people, which had become tired and



languishing, exhausted as it was by long civil wars, and to some other nations also there came another man that extolled and praised as divine what? Their very life, their small, mean and lowly life. He interpreted it in beauty. "He finds about him the life of small people of the Roman provinces. He interprets it. He gives it a superior meaning and thereby the courage to despise every other kind of life, the quiet fanaticism that the Moravian Brethren were to take up again later, the secret and subterraneous self-confidence that grows ceaselessly until it is ready to overcome the world."

What did Buddha find about him? Scattered practically in all the classes of his people he found men who were good, kindly, lazy and soft. He persuaded them of nothing at all except this, that laziness was a superior state, a divine state, that the aspiration to rest and to nothingness was the highest conception of the world and that God has none other. Of the *vis inertiae* he made a creed — and it was a mark of genius to have conceived so simple an idea. In fact it was to understand people who did not understand themselves. "To be the founder of a religion one must have *psychological infallibility* in the discovery of a class of average souls *that have not yet recognized that they were of the same kind.*" These souls are united by the founder of religion. This is why the founding of a religion becomes always a long feast of thanksgiving.

Thus created and organized, such religion is transmitted by habit and heredity. It is *proved* and *confirmed* by the acts of very real courage that it

prompts. Since thus strength is born out of weakness or seems to be born, religion wields at length over the imagination the influence and prestige of moral force. But do we need to say that martyrdom proves nothing? It proves, if you like, and even this could be contested, that some one is very much convinced. But conviction is no proof of truth, although, to be sure, it is no proof of error. Yet it presumes error since we see very well, and all the time that the more man is intelligent, the less he asserts, and since, therefore, a man who is sufficiently affirmative to die for his affirmation may be presumed to have an energetic will, a fiery passion, but a narrow mind. The martyrs, therefore, proved nothing at all, but they bewitch, they hearten and they intoxicate. They are necessary to the development of religion and they are the true pillars almost unshakable of the temple. "It is so little true to say that a martyr could prove the truth of anything that I should like to affirm that no martyr ever had anything to do with truth. . . . The sufferings of the martyrs have been a great historical misfortune: they have *bewitched*. Is the cross then an argument?"

Thus religion is born of human weakness. It is organized by the skill, sincere withal and even unconscious, of clever psychologists. It is strengthened and confirmed by solemn and striking acts of confession, devotion and sacrifice. Thus does a religion extend its influence over a section of humanity. What destroys it is the coming forth of another religion that corresponds to a new state of mind

but always to a state of weakness on the part of humanity or of a portion of humanity. The "religion of human sorrow" for instance, which is but a form of the "religion of humanity," tends nowadays to substitute itself for the others. It matters not whether or not it has a chance of survival. It is but an example of the way in which religions attempt to establish themselves. This religion of pity — what is it? First of all it is a remnant of Christianity. To be sure. That is necessary since a new religion must correspond to a general state of mind and even identify itself with the general state of mind, religiously conceived, and since there must be remnants of Christianity in the prevalent state of mind about the year 1880, then this new religion is a negation of Christianity in relation to the decrepit paths of Christianity. It appeals no longer to God, seems no longer to think of God at all. Perhaps it does not believe in Him. It rejects the idea of justice and the idea of State. It rejects the idea of authority and that of hierarchy; all ideas which had been, at least, accepted by Christianity. It is, therefore, partly a remnant of Christianity and partly a reaction against Christianity, as Christianity had been partly a remnant of Judaism and partly a reaction against Judaism. Finally it rests upon human weakness, it makes an appeal to it and divinizes it. It corresponds to the state of lassitude of Europe overburdened with wars, invasion and armed peace, and it makes a virtue of this lassitude. It says: "Never any shedding of blood, never any war even a just one: let pity stop and suppress carnage." After

all, it amounts to saying : "You are cowards. Very well, I am going to reveal to you a divine secret which will please you : you are right."

This is the way in which a new religion attempts to destroy an ancient religion, and sometimes succeeds. We have there the three necessary conditions that are sometimes sufficient conditions for a new religion to destroy another and establish itself in its stead.

But who can destroy all the religions without putting another one in the place of the last? One thing only, and it is, in truth, very difficult. It is the destruction of the supernatural, the energetic affirmation that the supernatural does not exist; it is the challenge for any one to prove that the supernatural does exist. The first thing that the prophet of the future must cry out is: "God is dead. I am telling you in truth a true fact: God is dead." That was the first word of Zarathustra. One must assert with energy that God no longer exists.

When that idea took hold of Nietzsche he pushed it so far that he forgot one of his favorite theories, that is that the world is a manifestation of beauty. For this theory may lead to God, to a God, to something theological: it contains something divine. If the world is a manifestation of beauty, it entails the existence of an artist; it may be above it or it may be below it or it may be in it but still somewhere or else it entails the world itself to be an artist, the artist of itself. Even in this there is too much that is divine. Therefore when Nietzsche warms up in

atheism, he denies the beauty of the world and we must acknowledge that he cannot do anything else: "The general condition of the world is chaos for all eternity not through lack of a necessity but in the sense of a lack of order, of structure, of form, of *beauty*, of wisdom, whatever may be the names of our human æstheticians. . . . It is neither perfect nor *beautiful* nor lofty and wishes to become neither of these. It does not tend at all to an imitation of man. It is not touched by any of our æsthetic and moral judgements. . . ."

God is dead: but take care, there remain shadows of God. After the death of Buddha there still showed for centuries his shadow in a cavern, a huge and fearful shadow. "God is dead but to judge from the ways of mankind there may yet be for thousands of years caverns where they will show His shadow."

These shadows of God are precisely the beliefs in something intelligent about the universe, in something either beautiful, as we have seen, or orderly or intentional. Metaphysics is a shadow of the supernatural; the simple humanization of the universe is a shadow of the supernatural; the simple and more or less firm belief that the universe means anything at all is a shadow of the supernatural. To understand the universe is to believe in God; to think that one understands it is to believe in God; to try to understand it is still to believe in God. To suppose that the universe is intelligible is to be a theist even when one believes one's self to be an

atheist. A deep thought this which Nietzsche grasps very clearly to its end with the clearest sight that he ever had.

Let us therefore dispel these shadows of God. Let us take care not to believe that the universe is intelligible. Let us beware of all the hypotheses by which we try to explain it to ourselves. "Let us beware (pantheism for instance) to think that the world is a living being. How should it develop itself? On what could it subsist? How could it succeed in increasing and growing? We know pretty nearly what organized matter is and we ought to change the meaning of all that there is unspeakably derived, belated, rare and haphazard, of what we perceive on the earth's crust to make of it something essential, general and eternal. Yet that is what those do that call the universe an organism. That is disgusting to me." Without going quite so far, "let us take care also not to consider the universe a machine. It certainly was not constructed with any aim in view: and by using the word machine we do it much too great an honor. Let us take care not to admit for certain everywhere and in a general fashion something definite like the cyclic movement of the constellations that are nearer to us: one glance at the milky way already awakens one's doubts, leads one to believe that there may be there motions which are much coarser and more contradictory (than those of the solar system) and also stars that are precipitated as if in a straight line forward. The astral order in which we live is an exception. That order as also the passing duration



which is its condition has itself rendered possible the exception to the exceptions: the formation of what is organic. . . . Let us beware again from saying that there are *laws* in nature. There are but necessities. Nobody there that commands, no one that obeys, no one that infringes. When you have learned that there are no aims you shall know also that there is no hazard; for *it is only by the side of a world of aims that the word 'hazard' has any meaning.* Let us beware again from saying that death is opposed to life. Life is but a variety of death and a very scarce variety at that. Let us beware . . . but when shall we ever reach the end of our bewares and cautions? When will all these shadows of God cease to trouble us? When shall we have altogether stripped nature of its divine attributes? This brings us back to asking: when shall we have done with humanizing nature?"

Religions and also metaphysics, these reflections of religions, will only disappear when man becomes able to understand, to see something *as different from himself*. But that is what he has not yet come to do, what he cannot do: "We do but operate with things which do not exist, with lines, surfaces, atoms, divisible periods and divisible spaces. How could an interpretation be possible if of everything we first of all make an image, *our image*? We are still considering science as a humanization of things as faithful as can be. In describing things and their succession we learn merely to describe ourselves ever more exactly. . . ."

So long as man shall see and know but himself



and so long as he can under the pretext of explaining things but transform them into himself he shall be dominated by religions and metaphysics, which are born of his physical weakness and kept up by his moral weakness.

See in one example the weakness inherent to the metaphysical beliefs and the weakness which *derives from it*. Men have long believed in the immortality of the human soul. "The will to power," one could say to Nietzsche, a powerful and intense desire to live ever and ever more, the dream of an Olympian or of a being who wishes to be Olympian. That is possible, Nietzsche would answer, for the will to power also has its errors. But this is a false will to power, and, at bottom, it is but a weakness, the horror and the fear of death, and it generates a perhaps more serious weakness which is this. With the belief in an immortal soul man is compelled to take before his death a decision, a side, since on the side that he shall choose shall his salvation depend. Look at Pascal. The result is an extreme timorousness that prevents knowledge from advancing and causes man to hold himself in fear as on the threshold of knowledge: "The most useful conquest that perhaps has ever been made was the renouncing of the belief in an immortal soul. Humanity has now *the right to wait*. It need no longer hurry and accept ill-examined ideas as it had to do previously. For in those days, the salvation of the poor immortal soul being dependent upon its convictions during a short life, it had to decide in a day, and knowledge had a terrifying importance. We

have reconquered the good courage to err, to attempt, to take for the time being. All that is now of lesser consequence. And, precisely because of this, individuals and whole generations may now face tasks so imposing that they would have appeared to be folly in the days gone by, and seemed an impious game with heaven and hell. We have the right to make experiments with ourselves. Even the whole of humanity has that right."

Among all these religions and metaphysics there is one that Nietzsche pursues with a beloved hatred. One can even surmise that it is because of that one that he hates them all, and this invites us attentively to follow him upon that ground. This religion is Christianity. For Nietzsche — and we have come to those ideas of Nietzsche that are the most just in the main if not in all the consequences that he derives from them — for Nietzsche Christianity is nothing else but one of the events and the most considerable and decisive one of plebeianism. It is because of it that he sees in it the most hateful and redoubtable *enemy*, the eternal *obstacle* to his general ideas. Christianity is the advent of plebeianism.

It was prepared by Socrates and by Plato who, whatever may have been their political ideas, accustomed the minds to consider all things from the point of view of morality, *sub specie ethices* and have also fostered the custom of despising and denying the right of the strong, the right of the best, and of wanting all men to be submitted to one single rule.

It was prepared by Buddhism or by infiltrations of Buddhism, the first plebeian religion to call all men equally to its bosom and to its faith that the world seems to have known. It was prepared (this Nietzsche seems to have forgotten completely or passed under silence) by the Hebrew prophets, for that was a movement formally popular, plebeian, democratic and equalitarian.

All these "preparations" are execrable but Christianity is yet more execrable than everything that prepared it. We know how it was born: everything that was low, vile, tired and social waste and social decadence was called upon to consider itself as holy, as divine, as "living member of God" and to despise everything that was alive, energetic, beautiful and noble, everything that had the wealth of life and beauty.

"Christianity is the religion proper for aged antiquity. As first conditions of survival it has needed ancient degenerated civilizations upon which it knew how to act and upon which it acted like a balm. At the periods when the eyes and the ears are 'full of dust' to the extent that they no longer perceive the voice of reason and philosophy, that they hear no longer the living and personified wisdom whether it bears the name of Epictetus or Epicurus, the erected cross of the martyrs and the trumpet of the last judgment will probably suffice to produce an effect that will induce such peoples to make a decent ending. Think of the Rome of Juvenal, that venomous toad with the eyes of Venus, and you will understand what it means to erect a cross

before the world. . . . Most men were born in those days with satiated souls and with the senses of an old man. What boon was it for them to meet those beings who were more souls than bodies and seemed to realize that Greek idea of the Shades of the Hades! This Christianity considered as the knell of the *good* antiquity, sounded on a bell, tired and broken, yet retaining a melodious sound, this Christianity even for the man who to-day skims those centuries merely from the historical point of view, is a balm to the ear. What then may it not have been for the men of that time! On the other hand Christianity is a poison for young barbaric nations. To plant, for instance, the doctrine of sin and damnation in the souls of the old Germans, these heroic, childish and bestial souls, what was it but to poison them? The consequence of all this was a formidable fermentation, and a chemical decomposition, a disorder of feelings and of decision, a pressure and an exuberance of the most dangerous things; and later a thorough weakening of those barbaric nations."

Such was the first nature, the first complexion of Christianity: divinized gentleness, divinized weakness, humility, submission and platitude divinized. Hence the two perpetual hostilities of Christianity: hostility to life and hostility to art. Christianity has had at all times a raging and vindictive repugnance "towards life itself." . . . It was "from the outset, essentially and radically, a satiety of life and a disgust with life; feelings that only masquerade and hide under the disguise of faith in another and bet-

ter life." Is it not evident that any doctrine that appeals to another life, *condemns* this present life, complains of it and curses it, invites one either to leave it, or to wish to get away from it or to reduce it to its minimum? Hence, in the Christian doctrine, one finds eternally the "hatred of the world," the "anathema to the passions, the dread of beauty and pleasure, a future beyond, which was invented the better to disparage the present, a background, a desire of nothingness, of death, of rest until the sabbath of the sabbaths."

Witness St. Paul "that Jewish Pascal" as Pascal was a Christian Paul; see this puny, sickly man, this epileptic, perhaps this ex-criminal, in all certainty this ex-slave to violent passions. What he seeks is the abolition of sin within himself through an intimate union with his God, that is he seeks to cause life to disappear in death which is a new and the only desirable life. No "will to power," no "will do dominate" is as formidable, since every effort is will to power. But where does this effect lead? Straight to death, to actual death which is a necessary and beloved condition of real life. "To death!—To Glory!" the Polyeucte of Corneille says magnificently and most *exactly*. To glory through death, is the very motto of the Christian.

A necessary sequel is that Christianity feels a constant and incurable hostility towards beauty and art. One might begin by saying that what is hostile to life is almost forcibly hostile to art since "all life rests upon appearance, art and illusion" and upon faith in an illusion considered beautiful, se-

ductive and strengthening. Without going so far, Christianity is hostile to art, because it admits nothing but that which is strictly moral and aims at morality as its end. This excludes art or subordinates it and thus degrades it and by degrading it, kills it. If we take up the hypothesis of the explanation and justification of the world by its beauty, an hypothesis which, as we know, Nietzsche has sometimes found pleasant, "nothing is more completely opposed to the interpretation and the purely æsthetic justification of the world than the Christian doctrine which is and wants to be nothing else but morality and which, with its absolute principles, as for instance, its veracity of God, relegates art, all art, into the dominion of lies and therefore denies, condemns and curses it."

Christianity rejects the whole of art. It is neither "Apollonian nor Dionysian. It denies all æsthetic values; it is nihilistic in the deepest sense of the word." To its shame and condemnation, there is this difference between what prepared it and itself that Socratism subordinated art to morality, and considered that art as all the other sides of human work should tend towards morality as its final goal. Upon this ground then it still admitted art or thought it did; it enervated art but did not proscribe it or thought it did not. But Christianity proscribes art and, being most intelligent, fears it as its mortal, that is, living, enemy. So soon as a Christian is intelligent and deep, so soon as he understands Christianity (Luther, Calvin, Pascal, de Maistre), he proscribes art. So soon as a Christian understands half



or more of Christianity, he reduces art to be a modest and servile auxiliary of morality: (Tolstoy). So soon as a Christian, albeit sincere, is but a superficial, recent, accidental and somewhat deliberate Christian, and withal understands it not at all, he aims at wedding art to Christianity: (Chateaubriand).

At heart, the Christian is a man of death, of sepulchral shadows, a lover of death. Look about yourselves. Christians are in love with death; the men and women whom their natural tendency leads to a taste for death have a sort of natural disposition to be Christians. The Christian priests are "the most repulsive species of dwarfs," and "creatures of the underground."

This doctrine has renewed human nature. It is quite conscious of that fact and justly boasts of it. But it has falsified human nature. It has created new feelings that are most anti-human. Nietzsche applies to Christianity the same reproach, or a very similar one, which Christianity addressed to Stoicism. Christianity taxed Stoicism with a pretence of suppressing passions instead of skilfully directing them. Nietzsche taxes Christianity with having also pretended to suppress the passions or with having, by diverting them from their purposes, made them more evil and also more attractive and corruptive. Christianity aimed at suppressing ambition, which is the best and most natural of human instincts, which is in fact, the "Will to Power." But the will to power was merely diverted from its course. It took its revenge and became the will



to conquer Heaven. It threw man back into the strife, moreover, which was more cruel and bitter than that of ambition proper, in the strife with himself and "the world." Through it man has become rough, violent, sad and wretchedly unhappy. This follows the desire to suppress a passion, the substitution of one passion for another and the substitution, for a good passion, of a bad one, or for a bad passion, of a worse one.

The Christians have aimed at suppressing love; they wanted it considered as a fatal passion, as an enemy. Very well. But "*the passions become evil and perfidious when we consider them in an evil and perfidious fashion.*" The Christians have turned Eros and Aphrodite into Genii from Hell, into lying Spirits. First of all it is doubtful that what has been created with a view to propagating the species<sup>1</sup> could be deceitful and fatal in itself. Then it is a sign of vulgarity, it is proper to the most vulgar souls ever to consider their enemies as bad and evil. We must pay attention to this. An enemy if you like. But to have an enemy is necessary to life, to any life, and the creature whom we could conceive to be without an enemy should be a very unfortunate and a very low being, very close to the non-being. — Finally and especially, by turning love into both a sin and a mysterious and redoubtable enemy, Christianity has poetized it, divinized it and turned it into a seductive joy of which one dreams with a blend of delight and shudders and of which therefore one dreams for ever. Therefore in aiming at the destruction of love, Christianity created it: "This

diabolization of Eros ends in comedy: Eros, the *demon*, has, little by little, become more interesting than angels and saints, thanks to the whisperings and mysterious little ways of the Church in all things erotic. It is due to the Church that love affairs have become the one interest truly common to all centres and this with an exaggeration which would have been unintelligible to the antiquity and which no doubt will some day cause people to laugh. The whole of our poetry, high and low, is marked and more than marked by the diffuse importance it gives to love which it always presents as the principal event. Because of this judgment it may well be that posterity will find in the whole inheritance of civilization something shabby and insane."

Christianity has therefore renovated human nature by falsifying, altering, degrading and corrupting it. In the true sense of the word, Christianity is corruptive.

It is dead, they say, and the comments which we have made have but an historical interest. Do not let us delude ourselves. In the same way as "God is dead" but left "shadows" behind, these metaphysical shadows of which we have spoken, and of which humanity may not be able to rid itself for thousands of years, in that same way, it is interesting to see what shadows Christianity also has left behind. Christianity has said: "Save yourselves through faith," and upon these words, "dogma" was founded. But it said also: "Love ye each other; love your neighbor as yourself; love your 'enemy'"; and upon these words was Christian

*morality* established. Little by little the dogma fell down but morality took the foreground. Note that it came there *as* the dogma fell down. The more the dogma was relegated into oblivion, the more one felt bound in honour to practice and especially to extol morality, to prove how one could be virtuous without being Christian. There are atheists whose chief moral incentive is their very atheism, so anxious are they to prove that an atheist may be a good man and to what extent he may be one. The trouble is that if one detaches one's self from Christianity in that way, one becomes more Christian than ever and more than ever a propagandist and vulgarizer of the Christian idea. This shadow of Christianity, is Christianity still hovering above the world. This residue of Christianity is the essence thereof.

Watch well the sequence of things: "The more one parted from the dogmas, the more, in a way, one sought the *justification* of that parting in a cult of love for humanity. The secret stimulus of the French free thinkers from Voltaire down to Auguste Comte was, not to remain behind the Christian ideal on this point but to *outbid* it if possible. Auguste Comte, with his well-known moral formula 'to live for others' in fact *out Christianizes* Christianity. In Germany it was Schopenhauer, and in England John Stuart Mill, who gave the greatest fame to the theory of sympathetic affections, of pity and of usefulness to others as the principle of action. But they themselves were mere echoes. These doctrines arose everywhere at the same time under forms that

were either subtle or coarse, and with extraordinary vitality, since about the time of the French Revolution, and all the systems of Socialism placed themselves unwittingly as it were upon the common ground of these doctrines. . . .”

Such are the residues of Christianity, which it is necessary to burn down and such are the shadows of Christianity, which must necessarily be dispelled.

To resume, the religions and also the metaphysics, which are but pale reflections of the religions, are born of human weakness. They are always adopted and grasped by the weak in order to repress and, if possible, to enslave the strong. They succeed first in repressing them and then in enslaving them. Sometimes even they succeed in seducing them. As a result, penetrated by these reflections and the shadows, they themselves repress themselves, enslave themselves and by consecrating their strength to the cause of the weak, they destroy strength.—Religions and Metaphysics and all the dreams of the supernatural in general are therefore auxiliaries of death, enemies of life and beauty, and betrayals and degradations of human race. At all events, they are again *obstacles* to the Nietzschean conception of life.

## CHAPTER VI.

### CRITICISING THE OBSTACLES: RATIONALISM AND SCIENCE.

WHAT then, if we were to turn to what generally passes for the antithesis, the antipode and the antagonism of religion and metaphysics, if we turned to science? — Let us see.

Science is first of all the savants. A somewhat sorry crowd. They are timid, fusty, sad and short-sighted, wonderful when it comes to *not* seeing the world, to not appreciating men, to not knowing what man is, also to not knowing either the principles, origins and foundations nor the end, the importance and the consequences of the very science they are studying. Often enough they are superstitious and dogmatic in their superstitions and prejudices because, knowing exactly what effectively they know, they bring to the expression of their prejudices the strictness and imperiousness of the formulas of their laboratories and studies. They are good workmen of knowledge who, when all is said, know nothing at all, as the workers in a factory are strangers to the work it turns out ultimately. They are average in all things, an intermediate class between the mob and the élite, and have neither the qualities of the one nor even the qualities that are attributed to the other. Most of them are moreover infatuated

with their vainglorious timorousness and number more pedants than any other class of society and even of the human species.—Nietzsche always speaks of the savant as a professor that fled from the profession. Let us pass on.

Science itself, apart from its practical usefulness, to which men may, if they care to, attach some importance, is but a very great sham. It was invented, about four hundred years before Christ, by Socrates, whatever he may have said or perhaps thought. What existed before Socrates, or at best what held the first rank and enjoyed precedence was *the intuitive man*, who, in his highest expression, was the artist and the poet. What existed after Socrates, or at least what took primacy in the mind of men, in the consideration of men, was *the theoretical man*, that is to say the reasoning man who must know in order to reason, who therefore learns and classifies and criticises and who, upon the gathered data, builds up deductions and theories, in a word the savant and the rationalist.

But this man also is a mortal enemy of art and life. He also is as anti-Dionysian as can be. Socrates is well enough known for an anti-artist and Plato wished to banish the poets from the Republic: "The most illustrious antagonist of the tragic (that is the artistic) conception of the Universe, is Science. Art causes life to be loved by presenting it a synthetic fashion; science discolors it and freezes it by analyzing it. Science kills what art had vivified. Whoever is prepared to dwell upon the most immediate consequences of this scientific spirit,



whoever goes relentlessly forward, will understand at once how through it 'the myth was put out of existence, and how, through this annihilation poetry, dispossessed of its natural ideal birthplace, was compelled henceforth to wander like a homeless vagabond.' "

Socrates it was who truly built piecemeal that theoretical man. He did it by his doctrine which was singularly deep in the sense that it went straight out to the end of the initial thought, but his radically false doctrine was that morality is in proportion to knowledge, that the man that does not do good is a man that does not know the good and that the man that knows the good does assuredly do it. Here it is precisely, the theoretical man introduced as king of the world! Now nothing is more false than this notion. The opposite is more likely to be true. The man that knows the good does not do it, because he is satisfied with knowing it and that is enough for his conceit and because, knowing the good and knowing that he knows it, he fancies that he is doing it and that he has accomplished and fulfilled his duty. The good is instinctive and passionate; the good is in the action and the action is, we must admit, rarely inspired by the idea and by knowledge. It is frequently, one must admit, the effect of an instinctive and unconscious movement.

Yet this thought is truly the fundamental or corner stone of the doctrine of the theoretical man. Socrates said to the world: "Know, think and reason. To know is to have the power to do the good. Know, think and reason for that is the whole of



man. The rest belongs to childhood."— He should have said: "Follow your instincts; they are good."

It really seems as if Socrates, who was a mistaken but a truly inspired man, understood all that he taught and that is indeed a rare thing. The final word and ultimate meaning of his doctrine was that his doctrine went against life, for listen to him in his last breath: "You shall immolate a cock to Esculapius." That is to say: "Esculapius has now cured me of life." Therefore life is evil. Final pessimism, the pessimism of aim which the doctrine of Socrates contains. Socrates perceived it truly indeed and expressed it magnificently in his last words, surely the most pessimistic words ever uttered.

However, the man of theory, by opposition to the man of instinct, to the man of creation and to the man that causes life to be loved, the artist that is, has been established and enthroned. He will learn, reason, know and build theories. All this is very futile. Science may fill its strength but it is radically and ridiculously powerless to fulfill its aim. What does it propose to do? To know, of course. Very well, but what is knowledge? To know is to establish the way in which all that is in ourselves perceives what is not ourselves. It is not therefore to know, but to know *ourselves*; to test our faculties in the exercise of themselves, precisely nothing else. It is to establish how we are, feel, think, measure and reason. Nothing else. We have not yet come out of ourselves. We know ourselves better and nothing else.

But by testing our faculties we strengthen them.

To be sure, and after having thus strengthened them for thousands of centuries, where shall we be? We shall be able to see what our faculties, which will be very much exercised and very much strengthened, can accomplish and how, very much exercised and very much strengthened, they perceive the world. Is the world better known thereby? The world, not at all, but yet our faculties. We have not yet come out of ourselves; we have developed *ourselves* but without coming out of ourselves. We have pushed further our own selves but without ever escaping them, for that is not a possible feat. We know ourselves better or we know a greater self but of what is not of us, we know nothing. What, then, is the use? "Seek knowledge! Yes, but always as man! What! For ever to remain a spectator of the same comedy, for ever to play a part in the same comedy? Never to be able to look upon things but with these same eyes? Yet, how many beings there must be — innumerable are they — whose organs are fitter to gather knowledge than our own! *At the end of all its knowledge, what shall humanity have known? Its organs.* And that may conceivably mean: impossibility of knowledge. What misery and disgust! . . . A bad spell comes over you; your reason is doing you violence. To-morrow however you shall be once more right in the midst of knowledge and by the same token right in sheer nonsense and by this I mean in the joy that everything human will cause you. Let us go to the seaside!"

Indeed, let us shake off this yoke; let us escape from the jaws of the vice of subjective scepticism. It is nevertheless unavoidable and will always return to do us violence; it is absolutely irrefutable. But let us escape from it and do what men have always done, let us pretend that it is possible for us to know something. Very well, let us take up the thread again. What is the aim of science? Well, it sets itself up facing the world, please note it is the world, and it aims at knowing and explaining it, to impart a real and true knowledge thereof; real meaning complete, and true meaning logical, connected, systematic. In other terms, or else the words have no meaning whatsoever, it sets out to empty the infinite. By definition it is powerless.— You may argue that it is something, to pull something out from the infinite and to explain it, to make it clear and understood. But every part of the infinite holds to the whole of the infinite and cannot be explained without the whole being explained. Hear the words of Claude Bernard: “If I knew any one thing thoroughly, I would know everything.” The explanations of science are therefore always so superficial that they are equivalent to a non-explanation, that they are a non-explanation, and that all the knowledge of science knows nothing.

Science may be a game, if you like, quite a serious and honorable game. But there is no sufficient reason to give those that are thus playing a game any pre-eminence in humanity, to entrust humanity to them. It even savors of the ridiculous: “The adepts of science give the impression of people who

would have intended to dig a vertical hole piercing the earth from end to end. The first one discovers that, if working during the whole of his life with the greatest assiduity, he could but succeed in piercing an infinitesimal part of the enormous depth and that, moreover, the result of his work would be filled in and reduced to nothing by the work of his neighbor."

The savant, the rationalist, the man of theory is therefore a degenerate man, an under-man. Have you read Faust? Did you understand it? Well, it is the condemnation in three parts of the man of theory. Faust is at first the man of to-day, the man of theory, the man who would have been utterly unintelligible to a Greek before Socrates; he is the man who is eaten up with a passion for knowledge, eaten up with a passion for "culture."—He perceives the vanity thereof and experiments with sentimental life.—Sentimental life does not offer him much resistance, does it?—Then, *having thrown himself into the contemplation of the Hellenic antiquity and having long tarried therewith*, what does he reach? He reaches the life of action, the life that does not reason nor does it sing the sentimental romance but acts and creates. What does this mean? It means that the progress of Faust consisted, in going back from the XIXth century to the Renaissance and from the Renaissance to pre-Socratic Greece. The progress of Faust consisted in his turning his back to "Progress." Each true progress shall do likewise. Scientific life, rational and theoretical life it is that indicates decadence. "The fact that science has gained this extent of

sovereignty shows that the XIXth century has escaped from the dominion of the ideal. A certain lack of aspirations and desires renders possible to us the scientific inquisitiveness and strictness, this kind of virtue which is proper to us."

Inquisitiveness is a passion but it is the last of them; it is an old man's passion. An old man it was who first said: "Out of mere inquisitiveness am I still alive," and he said it with much melancholy. No doubt, there are men who are born with that "high curiosity" as Renan called it; but they are those who are born old. Youth wants to live and do. The scientific age is the last age of humanity, or it would be the last if humanity were not fortunate enough to fall under the law of "eternal return" which is one of Nietzsche's dogmas, or one of his hopes.

There is hardly a more powerful illusion than this idea, truly universal nowadays, which consists in confusing civilization and science. The idea is general, with the men who think they have meditated and even with any other man, whether he belongs to the people or to the élite, and perhaps even more so with the man of the people. The civilized man is the man that knows; the cultured man is the man that knows. Nothing is more false than this idea. The artist that knows nothing at all and the man of action that knows little are as cultured and civilized, often much more so, than the savant: "All our modern world is caught in the web of Alexandrine culture and has for its ideal the man of theory, armed with the most powerful

means of knowledge, working in the service of science and whose prototype and original ancestor was Socrates. This ideal is the principle and the aim of all our educational methods. All other kinds of existence (art, life of action or industrial life) must painfully struggle, accessorially develop itself not as a projected end but as a tolerated occupation. A disposition almost appalling caused this for a long time, that the *cultured man* was only acknowledged as such if he took the form of the *learned man*. Our very art of poetry is born of learned imitations. . . . The type of Faust, at his starting point, would seem utterly unintelligible to a true Greek. . . ." Think, however, of the end of Faust and note also what Goethe said to Eckermann. They were speaking of Napoleon. Eckermann did not understand him at all. "But, my friend," Goethe said, "in *actions* also is there productivity." In this "delightful and naïve way" Goethe was reminding his friend that the non-theoretical man offers to the men of to-day, to the Eckermanns, something "improbable and disconcerting" and therefore that the wisdom of a Goethe is necessary for one to conceive and verily to excuse so unusual a mode of existence."

Goethe saw very well that science did not offer the only means of productivity. It is even an inferior one and prevents the display of the higher glorious means of productivity. The new idol is somewhat lowly and if it is, as we have shown it to be, also barren, it diverts men from the direction of the fertile sources. It chills and hardens the



world; renders it insipid without even fulfilling its pretentious design, which is to cause the world to be known.

Has science even that fine merit of which it brags, of being the opponent of credulity, of *destroying faith*? Science and faith, how often these two words and what they stand for have been set up against each other? Please note, however, that science is based upon a faith, that it is a sign that man does need a faith, a *mystical certainty* and that it confirms and strengthens in the minds of men their mania for credulity and their irrational and childish need for mystical certainty. "The fierce desire for certainty is poured out to-day in the compact masses with scientific and positivist airs" and again "this desire to obtain at any price something tangible is that same desire for a prop and a support, that same instinct of weakness which creates or preserves religions and metaphysics." Faith in science is but merely a form of piety and nothing else: "In what manner, we also, are we still pious?" In this way. We, the scientists, we pledge ourselves firmly not to believe out of faith, out of *a priori* convictions, to believe but that which shall have been proved real and true. Very well. But in order to impose this discipline upon ourselves "so that this discipline may begin to act" must there not be an *a priori* conviction, to wit that the proved is better than the not proved? To be sure that conviction is needed and it must be imperious and absolute, and it is an *imperative* and it is not proved. But, please, it is a faith! "It is



well shown that science therefore also rests upon a faith and that no unconditional science could exist."

You may say that it is not a faith but merely the desire, merely a natural and legitimate desire, not to be deceived. Very well, but then this desire not to be deceived presupposes another idea which is this: it were better not to be deceived than to be deceived. Speaking in the domain of general ideas, how do you come to know that? It is most unproved that it were better not to be deceived than be deceived. Speaking in the domain of general truth, your will of truth is therefore a gratuitous one; it exists because it exists; it exists because that you were born with it. It is an *a priori* conviction: it is a faith.

You may retort that that is not quite the case. It is not that I do not wish to be deceived; it is rather that I do not wish to *deceive* others. Well, of course, that is another thing. We were in the domain of metaphysics, and we are now in that of morality. I thought I had to deal with a metaphysical faith; but it is a moral one. Still, it comes to the same point or very near to it. Again it is an imperative, an unproved and unprovable fixed idea. You want the truth because you do not wish to deceive; because you are an honest man. Very good. But who told you that you should not deceive, who persuaded you of that little *Don Quixotism*, of that "enthusiastic little nonsense"? Your conscience, your holy conscience! All right, but then you can see that the wish for truth rests upon an imperative which does not give its reasons and

which is determined not to give them, again upon a faith. Therefore, whether your wish for truth comes from a wish not to be deceived or from a wish not to deceive, it rests either upon an *a priori* philosophical conviction or upon an *a priori* moral conviction. The desire to possess what is proved rests upon an idea or a feeling, neither of which is proved or can be proved. Therefore "it is again upon a metaphysical belief that rests our faith in science." Whence comes this metaphysical belief?

Well, it is most likely to come from the ancient theologies which have penetrated and soaked us for thousands of years. All this is still a remnant of God: "We ourselves who are to-day seeking knowledge, we the anti-metaphysicians and impious men, are still borrowing our kindling sparks from the fire that was lit by a thousand years old faith, by that Christian faith that was also that of Plato and that established as a principle that God is truth and that truth is divine."

Come to think of it for a while, it is strange that this same science that has freed mankind and must free it more and more—you know the commonplace—needs itself a slavery, necessitates that slavery and at the same time refuses to hear about it, brings it forth in deed and proscribes it in words. The theoretical, scientific, "Alexandrine" civilization came by degrees to thinking, conceiving and proclaiming equality among all men. Very well, if you wish it. But simultaneously, it needs, for its mines, its coal, its railways, its buildings, its division of work which derives from it all, it needs a "people"

which is as much a people of slaves, and, is in certain aspects more so than was the servile mob of Athens and Rome: The Socialists have proved this point very clearly and moreover in this part of their reasoning they are right. Here is an antinomy. Here is moreover a danger. That danger is that the Alexandrine civilization, that is, our own, may be destroyed some day, possibly some near day, by the double result of its practical necessities and its theoretical and declamatory preachings. Both tend to or end in precisely the same result: "One may no longer conceal from one's self what lies hidden beneath this Socratic culture: the boundless illusion of optimism. Nor may one be surprised any longer at the fruit of such optimism ripening; nor at society being increasingly shaken by the fever of pride and of the appetites because it has become corroded down to the lowest layers by the acid of such a culture; nor at the faith in an earthly happiness for all and in the possibility of such a scientific civilization, gradually transforming itself into a threatening will, which exacts this Alexandrine happiness upon earth and invokes the intervention of a *Deus ex Machina*, in Euripides fashion. One must note that in order to maintain itself, the Alexandrine civilization needs a state of slavery, a class of slaves; and yet, owing to its optimistic conception of existence, it denies the necessity of this state. Therefore, when the effect of those fine deceiving and soothing words has been worn out over the dignity of man and the dignity of labor, that civilization gathers speed towards an appalling annihilation.

There is nothing more terrifying than a barbaric people of slaves who have learned to look upon their existence as an injustice and are prepared to revenge themselves thereof not only by themselves but by the strength of all the generations to come."

Thus is science most futile in its work, pretending as it does to exhaust the inexhaustible and having, moreover, explained nothing at all so long as it has not explained everything. It is a portent of decadence, it replaces the man of production by the barren and impotent man of theory. It is a leaven of decadence in this that it drives man away from life and beauty to restrict him to the contemplation and the examination of a "truth" which is after all unattainable. It does not even enjoy the distinction of not being faith, and of warding off mankind from a faith considered childish since it rests itself upon a faith which remains as unproved, as unprovable and as childish as any other. From all points of view, science also is an alien, an importunate intruder and an *obstacle*.

## CHAPTER VII.

### CRITICISING THE OBSTACLES: MORALITY.

THE religions are false and science is vain; all are obstacles to strong life and to real life and leavens of decadence in humanity. Let us now turn to morality, to non-religious morality, so as not to come back to matters already examined; let us turn to independent morality, as considered since Socrates, perhaps even since days that came before him; let us study it as the law and rule of humanity and as a thing that guides and uplifts, strengthens and broadens mankind. It is true? Let us see.

To begin, it seems that morality is really *false* in itself, without going any further into the analysis that could be made of it and into the study of its effects. Morality is a commandment that enjoins us not to be natural and to avoid nature. Is not this already strange? Why should a being, who is natural beyond any doubt, who is part of nature, hold it as a duty and a rule of life, to live contrarily to nature and, admitting that he should do so, live outside it? "Man against the world," against "the whole world," man as "negatory principle of the world"—is not this so strange that it becomes a laughable matter? That everything

should have its laws, is possible; it is at all events the principle laid by our opponents. That pretention and that other which claims that we also have our own principle, but one contrary to the universal law, but one that denies, that directly attacks and despises the universal law, a mite of a thing against the world, a next-to-nothing against all things, that is like the paradox of an insane man. "The monstrous bad taste of such an attitude is apparent to our conscience and inspires in us nothing but disgust."

It seems established that if morality is not in nature and is even against nature, it is simply because it is false. A physician to whom you were to say: "Here is a most peculiar body; it does not obey the law of attraction. It is the only body in nature that fails to obey attraction; it even resists it most firmly. How do you account for that fact?" would reply in the words of Arago: "There is one explanation: it is that the fact you mention is not true. You are under a delusion concerning that body; if it were endowed with intelligence and had that same illusion upon itself I would tell it that it is crazy."

Morality, considered in what it is in the main, that is, a law peculiar to man, one that the universe does not obey and that is contrary to those obeyed by the universe, is a mere folly, an illusion and therefore untrue.

Men have felt this perfectly well. Finding in spite of all, the paradox of that very small man set up against the whole immense universe too monstrous, they invented, as counterpoise, another uni-

verse that would stand in with man on the same side of the scale. They invented the divine world. There is the universe; it is absolutely immoral, that is so; but here is God who is moral, like man, just, like man; who is the keeper and avenger of morality and justice and puts everything right at a given moment, in a given place and according to justice and morality. Hence a counterpoise. On the one side is the universe; on the other stand God and man. Even admitting man to be worthless, God is infinite. It is therefore the universe, which, by comparison with God and man together becomes a negligible quota and a mere nothing. Consequently, morality, which has for itself one part of what is in nature and the whole of the supernatural as well, cares nothing at all for the universe, which is in turn but a part, an atom and even a midget of an atom and immoral.

Very well played. And, by the way, it proves once more what intimate connection there is between morality and religion, and between morality and the supernatural. When morality does not come from the supernatural, does not proceed from it, morality needs it in order to avoid being paradoxical and ridiculous and invents it to secure ballast, and weight and authority and to force itself upon men. "The transcendental world was conceived by Kant so that he could leave moral liberty its place."

Very well played. But it is a game, it is sheer jugglery. We are in nature. This nature has its laws; it may be that they were established by God



but laws it has. The natural, the true and the divine points are, if nature is the work of a God, that we should conform to the natural laws and not that we should revolt against them. A fish that would want to live in the air and that would be persuaded that its *duty* commands it to live there, would be a most peculiar animal.

Who fails to perceive that such an invention of a whole supernatural world in order to explain, or to found morality, or to save it from the appearance of being absurd, is merely an artificial transposition and projection? The moral man, surprised in a way at his being one, wishing to investigate that point and to justify himself for his being moral, projects himself into the infinite and invents a moral God who is but man himself immoderately enlarged. He delights and recomforts himself in that shadow of himself and says to himself: "I am not *alone*; I am not the *only one* of my kind. I have a sublime and strong companion whom I resemble and who supports me against the world which is so different from myself and which is no doubt an hostile world. He will defend me against it and reward me for my resistance. At least he gives me confidence by his mere presence. At least he saves me from being ludicrous and from the terror of being alone of my kind, as a stranger in an unknown land." Morality, inventing the transcendental world to reassure itself, is like a traveler conversing in friendly terms with his own shadow.

But, notwithstanding the whole real universe

and independently of the transcendental universe. I find the moral law in my own conscience. That also is a fact, a real fact, which we must surely take into account and upon which I would be glad to have your opinion.

Nietzsche answered this in a *Critic of the Conscience*, which offers us nothing very new for it is almost wholly to be found in *La Rochefoucauld* but which is renovated by the liveliness of his eloquence and of his sarcasms, by his psychological penetration and the vigor of his dialectic. These are personal to Nietzsche and would have made that work of his an incomparable little volume but for the fact that its contents are scattered in a score of passages of his works. I shall do little else than gather it together. Quotations, in this case as in every other whenever Nietzsche enjoyed clear sight, are much to be preferred to interpretations, no matter who tenders them.

You allege that your conscience imperiously commands you to do this or that, and that it is painful to you not to obey its dictates. You say that "when man decides that this or that is good as it stands and when he concludes that, for that reason, it must be so and finally that, when he does what he has thus found to be right and necessary, then the action is a moral one." That is what you say. "But, my friend, you are speaking here of three actions instead of one, because your judgment: 'this or that is good as it stands' is a first action." Well, that action is arbitrary or at least uncontrolled. "Whatever it is that you are thinking of,

why do you consider it to be right? Because my conscience shows it to me "to be right. Well, what leads you to think your conscience infallible? Why not take conscience of your conscience? Why do you not analyze its decision? "Your decision 'this or that is right as it stands' has a previous history which lies in your instincts, in your tendencies, your antipathies, your experiences and your inexperience. You should be asking yourself: 'How did it come to be there?' and again, later: What is in the end, prompting me to listen to it?" Because, see this: "You may be heeding its command as a brave soldier receives an order from his commanding officer. Or as a woman that loves the man whose bidding she does. Or as a flatterer and a coward that fears his master. Or as a fool that obeys because he finds no ready retort to the order. In short, you may be obeying your conscience in a hundred different ways."

Think also of the habits one forms. "When you pay attention to such and such judgment as being the voice of your conscience, with the result that you consider something to be right, you may be doing it because you have never thought deeply upon yourself and have blindly accepted what ever since your childhood has been pointed out to you as being right."

Think also that there may be a subtle disguise over your selfishness, as La Rochefoucauld would have said, and that is over your selfishness. When you pay attention to this or that judgment as being the voice of your conscience, it may be that you do

it "because your daily bread and your position came to you along with what you call your duty; and you consider that duty to be right because it seems to you to be the condition of your existence, for your right to existence seems to you irrefutable."

Again, perhaps "the firmness of your moral judgment might well be a proof of personal paucity, of a lack of individuality. And the moral force might spring from your own stubbornness or from your inability to perceive a new ideal. If, to sum up, you were a shrewder thinker and more observant and had learned more, at no price would you still be calling duty and conscience this duty and this conscience which you fancy to be personal to you; your religion would be enlightened as to the way in which moral judgments are always reached."—They are formed in a thousand different ways. It is strange that one should fail to analyze the "categorical imperative" as one would any other phenomenon of the consciousness. It is because of this phenomenon one *does not wish* to analyze it; one does not care to analyze it and there are pretty good reasons for that too. They do not wish to analyze the categorical imperative those that want to act with energy and that, at the same time, need to obey, without discussing it, something very high which commands without reasoning its order. They need the absolute, as a man of action needs absolutism: "All men that feel the need of the most violent words and intonations, the most eloquent gestures and attitudes *in order to be able* to act, revolutionary politicians, socialists, preachers, with or with-

out Christianity, all those who wish to avoid half-success — they all speak of ‘duties’ and of duties with an absolute character. Otherwise, and they know this very well, they would have no right to their immoderate pathos. They are well aware of it. For that reason, they seize greedily a philosophy of morality that preaches any kind of categorical imperative. Or else they assimilate part of a religion, as did, for instance, Mazzini. *Because they desire that others should have absolute confidence in them, it is necessary that they should begin having absolute confidence in themselves*, according to any kind of ultimate commandment, which must be indisputable, sublime and without a restriction, a commandment of which they may feel themselves to be the servants and instruments and of which they would like to be acknowledged as the servants and instruments. In them, we find the most natural adversaries of moral emancipation and of skepticism. They are often very influential; but they are scarce.”

They do not wish either to analyze the categorical imperative, those, and they are much more numerous, who have a selfish interest in disguising wholly terrestrial and temporal submission and servility under the mask of a spiritual submission and a religious or moral character. This is a subtle move of egotism, of which those that benefit most by it may be more or less the dupes: “A man that feels disgraced at the thought that he is the tool of a prince, a party, a sect or even a financial power and yet wants to be, or is compelled to turn himself

into, such a tool, will need to face himself and public opinion, some pathetic principles that can ever be upon his lips, some principles of an absolute obligation to which he may without shame submit and show his submission. Every manner of servility with any ingenuousness at all holds on to the categorical imperative and shows itself the deadly enemy of those who wish to divest duty of its absolute character."

All this may bring one back to stating that conscience, far from being the very foundation of our nature, upon which we must ever rest, is but an adaptation of ourselves to all our surroundings and to that with which we are compelled to live. Here is what Leibnitz thought of the *intellectual* conscience: Knowledge is but an accident of representation, not its essence. What we call (intellectual) conscience is but a condition of our intellectual being. We cannot think without forming consciousness of a certain quantity of our representations; but that is merely an accident, a relatively scarce one. No doubt, it is necessary for our thinking but it is not at all the foundation of our intellectual being; it is but the surface thereof. In the same way, the moral conscience is but the intellectual consciousness of an inceptive act to which we are attributing a certain value or a certain beauty. We need this conscience in order to act. It conditions our actions; it is the condition of our actions. Without it, we should have no reason for action or we should have a different one. Must we then conclude that it is imperative and legitimately imperative? Not



at all. It is an incentive like any other, to be controlled like any other, one that can be divided up and subdivided into several back-incentives like any other and not at all a living table of the law to which we had but blindly to submit.

You may object: "Controllable! Controllable by what? By our conscience, of course, and here we are back to nonplus." To this I shall reply: "Assuredly." It is controllable by the conscience beyond the conscience. As there are back-incentives in the bidding of the conscience considered as an incentive, there must be back-consciences to control those back-incentives. Please note, however, that in thus falling back and in throwing the conscience back, we are destroying it because we throw it back gradually into the unconscious, where it gets lost. By means of analysis I may subdivide the prompting of my conscience into several motives or incentives and I may, to be sure, control them with my conscience. But these incentives, heredity, education, temperament or multiple social influences are either lost in the dark past or scattered in the space of the present. They escape me. I am no longer their judge nor yet their master. I am even unable to recognize them. Where, then, is my control? This very conscience which seemed so firm has weakened and feels itself powerless. This very conscience which seemed so strong and as it were, so compact, has crumbled and thereby vanished.

Therefore the "evidence" and the "command" of conscience are but prejudices and illusions, like



so many other things that have not been analyzed. Conscience is a multiple thing which presents itself to us as simple and that lends it authority. It is a variable thing which presents itself to us as immutable and that lends it credit. It is a very conditioned and relative thing which presents itself to us as absolute, and that lends it a divinity which it lacks. It is an idol only to those that consult it without looking at it. But take a look at it. Having seen that it is made of materials and of what materials it is made, you will no longer tremble before it.

Yet there is responsibility, the feeling of responsibility, which is also a fact and perhaps a universal fact and which, following the dictates of conscience, confirms it, sanctions it and consequently strengthens it. I am receiving—I fancy that I am receiving an order from within; that is the first fact. If I obey it, I am pleased with myself; if I do not, I am displeased with myself; that is the second fact. You have analyzed the first fact and it may be you have dissolved it, but there remains the second for you to analyze. Willingly. It seems to me that the feeling of responsibility is an illusion. This illusion comes to you from believing that you know how your actions are accomplished, how “the human action is performed.” That belief is an error. We do not know at all how the human action is performed. To think that they know how human actions are performed is the error of children and primitive people. It has taken us centuries to learn “that exterior things are not what they seem to be.

Well, the same is exactly true of the inner world. . . . All actions are by essence known." The ancients believed that an action is contained in the thought we have of it, like the bird in its egg and that it must necessarily come out of it. This caused both Socrates and Plato logically to conclude that to perform an action is to know it, that he who knows it does it, that he who does not do it is merely a man who did not know it and that the criminal is but a man who does not know virtue. Does not this seem quite childish to you? *Yet it would be the truth* if we knew how an action is accomplished. In that case, it would be perfectly correct to measure the thought by the action and, from such and such action left undone, to conclude that the thought thereof had not existed and, from an act accomplished, that the thought thereof had existed. But that is far from being correct. There is between thought and action something which we do not know at all. "What one may know of an action is never sufficient to accomplish it and the passage from understanding to action has never to this day been established in any case." Hence responsibility disappears. You can hardly be the cause of an action when it is impossible to you to make out with yourself what caused it to be. So long as one does not know how the passage from idea to cause is accomplished and so long as one is ignorant of all there is between them both, of all that there may be and of all that there must be between them, to hold one's self as responsible is the effect of an illu-

sion, of a prejudice and of a clumsy and erroneous knowledge of one's self.

Let us reflect awhile upon the impossibility in which we stand truly to know our inner mechanism and consequently to be responsible, rewardable, or punishable or even to hold any opinion thereon. Think of this: we hardly know ourselves and can hardly give names to even our coarsest instincts; and as to "their power, their ebb and flow, their reciprocal play, as to the laws that rule over their *nutrition*, these are utterly unknown to us." Why does the same fact irritate one man and amuse another and why does it irritate and amuse the same man according to his mood? "We notice, one day, while crossing a public place, that some one is laughing at us. . . . According to the kind of man we are, the event will be a different one. One may take it as he would a drop of rain, another may shake it away from him as he would an insect. One man will seek therein a cause for quarrel, another will examine his clothes to see whether they are affording a cause for laughter; another will be thinking of the ludicrous in itself; finally there may be one man who will rejoice at having unwittingly contributed to add one sun ray to the gaiety of the world.— And in every one of these cases, a certain instinct will find its satisfaction, whether it be that of vexation, or that of combativeness, that of meditation or that of kindness."

I have been supposing several men; but I might have supposed one same man as feeling any of

these sentiments. Why is that? Because at that time it happened to be his "mood," to use a popular saying. But when we say mood, what do we mean? It means that one particular instinct of the man, and not another instinct, pounced upon that incident as if it were a prey, or loot and fed on it. But why this particular instinct and not another; why precisely this one? Because it had at the time reached the climax of its craving, because it was famished and on the watch. But why at that special moment? That you will never know. You do not understand the nutrition of your instincts.

Here is one of Nietzsche's personal recollections: "Recently, at eleven o'clock in the morning a man fell down straight before my eyes as if struck by lightning: all the women about the place began to scream. But I set him up again on his feet and waited near him until he recovered his power of speech. I felt no emotion. I felt neither fear nor pity. I simply did what there was to be done and quietly went my way. Suppose that some one should have warned me the day before that the next day at eleven o'clock a man would fall at my feet, I should have undergone the most varied torments, I could not have slept and when the decisive moment came I might have been taken like that man instead of helping him. For in the interval all the instincts that one can imagine *would have had time* to represent themselves and to comment upon the fact. The events of our life are much more what we put in them than what they contain themselves. It may

be that they themselves are altogether empty. It may be that to live is to invent."

The point is that the play of our instincts and especially the causes of the play of our instincts are unknown to us. "Our estimates and our moral judgments are mere images and fancies hiding a physiological process which is unknown to us. . . . Everything that we call conscience is after all nothing but the more or less fanciful comment made upon an unknown, perhaps upon an unknowable text."—How could we then be responsible for a *spectacle* the whole of which we do not see, which we see badly, which we hear badly, of which we know neither the side scenes nor the ins and outs and of which we are certainly not the authors?

The mistake over this judgment of the conscience lies in imagining that it has a value and that it gives a "value." It is a phenomenon of registration. It registers a state of content or of discontent, of appetite or of repugnance, it does not assess the action to be performed or the action that has been performed; it should not be consulted in order to know whether the action has or has not a value: "Otherwise we would be reasoning as follows: our conscience rejects and repulses this action; therefore this action should be condemned. But as a matter of fact the conscience disapproves of this action because this action has been disapproved of for a long time. It creates no value." We shall agree to this more readily if we think that, at the beginning, it was not conscience 'which led in the end' doubtlessly to the re-

jection of certain actions ; it was the judgment or the prejudice relating to the consequences of that action."

Taking it thus the conscience is but the registrar of feelings, of ideas and prejudices which are past, and obsolete and which have lapsed in themselves. And if you look upon it as the register of quite actual feelings or thoughts, its authority as a creator of values, as causing something to have a value, is no greater ; because in fine "the approval of the conscience and a feeling of comfort which comes from being at peace with one's self are of the same order as the pleasure of an artist before his own work. They *prove* nothing at all. Content is not a measure to assess that to which it relates, not any more than the lack of content can be used as an argument against the value of a thing. We are far from knowing enough to be able to assess our actions ; we lack for this the possibility of taking an objective point of view. Were we even to disapprove of an action, we should not be judges but parties to it. The noble sentiments which accompany an act prove nothing as to the value of the act : *in spite of a most pathetic state of elevation the artist may give birth to a very poor thing.*—One hardly knows if one should not even go further and say that these impulses of conscience "are deceiving." That may be that. "They may cause us to look in the wrong place, they may divert our power for critical judgment ; they may lead us away from caution and from the suspicion that we may do something stupid" ; they may "make us stupid."



Men are most illogical. It is understood and the consent is practically unanimous over this that we are not responsible for our dreams. But why? "Nothing belongs to you more properly than your dreams; nothing is more thoroughly your own work. Subject, form, sector, spectator, you yourself are all these and everything is yourself in those comedies." It is the dreams that the *self* perhaps unalloyed, perhaps *almost* allowed, at all events with much less alloy than in our state of wakefulness, is revealed to us. Awake, under the influence of all your surroundings, you repress and correct your thoughts and feelings as they come forth, in consideration and conformity with the people and the things about you. You are ashamed or afraid of this or that thought which comes to you because it *would* shame you before others. You repress it, you strangle it a moment before it is quite clear, so as not to have had it, to be able to tell yourself that you have not had it. And it is true that you did not have it in full. Therefore the share of others in your thoughts and in your feelings when you are awake is enormous. In your state of wakefulness it is I, as much as yourself, who is thinking within you. Surely not in that state must one seek and try to seize and snap your personality.

In the state of sleep on the contrary you have no longer this power to repress your dawning thought. Sleep is the domain of unrestricted thought. The dream is the thought freed and consequently the pure self. If you want to know if you are brave, at heart and truly brave, if you are a coward, or if you



are kind or wicked, pay attention to what you do in your dreams. You have there the most precious and surest text that you could consult concerning yourself. Nevertheless you pretend that you are not responsible for your dreams. I should feel inclined to conclude "that the great majority of men must be having appalling dreams." If they had fine dreams they would be proud of them and they would enthusiastically declare themselves responsible for them; they would "exploit the nocturnal poetry to increase human pride." Nevertheless your dreams are yourself; they are more you than you are yourself when awake. When one studies the character of a person and makes him narrate his dreams, one finds again in him that person's feelings in the highest degree of artlessness and in a neater and purer light of artlessness and candor.

Well, let us go back to it. You do not wish to be responsible for your dreams. You are right. But you are no more, you are much less and with a much stronger reason, responsible for yourself in your state of wakefulness. "For life is but a dream, a little less inconstant," as Pascal said. That is, life is a little more repressed and amended by the non-self which is no doubt not yourself. If you are more free in your dreams than when awake that is not any reason why you should believe in your free will only when you are awake. In last analysis, "free will finds its father and mother in human pride and vanity." We must note here that there is perhaps something "anti-religious in this theory of free will; that something may be unconscious but it

is there. The theory of free will pretends to 'create for man a right to take himself as condition and cause of his superior acts.' It is therefore correct and properly speaking a 'form of the feeling of growing pride.' And here is its *processus*: 'Man feels his power, his happiness as one says. It must be that his will comes into play in the face of this state of mind; otherwise it seems to him that power and happiness did not belong to him. Virtue is, therefore, the attempt to consider an act of volition in the present or in the past as *an antecedent necessary to each feeling of high and intense happiness*. If the will of certain actions is regularly present in conscience one may foresee that a feeling of power shall result.' That is an illusion natural enough of our conceit. It is an 'optical play of primitive psychology.' It always proceeds from 'the false supposition that nothing belongs to us *unless it be in our conscience in the shape of will*. The whole doctrine of responsibility is tacked on this naïve psychology that *the will alone is a cause* and that one must be conscious of having manifested one's will to be able to consider one's self as a cause.' It is plain therefore that if we go back to its principle, the principle of the illusion that constitutes it, 'free will finds its father and mother in the human pride and vanity. It may be that I say this a little too often; but that does not make it a lie.'"

One should be thinking of this when in the presence of a criminal one has to judge. Of course society must be protected against those that hamper

it. On this point Nietzsche never varied; he is even an extremely harsh protector of society. But when it comes to *punishing*, that is an aberration. *The criminal alone knows to what extent he is guilty*; or rather he does not know it but he knows it incomparably better than you do. He knows the whole chain of exterior and interior circumstances that led him to his crime, or rather he does not know them, but as compared to you he knows them. It follows "that he does not consider, as his judge or prosecutor does, his act as being outside order and comprehension." You, as judge or prosecutor, are astonished, stupefied before an act that you have not committed, and which it was impossible that you should commit. And you "measure the penalty precisely according to the degree of astonishment that you have felt." Herein lies the injustice that is derived from ignorance.

Do you know in what consists the work of the defender in a criminal case? It is very simple. It consists in gradually emerging out of his ignorance concerning the antecedents and circumstances of the act. It consists in knowing the act. When he knows it, the *astonishment* of which I have spoken gradually diminishes and with it the horror of the act. The action perpetrated comes back within the order of things. In the end it does not appear at all as a fault but merely as something that threatens the community. If the public prosecutor was not dominated by his professional instinct, and since he does exactly the same thing as the counsel for the defence, he also would, through searching and know-

ing the antecedents of the criminal, end by no longer seeing the fault as a fault. He would end by understanding the crime as if he had committed it and consequently he would end in not finding it at all criminal but merely dangerous for society. Through analyzing a criminal action, that is through knowing it, one empties it of all criminality. It is extremely dangerous if one wants to punish, to study a criminal affair; because one ends by diminishing the distance between one's self and the criminal until that distance is altogether suppressed. Starting from this idea: "I never would have done such a thing," one reaches this other one: "I certainly would have done likewise." The institution of the jury is with regard to this point an essentially social thing. The jurymen are honest men whom crime astonishes prodigiously and for whom crime is a thing in which *he does not enter*. He is therefore in the disposition where one should be in order to punish. The judge, who is very much accustomed to crime, who lives with crime, would end by being exceedingly indulgent to crime, so much would he end in finding it natural and almost necessary, that is with regard to each individual case. Yet when the magistrates decide on criminal cases instead of the jury they are not gentle. Pardon me. People had no doubt perceived so well that there was social danger in having criminals judged by men accustomed to crime that they had invented a round-about way and a fiction. It was forbidden, if you please, the judge was *forbidden* to judge the criminal. He was only permitted to apply the law to the

criminal. He had to judge not at all according to his conscience but strictly according to the law. He did not have to say: "In my soul and conscience this man is guilty"; but he had to seek the line of a certain book which corresponded to the crime committed by that man, and he had to apply that line to that action without any intervention of his conscience, without any intervention of his moral sensibility. That is, we know it, the way in which the judges of the old regime always gave their verdict, and considered it their duty to do so. In other words the law was made to judge. That is something which was as far removed as possible from the species, and in which it was absolutely impossible to study the psychology of the particular criminal that had caused it, and which knew nothing at all of the particular point. In other words again it was the crime not the criminal that had to be decided upon. And that was quite right, if one wanted to punish. There you can see a very good proof that no confidence attached to an intelligent judge, precisely because of his intelligence, in order that the man should be punished. By a roundabout way and through a fiction he was compelled not to decide himself. And that was quite right if one wanted to punish. There are but two ways to insure the punishment of criminals: have them judged by a book which does not know them, and which has foreseen them only in the abstract, or have them judged by men especially selected as being incapable of understanding them. And both systems are very good if one wants society to protect and defend itself.

Let us retain from this that guilt is a kind of prejudice and that we never know to what extent a man is guilty, nor whether he is guilty at all. All that we know, and even that is very hard to assess, is that the criminal is a danger for the society that we have built up and that we wish to preserve.

In these matters of guilt and innocence, of vice and virtue, truth may not be, perhaps, the opposite of what we have believed until now but rather the reverse of what we have believed. We have too long been accustomed to consider virtue and vice as causes. We are now inclined to hold them to be consequences and we are in a way turning the question *inside out*. "We turn the relation between cause and effect inside out in a curious fashion. Nothing perhaps distinguishes us more thoroughly from the ancient believers in morality. For instance we no longer say: 'If a man is degenerating physiologically it was vice that caused it.' Neither do we say: 'Virtue causes man to prosper, it brings long life and happiness.' On the contrary our opinion is that vice and virtue are not causes but results. We hold onto the idea that, in spite of everything, in spite of education, surroundings, fate or circumstance, one can but become what one is. One becomes an honest man because one is an honest man; that is to say, because one was born as a capitalist of good instincts and favorable conditions. When one is born to the world *poor*, born of parents who, in all things, have but wasted and have reaped nothing, one is 'incorrigible,' I mean ripe for the penitentiary or the lunatic asylum. We



can no longer to-day visualize moral degeneracy as separated from physiological degeneracy. The first is but an ensemble of the symptoms of the second. One is necessarily evil as one is necessarily sick. The word evil here expresses certain incapacities which are physiologically linked to the type of degeneracy, as for instance, weakness of the will, uncertainty and even multiplicity of the person, powerlessness in suppressing the reaction to any given excitation, and in dominating one's self (like the impulsives), or the incapacity to resist any kind of suggestion from a foreign will. Vice is not a cause; it is a consequence. The word 'vice' is used to sum up in an arbitrary definition certain consequences of physiological degeneracy. A general proposition like that taught by Christianity that 'man is evil' would be justified if one could admit that the type of the degenerate is to be considered as the normal type of man. But that may be an exaggeration."

Again, in order well to understand the nature of this morality of which men are so proud, we must go back to its origins and ask ourselves whence it came and ask ourselves also whence it comes to us in the present time, which is not quite the same thing.

Whence did it come? Very likely from the idea of a celestial Nemesis, from the idea that some very powerful beings who dominate us and who may punish us, like us to suffer and like to see us suffer. Here is the sequence of things; in primitive society, in barbaric society, which were in constant



danger, and perhaps ferocious by nature but at all events accustomed to ferociousness by a state of perpetual warfare: "one liked to cause suffering, to avenge one's self; it was a virtue to be resourceful in vengeance and insatiable in vengeance." The community grows conscious of its strength and comforts itself, or thinks it comforts itself, with bloody spectacles. In a word "cruelty is one of the most ancient merry-makings of humanity." Under these conditions what could men believe concerning their Gods? As they make them after the image of man of course they fancy that the Gods also take pleasure and rejoice in the sufferings of men; that the spectacle of human happiness makes them sad, and that the spectacle of human unhappiness "amuses them and puts them in right good humor." Man, therefore, just as he causes his kind to suffer to please himself, so, to please his Gods, causes himself to suffer, especially when he feels happy, when he feels too happy, happy to such an extent that he might disturb or displease the divinities.

In that way war against happiness becomes a duty and voluntary suffering a pious deed. There is nothing else to permit him morality. Morality is a methodical succession of sacrifices in the most precise sense of the word. One struggles against a desire, it is a sacrifice to the Gods; one denies one's self a pleasure, it is a sacrifice to the Gods; one retrenches from one's superfluous or even one's necessary, it is a sacrifice to the Gods. One makes a martyr of one's self and it is a sacrifice to the Gods. The struggle of man against himself is to this

day the whole of morality. Much more so, that is more precisely so, was it the whole of morality in primitive times. "Thus was introduced the notion of the *moral and God-fearing man*, that is to say, the idea that virtue consists in suffering deliberately desired, in privation and in mortification, not at all, we should note here, as a means of discipline, self-domination or aspiration towards personal happiness; but as a virtue which causes the evil Gods to be favorably disposed towards the community because it brings up to them ceaselessly the smoke of the expiatory sacrifices."

Once this idea had penetrated the world, and that must have been very early, a bent was taken and man always considered himself compelled to fight himself to satisfy . . . well, what was it? It may have been at first evil and jealous gods, then later on, a kind but severe God who wants men to think of him and, if not that they should torture themselves, at least that they should not abandon themselves altogether to themselves, which were a manner of forgetting him; or again conscience, that is an inner God, God come within ourselves, a remnant of the divinities of old, a theological residue with all the characteristics of the Gods of old. These characteristics may be toned down; they may be sometimes identical and sometimes exaggerated. This inner God is severe, wants us to think of him as exacting, evil and cruel; he is never satisfied; he is harsher, more susceptible and imperious as we give him more; he commands *categorically* and without giving his reasons. He is in short, God, the God

of old; he has merely passed from outside and from afar within ourselves; he is as mysterious as the others and his commands are "mysteries." Morality is nothing else but transformed religion and especially Nemesis transformed.

Nietzsche might add this: do not tax me with sometimes deriving religion from morality, as previously (a morality that is compelled to invent religion, not to be absurd) and sometimes deriving morality from religion, as I am doing now. There is no contradiction, as you can see, since morality and religion are the same thing. They are two forms of the same thought. It is perfectly true that now this thought, under the guise of religion, creates morality, builds it up, develops it and leaves it to humanity even after its own departure; and now under the guise of morality, needs religion to support itself, to prove itself, to give itself an appearance of reason and, in turn, creates religion. Religion and morality create each other alternately or at the same time. They beget each other reciprocally, indefinitely, through the course of time or, in better words, they are consubstantial with each other. They are, if you like, one and the same divinity in two persons, which presents to humanity one of its two persons, then the other. The first always brings the second in its wake, and the second ever brings back and is ever compelled to bring back the first. Which is chronologically the first we do not know, and very likely can not know because it is almost certain that, chronologically and also essentially, there is neither first nor second, and that they exist in all eternity,

distinct but inseparable and indivisible, being at heart one and the same thing.

And now think of habit, tradition and heredity. Think that morality, as also religion, continues and prolongs itself among men by a sort of atavistic fatality, by a sort of submission to customs and habits with the result that "cowardice and laziness are the first conditions of morality" and you have in all its instalments the history of morality in the human world.

This morality, whose depth we have seen and how vain it is, whose origins we have seen and how little respectable they are — is it good at least in its results, and does it serve any purpose?

Morality depresses; it makes everything vulgar, uglier and weaker in the common sense of the word. It demoralizes. It says to man: "sacrifice yourself to your kind," and then leads him to a sort of suicide which is not even useful to his kind, of whom it spoke to him. Morality exhausts in the heart of man all the springs of his activity, the desires, the passions, the egotism, the tendency to persevere in the being, and to increase one's being and the will to power. And it is that being, now dried up and enervated which morality thinks is going to prove of some use to other men. Its pretention and its tactics consist in causing the activity of each particular individual to drift towards the general good. That is all very well but it starts by breaking all the springs of that same activity. It turns out slaves and expects from them the good results of free work. Worse even, it turns out men-tools, men-

machines. It seeks to endow man with that "blind tenaciousness that is the typical quality of instruments and tools" and it is from these same materialized men, from these men fallen from their humanity that morality expects a labor that may be of use to humanity.

All things considered, we find altruism turning in a circle or venturing in a blind alley.

It turns in a circle in advising us to "work for others, to be disinterested." Who said we were to do this? The others. We have therefore interest advising us to practice disinterestedness and clamoring for it. We have the right to give it the answer given to the fox whose tail had been cut off: "Turn round, if you please, and we shall answer you." In order to advise disinterestedness, one must be disinterested one's self. Altruism "could only be ordered by some one who would be, thereby, renouncing his own advantage, and who would be risking to bring about his own fall, through this sacrifice exacted from individuals." But if those (neighbors, individuals or society) that are asking from me the sacrifice of myself, derive, or merely think they derive, a great advantage, they are advising disinterestedness in their own interest, they advise altruism out of egotism and therefore contradict themselves. Their tongue says: "Sacrifice yourself" and their example says: "Do not sacrifice yourself." Whom do they intend, whom do they hope, to convince?

So much for the circle. Now for the blind alley.

You say: "you my neighbors, or the community,

or Society: be strong for my benefit. Very well but how shall I do it, by being weak for your benefit? begin by destroying all your strength in yourselves, and then be you strong for my service. Have no passions; but be passionate for my benefit. Do not tend towards persevering in the being but apply all your energies to cause that I should persevere in mine. Annihilate yourselves to bring me strength. Be each of you a *nothing* in order that, from all the *nothings* that you will compose there may be an immense strength that shall be myself. There is the blind alley. Altruism tells man to walk ahead after it has erected a wall in front of him. If we change the metaphor, it tells him to walk ahead after it has cut off the tendons of his legs.

It is not always altruism that speaks with the voice of morality; sometimes morality will speak to the individual in the interest of the individual. It says strange, disastrous things to him. Sometimes it will say this: "Toil ye stubbornly and furiously. That will bring ye to begin with riches and honors; then it will safeguard ye against passions and boredom. These are great advantages." It is not easy to see where lay these vaunted great advantages. In truth, that "blind tenaciousness" may somewhat dispel boredom but the latter is most subtle and knows very well how to slip through the intervals of work. It may somewhat allay the passions, but these are themselves most tenacious and they disturb one even in the middle of one's work in a worse and more pernicious way than if



they had been indulged. Especially, this blind and maniac tenaciousness "deprives the organs of that delicacy with the help of which riches and honors could procure enjoyment." Moreover these alleged radical remedies against boredom and passions blunt the senses at the same time and make them reluctant to feeling any new excitement. "The most active period, that is our own, does not know what to do with all its gold and with all its activity beyond piling up ever more gold and ever more activity, because more genius is required for spending than for acquiring. And we shall end by growing heartily sick of them." Yes, "we are now ashamed to rest, we feel remorse for our moments of meditation . . . we live as would someone who feared always to let something slip by. Rather do anything than be doing nothing. That is a principle. The principle is however a dodge used to deal the death blow to superior taste. . . . It will soon come to this that one will no longer follow an inclination towards contemplative life, no longer walk out in the company of one's thoughts or of friends who are not self-despising and endowed with an evil conscience. . . ." There you have one of the fine outcomes, one of the latest to date, of morality.

When morality is not urging us to a rage for activity, which degrades the fine human nature, it leads to other kinds of debasement. Most often, it leads to mediocrity in both good and evil, to some form of cowardly temperament, to that moderation in all things which already the ancients, albeit not those of the heroic period, to be sure, had made into



a virtue and which is a gray, colorless, ugly and repugnant thing. This small bourgeois morality, please note that it is the true one, advises what morality has so far discovered as the best, the most reasonable according to its reason and the most logically in agreement with itself. That morality seems to have for supreme aim merely to bring a good night's sleep to every man at the close of every day. Such is the noble aim to which morality aspires and to which it leads mankind. One may well ask whether the great rule of human conduct can truly be one that has no nobler end than this and that attains, or even desires, no more glorious result.

“People commended unto Zarathustra a certain wise man, as one who could discourse well about sleep and virtue: greatly was he honored and rewarded for it, and all the youths sat before his chair. To him went Zarathustra, and sat among the youths before his chair. And thus spake the wise man: “respect and modesty in presence of sleep. That is the first thing. Go out of the way of all that sleep badly and keep awake at night. Modest is even the thief in presence of sleep: he always stealeth softly through the night. Immodest, however, is the night-watchman; immodestly he carrieth his horn. No small art is it to sleep; it is necessary for that purpose to keep awake all day. Ten times a day must thou overcome thyself: that causeth wholesome weariness, and is poppy to the soul. Ten times must thou reconcile again with thyself; for overcoming is bitterness, and badly sleep the unrecon-

ciled. Ten truths must thou find during the day; otherwise wilt thou seek truth during the night, and thy soul will have been hungry. Ten times must thou laugh during the day, and be cheerful; otherwise thy stomach, the father of affliction, will disturb thee in the night. Few people know it, but one must have all the virtues in order to sleep well. Shall I bear false witness? Shall I commit adultery? Shall I covet my neighbor's maid-servant? All that would ill accord with good sleep. And even if one have all the virtues, there is still one thing needful: to send the virtues themselves to sleep at the right time — that they may not quarrel with one another, the good females. And about thee, thou unhappy one! Peace with God and thy neighbor: so desireth good sleep. And peace also with thy neighbor's devil. Otherwise it will haunt thee in the night. Honor to the government, and obedience, and also to the crooked government! So desireth good sleep. How can I help it, if power like to walk on crooked legs? He that leadeth his sheep to the greenest pasture, shall always be for me the best shepherd: so doth it accord with good sleep. Many honors I want not, nor great treasures: they excite the spleen. But it is bad sleeping, without a good name and a little treasure. A small company is more welcome to me than a bad one: but they must come and go at the right time. So doth it accord with good sleep. Well, also, do the poor in spirit please me: they promote sleep. Blessed are they, especially if one always give in to them. Thus passeth the day unto the virtuous. When

night cometh, then take I good care not to summon sleep. It disliketh to be summoned — sleep, the lord of the virtues! But I think of what I have done and thought during the day. Thus ruminating, patient as a cow, I ask myself: ‘What were thy ten overcomings? And what were the ten reconciliations, and the ten truths, and the ten laughs with which my heart enjoyed itself?’ Thus pondering, and cradled by forty thoughts, it overtaketh me all at once — sleep, the unsummoned, the lord of the virtues. Sleep tappeth on mine eye, and it turneth heavy. Sleep toucheth my mouth, and it remaineth open. Verily, on soft soles doth it come to me, the dearest of thieves, and stealeth from me my thoughts: stupid do I then stand, like this academic chair. But not much longer do I then stand: I lay me already.”

When Zarathustra heard the wise man thus speak, he laughed in his heart: for thereby had a light dawned upon him. And thus spake he to his heart: “A fool seemeth this wise man with his forty thoughts, but I believe he knoweth well how to sleep. Happy even is he who liveth near this wise man! Such sleep is contagious — even through a thick wall, it is contagious. A magic resideth even in his academic chair. And not in vain did the youths sit before the preacher of virtue. His wisdom is to keep awake in order to sleep well. And verily, if life had no sense, and had I to choose nonsense, this would be the desirablest nonsense for me also. Now know I well what people sought formerly above all else when they sought teachers

of virtue. Good sleep they sought for themselves, and poppy-head virtues to promote it. To all those belauded sages of the academic chairs, wisdom was sleep without dreams: they knew no higher significance of life."

It is very likely therefore that morality is a narcotic of which humanity, tired of the tumult of passions, has felt the need to arm itself at some given time. This is, of course, no reason why it should be proscribed. Yet it gives it no title to glory, and is no reason why we should worship it. It seems evident that the constitution of morality was a first step in the decadence of humanity. Morality has doubtlessly existed at all times, since we have seen that it loses itself in religion, that it creates it and is created by it. Yet there was a moment, perhaps one such moment for each nation, when morality was created, when it became a thing apart, a definite institution and understood as such by almost everybody (the time of Socrates among the Greeks). At that moment surely decadence began. There is a time when weariness turns back on life, when the "instinct of degeneracy" turns against the will to live with a "secret thirst for vengeance." Such is either the time of Socrates, or that of Christianity, or that of Schopenhauer's philosophy, or, in a way already, that of Platonism. It is even "the whole of idealism." At length there always comes a time when man wishes to escape life, when he ceases to agree to it and to affirm that it is good, including the passions that are the very shapes of life, a time when he ceases to affirm the very forces of life, including

the sorrows that are life's ransom, are inseparable from it and constitute its sanctions and conditions. Then it is that morality is established and that it is well understood to be established, and that all men have at least a confused feeling that it is established.

In other words, morality is nothing else but a sign of weakness, cowardice and sickness in humanity. It is a sort of general and contagious neurasthenia. Because that illness has deep roots, its own regular bearing and its hygiene, there is in a way some gentility about it, and it has become accepted as if it were something good and healthy. Its causes are its justification. Why live passionately, why live intensely since we are weak and powerless worms? Let us live according to our nature. The regular signs of that illness are taken for laws and rules of conduct. One becomes inured to seeing humanity bending, from stage to stage, its steps towards an ever purer, ever stricter, ever more correct morality. This progress in the weakening, in "Progress" itself, seems to be a most venerable ascent. Finally because that illness has its own hygiene and regime, both regime and hygiene are looked upon as virtues and those that prescribe them as teachers of virtue. It is nevertheless a disease taking roots, settling itself down, and developing itself and yet we cultivate it carefully and it becomes a diathesis. It looks as if man were only fully reassured and satisfied when it has become incurable.

One hardly knows why it does, but morality holds a real hypnotizing sway over the minds of even the thinkers, especially, I should perhaps say, over the

minds of the thinkers. It is apparently intangible. People will discuss God, the super-natural world or the immortality of the soul but one does not discuss morality. There is more; no matter to what philosophical party one may belong, one wishes to end in morality, and to make it plain that one does get there in the end. No matter what philosophical system one may invent or support, one finds a way in the end to bend it towards morality, and to prove that it gets there. There is still more; one always makes it a point of honor to prove that one's own favored system leads to morality by some better way than does any other, that it sustains morality, entails it and contains it in its own folds more and better than any other. There is this also; in order to prove its own excellence, each system asserts itself to be eminently in agreement with morality. In order to prove the others bad, it fancies that it needs but to prove that they lead to immoral conclusions. The words that condemn the others are the same that we use in self-apology; the supreme words are always: "morality is at stake."

Morality is a sanctuary; it also is a criterion that is thought infallible and a touchstone that is considered absolute. "In presence of morality we are not allowed to think, let alone to speak; we must *obey*. . . . To go so far as to criticise morality; morality as a problem, to hold morality as problematic, why, it is . . . immoral."

This form of hypnose must be analyzed. Morality seduces and fascinates because it knows how to "arouse the enthusiasm." It persuades people that



its own is a holy cause; that to consecrate one's self to its service has all the beauty of a sacrifice, and that in serving it, one is willingly forgetting and neglecting one's own interests. It persuades people that he who follows it is something between a hero and a saint. It insinuates that whoever teaches it, and especially whoever sets it up on its own basis again after it has been shaken — and that is always happening — has saved the world. Thus it "cripples the critical will" or else "attracts it to its own side" and into its own camp, or else it "causes it to turn against itself with the result that the spirit of criticism, like the scorpion, sinks its sting in its own body."

In short, morality is the *Circe of the Philosophers*. It changes them into animals that are harmless to itself but, unfortunately, also useless to anyone. It makes them deviate from their straightest paths. It makes them close or lower their eyes in its presence. Or, when they dare to gaze upon it, morality dazzles them to such an extent that they modify their own ideas so far as it is concerned, and with regard to its wishes. By means of clever windings, it causes them to become mere rivulets that flow towards morality and lose themselves in it.

Hence comes the fact that "it is to 'good and evil' that people have until now given the least reflection." This is appalling when one thinks of it. It is certain that good and evil, the rule and influence of habits, are the most important. But morality has made itself so venerable; it has terrorized the minds and made itself intangible to such an ex-



tent that it has become barren. Through refusal to let it be discussed, morality has made it impossible for any one to study it. It has made itself so much of a sacred place that it has become a desert.

We must at last look it well in the face and see that it is a prejudice that has been able, owing to a special privilege, to gain the respect of the most daring minds until it had them stupefied, that it is an uncontrolled prejudice which has made itself uncontrollable, yet a prejudice that deserves that name more than any other since it alone has been able to avoid almost all analysis and scrutiny.

It is also a noxious prejudice because as we saw, it lowers mankind, enervates and emasculates it, turns it into a timid, fearful, regular and correct animal, one of a herd, quite the opposite of what it would well seem primitive man was and of what it seems that man, whose brow is raised towards the heavens, should be.

Yes, here again we have an enemy of life in strength and beauty; here again is an obstacle to life in strength and beauty; here again is something which is opposed and more opposed than everything else, to man becoming strong and doing *beautiful things*. An artist must be the born enemy of morality and, as a matter of fact, artists are, instinctively, very often immoralists. They are right. Morality is organized against the force and the beauty of mankind. Of course, it is itself a force, but a weakening and disfiguring force. One must fight morality with all the love one feels and should feel for strength and beauty.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE THEORY.

HAVING reached this point, Nietzsche collects his thoughts and gathers himself up, so to speak. Everything in which men generally place faith he has now denied and rejected as evil: reason, religion, science and morality. Would he rank then as a nihilist or a sceptic? He must have asked himself that question, and answered in the same breath that he was certainly neither. He is as little of a nihilist as one can be. He accepts everything, he subscribes to everything, he agrees to everything, he embraces everything with passion, joy and enthusiasm. Far, far beyond the quarrels of pessimism and optimism, which he despises, far beyond optimism and pessimism, which he finds equally narrow, with an optimism — if we like to use this term for the lack of another — or with *affirmation*, if one will accept this word, which includes both optimism and pessimism, Nietzsche valiantly accepts the world with its beauty and its ugliness, its joys and sorrows, its pleasures and its strictness, its smiles and its atrocities. He accepts it as something that must be loved to ecstasy in a beautiful Dionysian delirium, and whose development, expansion and indefinite embellishment one must desire. He accepts

it as something that one must desire to be ever whole, ever alive, ever lively, ever full of a more intense and a more reviving life.

What displeases him sometimes is that this world seems to be growing old, and that certain ideas with which it was smitten and certain sentiments which delighted it, render it senile and risk to render it decrepit. There is nothing of the nihilist in these dispositions of the mind.

Is he a sceptic? One may not be perhaps a sceptic merely because one does not believe what the majority of men believe. Nietzsche feels strongly that he believes in something and that there is a deep faith. He believes in the Greeks of the days before Socrates. Well, that is something. It is to believe in the beauty and the nobility of the human race. It is to believe that man may realize an ideal of liberty, free strength, beauty, grace, nobility and eurythmy. It is to believe that man is an exceptional animal, not a reasonable one as some fancy, not a mystical one as a few will advance, not a moral one as so many will believe, nor anti-natural as some persist in alleging; but that he is strong and beautiful and made to create strength and beauty, a beauty below which one may always feel a manifestation of strength, and a strength always following the mysterious laws but laws that he feels of eternal beauty. Such is the faith of Nietzsche. He is not a sceptic. He is not a sceptic in this that he is not without a faith or without a will. These are the two essential ways in which one is a sceptic. He does not believe in nothing, he does not give

himself up or relax or let his arms drop nor does he abstain from action. Well, this faith of his — he wishes to spread it; and the object of this law — he wants to realize it.

One word will express it all. He wants to create a *freed* humanity, to restore it to its true nature. He wants a humanity freed from morality, from religion, from the superstition of science and that of reason; he wants to restore it to the strong instincts and the strong passions that made humanity great and beautiful in its green and luxuriant youth. The eulogy of the passions — there you have all the affirmative Nietzsche. The passions are good. What is their common root? Egotism. Well, egotism is good.

First of all it can neither be uprooted nor avoided and it were folly to attempt to extirpate it or to free one's self from it. Moreover it is an excellent, a holy thing. They tell you: love your neighbor. When one analyzes that thought one sees that it is false to the point of childishness and that it is a weakness. This love of your neighbor is but "a bad love of yourself," because you go "to your neighbor to fly from yourself and this is what you want to turn into a virtue but I can see through your disinterestedness." What you are seeking in your neighbor is somebody who will support you because you do not know how to support yourself and somebody who will love you because you cannot love yourself enough and in the way you should. "I would like to see every kind of neighbors and the neighbors of those neighbors becoming unbearable

to you because then you would be compelled to make of yourself a friend and a friend with a strong and overflowing heart." But you approach the others to speak well of yourself, to bring them to speaking well of yourself and to draw upon what you have heard them say to think yet more of yourself. You approach others to forget yourself or to seek yourself, and to both the instincts together that is to forget the man you are in reality and to seek the man you pretend to be. You approach others to cultivate the most evil side of your egotism and to neglect what there might be in it that is excellent and fruitful if it were cultivated. No, I am not advising you to love your neighbor. I would much rather advise you to love that which is furthest. "Higher than love for our neighbor is love of the furthest and future ones; higher still than love for mankind is love for things and phantoms. This phantom that runneth on before thee, the future, brother, this phantom is fairer than thou. Why shouldest thou not lend it thy flesh and thy bones? But thou fearest and runnest unto thy neighbor. My brethren, I do not advise you to neighbor love; I advise you to furthest love."—Thus spake Zarathustra.

One could hardly believe, in spite of the pain La Rochefoucauld took to warn us against such errors, how many things there are we find disinterested but are really pure selfishness, how many things are set down in the column of altruism are but "self-love" pure and simple. But self-love in disguise and which, thus disguising itself, becomes

perverted. That self-love would be much better ; it would be good, excellent and capable of the very best results if it did not choose to disguise itself, pervert itself, and if it did not fall to pieces by thus deluding others and itself as well as to its own nature. Our neighbor love — what is it but an imperious desire for possession, for a new ownership? Our love for science, what is it but a desire for novelty? "Gradually we weary of what is old, of what we possess with certainty and we begin again to stretch out our hands." Thus the most beautiful scenery in which we have been living for three months inspires us with nothing but the desire to see another one. Man is the "Don Juan of Knowledge." Renan, who more than any other man in the world was the Don Juan of Knowledge, complained of the restlessness of his mind, which after he had found truth caused him still to seek it.

What is pity? It is a desire for possession. When we see somebody suffer we willingly seize that opportunity given us to take up someone, to make him ours. This charitable man calls love "that desire for a new possession awakened in him and he takes his pleasure as if he were in presence of a new conquest that beckons him." That is what lay at the basis of this religion of *mercy* with which they dun our ears and to which people would like to convert us. The attempt is vain because we know "too well the little young men and the hysterical little women who need it to-day to use it as a veil and an ornament."

And it is especially sexual love that reveals it-



self most clearly as a manifestation of an ardent desire for ownership, that is to say, as intense selfishness.<sup>1</sup> "He who loves wants to possess to himself the object of his desire. He wants to hold absolute power over both the soul and the body of that person; he wants to be loved alone and to inhabit the other soul, to rule therein, and he looks upon this as the loftiest and most admirable thing. If we consider that it means nothing else but the exclusion of the whole world from something precious, from a happiness and a pleasure, if we consider that the man that loves aims at depriving and making poorer all his competitors, that he seeks to become the dragon of his treasure just as if he were the most indiscreet and selfish of all conquerors and exploiters; finally if we consider that to a man in love the rest of the world seems indifferent, colorless and worthless and that he is ready to give up anything for his love, to disturb any kind of order, to relegate to the background all the interests, one must be surprised that this savage avidity, this iniquity of sexual love, has been glorified and divinized to such an extent and at all times. One must be surprised that from this 'love' one could have caused to issue the idea of *Love* as opposed to selfishness, while it is very likely the most natural expression of selfishness." True love should not know jealousy. That would be its sign and if it

<sup>1</sup> La Rochefoucauld. Maxims, LXVIII: "Love is in the soul a passion to rule, in the minds a sympathy and in the body a hidden and delicate desire to possess what one loves, after many mysteries."



exists it is the mark thereof and there can be none other. But lovers know so well that love without jealousy does not exist or hardly exists, that it is precisely jealousy which they set up as the sign and mark of love and that they always say: "You are not jealous, you don't love me." While good psychology should cause us to say: you are not jealous; you do not love yourself. Of course they know very well, being good psychologists in their fashion, that is to say practical, that he who is not jealous is very seldom the man that makes "abstraction of himself so much does he *adore* but in almost every case the man, having possessed, becomes indifferent to his present possession and anxious for a new one"; and, in the practice, they are right. Jealousy indicates a desire to possess and to possess alone. If it is a sign of love it shows that love is but an instinct for ownership. It is rather strange that this instinct for ownership should have been called love instead of being called selfishness or greed or avidity (*avaritia*). But "those that established this current expression in the languages were apparently those that did not possess and that desired to possess. They have always been the most numerous. Those, on the contrary, that have been favored in this domain with much possession and satiety have, every now and then, allowed an invective to escape their lips, an invective against the 'furious demon,' as Sophocles said, the most lovable and the most beloved of all the Athenians; but Eros would always laugh at these slanderers who were precisely his greatest favorites."

We could thus review all the passions, all the inclinations and all the *virtues* which are by unanimous consent the cortege, the court, the household, the family or the children of altruism, and which at bottom are nothing but disguises of selfishness or perhaps, and that is the most favorable view possible, transformations of selfishness. There is no need to do it since it has been done by La Rochefoucauld.

This, however, is my point. La Rochefoucauld analyzed the substitutes of selfishness in order to flay them by bringing them back to selfishness for he held selfishness as a thing to be condemned, hated and proscribed. That was wrong. The truth is that selfishness is hateful in its substitutes, its disguises, or if you like, its transformations, but very good in itself, excellent in itself. What we should do is to fight all the disguises of selfishness, to shame them, to show them up as being stupid, ridiculous, hateful and fatal. Then, having led mankind away from them, we should bring it to pure selfishness which is good and get men to become accustomed to blush before all the disguises of selfishness, and no longer to blush before selfishness itself. In other words, selfishness tried to get itself accepted and, to do that, began to play all sorts of parts all over the world. It plays them badly and the dramatic critic recognizes it fully through every one of them. We must persuade selfishness that it is more beautiful in its natural state, that it is also more fruitful and useful, that humanity needs it but, in its purest state, not in the rôle of disguises,

which it seeks, or in the mixtures, which it makes of itself with other things, or in these strange and unhealthy combinations which, it delights to enter.

These combinations — do you see them? They are most often frigid virtues. What is moderation? A caution that is nothing else but cowardice, that is the lowest form of selfishness, blended perhaps with a little care not to hurt, clash with, or incommode others. Now, that is not beautiful, and there is nothing in it to boast about. Moreover, it is moderation that places humanity in a state of general platitude, universal mediocrity, unanimous indolence and of prostration before small tyrants, themselves no less moderate, almost as mediocre, and quite as insipid. To have made a virtue of moderation shows that there is a decay and almost a deliquescence of the human race.

What is pity? It is an emotion that takes hold of you in presence of misfortunes in which you yourself may fall. *Hodie tibi; cras mihi*. It is foresight or I should say foreknowledge, that is to say, a selfishness that can see unto the morrow. It is hard to find in this such an admirable virtue. Moreover pity enervates man by persuading him that he has fulfilled his duty when he has shed a tear upon the fate of another man, that he has done his duty when he has given a little of his superfluous to some unfortunate being. It enervates him by throwing him back into a gentle quietness as soon as he has paid that ridiculous tribute to humanity. It enervates him by leading him away from all great, strong, civilizing, *ascending* actions,

actions which might cause tears to be shed or trouble the general quietness and your own, perhaps even cost a number of human beings their lives. Pity is the born enemy of heroism. You may be sure that it was invented by someone that was, in no wise, a hero himself.

“This virtue, which Schopenhauer taught as being the highest and only virtue, the foundation of them all; this pity I have recognized as more dangerous than any vice. To fetter, out of principle, the choice in the species, the purification of this one among all the wastes — that until today was called virtue preeminently.” Compassion, as soon as it truly creates some suffering — and this should be here our only point of view — is a weakness as much as the giving way to a prejudicial virtue. It increases the amount of suffering in the world. If, here and there, as a sequel to compassion, a suffering is indirectly lessened or suppressed, we must not use these occasional consequences, quite insignificant in the whole, to justify the work of a pity that is baneful. “To allow this procedure to predominate for even one single day is to let it immediately lead humanity to its downfall. Compassion has in itself no more of a beneficial character than any other instinct. Only when it is exacted and vaunted — and this happens when one fails to realize what it has that leads to prejudice, and when one discovers instead a source of joy therein — does compassion cloak itself, as it were, with a good conscience; it is only in that case that one will give one’s self up willingly to it, fearless of its consequences.

. . . If we allow our minds to be darkened by the misery and sufferings of others, and we hide our own sky with clouds, who shall bear the consequences of this darkening? The other mortals, of course, and that will be a weight added to their own burden. We can neither help nor comfort them if we wish to be the echoes of their misery and if we want ever to lend an ear to that misery — unless we were to learn the art of the Olympians and sought to recover our serenity through the misfortune of man instead of drawing wretchedness therefrom. But this is somewhat too Olympian for us. . . .”<sup>1</sup>

We hear much nowadays of solidarity. It is an especially modern virtue which is made much of in official as well as in popular speeches. The agreement seems to be complete on solidarity. It is, at bottom, nothing but the need to lean upon each other so much is every one convinced of his own weakness, infirmity and faint-heartedness. It is something like the egotism of fear, a sort of cowardly

<sup>1</sup> La Rochefoucauld: “I am little sensitive to pity and I would like not to feel it at all. Nevertheless there is nothing I would not do to relieve any one who is afflicted and I effective-believe that one should do everything even to the point of making a show of much compassion for his trouble; for the wretches are so stupid that it gives them the greatest comfort in the world; yet I hold also that one should be satisfied with making a show thereof while taking good care not to feel any. It is a passion that is worthless in a well-constructed soul, that can but weaken the heart and that should be left to the mob, who since they never do anything through their reason, need passions to prompt them to do things.”

selfishness. Sheep that press close to each other are practicing solidarity in the most precise and correct fashion. There is nothing, however, to indicate that they are very proud of it nor that they make it a matter of public speeches. Solidarity is like trading by association, a deal in which each party hopes to gain more than the other, and in which each hides under the affectation to render services a burning desire to receive one. It is, after all, possible that there is in that a touch of altruism. But what is most distinctly seen is a sneaking and hypocritical selfishness that dissimulates itself, disguises itself, contrives, insinuates, has neither the courage of its opinion nor perhaps the consciousness of it. How ugly is selfishness when it besmears itself and yet how truly beautiful it would be if it were to wash off all the virtues with which it paints itself!

Shall we speak of piety? It is no longer a very fashionable virtue but in the olden days it was the queen of them all, and it still stands as it were on the steps of its ancient throne. Piety is a particular selfishness with pride in its background. It consists in believing most deeply that there is a superior power which is immense, sublime and infinite, with which we hold intimate relations, which we address when we wish, which listens to us whenever we speak to it and which — we truly believe that, and dare to let it know that we do — can refuse us nothing so much do we love it. Not in vain have men in many of their languages attributed the same denomination to "love" and to love of God. They do not differ very much. Just as love is a desire and



an appetite for possession, so love of God is a deep, more or less conscious, desire to possess God, to own Him as one's dependent and at one's disposal, and to obtain from Him all imaginable favors in time and in eternity. And the bearing of each of these two loves is very nearly the same. It is with declarations of love, made as eloquent as he can, that the pious man will attempt to conquer his God, and the basis of his reasoning, as ludicrous as that of the lover, is as follows: "It is really necessary that you should love me. I deserve it since I love you." Desire constituting a right — that is the sophism of the lovers, the pious men, the socialist collectivists, of those that solicit the Cross of the Legion of Honor. The pious man prays in order to obtain just like the lover. These prayers must have been at first,—and we have seen examples showing this to be the case — very much alike.

What a strange aberration of pride and desire is prayer. If prayer were to have any meaning it would mean firstly "that it could be possible to determine or to change the feeling of the divinity": secondly "that the man that prays should know precisely what he lacks and what he needs." Christianity is a curious thing. These two conditions necessary to prayer have been *denied* by Christianity, which has invented that omniscient and omni-provident God, that motionless God, and affirmed that God alone knows what we need while we do not. And yet Christianity has preserved prayer. It has preserved prayer "in parallel to faith in an omniscient and omni-provident reason of God. Prayer loses



thereby its import and becomes even blasphematory." It showed great craft in this. "It showed the admirable snake-like cunning of which it disposed. Because a clear commandment: 'Thou shalt not pray!' *would have led Christians to Godlessness.* In the Christian axiom '*ora et labora,*' the *ora* takes the place of pleasure. And what would have become, without the *ora*, of all these unfortunates who were denying themselves the *labora*, the saints? But to hold conversation with the Lord, to ask from him a thousand pleasant things, to take some slight pleasure in perceiving that one could still have desires in spite of a father so perfect—that was an excellent invention for the saints." And if this seems to be rather refined, let us say that there lingers always in Christianity, as Comte showed it very well, a residue of paganism, and that prayer, which is so much in the way of the Christian philosopher and of the Christian who is a philosopher (see Malebranche) is one of the very many remnants that paganism has left to its successor, perhaps with an unspoken intention to poison it. What is certain is that the Christian prays his God sometimes as a Christian but often, more often, most of the time, as a lover begs from the woman he loves.

We might carry the analogy further. It should be carried further. Just as there is no love without jealousy so does the man who believes, the pious and fervent man, refuse to admit, or admit with great reluctance, that any other man could share in the favors of his God. Hence the religious wars,

as atrocious wars as the quarrels that love has brought about, and still brings about among men. The believer is a jealous lover whom love and jealousy have made ferocious. In his heart he would like to *have* a God to himself. Primitive religion was fetichism and there will always remain some of it. Religion becoming little by little a sociological and truly social force changed from an individual into a communal thing; but it retained always its primitive character of a jealous and suspicious love. If it is no longer between man and man that suspicion arises, if it is no longer this man accusing that man of wanting to steal his fetich from him, it is now from sect to sect that they mistrust each other. The white sect charges the black sect with wanting to attract to itself the God of the white sect, with wishing to lead him astray and to bribe him. And for that reason the white sect attacks, slays and furiously massacres the black sect. The Jews, from whom we have religiously speaking inherited so many things, afford the most remarkable example of this religious jealousy and of this love of God, which is an acute form of monopoly. Holy piousness is another transformation not the least remarkable nor the least hateful one of selfishness.

Will any one say that there must be some virtues that cannot be ascribed to selfishness? Let us again turn to La Rochefoucauld, and, to cut short, let us take a last example, the very one, doubtlessly, that some might triumphantly oppose to us. "Would you say, you will exclaim, that disinter-

estedness is selfishness, that disinterestedness is interestedness?" To be sure one may say it, and with reason. The disinterested man that pursues an aim without foreseeing the possibility of any personal advantage, that does it for its own beauty, for what he dimly perceives therein that is great, high and sublime, that man derives such enjoyment from his renouncement that we should perhaps say that he is the most selfish of men. The eternal error is the belief that one may get rid of one's own *self* or detach one's self from it. One may never detach one's self from it. The only result of an attempt at doing so is to fall deeper in it and to get more buried under it. If you like, one sinks deeper as it were in a deeper self; one becomes detached from the superficial side of the *self*, to get nearer the roots of the self, and to become intimately and inextricably and indissolubly intertwined with it. The disinterested man, you say! But he enjoys his disinterestedness in the most intense fashion. He takes an infinite interest in his disinterestedness. He has not sacrificed himself, he has better invested it, and by investing it better he has increased it as one would one's capital. He has prodigiously increased it. Be he priest or savant, let us say Vincent de Paul or Pasteur, do you imagine that these men are not happy? But they have not given up their share of happiness; they have made no sacrifice, no renouncement. You cannot call them disinterested. You may call them sublime egotists if it pleases you but call them egoists you must. They are deeply, royally and di-

vinely so. Because they are that, differently from and better than the others, would you say that they are not selfish? They are more so! More, no, they are better! But, *better* and *more*, it is the same thing if they are conscious of it. And how could it be that they should not be conscious of it, that they should not feel their own happiness?

Again, I do not blame them. I am in favor of selfishness. I merely blame the disguise. I only blame selfishness when it hides itself and gives itself favorable names, because that spoils it. I merely blame here the pretension of interest to give itself as disinterested and the error with which one mistakes the strongest egotism for disinterestedness.

Let us make our confession. You are a Christian and I am a man of science. We both flatter ourselves to be disinterested, to have renounced. Let us truthfully examine your case and mine. "No book is there which contains with more abundance, which expresses with more candor, what can benefit all men, the happy and exalted fervor that is ready for sacrifice and death — than the book which speaks of Christ. A wise man may learn therein all the ways with which one may make of a book a universal book, everybody's friend, and above all, the master-means to present all things as discovered and to fail to admit that anything may still be imperfect or in process of formation. . . . The reason which causes such books to be replete with results — must it not by the same token cause any purely scientific book to be of little weight? Is not the latter condemned obscurely to live among

obscure men and to be at length crucified, never to be resuscitated? Compared to what religious men proclaim concerning their knowledge of their sacred spirit, are not all honest men of science poor in the spirit? Can any religion, no matter which one we take, exact more renouncement, more pitilessly exclude the selfish than does science? This is very near to what we could say, we, the men of science, and not without some historical backing, when we have to defend ourselves against the believers because it is hardly possible to defend anything without a certain amount of *cabotinage*. But when we are among ourselves our language must be more honest. Down then with renouncement! Away with these airs of humility. Better on the contrary to say that here lay our truth. If science were not linked with the joy of knowledge, wedded to the usefulness of knowledge, what would science mean to us? If a little faith, a little hope and love did not lead our soul to knowledge, what then could attract us to science? And, although in science the *self* means nothing, it is nevertheless true that the inventive and happy *self*, and even any fruitful and earnest *self*, matters a great deal in the republic of the men of science. The esteem of those that confer esteem, the joy of those to whom we wish well, or of those whom we respect, and, in certain cases, glory, and the relative immortality of the person — such is the price that one may expect for the giving up of one's personality. This does not include lesser results and compensations, although it is precisely because of these that most men do swear

faithfulness to the laws of that republic and in general to science, and that they continue ever to remain attached to it. Had we not remained, in a certain measure, non-scientific men, what importance could we still attach to science? After all, and to give my axiom all its generality, *knowledge would be indifferent to a purely knowing being*. It is not the quality of our faith and piousness that distinguishes us from pious men. *It is the quantity,—we are satisfied with little*. But the others will say, if such is the case: ‘be satisfied then and admit also that you are satisfied.’ To which we could easily retort: ‘it is quite true that we do not belong to the dissatisfied ones. But you, if your faith makes you happy, do you also admit that you are happy’ . . .”

Therefore it must be acknowledged that there is so much selfishness in the virtue which seems to consist in the very exclusion of selfishness, in that virtue the very name of which is precisely abolition of all selfishness, that one inquires if this virtue is not selfishness itself. After that sufficiently striking example, and the legitimate conclusions drawn therefrom it seems that we need go no further and that we must admit that the virtues are, to use the common language of mankind, subtle forms of selfishness, hypocrisies of selfishness and degradations of selfishness. They are not good because, masking selfishness, they hamper it, and disguising selfishness they hinder it, and forcing it to a strained bearing they fetter it, and, because mixing it with some foreign matter, they alter and corrupt it. It is selfishness in the pure state that is beautiful



and good. Men are not mistaken because they are selfish and because they want to remain so. They are mistaken because they want to dissimulate their selfishness, to hide it from themselves and the others.

Note that man thinks he needs this mask of virtue, this morality mask, all the more and in sooth that he needs it really all the more as he becomes more civilized. In other words he needs it all the more according to the length of time he has borne it. The civilized man, man moralized, has become very ugly, most insipid, most puny and hideous. The mask has made the face ugly. All the more reason, therefore, why he should mask himself and so on indefinitely. Suppose a man who, in order to make himself agreeable, has begun to wear a mask, and his mask has given him a cancer. From being an alleged ornament, the mask becomes a horrible necessity. That is where we stand in the Europe of 1880; and this is no doubt a difficulty which the immoralists fully appreciate and which would almost cause them to hesitate on the road. "The spectacle of man's nakedness is generally shameful. I am speaking of us Europeans. . . . Let us imagine some extremely merry guests at a banquet, and that, by some sly trick of a magician, they find themselves suddenly unveiled and undressed. I am thinking that, at that very minute, not only would their pleasant mood suddenly disappear, but even that the most ravenous appetite would be discouraged. It seems that we Europeans cannot possibly do without that masquerade which we call clothing. The same good reasons then might perhaps exist for



the advocating of a disguise for moral men, leading us to ask that they be wrapped up in moral formulas and notions of propriety, and to ask also that our actions be benevolently hidden under the ideas of duty, virtue, civic spirit, honorability and disinterestedness. *Not that I think that we should mask human wickedness*, that dangerous wild beast that lurks within us. On the contrary. It is precisely as domestic animals that we afford a shameful spectacle and that we need a moral disguise. The inner man in Europe is not sufficiently disquieting to be able to show himself with a ferociousness *that could make him beautiful*. The European cloaks himself with morality because he has become a sickly, infirm, and crippled animal, with the best of reasons for being tamed since he is almost an abortion, something imperfect, misshapen and awkward. It is not the ferociousness of the beast of prey which feels the need of a moral disguise; it is the animal from the herd with its thorough mediocrity, and the fear and boredom it gives itself. Morality decks out the European, let us acknowledge it, so as to give him distinction, importance in appearance, and to make him divine."

Because it is becoming difficult to return to pure selfishness and to rediscover selfishness in its pure state, where it is beautiful, sane and fruitful, that is no reason why we should not try it again. Especially is that no reason why it were untrue to say that selfishness is the natural and the best state of man. It is so, and we should have the intelligence to understand it and the courage to say it. The

depths of the sane man reveal an ardent, energetic and boundless egotism, and "will to power," the desire for extension, the desire and the need to be ever greater, more expanded, influential, ever to extend further his action, ever to occupy more space.

There is some delusion in the assurance that the basis of mankind is the desire for happiness — that is, if there may be any delusion when one uses so elastic, plastic and vague a word as happiness. If by happiness, one understands a state of rest, quietness and tranquillity in which one wishes and can wish nothing, that is surely not man's desire and, when he does desire it, he is mistaken about himself. Assuredly he does, though, and Pascal said it very well: "He tends towards rest through agitation." But we need to realize that Pascal meant: "he tends towards rest through agitation, and that indefinitely." Therefore, in last analysis, it is agitation that he needs. He agitates himself to increase himself, believing perhaps that, having reached a certain stage of increase, he will be able to rest in his acquired greatness and upon his conquest. But that is a mere illusion, and we must leave it aside. Man agitates himself to increase himself, and his only true need is agitation for the sake of power.

As a matter of fact, he knows it subconsciously very well. When he says that he will rest when he has reached such and such an aim, and that he will enjoy a "well-earned rest," he only half-believes it, and is somewhat laughing at himself. Within him-

self, behind the man who says that, there is one that laughs in his sleeve. This is precisely the reason why most men of action set up a goal for themselves, true enough, and it is understood that on reaching it they will rest themselves, but they take good care to set it up so far that never can they reach it. They fear above all things the morrow of the task accomplished, that gloomy sadness with which Gibbon was seized when he had written the last line of his huge Roman History. Gibbon had always feared not to finish his Roman History; but in his heart there was ever the secret hope that he might die before ending it.

The will to power, the wish to persevere in the being and, indefinitely, to expand one's being, pure egotism in short,—there you have natural man. When he thinks he renounces it, he does not renounce it; when he alters it to a smaller or a larger extent, he denatures himself; when one denatures one's self, one degrades and weakens one's self; and moralized man is but a perverted egotist. In order to reintegrate man into his humanity, we must, at all cost, persuade him to become once more a pure and simple egotist. Radical egotists they were, those nations of the antiquity that did not even admit, that did not even understand that there could be any other destiny for a people but to be conqueror or conquered, which were ever going forth, ceaselessly conquering, piling up increases upon increases, extending and developing their personality, wishing to fill the world with their self, until the day, by them accepted, when in turn they would be

conquered. And yet these nations were those that created civilization. One cannot say that they had a bandits' morality or that their conception of life was worthy of barbarians or savages. They were men and that is all. They were fully men. They had the "will of power," that is to say, a sane, young and lively egotism, and they expanded, according to the law of nature, by conquest, by the founding of cities, by colonial settlements, by literary and artistic creation. With morality, they bothered themselves no more than if it had not existed, unless it were with that *morality which is but a rule of civil and civic discipline*.

Let any one tell me what was the morality of a Themistocles, a Pericles, a Scipio, a Sylla, a Marius or a Cæsar unless it were this: "I myself, great in the ever greater motherland?" Warriors' morality, brigands' morality. It may be clever to say this. At all events it is very "ecclesiastical" and very bureaucratic, and there is no clergyman or established petty official who has not said it a dozen times in his life. Note here that they quickly change their morality as soon as their own country wins a small victory. But I say to you; "my brethren in war! I love you from the very heart. I am, and was ever, your counterpart. And I am also your best enemy. So let me tell you the truth. I know the hatred and envy of your hearts. Ye are not great enough not to know of hatred and envy. Then be great enough not to be ashamed of them. And if ye cannot be saints of knowledge, then, I pray you, be at least its warriors. They

are the companions and forerunners of such saintship. I see many soldiers; could I but see many warriors! 'Uniform' one calleth what they wear; may it not be uniform that they therewith hide! Ye shall be those whose eyes ever seek for an enemy — for *your* enemy. And with some of you there is hatred at first sight. Your enemy shall ye seek; your war shall ye wage, and for the sake of your thoughts. And if your thoughts succumb, your uprightness shall still shout triumph thereby. Ye shall love peace as a means to new wars — and the short peace more than the long. You I advise not to work, but to fight. You I advise not to peace, but to victory. Let your work be a fight, let your peace be a victory. One can only be silent and sit peacefully when one hath arrow and bow; otherwise one prateth and quarreleth. Let your peace be a victory! Ye say it is the good cause that halloweth even war? I say unto you: it is the good war that halloweth every cause. War and courage have done more great things than charity. Not your sympathy, but your bravery hath hitherto saved the victims. 'What is good?' ye ask. To be brave is good. Let the little girls say: 'To be good is pretty, and at the same time touching.' They call you heartless: but your heart is true, and I love the bashfulness of your goodwill. Ye are ashamed of your flow, and others are ashamed of their ebb. Ye are ugly? Well then, my brethren, take the sublime about you, the mantle of the ugly. And when your soul becometh great, then doth it become haughty, and in your sublimity there is

wickedness. I know you. In wickedness the haughty man and the weakling meet. But they misunderstand one another. I know you. Ye shall only have enemies to be hated, but not enemies to be despised. Ye must be proud of your enemies; then, the successes of your enemies are also your successes. Resistance—that is the distinction of the slave. Let your distinction be obedience. Let your commanding itself be obeying. To the good warrior soundeth ‘thou shalt’ pleasanter than ‘I will.’ And all that is dear unto you, ye shall first have it commanded unto you. Let your love to life be love to your highest hope; and let your highest hope be the highest thought of life. Your highest thought, however, ye shall have commanded unto you by me—and it is this: man is something that is to be surpassed. So live your life of obedience and of war. What matter about long life? What warrior wisheth to be spared? I spare you not, I love you from my very heart, my brethren in war.—Thus spake Zarathustra.”

However the devastating egotism has always been termed *evil* for two sufficiently reasonable reasons. The first one is that this devastating egotism, whatever it is with which you blend it, is after all wickedness. The second is that it begins at least with an accumulation of disasters and by causing awful sufferings to mankind. If that be not evil, what is evil? Well, if that be evil, I might feel somewhat tempted to exclaim: “Long live Evil!” as Proudhon once exclaimed: “Long live Satan!” for this evil is singularly beneficent and, after all,



I can see nothing but that as being beneficent. If you have not yet observed that a pacifist civilization lulls nations to sleep and gradually becomes some culture fluid for all the vices, especially for the most shameful among them! . . . It seems to me that nearly all the good that was accomplished in the world has been the work of "evil." Good men have their good points but they have a few less than the bad men. The good is good, to be sure but evil is better: "The strongest and most wicked minds are the very ones that have to this day led humanity to its greatest progress. They always were re-kindling anew the passions that were falling asleep,—for every organized society puts the passions to sleep. They reawakened relentlessly the sense of comparison and of contradiction, and the pleasure that lay in the new, the dared, the non-felt. They compel man to set up opinions against opinions, to oppose an ideal type to an ideal type. Most of the time they achieve that by force of arms, by breaking down the frontiers and by violating piety; but they did it also through new religions and new moralities. The same wickedness is in the soul of all the masters and of all the preachers of the new, that same wickedness that discredits a conqueror. Nevertheless, what is new is, no matter how you look at it, evil, for it is that which conquers and aims at pulling down the old landmarks and the ancient pieties. Only the ancient can be good. The good men of all periods were those that searched deeply into the old ideas to make them bear fruit; they were tillers of the mind. But there



is no soil that does not become exhausted and there must always come back to it the point of the plough of evil. There exists nowadays an absolutely erroneous doctrine of morality, a doctrine that is especially welcome in England. According to its tenets the judgments *good* and *evil* are the accumulation of past experiences concerning what is *opportune* and *inopportune*; and, according to them, what is called good is what preserves the species, and what is called evil is what threatens it. But, to say the truth, the bad instincts are opportune; they are the keepers of the species and its renovators to the same extent as the good ones. It is only their function that differs."

For all these irrefutable reasons it becomes necessary to reinstate man's only true virtue, the will to power, an integral egotism, a radical, uncompromising, undisguised, and unadulterated egotism, an open and daring egotism. We must shed morality as we would some cumbersome and choking garment or exude it as we would a deadly virus. This morality never has but one aim, one end, one anxiety, one passion — that is to kill the individual, with the purpose, erroneous at that, to cause society to live on.

Nothing is more ferocious than this so-called altruistic morality. It is but a piece of atrocious and murdering social selfishness. It never says: "I am sacrificing myself" but "do ye sacrifice yourselves to me." What is it you name "virtues"? You name a man's virtues good, beautiful and admirable "not because of the results they have for him personally but with regard to the results you

suppose them to entail for yourselves and for society." In sooth, you show very little disinterestedness in your praise of disinterestedness; you are remarkably selfish in your praise of non-selfishness. For otherwise you would have noticed that the virtues, such as application, obedience, chastity and piety are detrimental as a rule to him that practices them. . . . When you possess a virtue, a true and complete virtue, not merely the small instinct of a virtue, you are the *victim* of that virtue. That is the very reason that prompts your neighbor to praise your virtue. We praise the worker, albeit his application is detrimental to his visual faculties, to the originality and the freshness of his mind. We pity and respect the young man who "tired himself out with work" because we judge as follows: "the loss of an individual, of even the best individual is but a small sacrifice for society as a whole. It is to be regretted that this sacrifice was necessary. Yet it would surely be much more to be regretted if *the individual were to think otherwise* and attached more importance to his own preservation and his own development than to his work, performed in the service of society." Such is your reasoning in the face of the virtue of others. It is not what one would call virtuous. Properly speaking it is a cynical reasoning. Those that praise virtue should put us out of conceit with it, because of the profoundly perverse fashion in which they praise it; I should rather say, because of the very principle at the basis of the praise that they deal out to it.

It is true that you pity that young man at the same time as you respect him but it is not "for himself that you pity him. You do it because, through his death a *docile* instrument, or as you term it a good man, has been lost to *disinterested* society. It may be that you take into consideration the fact that he would have proved even more useful to society if he had worked with more care of himself, and had kept himself going for a longer period. One does not deny the advantage that would have accrued in that case, but one estimates more lasting and higher the other advantage that a sacrifice has been made and that the notion of the sacrifice victim has once more received visible confirmation." The eulogy of virtue, in other words, morality, is therefore the exaltation of "a certain unreason in virtue, thanks to which the individual allows himself to be transformed into a function of the collectivity."

The eulogy of virtue, otherwise named morality is the exaltation of "something detrimental in the individual, the praise of some instinct, learned, acquired or traditional which deprives man of the noblest love of himself and of the strength to protect himself." At all cost we must get rid of that kind of morality.

This sort of egotism-hunting by morality, pursued with monstrous egotism, takes at times a most peculiar character and brings out results that are as ludicrous as they are detrimental. The great motto of morality, is it not, "have command of one's self; learn to conquer one's self. *Gnothi*

*seauton; micah seauton*"? There may be some good in that, but it is rather likely to breed maniacs and wretched ones too. "These teachers of morality that recommend to man above and before all things to possess himself, inoculate him with a peculiar disease, a sort of continuous itching. I mean the constant irritability against all natural impulses and inclinations. Whatever comes to him from within or from without, be it a thought, an attraction or a desire, the irritable man always fancies that now is his mastery over himself running a risk. Unable to trust and abandon himself to any instinct, to any free flap of his wings, he is forever making defensive gestures. Armed against himself, his eye sharp and defiant, he has constituted himself the eternal keeper of his own tower. He may, with all this, be *great*. But how unbearable to others he has become, hard to put up with, and how he has beggared himself and isolated himself from the finest hazards of the soul and from all possible future experiences. *For one should know how to love one's self for a time if one wishes to learn something of those that are what we ourselves are not.*"

*Delenda est Carthago!* Morality must be abolished. It is a social Moloch, a destroyer of all the sane, free and fecund energies. Pure egotism must be reinstated.

One may advance the idea that when egotism does not transform itself into alleged virtues, through the metempsychosis or the mimicry that we have studied, it transforms itself into passions; rather that passions are its natural forms and vari-

ous aspects. Are you going to defend and support the passions? They have until now been generally considered as diseases of the soul. Is not that the case?

Of course not. The passions are no diseases. They are manifestations of life. They are transports, effervescences; they are fevers if you like but they are not diseases. There may be a rule for passions, as there is one for games, as plays have their programs, travels their time tables, walk its method and racing or dancing their laws. These are judicious and time-saving dispositions that aim at helping one to derive the utmost possible enjoyment out of the various things they regulate. Let then the passions have their rules; that is very acceptable and even evident. But passions in themselves are sane, as Descartes well knew long ago, and if they are manifestations of egotism, it is because they are manifestations of life, for egotism is life itself.

Some sincere men have spoken ill of human passions. They had a reason and some common sense at least in this case. They did it because the passions to which men are a prey are very often not passions at all but imitations of passions, apeings of passions. "How many men there are," exclaimed La Rochefoucauld, "who would never have fallen in love had they not heard people speak of love." Nothing is more true than this. We have as many false lovers, false jealous, false authoritarians, false ambitious men, false sectarians, false party men, false men of convictions, as we have

false poets, false writers and false thinkers. At the beginning of his life, man takes very often, extremely often, for a passion, for *his* passion, a very fugitive and very superficial inclination that comes to him, prompting him to imitate this or that person about him, this or that character of modern or ancient history, or of some novel or poem. It is certain that such a passion is ludicrous, leads but to follies and causes his unhappiness. One must not fool one's self over one's passions any more than over one's aptitudes, since after all passions are aptitudes.

But the deep, true passions are all of them excellent forces for both the individual and society. The ugliest of them, say that of the miser, is precious and fruitful. *Père Grandet*,<sup>1</sup> who was a great man, a poet, did, so far as himself was concerned, taste deep joys, ecstasies, the ravishments of a collector, a founder and a conqueror. And so far as society was concerned, he created for it one of those reserves of accumulated work which is very useful that some men should prepare. All the passions are good when they are true. To flay or proscribe them shows a detestable pharisaism.

Teachers of morality have a safe game when they abuse the passions. They provide an easy field of exploitation because, to be sure, the passions, like everything that is beautiful, are replete with dangers. But these teachers exaggerate to begin with and impose upon us, and, moreover, it is precisely the affairs that are pregnant with dan-

<sup>1</sup> Balzac's well known character.



ger that are worthy of man's attachment. That is the sign by which we know them. "What themes have not these preachers of morality embroidered upon the inner 'misery' of the 'wicked' men? What lies have they not prated of the wretchedness of passionate men? Lies, yes, that is the right word. They know very well the extreme happiness of that sort of men but they say nothing of it because it would refute their theory, according to which no happiness can be born but from the annihilation of passion and the silencing of desire."

As to the recipe of all these soul physicians and their recommendation of a radical and rigorous cure, one may be allowed to inquire: "Is our life really sorrowful enough and hateful enough for us to exchange it with advantage for the stoicism of some petrified life? We do not feel ourselves sufficiently sick to need become sick in a stoic fashion. It seems to me that people have always been speaking with exaggeration concerning pain and sorrow, as if it were good form to exaggerate in this matter. On the other hand, people maintain silence on the innumerable ways to alleviate sorrow. We are very good at shedding tears upon our grief, and especially upon the grief of the soul; there are resources open to us in our courage and loftiness and in the noble delights of submission and resignation. A trouble is merely a trouble for an hour. One way or another, it is as a present fallen therewith from the sky, such as new strength even *if it be but* a new occasion to display strength."



These preachers of morality, if they are sincere, and that is not likely, have failed sufficiently to mediate on the necessary, natural and, withal, very fortunate intricacy of pleasure and pain. Pain and pleasure are linked and intermingled to such an extent that they are each other's function, or are at least, in any and every case, joined in an indissoluble union to the extent that they are at times indistinguishable. "What! Is then the final aim of science to create for man as much pleasure and as little pain as possible? How could that be if pleasure and grief were so tightly bound together that the man that wished to take his fill of the one, who would learn to jubilate to the heavens, must needs also prepare himself to be sad unto death? (*Himmeloch jauchzend. Zum Tode betruibt.*—The Song of Clara in Goethe's *Egmont*.) And that may be true. The stoics at least believed it, and they were consistent, when they asked the least pleasure possible in order that life should cause them the least pain possible. When you utter the sentence: 'The virtuous man is the happiest,' you are in the same breath, exhibiting the sign to the masses and setting forth a casuistic subtlety for the more subtle people. Today you can still make your choice: either you decide upon the smallest amount possible of pleasure, in short the absence of pain. After all, socialists of all brands could not honestly promise any more to their supporters. Or else you may decide in favor of as much grief as possible, as the price you are prepared to pay for the expansion resulting from a mass of enjoy-

ment and of pleasures, all subtle and seldom tasted to this day. If you decide in favor of the first alternative, if you wish to lessen and diminish the sufferings of mankind, well, you will have to diminish and lessen at the same time their capacity for joy. It is certain that one may favor either of these two with the help of science (philosophical science, general science, otherwise named *knowledge*). Perhaps one knows science now rather owing to its faculty to deprive men of their pleasure and to render them colder, more insensible and stoical. But one could also discover in it faculties of a great dispenser of pain. And *then* its opposite force might be discovered *at the same time*, its immense faculty to light up a new starry heaven for joy."

It is certain that the passions are forces that can be repressed but not without repressing and even suppressing life itself. It is certain that they are the very life, and that they give to the man that abandons himself to them lively sorrows and deep joys, pleasure in suffering, happiness along with unhappiness — and therefore happiness. For that is the point we must reach: man is made for a life in which enters an unhappiness mingled with joys. He is intended for a checkered life, for a dramatic life and for a dangerous life. A dangerous life, that is the natural life of man. That is what preserves him from boredom, melancholy, depression, stagnation, disgust and the low passions, or in better words from what is low and vile in each passion, from the low forms of each

passion. The dangerous is the *true* life. For do you know what the word "true" means? "*True* — that means: that which uplifts the human type." The dangerous life is the superior life. The dangerous life is the good life. For do you know what the good is? The good is the beautiful. It is not at all a little more pleasure or a little more comfort. To cause the good to depend upon such things is very mean and cowardly; it is almost nihilism or something that leads to it. "The preponderance of pain over joy, or vice versa, these are two doctrines that give signs of incipient nihilism. In both cases no other final meaning is set but the phenomena of pleasure or grief. But that is the way of the kind of men that lack the courage to set themselves a will. For any saner kind of men, the value of life is not measured by the standard of such accessory things.—'Life is not worth living' and on the other hand 'of what use are tears.' That is a weak and sentimental argumentation. . . . The fundamental instinct of all vigorous natures is that there exists something which is a hundred times more important than to know whether we find ourselves well or not — *and consequently also to know* whether others find themselves well or not. This instinct tells them that we have an aim for which one does not hesitate to make human sacrifices, to run the risk of all dangers or to take the worst upon one's self. That is the great passion. For the *subjective* is but a fiction. The ego of which one speaks when one blames egotism does not exist at all."

Opposed therefore to morality, the doctrine of life unfolds the passions to cause man to live an ardent and superior life. Superior to what? Superior always to something, always to itself, and more and more to itself since man's nature, law and aim is to rise above himself. The will to power in its end and, perhaps, even in its very essence is precisely the will to live dangerously. And the dangerous life, the first life of man, if we go back along the course of time, is the only *vita vitalis*, the only one that is worth the trouble of living and that is worthy to be lived. Decadence is precisely what so many men call progress; it is the passage from life dangerous to the flat and ignoble life of security.

One will scoff at this philosopher who in his peaceful study or on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, at last pacified, intoxicates himself in this way with the beauty of perilous and tumultuous life. He confesses that his own existence is most unworthy and despicable enough when compared to that of the conqueror or the explorer. But we all do what we can, and he does also what he must when he gives himself merrily to his true passion. The philosopher himself has his own passionate and dangerous life. He has his passionate life, and his passion is the obstinate and sorrowful quest of truth. He is himself one of those that "seek with mourning." He has his dangerous life and in order to conquer truth he defies the prejudices and the scorn of men. He also defies, and that is more sorrowful, the resistance, the revolts and the

cries of anguish of the "old man" who must be always torn, bit by bit, if one is to put him off and to liberate and install the new man. There you have the little battlefield and the little garden of sorrows of the philosophers, which, after all, are not without their greatness, as Nietzsche said in the finest page that he wrote, and one of the finest pages ever written. *In media vita*.—"No, life has not deceived me. On the contrary I find it from year to year richer, more desirable, and more mysterious, since the day when came to me the great liberator, the thought that life might be an experience to the man that seeks knowledge, instead of a duty, a fatality and a trickery. Let knowledge itself be another thing to others, such as a resting couch, or the road to a resting couch, or a game or a careless stroll. To me it is a world of dangers and victories in which the heroic sentiments display themselves and have also their dancing place and their hall for games. *Life is a means to knowledge*. With this principle in our heart, we may not only live bravely, but also *live with joy and laugh for sheer joy*. And how could one know how to laugh and live well if one had not experienced first both the fighting and the victory?"

## CHAPTER IX.

### DEVELOPING THE THEORY.

UPON reaching this stage in the evolution of his thought Nietzsche was, I believe, confronted with an objection which my readers must have felt more than once in the previous chapters. This rule, this ideal, this standard of life, applies but to a small number of men. It is not, of course, a morality since we know that Nietzsche will not hear that word. It is not a morality, since morality should of course be universal. It is not even a general doctrine, not a doctrine with any degree of generality. It is not a thing that it were good to tell many men, nor even one that could be told to many men. It is something like the password of an élite; something like a code of rules for the use of the *general staff* of humanity.

Could you really go to the masses, to the coarse masses and tell them: be selfish and give yourselves up to your passions; be selfish not merely without any scruple but even dashingly, cheerfully and enthusiastically; give yourself to your passions with all your courage? The mass, the mob, has — you are well aware of it — but a dull selfishness and low passions. Their expansion — you know it well — not only will have nothing of strength or beauty,

nothing of the Apollonian or the Dionysian; but it will prove, moreover, abominably detrimental to the mass, and would fast lead it beyond any doubt to death. What then do you make of your rule of life? How would you overcome this difficulty? *Quo vadis?* or simply *quid?*

Nietzsche realized very well this natural and unavoidable objection. He realized it not merely at a certain precise stage in the evolution of his thought as I supposed it a minute ago for the sake of convenience and to make clearer my exposition; he realized it throughout the whole of his intellectual life or very near, as we can see when reading almost any of his works. He was driven to it as into a corner through his own motion. He was not concerned about it; he neither avoided it nor went around it. He dashed straight at it, and accepting it in its whole; he destroyed it.

He answered: "what you say is right. My rule of life is not meant for the masses, it is meant for an *élite* that alone represents humanity, that alone is truly humanity, and that should govern humanity and truly despise the masses, their temperament, complexion, customs and prejudices. My theory is essentially and radically aristocratic."

As is nearly always the case this was at once cause and effect. Nietzsche's theory drove him perforce to aristocratism, and Nietzsche, who was an aristocrat by nature and temperament, has derived his theory from his own aristocratic tendencies. Nietzsche was an aristocrat because he was an immoralist and he was an immoralist because he was



an aristocrat. His master idea which was at the same time philosophical and historical, was that morality, had been invented by the people to restrain, muzzle, curb and paralyze those that were strong and those that were beautiful, those that wished to live in force and beauty; and that the people being patient and crafty had thoroughly succeeded. The people with their lower instincts can live neither in beauty nor in force. They want to live dully, peacefully, safely and gently, and never to do great things. They love the dangerous life not at all. They want to eat bread, to look on at the circus, to reproduce themselves, to drink sometimes, to sing a few silly songs, to work as little as possible, and not at all if they can, and, finally, to die very late. They have their own art, at all times the same, and one that characterizes their lives. It is an art without imagination or lyricism, without sublimity, without even the appearance or the intention thereof. It is an art made up of timid, plaintive, and insipid mawkishness, an art of romances or of painting in the moving, touching manner. It is an art purely elegiac or if you like altogether *gemüthlich*. On the other hand it is a coarsely comic art made up of heavy jokes and jests of the knockabout variety. There is nothing in this popular art of any period that urges action, to enterprise, to an energetic, diligent, rough, strong and beautiful life. At all times and everywhere the people is a "herd" of shy and supine creatures.

Feeling above themselves either a conquering race which was not their own and which was imbued

with energetic instincts and an aspiration towards the great and the beautiful, or a race sprung from their own midst but which had acquired, through auto-selection, and then heredity, these same instincts, the people took very late, but take them they did, measures destined to muzzle and enervate that superior race.

These measures were of various kinds. In certain countries the superior kind had very wisely provided against its union by marriage with the plebeians. The plebes had no rest until they had caused that injustice and that "immorality" to disappear and until they had softened, cowed, devirilized the superior race through a mixture of blood.

In other countries the same mob felt conscious of its numbers and knew that, if there was union, number was a force. There the plebe weighed down the élite with its own weight; organizing agricultural, industrial or military strikes, taking advantage of the failures of the superior race, it entered the city and the government thereof and practically drowned the superior race in its own stream. And that was the end of the conquering, civilizing, artistic and *ascendant* city, of the city that honored humanity and was leading it to a brilliant destiny.

Finally, and almost everywhere, the people invented morality. That is to say they submitted the superior kind to their own ideas, having devised some means to give and impose them and to make them seem to be good, sane, just, compulsory and divine; and that whoever lacked those ideas should be

despised. That was an incredibly clever trick, a miraculous one; it was stupefying—but truly worthy of admiration. We must evince no surprise at the fact that it took a very long time to succeed, since it is almost fabulous; but, in the end, it succeeded. The plebes succeeded in almost every country in introducing the *scruple* in the soul of the *élite*; they caused the *élite* to say: "It is possible that what I am doing is not *good*; it is possible that it is not fair for me to do great, strong and beautiful things by myself or with the help of people who do not care for them."

Scruple is a disease, like repentance. As soon as that disease was introduced in the soul of the *élite*, no matter where, the *élite* was stupefied by it as one becomes paralyzed by one of the poisons that act on the nervous centers. Little by little, following the progress of the intoxication, it abdicated and the instinct of mediocrity gradually replaced the instinct of greatness; and that was a sort of social bemiring.

Do you wish for a sketch of this popular morality? "Where do you think morality could possibly find its most dangerous and vindictive advocates? Here is a man, a failure, who has not enough of a mind to rejoice in it and who has just enough culture to know what he lacks. Bored and sickened he has nothing but scorn for himself. Possessing a small inheritance he is unfortunately deprived of the last solace, of the blessedness of work, the forgetfulness of one's self in a daily task. It may be that such a man, who is at heart ashamed of his own

existence, is, moreover, harboring a few small vices. He cannot prevent himself from being more and more corrupted. He is irritated by a luxury to which he has no right, or by a society too intellectual for him to lead it. In such a failure the mind becomes a poison, culture becomes a poison, ownership becomes a poison, solitude becomes a poison. Such a man, poisoned through and through, ends by falling into a permanent state of vindictiveness. He breathes revenge and a will to vengeance. What do you think he needs, absolutely needs to give himself from outside himself the appearance of being superior to the most intellectual men, to create for himself the joy of exacted vengeance, at least in his imagination? Morality. You may swear to it; it will always be morality; always big words of morality, always the big drum of justice, wisdom, reason, holiness and virtue; always a stoic bearing (how well does stoicism hide that which one does not have!). Always the cloak of wise silence, of condescension, of gentleness, no matter what names one may give to the cloak of the ideal under which hide themselves the incurable belittlers of themselves who are at the same time the incurably vain ones of the earth. I must not be misunderstood. It does happen sometimes that from among these born enemies of the mind there are developed those rare samples of humanity whom the people venerate as saints and sages. It is from among such men that emerge those monsters of morality who make a 'splash' who make history. St. Augustine was one of them. The dread of the mind, the vengeance

against the mind, alas, how often have those vices which are endowed with a true dynamic power given birth to virtue! Aye, to virtue! Between ourselves, the philosophers' pretension to wisdom, that most insane and immoderate pretension, which has been raised here and there on earth, was it not always to this day, in India as well as in Greece, first of all a hiding place? Sometimes perhaps it took up the cloak of education, that point of view which hallows so many lies, and they have wished to show some tender care for beings who are developing themselves and growing, for disciples that must be often protected from themselves, from a faith in their teacher. But most of the time wisdom is a hiding place for philosophers in that which they dissimulate themselves because of their age, their weariness, their lukewarmth or their hardening, because they are sensing that they are nearing their end with the sagacity or the instinct that animals have before their death. They set themselves apart, become silent, choose solitude and take refuge in caves; then become sages. How so? Is then wisdom a place where the philosopher hides from his own mind?"

This is the kind of people, the worst of whom being venomous, impotent men, poisoned with their own venom, and the best being timid and weakened, sick men, and all of them jealous, who have constituted at all times the grand army of morality. Morality is plebeianism against the *élite*. It is the conspiracy and the plot of all the cowardly instincts against the lofty and energetic instincts.

It is a plot against the ideal. It gives itself as an ideal and succeeds, through I know not what tricks of a cunning slave, in being taken seriously, in being worshiped by the very people against whom it had been framed.

The slaves' shifts of which I spoke are many. The inferior kind exploits pity for instance and that is the most debilitating, anti-social feeling that can exist. When pity enters the heart of the superior kind the latter is lost and, with it, the nation and a whole civilization, and one has to begin all over again.

Again, the inferior kind "unlearning modesty swells its needs," and its general ideas which are but forms of its needs, "until it makes of them cosmic and metaphysical values." The philosophers, if that kind produces any and that does happen, are admirable in operating the transformation. They give out as general principles for the guidance of humanity what is but the needs of the plebe, desires of the plebe, jealousies of the plebe and confused aspirations of the plebe towards the particular form of happiness that suits it. Again, the inferior kind invents real sophisms such as that of the equality of men without any one ever being able to discover upon what ground, upon what scientific, historical, ethnographical or ethical basis, or any basis you may fancy, such an absurdity ever could have been built. This idea of equality either the inferior kind extracts from religion or it invents a religion to confirm it. If there exists a religion which asserts that all men are equal before the Gods it



gradually comes to the conclusion that consequently — and what a consequence! — all men must be socially equal. Or else if it has once asserted that all men, because they are men — and what a reason! — are equal, it imagines a religion that endows this childishness with the authority of a divine rule and the majesty of a celestial dogma. Or again, these two ideas, these two confused sentiments, the social and the religious, develop themselves together without any one being able to discover which has generated the other, and they lend each other mutual help and support, and they vie with each other to suppress the superior kind and to drown and dissolve it in the plebe.

Again, the inferior kind invents the idea of plurality, the idea of the right of plurality: what must be done is what suits the greatest number; therefore the only thing to do is to count heads. This is a confusion ludicrous if involuntary, and hateful if deliberate, between the qualificative and the quantitative. Is it a matter of counting or of weighing? The general is one and the army a hundred thousand. Is it the one who is one who must obey those who are a hundred thousand? If the quantity is to be preferred to the quality it is incontestable that it is the general who must obey or rather who should not exist at all.

Such are the principal shifts conscious or unconscious used by the inferior kind against the superior.

Let us note that it also happens, and that is not the least important factor in this evolution, that



the "superior kind" gives way and ends in "defaulting." "The superior kind defaults, I mean the kind whose inexhaustible fecundity and power maintained the belief in mankind. Think of what we owe to Napoleon: almost every one of the superior hopes of the century." The superior kind disappears owing to exhaustion, following a long effort, to the neglect of renewing itself by means of the admission to its fold of the best elements of the inferior kind, or through forgetfulness of its principles and rules of action, through carelessness, disgust, refining or artistic delicacy. The latter is one of its own particular instincts and one of the best but it should have nothing but its own share: good taste. In that case good taste, in the end, encroaches upon the other instincts and destroys the equilibrium. If through these means the superior kind allows itself to be conquered and seduced by the coarse sophisms of the plebe, it is lost and with it goes the civilization it had created and of which it is still, but futilely bearing the banner. For "in this wise the whole existence of the nation is vulgarized; because so long as the masses rule they tyrannize the exceptional men, which causes the latter to lose faith in themselves and drives them to nihilism."

Let us take a trip along history and watch through the accidents of the road and of the stages and through the regressions, which we shall neglect, the joint progress of this plebeianism and of this morality, which are two diverse forms, hardly diverse and hardly distinct, of one and the same

thing. The Greeks and the Romans, these creators of two civilizations, and, together, of all known civilization, Greeks and Romans were at the same time absolute aristocrats and immoralists. Do not speak to me of the Athenian democracy, a democracy of a few thousand citizens set up above three hundred thousand mongrels and slaves. Greeks and Romans were thorough aristocrats. They were also thorough immoralists. They knew but one duty, the duty to the State. Please understand that this means that here we have a superior kind which acknowledges no duties towards the slaves or the foreigner, toward the plebeian or towards woman, and which knows but one duty, that to maintain itself; for it is the State, to maintain itself in health, in strength, in greatness, in beauty and in an infinite capacity for expansion and development.

Such was the whole morality of the Greeks and the Romans, and that comes back to saying that Greeks and Romans had no morality. It is enough to read Cicero's *De Officiis*, an admirable book withal it dates from the beginning of the decadence, well to understand that a Roman knew no duties beyond those to his country. To tell the truth, these latter duties he knew well.

The Greeks and the Romans were therefore pure aristocrats and pure immoralists. A superior kind established itself one does not know very well in what way, upon a rock promontory, upon seven hills overlooking vast plains. That was the nucleus of a great city and it attracted many individuals of the inferior kind. It disciplined them, ruled them,

and never thought of but one thing: to be strong, great and beautiful. For that purpose it imposed upon itself and upon its servants enormous and incessant sacrifices. That is all. There is not a shadow of morality in this.

They had a religion.

Precisely. That is a very curious point. They had a religion; but it was a religion altogether of the city, all consecrated to the city, all civic. The gods were but a sort of celestial Senate above the Senate of here below, a sort of immortal Senate above that of the mortals. The gods belonged to the city. They were superior citizens and enlightened, severe and somewhat jealous protectors of the city. They were Olympian *aristoi*. That religion was patriotic and was even as the very sanctuary of patriotism. If it contained any amount of morality, and it did that we must admit because there would always be infiltrations, at least it contained so little of it that it was necessary for philosophers to invent and create piecemeal a morality beside that religion and outside of it and somewhat against it, which last fact it sometimes made plain to the philosophers. Nothing shows better that morality was at first most foreign to these peoples. They were patriots. They were religious from patriotism or rather they had the cult of the motherland, but they were aristocrats and *consequently* immoralists. And these peoples are the greatest that antiquity and even the whole of history has produced, and they shed untold glory upon the planet which we inhabit.

See now, further away, between the Mediterranean peoples and the Oriental world, a small nation belonging to another race. That nation also is patriotic; it also has its national god, its local god, a provincial god, as it were. But its people are not aristocrats. They are all of them plebeians and they have a most peculiar morality which would greatly astonish a Roman or a Greek. This little nation has invented *sin*. Understand by this that sin is not to them an action detrimental to a fellow citizen and therefore a deed against the city. Sin is to them a deed against God, an action that displeases God and can be wiped off through repentance alone, through a prayer for pardon, a prayer for grace, through contrition and self-abasement before the offended divine majesty. This was a most peculiar conception. It was equalitarian, because, in presence of the divine greatness, all human greatness is equal, being in itself a mere nothing, and the sin of the powerful and of the rich man is no less grievous than any other, taken as an offence to God. It was ecclesiastical, because if there were men in the confidence of the divine thought and interpreters thereof, they had to be the judges of sins and hold rich and poor alike, strong and weak alike, to account for them. It was moral, because here was no matter of a country to be defended, of a city to be served, of a will to power to be used in helping and supporting others. It was a matter of a code given by a God, imposed upon men in the interests of that God and for his glory. That code commands imperatively, gives no reasons and must be

obeyed *because* it commands and for that reason alone. The categorical imperative was born.

There you have morality, in this case altogether religious. Elsewhere it will assume another shape and follow different paths to success. But there you have it such as we, the men of today, know it. There it stands in its main features: "*Origins of sin.*" Sin as we view it today wherever Christianity rules or has ruled, sin is a Jewish sentiment and a Jewish invention. Considering this basic plan of all Christian morality, Christianity has in effect sought to Judaïse the whole world. We get the best idea of the amount of success it achieved in Europe from the degree of strangeness which the Greek antiquity — a world free from the notion of sin — retains before our sensibility in spite of all the goodwill to bridge over and to assimilate which has never been lacking throughout whole generations and in the minds of many men. "Only if thou repentest shall God be merciful to thee." Such words would have aroused hilarity and anger in a Greek. He would have exclaimed: "Here are slaves' sentiments!" Here, among the Hebrews, a God is accepted who is powerful, supremely powerful and yet he is an avenging and vindictive God. His power is so great that one can generally cause him no damage, *unless it be in what pertains to honor*. Every sin is a sign of lack of respect in him, a *crimen laesae majestatis divinae*, and it is *nothing more than that*. Contrition, dishonor, abasement, here are the first and last conditions upon which his grace depends. What he demands

therefore is the re-establishment of his divine honor, reparation for his divine honor. That, on the other hand, the sin may have caused a damage, may have entailed a profound and growing disaster which is snatching and strangling one man after another, that matters little to this oriental despot who is enthroned above in the heavens. The sin was a lapse towards him and not towards humanity! He grants also that indifference to the natural sequence of sin to the man to whom he has given his grace. God and humanity (or the city) *are here imagined so far apart, so much in opposition to each other* that it is fundamentally impossible to sin against the latter. Every deed must be considered only in view of its supernatural consequences, without a care for the natural consequences. Thus the Jewish sentiment will have it because, to them, everything that is natural is in itself unworthy. The Greeks, on the contrary, willingly accepted the idea that sacrilege also and even theft could be endowed with dignity, as was the case with Prometheus. . . . It was in their need to imagine dignity in sacrifice, and to incorporate it therein that they had invented tragedy — an art and a joy which, notwithstanding the poetical gifts and the taste of the Jews for the sublime, remained deeply foreign to that people.

This morality took other paths also as I said, and, under somewhat different aspects, we see its birth among the Greeks, in the Socratic times, while it remained in a stationary state with the Jews, later to expand and to pour itself out like a



torrent. The following idea took root among the Greeks of the days of Socrates: Morality — that is the becoming personally better, that is the being loved by one's neighbors and one's kin, that is the being harmless — morality is something which is superior to everything and must regulate everything, in relation to which all things must be regulated, and to which all things must be subordinated.

You may mention science. That means little and the greatest savant is the man that knows that he knows nothing. But if there does exist something that calls itself knowledge, it only has any *value* (1) if it is not opposed to morality (2) if it tends thereto, leads thereto, if it serves and supports morality.

You may mention politics and sociology. Politics only have a value if their aim is to make men happy by making them better men and if they achieve that result, and consequently if they act, strictly and undividedly, as soldiers of morality, workers of morality and handmen of morality.

You may mention the arts. They are despicable matters, like cooking or cosmetics, unless perhaps, (but it is doubtful whether they are capable of that) they serve to teach or to prompt morality.

There lay the whole of Socratism — to bring all human occupations, all human efforts and all human recreations back to morality as being their ultimate aim, to admit them as justified by that aim and sanctified thereby if, that is, they do tend towards it, and to proscribe and brand them if it is proved, or evident or merely likely, that they are



not tending to morality or that they cannot reach it: "The common feature in the history of morality since Socrates, is the attempt to bring the *moral values* above all the other values in order that they become, not only the judges and guides of life, but also the judges and guides (1) of knowledge (2) of the arts (3) of the political and social aspirations. To become better is considered the only task. All the rest is but a *means* to that end — or else it is a perturbation, an obstacle or a danger and must be fought therefore to destruction. A similar movement can be traced in China and there is one also in India."

What are the reasons for that state of mind. (1) The herd instinct directed against the strong and independent men. (2) The instinct of the disinherited and suffering ones directed against those who are happy. (3) The instinct of the mediocre ones directed against the exceptions. So soon as any single one of these instincts assumes some strength in a human race, it upsets the order of the values. No longer is it the strength of body and heart which is prized. It is the timidity and the regularity of private life. No longer is it splendor, fine luxury, artistic and patrician magnificence which are looked upon with admiration. It is suitable property, the narrow economic life of the small bourgeois or sometimes the abstinence or the useless asceticism of the stoic, the cynic or the cenobite. No longer is it genius which draws admiration; on the contrary it is looked upon as dangerous and almost insolent. Our admiration

goes to mediocrity of the mind, of the soul, of the character and of the daily life, which mediocrity is held to be the ideal that all should realize, and it goes to a social level beyond which no one must venture, the penalty being ostracism or death. It was after the Greco-Roman world had already started upon that descent that Christianity appeared.

We must set Jesus apart, of whom but little is known and who seems to have been, if we try to visualize him through the contradictions of doctrine and of tendencies shown by the Gospels, much more an aristocratic mystic than a plebeian — we must set him apart because the idea of justice was unbearable to him, and in these matters the notion of justice is the one touchstone. It is quite likely that, as Aristophanes took Socrates for a sophist, so did the Pharisees take Jesus for a plebeian, for the last of the Prophets, for a demagogue; while he was perhaps the very opposite of one. However, we do not know. We must needs set Jesus apart since of him, all things considered, nothing is known.

But Christianity, such as it was built up by St. Paul and his disciples, was the greatest moral and plebeian movement of known history. In sooth it was the very advent of plebeianism as I have previously said: "The main idea was to *bring to the top* a certain category of souls. It was a popular insurrection in the midst, first of a sacerdotal people," then of nations that had remained aristocratic albeit they already had some plebeian tend-

encies and therefore were all prepared for the arrival of the *new one*. It was a pietist movement sprung from people of the depths, fishermen, toll-gatherers, women, sick people, then the plebeian mob of Antioch, Corinth, Rome, the African cities, the mob of all the capitals and all the great towns.

Note the long abstention of the peasants. The peasants are the last pagans (*pagani*) not merely because news reaches them more slowly and because they are the backward ones in all periods, but also because the spirit of submission to the exception is a primitive sign, while the spirit of equality, that is to say, the spirit of domination of the mediocrity over the exception, is a modern sign in each civilization, otherwise a symptom of the decomposition of that civilization.

Note the prompt and ardent adhesion of the women. It may perhaps have been due to sentimentalism, to emotion felt at the story of the martyrdom, the hysteria of the Cross, a disease since then very much studied and well known. It was due to this especially, which is more simple and natural, that woman was, in the antiquity, a slave and that the notion of equality struck her at once as an arrow. It was due to this also, that woman is essentially mediocre in the precise sense of the word, more intelligent than the man in the lower classes, and less intelligent than the man in the higher classes, that she often reaches a most remarkable intellectual development but *never* reaches genius, that she is therefore mediocre, average and consequently very favorable, as soon as she

can grasp its meaning, as soon as she can get an inkling of it, to the rule of the middle classes, to the reign of the mediocre ones and to the domination of the mediocre ones over the exceptional ones and to the proscription of the exceptions. Femininity is a ready-made plebeianism, a plebeianism natural. Democracies will naturally tend to the establishment of political suffrage for women; they would even accommodate themselves very easily to the political suffrage of the women alone, to be ruled by the women. That sort of government would truly prove very good for them and ensure them with certainty that kind of happiness and social welfare which has their preference. It was due to this also, that women, much more than men, need morality, need that the weak be held sacred and the strong held in check, bridled with scruples, shackled and choked with a conscience, hesitating about his rights and blushing of his very strength.

Thus armed, Christianity vanquished the old world. It persuaded humanity that it needed to be mediocre, low, somewhat ugly, *not* led by the strong, courageous and intelligent men, *not* illustrated and nobly intoxicated by the artists, but led by those who fast and pray, and scornful of the men who have the sense of the beautiful.

The strong, the courageous, the intelligent men and the artists never abdicate, or at least they never resign, and they have, later on, partly regained their positions even in Christianity, as priests, bishops, popes, preachers, founders of religious orders, painters, sculptors and architects. Yet

for a long time the spirit of Christianity remained what we have just seen. It was never altogether abolished nor even modified to any large extent, and this has had mighty consequences, as we shall see.

The Roman Empire was enervated and disorganized, in the precise meaning of that word; its organism was undermined by a number of causes but especially by that spirit of Christianity, concerning which it was under no illusion as was proved by the persecutions with which it attempted to defend itself. It fell a fairly easy prey to the Barbarians. The Barbarians were neither intelligent nor artistic but they were courageous and strong, organized according to force, and free from any spirit of weakness in their constitution or their habits. They won.

They won, but Christianity seduced and captivated them; it domesticated them. How did it ever succeed in that? Nietzsche points out the fact, expresses his surprise but does not explain it: "A nihilistic religion comes from a tired and stale nation and outlives all the violent instincts inherent to that nation. It is gradually carried into another sphere and penetrates at last young nations *which have not yet lived at all*.<sup>1</sup> How strange that is! A happiness of decline and of eventide, a shepherd's happiness preached to barbarians, to Germans! How much need there was first of all to Germanize and to barbarize all that! To those that had dreamed of a Valhalla! To those that found all

<sup>1</sup> Underlined by Nietzsche, perhaps as an explanation?

happiness to lay in warfare! A supernational religion, preached in the midst of a chaos wherein there did not even exist any nations!"

As a matter of fact, it is difficult to find the explanation. It may be that those barbaric warriors were seduced by the legend of God Who Was Made Man, of God making Himself man in order to bring glad tidings to humanity and suffering death through that undertaking. That sentimental idea must have a very great hold upon all men and especially upon simple and rough men. "Oh, had I but been there with my barons!"<sup>1</sup>

It may be that the Barbarians, as they began to win and advanced through fertile lands and found milder climates, lost some of their barbarism, ceased to think that all happiness lay in warfare and took readily, as they settled down and became founders of nations, to a religion of rest, quiet and gentleness.

It may be that they felt those priests to be at heart their auxiliaries, as being the enemies of the old Romans, of the traditionalist Romans who were attached to their gods and the memory of them, attached to paganism as holding the strength of their ancient institutions and civilization, or as having brilliantly expressed them. Barbarians and Christian priests were equally enemies of *ancient Rome*. That was enough for them to agree, or, at least, it was the road to an agreement. Then again,

<sup>1</sup> Exclamation attributed to Clovis, the founder of the Frankish dynasty (465-511) when he was converted to Christianity.—(Translator's Note.)



as Nietzsche remarked with his usual  *finesse* : "they must have begun by very much Germanizing and barbarizing all that."

The fact is there at all events. The Barbarians became Christians and that may have been an evil. The world was handed over to Christianity.

Christianity, in truth, evolved itself. It ceased to be demagogical. It became aristocratic and aspired, in the person of its leaders, either at sharing the power of government or at monopolizing it wholly by ruling the ruling power itself. It ceased to be anti-artistic, anti-Apollonian or anti-Dionysian, became most refined in the person of its chiefs and called the artists and the other joys of life to its fold. The ancient spirit was taking its revenge. The Renaissance, beloved of the Popes, was but a resurrection of Hellenism and of the Hellenic spirit.

But please note two points. First of all, the Christian spirit, the true Christian spirit, remained throughout in the popular clergy, in the clergy-people, in that clergy which in olden days elected the bishops, in that clergy which in olden days enjoyed the right to marry, in that dispossessed small clergy — large in numbers — which is the democracy of the Church, which shall never be very fond of Rome, which shall never love the powerful ones, either temporal or spiritual, which shall never love the artists, and which shall speak the demagogical and socialistic language against the powerful ones of the earth at the times of trouble and license, that is at the times when it can speak. On the eve of the French Revolution that clergy was ready



to make it and contributed, as a matter of fact, very strongly to its first approach and its first victories.

There have ever been two superimposed Christianities. One was a perverted Christianity, an Hellenized and Romanized Christianity of which it could be said: "*Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit.*" The other was the true Christianity of Jewish origin, of the "Hebrew Prophet" brand, the democratic, plebeian and plebeianistic Christianity which kept alive, and caused to persevere in the being, Saint Paul's own spirit.

Note the second point. It is not more important, but more striking, than the first. Withal, they are at bottom the same. Whenever Christians have wished to revert to the primitive Church, to the spirit, the character, the moral state and the state of soul of the primitive Church, it was a plebeian revolution which they made or attempted. Thus came the anti-Roman, anti-aristocratic, anti-artistic, very soon equalitarian Lutheran movement, which became republican and mingled with socialistic ideas, feelings or tendencies.

Thus came the anti-Roman, anti-aristocratic, anti-literary, anti-artistic, profoundly "moral" Jansenistic movement, as much moral as Calvinism, which, moreover, was of French origin, and unconsciously Republican, and upon this point Louis XIV was under no delusion.

Something should be said for the benefit of the fools who attack religion, or, if one likes, of the men who attack religion in a foolish manner: "The struggle against the Church is certainly also,

among other things, the struggle of the more vulgar, more gay, more familiar and superficial natures against the domination of the men who are heavier, deeper, more contemplative, that is to say, more wicked and distrustful, who long ruminate the suspicions that come to them concerning the value of existence and also their own value. The vulgar interest of the people, its joy of the senses, its 'good heart' revolted against those men. The whole Roman Church rests upon a southern mistrust of human nature, a mistrust always ill-understood in the north. That mistrust was inherited by southern Europe from the deep East, mysterious antique Asia and its contemplative spirit. Already Protestantism was a popular revolt in favor of the reliable, candid and superficial people. The North was ever heavier and more insipid than the South."<sup>1</sup>

We find then that there existed between the high Catholic clergy and the low Catholic clergy, and in a more general way, between the Catholics above and those below, and in a still more general way, between the Christians above and those below, the same difference, the same antinomy and the same hidden struggle which exist at all possible times between the superior and the inferior kinds. Yet there always remained in Christianity that primitive spirit in favor of the inferior kind, that deeply plebeian primitive spirit, that primitive spirit which had freed woman and slave, that primitive spirit which had called the poor to the Kingdom of God

<sup>1</sup> Faguet wisely had this quotation followed by a query mark in his text.—(Translator's Note.)

and represented the entrance of the rich therein as impossible, that primitive spirit which, all things considered, was truly a protest and an insurrection against the whole of antiquity and against all principles and ideas — aristocratism, slavery, virilism, taste for the strong and beautiful — upon which antiquity had rested, and which had given it all its virtue and all its strength.

Then came the French Revolution which was but an incident. It was nevertheless a considerable incident in the history of plebeianism. It was an explosion of that plebeian, equalitarian, optimistic and moral spirit. As we all know, the whole French Revolution is expressed in two words: Equality, National Sovereignty. The rest was so very little its true spirit that it was obsolete from the outset, was very soon abandoned and has never been seriously taken up again unless by the enemies of the French Revolution and those it injured in their interests. Equality and national sovereignty are nothing else but pure and simple plebeianism, unalloyed and utterly irreconcilable with anything that is not itself. Because note that if equality is destructive of liberty, which has been proved a hundred times, and which facts have proved in the past, are proving now and shall ever prove better than could any reasoning, national sovereignty itself destroys equality. It assuredly destroys equality itself because, if it is plurality that rules without any corrective, what does take place? This, to wit that the superior kind, the *élite*, the exceptional ones are purely and simply *suppressed*. Their

thoughts, feelings, judgments, tastes do not count. They are sacrificed. So that there is not *equality* between *all* the citizens; there is oppression of the superiors by the inferiors, of the *élite* by the "herd-animals," or, if you like, of the exceptions by the average. Democracy suppresses the exceptions. It organizes the oppression of the smaller by the greater number. It turns the "superior kind" into a caste of pariahs. That is not at all equality.

Yet that is precisely what the Revolution wanted. It wanted at heart neither liberty, nor fraternity *nor even* equality. It wanted the sovereignty of the greater number, that is to say, the oppression and hence the short and swift suppression of the higher class, that is to say again, pure and simple plebeianism. The Revolution was plebeianism itself in its purest, most decisive and conscious state: "It was the French Revolution that placed definitely and solemnly the scepter in the hand of the 'good' man, the lamb, the ass, the goose, and of all that is dull and brawling, ripe for the mad house of modern ideas."

This of course, in the name of morality, in the name of that plebeian morality, the evolution of which we have carefully followed. It is interesting to consider that Rousseau, Kant and Robespierre are hand in hand: Rousseau the very type of the plebeian moralist, with his sentimentalist effusions, his moralizing pathos, resembling that of a Calvinist pastor, his taste for life mediocre, peaceful and idyllic, his *gemüth*, his hatred of the arts and the letters; Kant with his fine philosophical

intelligence, but a man that remained ever as if hypnotized by the vision of a beautiful moral building to be erected upon an unshakable basis; Robespierre with his soul of plebeian priest, narrow, authoritative and fanatical. "All philosophers have constructed their monuments under the seduction of morality; Kant no less than the others (more than the others). Their intention merely seemed to bear towards certainty, truth and knowledge. But, in truth, they aimed at the majestic monument of morality, to use once more the innocent language of Kant who held it to be his task and his work, to be the task 'less brilliant but not without merit' to 'level and straighten the ground upon which that majestic moral edifice was to be built.' Alas, he did not succeed; quite the contrary, we must admit today. With intentions of that kind, Kant was truly the son of his century. . . . He also had been bitten by that moral tarantula that stung Rousseau; he also felt his soul weighed down by that moral fanaticism of which another disciple of Rousseau believed himself and proclaimed himself to be the executor. I mean Robespierre, who wished to found upon earth the empire of wisdom, justice and virtue (his speech of June 7, 1794)."

This line is continued unto our own days by the true heirs of the French Revolution, and the only logical ones. They are the Socialists of all shades, "the most honest and the most stupid race in the world." They simply wish, and with much reason if one were to admit the revolutionary principle,

that equality should become real, that there be no longer any superior kind, in any way, neither by riches, or titles, or honors, or more complete education, or higher culture. They wish to suppress every exception. They want the reign of equality, justice and concord established upon earth: "That reign would be, in all imaginable cases, that of mediocrity and one resembling that of the Empire of China." In admiring the Chinese as they were so fond of doing, the philosophers of the XVIIIth century seem to have understood what they were saying and to have distinctly seen where led the theories that were dear to them.

But this thought of destroying the *élite* and suppressing the exception is a dream. It is a very fanciful idea. The exception is a natural thing and will always happen. The men of *élite* are the product of nature and will always be born.

To be sure; yet to begin with it is not quite true. Plebeianism by preventing the superior kind from refining and strengthening itself by heredity reduces its numbers. On the other hand, in preventing the superior kind from developing itself through a distinct education and culture, and carefully reducing it to the rudimentary education, which can be given to all it reduces its numbers still further. Plebeianism reduces the superior kind to its minimum. It brings it back to being composed merely of the individuals that are born very distinguished and most exceptional, and whose force of ascent nothing could stop.

Moreover, plebeianism still further diminishes



the superior kind through discouraging it. When plebeianism rules, what advantage could a man who is born superior find in cultivating, developing or merely allowing others to see his superiority? His own interest is to hide it. To show it would be to make himself suspected. To show it would be to denounce himself. To show it would be to proclaim himself candidate for a pariah, and would mean that very soon he would be classified in fact as a pariah. Under a plebeian régime of what use is it to have any merit? It is the contrary which proves advantageous. "Let us be mediocre and not give ourselves the pain of becoming oppressed." Thus reason many men of merit, and thus again is the superior kind further decreased. Minimum of a minimum.

There remain nevertheless in the end those very few men who are very superior, who cannot agree to hide or to strangle their superiority, or who can in truth neither repress it, so strong is it, nor hide it, so radiant is it. But plebeianism is not sorry that these men should exist, because they threaten it with no danger owing to their small number, and because they afford it matter for triumph. There must be pariahs so that one may feel one's self part of a dominating class, and there must be oppressed men so that we can enjoy the pleasure of feeling ourselves oppressors. Do you think that the French plebeianism, a very benevolent one but one that is nevertheless jealous of its legitimate prerogatives, did not derive great pleasure from seeing that renown? Taine and Pasteur had no influence what-



soever in the state and were nothing in the city. That is the very victory of democracy, that genius enjoys less rights in it than mediocrity or sottishness. Consequently it is necessary that there should be men of genius for democracy to be able to taste its triumph in setting them aside, for democracy to be able even to take consciousness of itself in repelling them and in saying to them: "I know ye not." If the superior kind had utterly disappeared, plebeianism would feel the boredom of the too complete victories, and would feel no longer the pleasure of being itself. It would lose the passion of itself, which is both the salt and the spur of life.

Therefore the natural movement of rising plebeianism consists in diminishing by all the means that we have seen the superior kind, while preserving a few specimens, or rather in congratulating itself that there shall always be a few samples thereof.

This decadence of a society or a civilization in the same measure as aristocratism declines is quite patent to the eyes if we consider the three centuries which we have studied. The various "sensibilities" of the last three centuries can best be expressed as follows: "*Aristocratism*: Descartes, the rule of *reason*, proof of the sovereignty in the will—*Feminism*: Rousseau, reign of *sentiment*, proof of the sovereignty in the senses, lies.—*Animalism*: Schopenhauer, reign of the *appetites*, proof of the sovereignty of the animal instincts, more true but also more gloomy.

"The 17th century is aristocratic; it co-ordinates,

it is haughty towards everything that is animal, stern towards the heart, deprived of sentimentalism, non-German, *ungemüthlich*; opposed to what is burlesque and natural. It has the generalizing spirit, sovereign towards the past; because it believes in itself. At heart it holds much more of the ferocious beast and to retain mastery practices the ascetic discipline. The century of the strength of will is also that of the violent passions. The 18th century is dominated by woman. It is enthusiastic, witty, and colorless, but it has spirit for the service of its aspiration and of the heart. It is libertine in the enjoyment of all the most intellectual things, and undermines all the authorities. It is intoxicated, lucid, human and sociable; it is false before itself, and at heart quite rascally. The 19th century is more animal-like, more earthy, uglier, more realistic, more mobbish, and because of that 'better and more honest' . . . but weaker in will, sad, confusedly exacting, but fatalistic. Neither fear nor veneration in the presence of reason any more than in the presence of the heart; secretly persuaded of the domination of the appetites . . . morality itself is reduced to an instinct (compassion)."

Does plebeianism with the instincts we now know to be its own, capture the State? It is interesting to know what it does with the State and let us say it right here for the sake of clearness, to know how thoroughly it disfigures it. What is the State in its principle? It is a league of defense against an enemy considered to be powerful, dangerous and

imminent. "The community is at its beginning the organization of the weak ones to *balance* threatening forces, . . . or in order to become superior to those threatening forces." Most of the time that organization merely consists in placing one's self in the hands of a man himself powerful, who in truth differs not at all from the powerful enemy against whom one wishes to defend one's self. "The brigand, and the strong man who promises to a community that he will protect it against the brigand, are probably both very much alike, with this one difference, that the second reaches his own advantage by a different path, that is to say, by means of regular tributes which the community shall pay him and no longer by war levies. The same relation exists between the merchant and the pirate who can both, for a long time, remain one and the same man: as soon as one of the two functions seems no longer a prudent one, they take up the other. At bottom, even to-day, the merchant's morality is but the morality of a better-advised pirate: it is a matter of buying as cheaply as possible, of spending unless indispensable nothing but the expenses of the undertaking, and of selling as dearly as possible. The essential point is that this powerful man promises to balance the brigand: the weak ones see therein the possibility for them to live. Because it is necessary either that they should group themselves to form an equivalent power or else that they submit themselves to a man who is able to counterbalance that power. As a rule the preference is given to that second process, because it checks *two* dangerous men, the

first by means of the second and the second by the advantage which is guaranteed him. The protector gains in well-treating those that are bound to him so that they may both feed themselves well and feed him well."

There you have the origin of the State. There is here nothing absolutely that is "moral." It is a bargain. Some men have bought a beast of prey to turn it into a defender. Thus does one buy a watch dog. Nothing is more natural or legitimate, but there is absolutely no morality in it.

But let us go still a little further and note that the State is even an organized immorality. "Principle: only the individuals feel themselves to be responsible. *Collectivities have been invented to do things that the individual does not have the courage to do*" and that he scruples to do. "The whole of altruism is a result of the intelligence of the private man; societies are not altruistic towards each other. The Commandment to love one's neighbor has not yet been broadened by any one into the commandment to love the others. On the contrary we must consider as true what we find in the laws of Manu," as a parenthesis, one may add that this shows why the study of the societies, by the consideration of what they are at the present time or by historical *researches*, is so useful to help the knowledge, the true knowledge of man. Effectively "all communities and all societies, because they are a hundred times more *sincere*, are a hundred times more *instructive* concerning the nature of man than the individual could be since he is

too weak to have the courage of his desires. . . . The study of society is so precious because man is much more *naïve* as part of a society than man as an individual. Society never considered virtue otherwise than as a means to attain force, power and order."

But what is the mechanism of this strange transformation? How does man, as member of a community, become so different from man as individual? "How is it that a great number of people can do things to which the individual would never agree? By the division of the responsibilities, the commandment and the execution." It is that which introduces, or helps to introduce, "virtue, duty, love of country and love for the sovereign" and it is that which "maintains pride, severity, force, hatred and vengeance — in short all those typical characteristics which are repugnant to the member of the herd."

Therefore we must know it and know how to say it; "the State is organized immorality: within, in the form of police (to you as individual, inquisition and informing are no doubt hateful), police and the penal code (individually you do not lay claim to the right to punish), et cetera; — outwardly in the form of will to power, warfare, conquest and vengeance."

What does plebeianism do with that State which is immorality, or if you like, organized immoralism? *It transfers to the State the virtues of the private man.* It wishes to put in the State the virtues of the private man, and is utterly convinced that the

“virtues” of the private man must also be State virtues. In other words, it kills the State. It wants the State to be a good, peaceful, gentle, shy, kindly and weak man. It wants the State not to go to war. It would like the State not only not to attack but to defend itself as little as possible. It would like the State to turn the other cheek and to give moreover its coat when it has had its mantle taken off. It wants the State not to judge, or to judge with the indulgence of a weak and even of a weakened family man. Strange enough, it wants the State to be everything and to do nothing, in which — albeit it is somewhat burlesque — plebeianism is right. For in order that the superior kind be repressed and diminished it is necessary that the State constituted by the plebeian plurality be everything. And in order that the State possess the virtues, ideas, sentiments and habits of the plebeian plurality it is necessary that it do nothing at all.

Thus the plebe organizes, if we may call it organize, a State destructive of the superior kind (or of a large part of the superior kind) and disarmed on the one hand against the greedy foreigner and on the other hand internally against the violent or the subtly gnawing enemies, the witting or unwitting enemies of society. This plebeian State curbs the highest portion of the superior kind as we saw and it also destroys the slightly less high portion of the superior kind in this wise that it calls, attracts and leads it on towards politics and therein exhausts it. “All the political and social conditions together are not worthy of gifted minds being com-



pelled to busy themselves with them. Such a wasting of minds is after all more serious than a state of misery. Politics are a field of work for the more mediocre brains and that field of work should not be open to the others. . . . What we see today is a great and ridiculous folly, today when not only do all men think that they should be daily informed as to the political matters but when everybody wants also to take active part in these matters at every minute and is prepared to abandon his own work to do that. Public security is much too dear at the price. And what is madder still, one reaches, in this wise, the opposite of public security, as our own excellent century is busy demonstrating as if it had never been demonstrated before. To ensure for society security against thieves and fire, to make it infinitely easy for all kinds of trade and relations and to transform the State into a providence, in the good or the bad sense of the word — these are inferior, low, mediocre and not at all indispensable aims. And no delicate instruments should be applied to them. Our period, albeit it speaks much of economy, is very wasteful indeed; it wastes the most precious thing, brains."

More especially is the plebeian State a disarmament of the State and a *denaturation* of the State, a transformation of the State into a dissociation, a transformation of the State into a thing which has but private virtue, and no State virtue whatsoever, a transformation of the general strength into general weakness.

In the course of its ascent towards that goal the



plebe proceeds as follows: "The oppressed ones, the inferior ones, all the great mass of the slaves and the semi-slaves want to reach power. First degree: they free themselves, they release themselves, doing it first in their own imagination; they recognize each other and they impose themselves. Second degree: they take up the fight; they wish to be recognized; equal rights, 'justice.' Third degree: they insist upon privileges; they force the representatives of power onto their side. Fourth degree: they want the power for themselves alone and they take it,"—and thus they succeed in establishing a State, of which we have just seen the picture.

This State, which we must need worship, this State, which is the "new idol," is fictitious, lying and deadly. "Somewhere there are still peoples and herds, but not with us, my brethren: here there are states. A state? What is that? Well, open now your ears unto me, for now will I say unto you *my word concerning the death of peoples*. A state, is called the coldest of all cold monsters. Coldly lieth it also; and this lie creepeth from its mouth. 'I, the state, am the people.' It is a lie! Creators were they who created peoples, and hung a faith and a love over them: *thus they served life*. Destroyers are they who lay snares for many, and call it the state: they hang a sword and a hundred cravings over them. Where there is still a people, there the state is not understood, but hated as the evil eye, and as sin against laws and customs. This sign I give unto you: every people speaketh its

language of good and evil: this its neighbor understandeth not. Its language hath it devised for itself in laws and customs. But the state lieth in all languages of good and evil; and whatever it saith, it lieth; and whatever it hath, it hath stolen. False is everything in it; with stolen teeth it biteth, the biting one. False are even its bowels. Confusion of language of good and evil; this sign I give unto you as the sign of the state. Verily, the will to death indicateth this sign! Verily, it beckoneth unto the preachers of death! Many, too many are born: for the superfluous ones was the state devised! See just how it enticeth them to it, the many-too-many! How it swalloweth and cheweth and recheweth them! 'On earth there is nothing greater than I: it is I that am the regulating finger of God'—thus roareth the monster. And not only the long-eared and short-sighted fall upon their knees! Ah, even in your ears, ye great souls, it whispereth its gloomy lies! Ah, it findeth out the rich hearts that willingly lavish themselves! Yea, it findeth you out too, ye conquerors of the old God! Weary ye became of the conflict, and now your weariness serveth the new idol! Heroes and honorable ones, it would fain set up around it, the new idol! Gladly it basketh in the sunshine of good consciences,—the cold monster! Everything will it give *you*, if *ye* worship it, the new idol: thus it purchaseth the luster of your virtue, and the glance of your proud eyes. It seeketh to allure by means of you, the many-too-many! Yea, a hellish artifice hath here been devised, a death-horse jingling with

the trappings of divine honors! Yea, a dying for many hath here been devised, which glorifieth itself as life: verily, a hearty service unto all preachers of death! The state, I call it, where all are poison-drinkers, the good and the bad: the state, where all lose themselves, the good and the bad: the state, where the slow suicide of all — is called 'life.' Just see these superfluous ones! They steal the works of the inventors and the treasures of the wise. Culture, they call their theft — and everything becometh sickness and trouble unto them! Just see these superfluous ones! Sick are they always; they vomit their bile, and call it a newspaper. They devour one another, and cannot even digest themselves. Just see these superfluous ones! Wealth they acquire, and become poorer thereby. Power they seek for, and above all, the lever of power, much money — these impotent ones! See them clamber, the nimble apes! They clamber over one another, and then scuffle into the mud and the abyss. Towards the throne they all strive: it is their madness — as if happiness sat on the throne! Ofttimes sitteth filth on the throne,— and ofttimes also the throne on filth. Madmen they all seem to me, and clambering apes, and too eager. Badly smelleth their idol to me, the cold monster: badly they all smell to me, these idolaters. My brethren, will ye suffocate in the fumes of their maws and appetites! Better break the windows and jump into the open air! Do go out of the way of the bad odor! Withdraw from the idolatry of the superfluous! Withdraw from the steam of

these human sacrifices! Open still remaineth the earth for great souls. Empty are still many sites for lone ones and twain ones, around which floateth the odor of tranquil seas. Open still remaineth a free life for great souls. Verily, he who possesseth little is so much the less possessed: blessed be moderate poverty! There, where the state ceaseth — there only commenceth the man that is not superfluous: there commenceth the song of the necessary ones, the single and irreplaceable melody. There, where the State *ceaseth* — pray look thither, my brethren! Do ye not see it, the rainbow and the bridges of the Superman? — Thus spake Zarathustra."

To resume, when plebeianism has carried the day it destroys the State without replacing it and is utterly unable to replace it. It has conquered power but is unable to exercise it. It has secured domination for itself, for a mere nothing. In the name of morality it has conquered the empire for negation. The ascent of plebeianism is the rising tide of nullity and morality, which was its ascensional force, is a negative and nihilizing virtue.—Morality is the "will to power" of the powerless.

## CHAPTER X.

### DISTANT PERSPECTIVES OF THE DOCTRINE.

IF this be the case, it is necessary that we should use all possible means to destroy, abolish and annihilate morality. To deliver man to all his passions, and to urge him to abandon himself to them. . . . Here you have the conclusion and the solution.—Not at all, Nietzsche answers, after having thought it over, not at all. What results from what we have seen is not that morality is deadly to men, it is that morality is deadly to the smaller number of men, and deadly to society, which in order to subsist, must be ruled by these men; and it is deadly to humanity, which should be led by those men if it is to avoid becoming mere dust or mire. But it is far from being deadly to the great number; for the inferior kind, to the masses; it is their very life. It is the conception of life, the rule of life and the ideal of life to which these masses may rise, and which they need; for it is natural to them: “What is allowed only to the *strongest* and most *fecund* natures in order that their existence be possible — leisure, adventures, incredulousness and even debauches, that, if it were allowed to the average natures, would *necessarily cause them to perish.*”

As a matter of fact, that is what takes place. "Activity, rules, moderation, 'convictions' are seemly in a word as virtues for the herd. With their help, that kind of men, the average men, will reach the form of perfection which is proper to them."

What is needed then is to maintain morality for those that need it and not to subject to it those to whom it is not necessary, and to whom it is harmful and deadly, just as we maintain water for the fish without compelling the birds to live in it. "A doctrine and a religion of 'love,' (fetters to the affirmation of the self), a religion of patience, resignation, mutual help in deed and words, might be of a *superior value* in those strata, *even in the eyes of those that dominate*. For they repress the feelings of rivalry, resentment and envy, which are proper to ill-gifted beings. They divinize for them under the name of ideal, of humility and obedience, the state of slavery, inferiority and oppression. This explains why the dominating classes (or races), as well as the individuals, have always preserved the cult of altruism, the gospel of the meek and lowly and the God on the Cross."

Let the men of the inferior kind retain morality. After all, they are those who invented it. They invented it according to their nature and their needs. There is nothing to say about it. Their only error consists in wanting to submit to it those for whom it was not made and whom it annihilates, to the great cost of society and mankind. What is wrong with the fish is not that they want to live in the

water: the wrong would come if the fish wished to compel the eagles, those conquerors, and the nightingales, those artists, to live thereunder. You have the saying of Napoleon, a perfectly just one: "that you should listen to the voice of sentiment and pity, that is your business and it is very good on your part; but to me, Monsieur de Metternich, what does it matter that a hundred thousand men live or perish."

It is established that humanity, the mass of humanity, cannot live without morality, perhaps even not without a religion, religion being the development, the derivation and also the support of that morality. It is proved also that the *élite* of humanity cannot live, and also cannot lead humanity along the path of greatness and beauty unless it is freed from that morality. Let us conclude that humanity needs a morality and that there must be none for the *élite*. The words so often jeered at: "there must be a religion for the people" are not in the least grotesque. They are the confirmation of a fact. What was ridiculous was the words of the hair-dresser to Diderot: "even though I may be nothing but a surgeon's helper you should not think that I have any religion."

But we are reaching two "moralities," or if you like, two rules of life, which is much the same thing, one morality for the small men and one morality for the great ones; because the absence of morality for the great ones must, of all necessity, be more than merely a negation. It will need to precise itself, to discipline and organize itself, and



itself to become a morality of a certain kind, a morality differing from vulgar morality, a morality even contrary to vulgar morality, an immoralistic morality, but yet a rule of life, and that is to say a morality, and here we have therefore the two moralities.

Well, precisely, Nietzsche answers, the error lay in wanting morality to be "the universal morality" as the ancient courses of philosophy taught. Morality cannot be universal. It could only be so if all men had the same nature, and you know very well that such is not the case. It is the notion, still groping, of equality that inspired the old philosophers with this idea of universal and uniform morality. Holding in a vague way the prejudice that men were equal and of a same nature, they formed the notion that the same rule of life should be applied to them, and was inscribed, as it were, in all their hearts. But this is an error upon an error. Men are not equal; they are not uniform, they are neither cast in the same mold, nor animated with the same spirit; there are great ones and small ones; there are some that are capable of one rule of life, and there are others that are capable of another rule of life for which the first ones are not fit. The unbearable impertinence of those that are cast in the little molds consists in wanting to force into them those that are too big to dwell therein, and exactly the same thing happens in morality as in politics, and the foolishness of equality and the foolishness of universal morality are one and the same foolishness.

In other words, if you prefer, I admit morality. I even respect it, but I give it its own portion. I want it to reign and act where it is very good in its own place, and upon those that are made for it, since they made it. But I stop it where its dominion ends and at the boundary beyond which it becomes useless and soon detrimental. I want it to have, like many other things, its department, but not everything for its own share, as it pretends to have.

Strange pretension. Can you imagine art pretending that everything is made for art, that all human things must be subordinated to art, that all the branches of human knowledge must be compelled to tend towards art as the ultimate end, and that all men should be artists?

Can you imagine science — and if that happens sometimes it is a ridiculous indiscretion — pretending that everything has been made for science, that everything must be regulated by science, that everything must lead to it as towards a unique aim, that it is *obligatory*, and that all men must be men of science?

Morality is one of the branches of human knowledge, good in its own sphere, as the others are, but evil when beyond its own purpose. It is the knowledge that mediocre men have of their needs and their desires. Let it then be used by the mediocre men, but it must leave the others alone. Morality alone has the pretension to be universal, to be obligatory for all men and to bend all men under its laws. It is that pretension only which I condemn and reject. Morality in its own home!

You may say: "but those whom you are freeing from morality will necessarily establish a morality for themselves, a rule of life for themselves, if for no other reason than to agree among themselves, to organize and discipline themselves, to know what they want, and where they tend, and to recognize and communicate with each other concerning the means to reach their aim, since you are giving them one, that is to say, the strength, the greatness and the beauty of mankind. And there you are in the presence of two moralities, that of the small and that of the great ones." I accept quite willingly this conclusion, or rather merely this fashion of putting things. Yes, in my idea, there is a morality for the small ones and there is something for the great ones, which is very immoral but which you may call morality if you like. For the mediocre ones — traditional morality, which I need no longer define or describe since it is what I have been doing all along, while attacking it. For the men of the superior kind — a particular morality, which I shall make no bones about describing in its main lines. Here is the morality of the superior ones and the morality of the mediocre ones opposed to each other: *the morality of the masters and the morality of the slaves.*

"In a tour through the many finer and coarser moralities, which have hitherto prevailed or still prevail on the earth, I found certain traits recurring regularly together, and connected with one another, until finally two primary types revealed themselves to me, and a radical distinction was brought to light.

There is *master-morality* and *slave-morality*; I would at once add, however, that in all higher and mixed civilizations, there are also attempts at the reconciliation of the two moralities; but one finds, still oftener, the confusion and mutual misunderstanding of them, indeed, sometimes their close juxtaposition — even in the same man, within one soul. The distinctions of moral values have either originated in a ruling caste, pleasantly conscious of being different from the ruled — or among the ruled class, the slaves and dependents of all sorts. In the first case, when it is the rulers that determine the conception ‘good,’ it is the exalted, proud disposition which is regarded as the distinguishing feature, and that which determines the order of rank. The noble type of man separates from himself the beings in whom the opposite of this exalted, proud disposition displays itself: he despises them. Let it at once be noted that, in this first kind of morality, the antithesis ‘good’ and ‘bad’ means practically the same as ‘noble’ and ‘despicable’; — the antithesis ‘good’ and ‘evil’ is of a different origin. The cowardly, the timid, the insignificant, and those thinking merely of narrow utility are despised; moreover, also, the distrustful, with their constrained glances, the self-abasing, the dog-like kind of men who let themselves be abused, the mendicant flatterers, and above all the liars: — it is a fundamental belief of all aristocrats that the ‘common people are untruthful. ‘We truthful ones’ the nobility in ancient Greece called themselves. It is obvious that everywhere the designations of moral

value were at first applied to *men*, and were only derivatively and at a later period applied to *actions*; it is a gross mistake, therefore, when historians of morals start with questions like, 'Why have sympathetic actions been praised?' The noble type of man regards *himself* as a determiner of values; he does not require to be approved of; he passes the judgment: 'What is injurious to me is injurious in itself'; he knows that it is he himself only who confers honor on things; he is a *creator of values*. He honors whatever he recognizes in himself: such morality is self-glorification. In the foreground there is the feeling of plenitude, of power, which seeks to overflow, the happiness of high tension, the consciousness of a wealth that would fain give and bestow:—the *noble* man also helps the unfortunate, but not — or scarcely — out of pity, but rather from an impulse generated by the superabundance of power. The *noble* man honors in himself the powerful one, him also who has power over himself, who knows how to speak and how to keep silence, who takes pleasure in subjecting himself to severity and hardness, and has reverence for all — that is severe and hard. 'Wotan placed a hard heart in my breast,' says an old Scandinavian Saga:<sup>1</sup> it is thus rightly expressed from the soul of a proud Viking. Such a type of man is even proud of *not* being made for sympathy; the hero of the Saga, therefore, adds warningly: 'He that has not a hard heart when young, will never have one.' The

<sup>1</sup> "When God made the heart and the bowels of men, he put therein first of all Goodness.—(Boss.)

noble and brave who think thus are the furthest removed from the morality that sees precisely in sympathy, or in acting for the good of others, or in *désintéressement*,<sup>1</sup> the characteristic of the moral: faith in oneself, pride in oneself, a radical enmity and irony towards 'selflessness,' belong as definitely to noble morality, as do a careless scorn and precaution in presence of sympathy and the 'warm heart.' It is the powerful that *know* how to honor, it is their art, their domain for invention. The profound reverence for age and for tradition — all law rests on this double reverence,—the belief and prejudice in favor of ancestors and unfavorable to newcomers, is typical in the morality of the powerful; and if, reversely, men of 'modern ideas' believe almost instinctively in 'progress' and the 'future,' and are more and more lacking in respect for old age, the ignoble origin of these 'ideas' has complacently betrayed itself thereby. A morality of the ruling class, however, is more especially foreign and irritating to present-day taste in the sternness of its principle that one has duties only to one's equals; that one may act towards beings of a lower rank, towards all that is foreign, just as seems good to one, or 'as the heart desires,' and in any case, 'beyond good and evil'; it is here that sympathy and similar sentiments can have a place. The ability and obligation to exercise prolonged gratitude and prolonged revenge — both only within the circle of equals,—artfulness in retaliation, refine-

<sup>1</sup> In French in Nietzsche's text.



ment of the idea in friendship, a certain necessity to have enemies (as outlets for the emotions of envy, quarrelsomeness, arrogance — in fact, in order to be a good *friend*): all these are typical characteristics of the noble morality, which, as was pointed out, is not the morality of 'modern ideas,' and is therefore at present difficult to realize, and also to unearth and disclose. It is otherwise with the second type of morality, *slave-morality*. Supposing that the abused, the oppressed, the suffering, the unemancipated, the weary, and those uncertain of themselves, should moralize, what will be the common element in their moral estimates? Probably a pessimistic suspicion with regard to the entire situation of man will find expression, perhaps a condemnation of man, together with his situation. The slave has an unfavorable eye for the virtues of the powerful; he has a scepticism and distrust, a *refinement* of distrust of everything 'good' that is there honored — he would fain persuade himself that the very happiness there is not genuine. On the other hand, *those* qualities that serve to alleviate the existence of sufferers are brought into prominence and flooded with light; it is here that sympathy, the kind, helping hand, the warm heart, patience, diligence, humility, and friendliness attain to honor; for here these are the most useful qualities, and almost the only means of supporting the burden of existence. Slave-morality is essentially the morality of utility. Here is the seat of the origin of the famous antithesis 'good' and 'evil':



— power and dangerousness<sup>1</sup> are assumed to reside in the evil, a certain dreadfulness, subtlety, and strength, which do not admit of being despised. According to slave-morality, therefore, the 'evil' man arouses fear; according to master-morality, it is precisely the 'good' man that arouses fear and seeks to arouse it, while the bad man is regarded as the despicable being. The contrast attains its maximum when, in accordance with the logical consequences of slave-morality, a shade of depreciation — it may be slight and well-intentioned — at last attaches itself to the 'good' man of this morality; because, according to the servile mode of thought, the good man must in any case be the *safe* man: he is good-natured, easily deceived, perhaps a little stupid, *un bonhomme*. Everywhere that slave-morality gains the ascendancy, language shows a tendency to approximate the significations of the words 'good' and 'stupid.' A last fundamental difference: the desire for *freedom*, the instinct for happiness and the refinements of the feeling of liberty belong, as necessarily, to slave-morals and morality, as artifice and enthusiasm in reverence and devotion are the regular symptoms of an aristocratic mode of thinking and estimating."

There stand, according to Nietzsche, the two morals. There you have the two races facing each other, each with its own rule of life. Never will they understand each other. They will always look upon each other with the deepest astonishment, be-

<sup>1</sup> *Dominium*, *dangier*, *danger*.

cause not only are their actions different, but the distant motives of their actions belong to different spheres, or stand on different geometrical planes. We have here two worlds: "All noble and generous feelings seem improper to the vulgar natures, and hence, most often, *unlikely*." They wink whenever they hear of those feelings, as if they were saying to one another: "there should be a good little profit in this; people cannot see through all the walls." They show envy towards the "noble" man as if he were seeking his own advantage along dubious paths.

Nevertheless, there are cases when it is difficult to find, and even almost impossible, to seek an interested motive to a noble action. Then it is that the man below finds the man above to be insane. He looks upon that man with awe, fear or pity according to his personal character, but he is persuaded that he is in the presence of a man that has lost his head and that is not in his senses. As a matter of fact it was not a question of "common" sense, the only thing that the man below can understand: "if they are convinced with too much sureness of the absence of selfish intentions and personal tastes, the noble man becomes a sort of madman to them. They despise him in his joy, and laugh at his radiant eyes: 'How can one rejoice at the prejudice caused to him? How can one accept a disadvantage with open eyes? Nobility of sentiments must surely be complicated with a sickness of the reason.' They thus think, and cast him a despising glance, the same that they have when

they see the pleasure a madman takes in his fixed idea. . . ."

Note that *they are right*, and that there is a sort of folly in the greatness of the soul. Greatness of soul is a "will to power," a "will to nobility," a "will to elevation" which is the most energetic form of egotism, the most energetic form of the exaltation of the *ego*. But it destroys egotism in the vulgar sense of the word; it destroys the egotism of preservation, the only one that the man from below understands and can understand. Consequently, the superior nature is "the more un-reasonable one when compared to the vulgar nature, because the noble and generous man, the man that sacrifices himself, sinks in fact under the burden of his instincts. His reason is at a standstill during his best moments. An animal, which protects its young at the risk of its own life, or one which, when in heat, follows the female until death, is not thinking of the danger of death. Its reason also is at a standstill, since the pleasure given it by the sight of its young or by the female, and the fear of being deprived thereof, altogether dominate it." It becomes more animal than it usually is. Thus the noble and generous man feels a few sensations of pleasure or pain with so much intensity that the intellect must needs become silent or place itself at the service of those sensations. "His heart will then overpower his brain and the word of passion will henceforth apply." . . . "It is the un-reason of passion in the noble and generous man that the vulgar despises."

There are many passions that the man below

will understand and condone ; but they are the passions that pertain to vulgar egotism, to conservative egotism and that are mere exaggerations, modifications or perversions thereof. Thus, the man below will "no doubt be irritated by the passions of the stomach, but he understands, nevertheless, the attraction which that tyranny exercises," and he excuses it or smiles at it. But how could he understand that one would "for instance, for the sake of a passion for knowledge, endanger one's health and one's honor"? There, in his eyes, begins folly. To the men below, the superior men are mere maniacs.

We must thoroughly understand this if we wish to remain fair. The hatred of the vulgar men for the superior men is not made up altogether of jealously, envy, angry spite, humiliated selfishness and irritated vanity. All these elements enter into the composition of that hatred, to be sure, and in high doses. But there is something else, which, if not worthy of respect, deserves at least consideration ; there is the stupor of the normal being in presence of the monstrous being.<sup>1</sup> And vice versa, the superior man is profoundly unfair to the man below. The superior man has a natural taste for the things which as a rule leave men quite cold, for art, science, beauty, high curiosity or high virtue. Compared to the mass, the superior men are seekers of exceptions, seekers of the rare : "The taste of the superior natures fixes itself upon the exceptions,

<sup>1</sup> *Mediocre man: normal man.* Lombroso.

upon things that seem to have no flavor." In short, "the superior nature has a way of appreciating which is its own."

As the masses do with morality, the superior men want to turn the particular rule of their own kind into a universal rule and there lies their unfairness: "In its idiosyncrasy of taste, the superior kind fancies, as a rule, that *it has no peculiar fashion of appreciating things*. On the contrary, it sets its own most particular values and non-values, which are altogether its own peculiar ones — it sets them up as universal values, and falls thereby into what is incomprehensible and unrealizable. It is very seldom that a superior nature retains enough reason (or flexibility of common sense and comprehensive intelligence) to appreciate and treat ordinary men as ordinary men. It has, as a rule, faith in its own passion, as if *that* passion were *the* passion which has merely remained hidden in the others. In that idea the superior kind shows itself full of ardor and eloquence. When such exceptional men fail to consider themselves as exceptional men, how could they ever be capable of understanding the vulgar natures and of assessing the rule in an equitable fashion? Thus *they also* speak of the folly, the impropriety and the fantastic mind of humanity. They also are full of astonishment before the frenzy of a world which will not recognize what 'should be for it the only necessary thing.' That is the eternal folly of the men that are noble."

*Therefore*, we must leave to each man *his own way of feeling*, his own appreciation of values, his

own rule of life, his own "morality." No one must encroach, or wish to encroach upon others. That were a vain idea, an unrealizable danger and a useless attempt. Neither of the two parts of humanity must try to *convert* the other, neither the one below that which is above, nor the one above that which is below. Let us leave to the people its morality and let us have our own. Which one is that? I have said it a hundred times but let us be still more precise.

The superior kind must needs practice that superior egotism which we have indicated as being its nature, the basis of its complexion, its aim and very mission. It must be hard on itself and on the others, but especially on itself, pitiless to itself as to others but much more pitiless to itself than to the others. ("Be hard," Zarathustra is always telling his disciples.) Be *solidaristic*, practice the firmest concord and consider yourselves as one family, without in the least believing that you are related to the rest of mankind. Honor the tradition and the past, and therefore old age. Be extremely safe, cordial, devoted and passionate in friendship; show contempt for love and all sensuality, without, moreover, attaching any moral value to chastity, contempt in general for all that is personal and individual interest, for all that is mere enjoyment of *property*, and that fails to be enjoyment of *caste*. Show your contempt, for instance, for domestic comfort and your royal passion for the luxury of hereditary palaces, senatorial palaces, for temples and museums. Seek ever an aim that is in great-



ness, strength in extension, beauty in realization surpassing its own power and exhausting them, since man has no other true law but to try and overcome himself. Aspire always to uplifting the human kind in its own collective person. *Olympianize* man in a few superhuman samples, thus forming a formidable, redoubtable *élite* which will lead, and roughly lead, humanity, after having imposed upon itself by dint of science, a disciplined will and the very astonishment that will must needs inspire. Find in all this work, indefinitely continued, the intense delights of true egotism, substituted to vulgar and *apparent* egotism, the acute and deep delights of the assertion, the expansion, the extension and the violent tension of the self. "Ye are over-sparing, ye give way too much. Of that is the soil upon which ye grow made up. But for a tree to become *great*, it must shoot hardy roots around hard rocks. . . . Alas, why are ye not comprehending my words? Do ye always what ye will; but first of all do ye *know how to will*; be ye of those who can will. Always love your neighbor as yourselves, but be ye first of all of those that love themselves; that love their own selves with the greatest love and the greatest contempt." Thus spake Zarathustra, the impious one. Note this. It is somewhat surprising at first, but it becomes quite natural when one thinks it over for a while. Christianity, which is a slaves' morality, has, nevertheless, given precisely the models of these men and traced their rules of life. The reason is a very simple one. Christianity, at a certain time, found itself to have



become, in the collective person of its Church, an aristocracy which felt the need to become and to remain a superior kind. Thus, like the directors of Christianity, the superior kind will be wise if it puts into use some practices of an ecclesiastical character, as, for instance, asceticism, fasting, the life of the cloister and festivities. All this has been often corrupted, altered, deviated, and ill-understood by Christianity. But at bottom, it is excellent: "*Asceticism*: one has hardly yet the courage to put its natural usefulness into light, its indispensable character as *educator of the will*. The absurd world of our educators, which has at present in mind the notion of the 'useful servant of the State,' as a regulating scheme, thinks that it can get it accomplished merely with instruction and the training of the brain. It does not even grasp the notion that there is something else which is far more important than all the rest, that is the education of the force of the will.<sup>1</sup> Examinations are instituted for all matters, with the exception of the essential one: to know whether one can will, whether one can promise. The young man completes his education without having even a doubt or any curiosity touching the superior problems of his nature." Asceticism shall be one of the practices of the superior kind,

<sup>1</sup> The result thereof is the touching political docility of the otherwise perfectly able minds of those able and cultured Germans who are satisfied with serving the earthly ends of their leaders. They have no will with which they could resist the notion of the State-Master instead of the State-Servant or of the State-Enemy.—(Translator's Note.)

provided it is considered, not as an expiation and a punishment exercised against one's self, but as an education, a training of the will to power.

"*Fasting*: It is to be commended from every point of view and also (artistic and dilettantist view points) as a means to maintain the subtle faculty for enjoying all good things; for instance, to refrain from reading, from hearing music, from being pleasant to others. One must have also fasting days for one's virtues." The fast shall be practiced in this wide, broadened way, in this ingenious way, by the superior kind, if it wants to be artistic — and that it must needs want to be. *The Cloister Life*, if well understood, is temporary but never eternal, for, in the latter case, it is but suicide; and even suicide were better. Again, this is an excellent thing for the education of the will and of the intellectual activity: "temporary isolation, by refusing severely, for instance, to attend to one's correspondence. It is a sort of deep meditation and of return upon one's self with desires to avoid not temptations but outside influences. A voluntary exit from the circle, from the middle. A placing apart, far from the tyranny of the excitations, which condemns us to spend our forces in reactions only and which does not allow the latter to accumulate as far as spontaneous activity. Take a close look at our savants: they only think now by means of reactives; that is to say, *they must need read first before they can think.*"

On the other hand, and in inverse sense, come the *Festivities*: "In feast, one must understand

pride, impetuosity and exuberance; the contempt of every kind of seriousness and bourgeois spirit; a divine assertion of the self because of the plenitude thereof and of the animal perfection. . . . The feast, it is paganism par excellence." Christianity had partly repulsed it, partly accepted and partly suffered it. The superior kind shall turn life, by means of art, into an eternal feast; but it will practice also accidental feast, when the will unbends and does after all but assert again the desire for expansion, heartiness and powerful rapture in that broadening and that joy.

Thus can be formed a race of superior men of whom one does not know what may come, with the help of heredity. We must go up the current of plebeianism, stem the tide of the redoubtable *pambeotia* of which Renan spoke. We must return to the Greco-Roman antiquity; but beyond that antiquity itself, by the same means it only used out of instinct, but utilizing them in a methodical and scientific way, and with all the resources afforded us by modern science, we can, and it is even our duty, create a race superior not only to present day humanity but to all known humanity, an unexpected and unforeseen race, a race of supermen, ever more or less dreamt of by mankind, sometimes half-realized, and which no man can affirm to be unrealizable. To create the superhuman, that is the present, as it is the eternal, duty of mankind.

We should not be too prompt in asserting that we are precisely turning our backs to this ideal. That there is an appearance of this can hardly be

contested. The materials seem to be lacking. Whatever may be said by "the most blustering, perhaps the most honest, at least the most short-sighted kind of men that exist to-day, that is to say, *Messieurs the Socialists*," man having no social value unless he is "solid" and a "stone for a mighty building," the actual inferior man being nothing at all and the actual superior man being most of the time but a mere comedian—it really seems that "what shall *not* be erected henceforth, is a society in the ancient and true meaning of the word." It does seem that "*we all, are no longer materials for a society.*"

Nevertheless, *even of this* may something come out, and precisely that of which we are dreaming; not as good comes out of the excess of evil, for there is no sense whatsoever in that notion, but as reaction comes out of action and especially as, in the whole domain of natural history, a groping but deep desire for liberation and ascent emerges out of stagnation.

To begin with, we must well realize that decadence, may be, of course, more or less strong and that it is certainly when it is strong that it is called decadence, but that it is eternal in itself and also necessary. There is always decadence, even throughout progress itself, and decadence is, like progress, a form and a condition of life: "Defec-tion, decomposition and waste offer nothing that is condemnable in itself. They are but the necessary condition of life, of the vital increase. The phenomenon of decadence is necessary as the blowing and the progress of life: we lack the means to sup-

press that phenomenon and even should we possess it" reason would insist that we preserve its rights. It is shameful to have all the theorists of socialism admit that there may be circumstances and social combinations where vice, sickness, crime, prostitution and misery would cease to be developed. That is to condemn life. No society is free to remain young. Even at the moment of its finest development it leaves waste and detritus. The more it progresses in audacity and energy, the more it becomes rich in mistakes and deformities. . . . Not by means of institutions can decay be suppressed, nor vice either.

We must also face the fact that we are always falling in an error or rather a double error concerning degeneracy. What are usually held to cause degeneracy are but the consequences thereof. And what we consider to be the remedies of degeneracy are but palliatives, and powerless ones at that. Decadence is the predominance of the lower species over the noble species and of the morality of the lower over the instincts of the noble. The consequences are "vice, vicious character, sickness, sickly state, crime, criminality, celibacy, sterility, hysteria, weakness of will, alcoholism, pessimism and anarchism." Now meditation is no remedy against vice, sickness, crime, et cetera; it is preservation of what remains valid and pure in humanity. "The whole moral struggle against vice, luxury, crime and even against sickness stands as a naïveté and as something utterly superfluous. There is no matter for amendment in them. Decadence itself,"

to take it as a whole, "is not something that we should fight. It is absolutely necessary and proper to each period and to each century. What we must fight with all our forces is the importation of the contagion into the sane parts of the organism."

Therefore we should not despair in presence of the decadence that we are witnessing. First of all that decadence is a normal phenomenon. Then if we do not rein it up it is because we are mistaken concerning the remedies to be used, and it is possible that this error may cease to be indulged in.

Moreover, in the midst of this decadence, among that waste and detritus, there are symptoms of a possible return to the normal life of humanity, to the rough and rugged life, to life in strength, to a life guided and led by the will to power. Humanitarian philosophers bemoan the fact that the 19th century, the century of lights, is after all that in which more, or at least as much, as in any other, the doctrine of the Right of Might was asserted and exasperated. No doubt this might be evil; for, without the instinct of greatness and beauty, the instinct of force itself is evil in this that it is incomplete, that it does not produce by itself a great civilization; nevertheless it is not such a bad symptom. One could reasonably draw from it a motive for "faith in the civilization of Europe"; perhaps it is our duty to draw it. Think of this: "to Napoleon, and not at all to the French Revolution which was seeking fraternity among the nations and universal flowery effusions, do we owe that we are able to-day to foresee a sequence of a few warlike



centuries. This coming period will not have its equal in history. In short, we owe to Napoleon that we have entered (re-entered) the classical age of warfare, scientific warfare, and at the same time of popular warfare; war on a large scale owing to the means, the talents and the discipline that will be used in that end. All the centuries to come shall look with envy and respect upon this age of perfection; because the movement of nations of which this war-like glory is but the repercussion began through Napoleon's effort, and could not have come but for Napoleon. It is, therefore, to Napoleon that the honor shall one day be given of having made over a world in which the *man*, the warrior, shall outweigh once more in Europe the tradesman and the Philistine, perhaps even women, since the latter has been wheedled by Christianity and by the enthusiastic spirit of the 18th century more even than by 'modern ideas.' Napoleon, who saw in modern ideas and in civilization in general something like a personal enemy, proved by his hostility that he was one of the chief continuers of the Renaissance. He set up again a whole face of the antique world, perhaps the most definite of them, the granite face. Who knows if thanks to the latter the antique heroism may not end some day by triumphing over the nationalist movement, if that heroism may not make itself necessarily the heir and continuer of Napoleon — of Napoleon who wished, as we know, Europe united so that she could become mistress of the world?"

Finally, take care that it is possible that the

democratic lowering itself may be both a *condition* and a *cause* of the formation of a noble race destined to rule in the future. "In order that a strong and noble race be established it is necessary that there should be a general level of the crowd, of the masses, of the human mob, and that this level be very low (slaves with slaves' instincts in the antique nations). That is precisely the levelling which is taking place in present day Europe by means of a kind of 'dropping' of the middle classes into the plebe proper and by means of a demoralization of that same plebe (alcoholism, libertinism, anarchism, etc.). The European masses make slaves of themselves; and the existence of a large slave race, slave in essence, and by its own proper complexion, is the very condition of the birth of a noble race. The progressive diminution of man is precisely the active force (this is not the proper word; we should read 'movement' or 'evolution'), which permits us to believe in the culture of a stronger race, a race that would precisely find its surplus in the amount by which the diminished kind would become weaker: will, responsibility and the faculty to set an aim to one's self."

I can say more and add that this levelling may be the very cause of the perhaps near creation of a superior race. The elements of the superior race are always existing; I firmly believe it. In order that they may release and disentangle themselves, and emerge, it is necessary that the plebeian levelling should have taken place; then and because of this levelling and of the disgust that it

inspires in the noble elements and also because of the necessity that imposes itself on these elements "to deepen the distance, to open a gulf and to re-establish an hierarchy"—it is because of all this that the elements of the noble race disentangle and release themselves, and that they emerge. What is taking place then in our own present time, through the levelling in sordidness which others may term the triumph of plebeianism "*is a substruction*" which may very well serve for the building up of stronger race. Far from deploring actual plebeianism and its progressive flattening, it is reasonable enough to say that we should congratulate ourselves upon it and perhaps even accelerate it. "The levelling of the European man is the great *processus* which could not be delayed: we should speed it on its way. . . . Even the only aim which we should consider for yet a long time to come is the diminution of man; because it is necessary first of all to create a broad foundation upon which the race of the strong men can be erected."

This race will constitute itself at a given time. It will isolate itself because of disgust. It will straighten itself up by means of the natural affinity among its elements. It will organize itself out of its sheer need of order and discipline for a common action. It will dominate and enslave the other species by the one well known phenomenon of the predominance of quality over numbers, and by the very fact that the other kind will not need to be enslaved, since it has enslaved itself by giving itself the temperament of slaves. As a matter of fact there is no

other slave but the man that enslaved himself, not the man that has been enslaved, the man that practices slavery not the one that suffers it.

Thus will be born the race of the masters whence may come out the race of the supermen. "It will not be merely a race of masters whose task would simply consist in ruling; but a race with its own vital sphere, with a surplus of strength for beauty, bravery, culture and manners, and this right unto the most intellectual domain. It will be an assertive race that can allow itself every kind of '*grand luxe*': a race strong enough not to need an imperative of virtue, rich enough to be able to do without economy and pedantism, finding itself beyond good and evil, a hot-house for peculiar and selected plants. . . ." This race, Spartan by its will and its endurance, Athenian by its sense of the beautiful, Roman by its grit and its unlimited will to power, shall exist: the elements thereof exist now. We can see samples of them at every turn, be it in the world of science or in those of inventors, of explorers, or of artists. The democratic movement delays as we have seen but, presently, will hasten its hatching. The democratic movement shall find its "justification" in that birth, with the proof that it can serve some purpose. That race shall exist, if it be true, as history seems to prove, that humanity never disorganizes itself unless it be to reorganize itself anew, and if it be true that plebeianism, the precise form of social disorganization, can but foretell new conditions and even produce a new reorganization.

Having reached this *affirmation*, Nietzsche perceived that from the moment when he affirmed something he was perhaps no longer the immoralist he had fancied himself to be, nor the anarchist, nor even the anti-religious man that he had fancied himself to be. He perceived that perhaps he was but like others, dreaming a morality, a sociology, and even a theodicy, but of course a special morality, a sociology that was his own, and an original theodicy. Somewhat too proud to admit it, he set his wits to the placing of the question somewhat differently, in giving the thing another name and in admitting that he was a moralist, a sociologist and a theologian without admitting it. He did not wish to say: "yes, I admit it. I have a morality, a sociology and a theodicy in my fashion," so he said instead: "I have a morality *beyond* morality, a sociology *beyond* sociology, and a theodicy *beyond* theodicy." It was at bottom very much the same thing but his face was saved.

It is certain that Nietzsche was seduced by his own invention of the *beyonds*<sup>1</sup> and that he wished to make thereof a whole theory that would crown his work by embracing and harmonizing it, perhaps by conciliating the contradictions and by establishing a connected system. Unfortunately he was not allowed time for adjusting that theory which would have been a sort of method of conciliation by "super-elevation," a sort of method of conciliation by the sublime. That would have amounted to say-

<sup>1</sup> Jenseits.

ing: "seen from very far above, the contraries do not conciliate themselves but they disappear, or if you like, they conciliate themselves in annihilation. Beyond and above optimism and pessimism there is no longer any optimism or pessimism; . . . Beyond and above morality and immoralism there is no longer any morality nor immoralism; these names disappear . . ." And so on.

There was Nietzsche's last thought, his supreme dream, not that chronologically speaking he had it after the others, for it seems that he was pre-occupied very early by it and that the thing was, as it were, one of the bends of his mind; but I mean that it was what he had already reserved himself to establish and systematically to expose in order to end and close his work.

This remained confused, merely sketched here and there, and I can but give its wavering lines such as they may be found scattered throughout the various works of our author.

For instance, examining two categories of "negators of morality" Nietzsche says this: "there are two kinds of negators of morality. To deny morality may mean (1) to deny that the ethical motives that men give as pretexts do really prompt their actions. It is as if one were saying that morality is a matter of words and is part of those coarse or subtle impositions (more often imposition upon himself) which are proper to man especially perhaps to men who are famous for their virtues. (2) to deny morality may also mean to deny that moral decisions rest upon truths.



In that case, one grants that these judgments are truly the motives of the actions; but that they are errors, bases of all moral decisions which lead men to moral actions. This last point of view is my own. Yet I do not deny that, in many cases, a subtle mistrust in the way of the former, that is to say in the spirit of La Rochefoucauld, is warranted and of a high general usefulness. But I deny morality as I deny alchemy; and if I deny the hypothesis, yet I do not deny that there were alchemists that did believe in those hypotheses, and based themselves upon them. In the same way do I deny immorality; not that I deny the existence of an infinity of men who feel themselves immoral but I deny that there is in truth a reason for them to feel this. I do not deny, as it goes without saying if one admits that I am not a madman, that one should avoid and resist many actions which are said to be immoral, and also that we should execute and encourage many of those that are said to be moral; *but I believe that the one and the other actions must be done for reasons different from those so far accepted. It is necessary that we should change our way of seeing in order to arrive at last perhaps very late to change our way of feeling.*"—to change our way of seeing and then our way of feeling. For instance, there are three degrees in the action called heroic or simply generous: (1) *impulsion*: to throw one's self in the water, without the slightest reflection, to save some one: (2) *decision* accompanied by extreme pleasure: to do the same thing very deliberately, after

deliberation and consideration of the subject; but to do it out of will, with a heroic joy, coming from the consciousness that one has of this sovereign will. (3) *Decision* unaccompanied by pleasure: to do the same thing after deliberation and consideration of the danger, and to do it out of will, but without feeling a pleasure which is, at the same time, also impulsion and reward. This third degree is the highest. It is the one that we must reach; is what we call changing our way of seeing and even our way of feeling.

“One gives way to a generous feeling, placing one’s life in danger, under a momentary impulsion. That is of little value, and does not even represent a characteristic action. In their *capacity* for thus acting, all men are equal, and, as to the *decision* which is necessary thereto, the criminal, the bandit, the Corsican, certainly surpass an honest man. The superior degree would be reached if one could overpower that impulse within one’s self not to execute the heroic deed as a sequel to impulsions, but coldly, in a *reasonable* fashion, without there being a tempestuous overflowing of feelings of pleasure. It is likewise the case with compassion: it should be habitually passed first of all through the *sieve* of *reason*. Otherwise it would be as dangerous as any other sentiment. The blind obedience to a passion, be the latter generous or commiserating or hostile, that matters little — that is always the cause of the greatest calamities. Greatness of character does not consist in not having those passions; on the contrary one should possess them in

the highest degree. It consists in holding them on leash—and again this without such a constraint causing even a particle of joy, but simply. . . . We must dominate the passions and not weaken or extirpate them. And the greater the mastery of the will the more freedom one may grant to the passions.”

In other words, Nietzsche simply tends toward a morality, and it seems to me, a perfectly “universal” one. Only it is a new morality, a new assessment of the “*values*,” be they the moral values or the others. These should be even, chronologically, his last preoccupation.

In the same way he was very visibly preoccupied, if not in reconstructing a religion, at least in re-establishing God. It seems to me that in his last works Nietzsche felt that he had only wished to destroy God because of morality, that he had destroyed but the moral God, and consequently, that the non-moral God may still remain, and that nothing is opposed to his existence. He says again: “the world is not at all an organism; it is chaos . . .” but he says also: “do we suppress the idea of aim in the *processus* and do we nevertheless affirm the *processus*?” That may be. “Such would be the case if, in the circle of that *processus* and at every moment thereof, something were reached,—and that always the same thing. Spinoza conquered an affirmative position of this kind, in this sense, that for him, every moment has a *logical* necessity; and he triumphs in such a confirmation of the world by means of his fundamental logical instinct.” Again

Nietzsche says and with great depth: "because one has considered conscience as measure, as superior value of life, instead of seeing therein an instrument and a particular case in the general life, because one has fallen into the false reasoning of the *a parte ad totum*, all the philosophers instinctively seek to imagine a conscious participation in everything that happens, a spirit, a God. But they should be made to understand that it is precisely in this wise that the existence becomes a monstrosity; that a God and a universal sensibility would be something that should cause life to be absolutely condemned. We have eliminated the universal conscience . . . and that is the very thing which brought us a great relief. As it is *we are no longer compelled to be pessimists. The greatest reproach that we addressed to life was the existence of God.*" This was clearly atheistic, but Nietzsche said also, with loyalty and finesse: Yes, but "after all it is *only the moral God that has been overcome*. Is there any meaning (or: might not there be a meaning) in imagining a *God beyond good and evil?* Would (or, might not) a pan-theism directed towards this be imaginable?" Elsewhere he answers; "yes, yes, that would be imaginable and it would have a meaning. Let us discard the greatest beauty of the idea of God. It is unworthy of God. Let us discard also the highest wisdom. It is the vanity of the philosophers, upon whose conscience lay the folly of that monster of wisdom who would be God: they pretend that God resembles them as much as possible. No!

*God, the highest power*, that is enough. Hence results everything that results: the World." And there are no more theistic words nor any more religious ones than this energetic affirmation of the *All Mighty*, thrown in some way beyond good and evil, beyond goodness and wisdom, beyond all the contingencies, and beyond all the human things that piety, and also the vanity and short-sight of humanity have perhaps imprudently mixed in the divine essence.

It is therefore established that Nietzsche, persuaded that man is a being that must overcome himself, has often, perhaps always, dreamt of himself, and beyond his immoralism and his atheism, sought to find again a superior morality and a superior theism and perhaps a superior religion.

But this back-plan of his conceptions and this thought in the back of his head remained, I must repeat, confused. The passages of his works in which they appear, and in some way, insinuate themselves are scarce enough. The expression which he gives them, sometimes luminous enough as we have seen, is more often hesitating and obscure. We have here a Nietzsche who *would have been*, if "the highest power" had given him a longer life. He did not come into being. He could but announce himself, make himself foreseen, and foresee himself. A general judgment upon Nietzsche must bear upon all we have seen of him without taking any further notice than that which we have just given it of this last phasis, or in better words, of this last degree.

## CHAPTER XI.

### DIGRESSION: LITERARY IDEAS OF NIETZSCHE.

ALTHOUGH the literary and artistic ideas of Nietzsche do not always bear close relation to his philosophy, and although we naturally recorded where they were in their place those among his artistic ideas which are related to his philosophy, and even stand at the basis of it, it is seemly that we should not leave the philosopher without a glance at the most curious of his innumerable, æsthetic, *free* and independent considerations, which came forth according to the day and the hour. They were his digressions. This also will be a digression, after which we shall come back to the philosopher to cover him up in a whole gathering judgment.

Let us recall to mind that Nietzsche is first of all a classic, an Apollonian and a Dionysian, a neo-Greek, an Hellenist who would be an Hellene. The influence of Goethe must have been strong here, and somewhat also that of Renan. I fancy that, with Goethe and Renan, without taking Schopenhauer much into account, we could reconstruct the whole fundamental Nietzsche. Nevertheless, one may say that Nietzsche is neo-Greek almost from



birth. At the age of twenty he was that as much as ever, more than ever, and with more indiscreet fire, than at any other period of his life. That is his very foundation. Hence his passion for Wagner's drama in which he thought — rightly, I believe,— that he had again found the Greek tragedy. Hence also (without taking into consideration the private reasons with which, I admit, we should reckon) his anger later against this same drama of Wagner after he had fancied that he recognized in it the sickly and unhealthy autumn flower of romanticism.

Hence his passion for the whole French literature of the 17th and 18th centuries (we should add Montaigne) in which he thought he saw, and that may be argued, an heir of the Greeks much more than of the Romans. Hence all his taste, which goes for a very simple, very neat and very clear forcefulness, to the constant union of simplicity and strength. It is true that the artist is to Nietzsche a "sick man" because Nietzsche always loves to give first of all an exaggerated and paradoxical form to his thought in order to secure attention, even if he has to readjust his thought later; but a sick man, full of active force and of superabundance, and who creates and gives out beauty in a precise, just and sane form. The artist is exceptional and lives in a peculiar state that may be termed the malady of super-excitation: "The artist is created by exceptional conditions, by all the states that are intimately bound to the phenomena of sickness, with the result that it does

not seem possible for one to be an artist without being a sick man. These physiological states become, in the artist, almost a second personality. They are (1) *intoxication*: the increase of the feeling of power, and the inner necessity to make of things a reflection of one's plenitude and of one's proper perfection; — (2) the *extreme acuteness* of certain senses . . . a need to rid one's self of one's self in a way by means of signs and attitudes, an explosive state. We must imagine, first of all, this state as an excessive desire that prompts us to rid ourselves by means of muscular work and a mobility of all kinds, of this exuberance of exterior tension; then as an involuntary co-ordination of that movement with the inner phenomena (images, thoughts or desires); — (3) the *forced imitation*; an extreme instability that compels us in a contagious way to communicate a given image, . . . an image that is born within, and acts by putting the limbs into movement; a sort of suspension of the will; a sort of blindness and deafness towards everything that is happening outside." This particular state of super-excitation and acting power, a fever of a special kind, "is what distinguishes the artist from the profane, from the *receptive* man. The latter reaches the culminating points of his irritability by *receiving*; the artist does so by *giving*. The result is that an antagonism between these two predispositions is not only natural but even desirable. Each of these two states possesses an optic which is contrary to the other. To ask that an artist exercise himself with the optic of the spectator

or the critic is to insist that he should weaken his creative power. It is the same thing as the difference of the sexes. We must not ask the artist who *gives* to feminise himself, that is to receive. To this day our æsthetics have been feminine, in this sense, that it was only the men that were receptive to art that formulated their experiences touching what was beautiful . . . this and what precedes indicate a necessary error because the artist that would begin to understand, would misunderstand. It is not for him to look back, not for him to look at all. His but to give. This is to the honor of the artist that he is incapable of criticism. If he were capable of criticism he would be neither fish nor fowl; he would be . . . modern."

Consequently the artist is as impersonal as possible. He is also, and, *consequently*, as personal as possible. *Beyond* personal art and impersonal art there lies true art. The artist is impersonal in his sense, that his voluntary personality does not enter and must not enter into his work, and because, as Nietzsche admirably put it, "the author must be silent when his work begins to speak." He is personal precisely because, if his voluntary personality does not intervene, his sensible personality, his temperamental personality fills his work.

Thus gifted, the artist shall be most naturally one and simple, very much one and very simple. Do you know what the mixed, the *artificially complex*, arts mean and what they reveal?

They reveal the impotence, the conscious, or at least the half-conscious, impotence of the ar-

tist: "The mixed styles in the arts stand as witnesses of the mistrust that their authors felt towards their own forces. They sought allied powers, intercessors and cloaks — such is the poet that calls philosophy to his help, the musician that has recourse to drama (that was for Wagner) and the thinker that allies himself to rhetoric (that was, consciously or unconsciously, very much for Nietzsche). In the same way, the overloaded style in art is a sign of weakness, or of a weakening either in an author, or in a school, or in a period, or in a civilization. A simple art is always art at its apogee; classical art is always simple: "an overloaded style in art is the consequence of an impoverishment of the organizing power, accompanied by an extreme prodigality in the intentions and the means. At the beginnings of an art, one finds sometimes precisely the extreme opposite to this fact."

Effectively classical art, the art of beautiful and simple ordnance, cannot be born straight out. Art is at first, it seems, nothing but an exercise of the intelligence, and only, little by little, does it become one of the sensibility, then, perhaps later, of the sensibility united to the intelligence, and lastly, of the whole being.

We might venture the following hypotheses upon the *processes* of the æsthetic sense: "if one thinks of the primitive germs of the artistic sense, and if one inquires what are the different kinds of pleasure generated by the first manifestations of art, as for instance among the savage tribes, we find first of all the pleasure of *understanding what another*

*man wishes to say.* Art is here a sort of riddle, which procures to the man that finds its solution the pleasure of establishing the quickness and nimbleness of his own mind. Then one remembers, at the sight of even the coarsest work of art, what one knows by experience to have been a pleasant thing, and one rejoices, for instance, when the artist has indicated haunting memories or remembrances of victories or of nuptial festivities (intervention of the sensibility). Again one may feel one's self moved, touched and inflamed at the sight, on the other hand, of glorifications, of vengeance and danger. Here we find the enjoyment to lie in the agitation itself, in the victory over weariness. The memory of an unpleasant thing, if it is overcome, or even if it makes us appear ourselves before the audience as being interesting in the same degree as an art production (as, for instance, when the minstrel describes the adventures of a bold sailor) — that memory may provoke a great pleasure, which is then attributed to art."

Of a more subtle kind (intervention of the intellect uniting itself to the sensibility) is the joy that is born from the sight of all that is regular, *symmetrical* in the lines, the points or the rhythm. Because through a certain similitude one awakens the sentiment of all that is orderly and regular in life, to which alone is due every manner of comfort, we venerate therefore unconsciously in the cult of symmetry the rule and the fine proportion as sources of all the happiness that came to us. This joy is a manner of thanksgiving.

"It is only when we have derived a certain satisfaction from this last joy that there is born yet a more subtle sentiment, that of an enjoyment, obtained from the breaking of what is symmetrical and regulated: if this sentiment incites, for instance, to seek the reason in an apparent unreason. From which there appears then some sort of an æsthetic enigma. This is a superior category of the artistic joy mentioned in the first instance. (It means very likely that here we have a return of the intelligence no longer uniting itself to the sensibility, but being pleasantly contrary to it, *teasing* it. The game is *piquant* in a certain measure, but, if exaggerated, it perverts and ruins the taste in the same way as the teasing, become wickedness, is no longer a social charm but destroys sociability.) Those that may further pursue this consideration will know what kind of hypotheses for the explanation of the æsthetic phenomenon one renounces here out of principle."

This last line contains also a sort of "riddle" which I give up, or rather, which I renounce to give the explanation which I fancy thereof — not being at all sure of it. I open a *referendum* upon this enigma. I shall receive with gratitude the solutions that my readers may be good enough to communicate.<sup>1</sup>

Although it is always simple and always one in its manifestation, nevertheless it should not be be-

<sup>1</sup> The late Mr. Faguet being now in a position to understand all riddles propounded by Nietzsche, his translator makes a similar appeal on his own behalf.



lieved of course that classical art is always the same, and that there is but one classical art. There are at least two manners; they are very different and opposed to each other; they are not at all contrary, but they are opposed. There are two great kinds of classical art. "There is that of the great calm and that of the great movement." (Doubtless Virgil and Homer; Goethe and Shakespeare.) And these two kinds are legitimate and admirable. And then there are the "bastard kinds of art." Besides, and beyond the art of the great movement, there is the "frantic art." Besides and beyond the art of great calm, there is the "art that is *blasé* and anxious for rest." These two kinds of art "want their weakness to be taken for strength, and mistaken for the true kinds of art."

It is with the art that is *blasé* and anxious for rest that we should link German romanticism. It is rather with the frantic art that we should link French romanticism. French romanticism (except perhaps some portions of elegiac art due to German influence and to the influence of the English novel, and prompted especially by the desire to please the mob which sees nothing but mawkishness in art), French romanticism was an affectation of strength, audacity, movement, frenzy and clashing noise. It was the frantic art by excellence — and a very weak art at bottom. It was a sort of apeing of the first Empire, or rather it was a stretching out in literature of the imperial activity. The Empire left in the French literature not its strength but the trepidation that follows a sudden stop.

German romanticism, which has much less connection with French romanticism than has been credited, is, properly speaking, the art that is *blasé* and anxious for rest and insipid sweetness: "When the Germans began to prove interesting to the other peoples of Europe — that was not so long ago — it was due to a culture that they no longer possess today, that they have shaken off with a blind ardor, as if it had been a disease; and yet all they could find to put in its stead was the political and national folly. It is true that they have succeeded thereby in becoming even more 'interesting' for the other nations than they were before on account of their culture. Let that satisfaction be left to them! Nevertheless it is undeniable that this German culture has imposed upon the Europeans, and that it was neither worthy of imitation nor of the interest that followed it or even less of the borrowing that others vied among themselves to make. Let men seek information today about Schiller, Wilhelm von Humboldt, Schleiermacher, Hegel, Schelling and the others. Let them read the correspondence of those men, and be introduced, as it were, to the large circle of their followers. What is it that they have in common? What is it that, in them, impresses us men of today; what is it that makes them sometimes unbearable to us, and sometimes so touching and pitiful? On the one hand, it is their rage to appear morally moved at any cost; on the other hand, it is their desire for a brilliant universality without consistency, such as their set intention to see everything in a beautiful light,—

characters, passions, periods and habits. Unfortunately this 'beautiful' corresponded to a vague bad taste which boasted nevertheless of an alleged Greek origin. It was a sweet, goody idealism, with silvery reflections, that wanted, above all things, to strike nobly disguised attitudes and accents, something as pretentious as it was harmless, animated by a cordial aversion to 'cold' or 'dry' reality, and especially to the knowledge of nature whenever it could not be twisted to serve a religious symbolism. Goethe witnessed in his own fashion these frenzies of German culture, placing himself outside them, gently resisting, silent, asserting himself always more and more upon his own path . . . a better one. A little later, Schopenhauer also was a witness. . . . What was it after all that seduced the foreigners — that made them fail to behave as Goethe and Schopenhauer, or merely fail to look elsewhere? It was that pale luster that milkyway-like enigmatic light that shone above that culture — that caused foreigners to say: 'here is something that is very, very far from us; we lose therein our senses of sight, of hearing, and of understanding, our senses of enjoyment and of valuation; but nevertheless it might be true that they are stars. Have then the Germans quietly discovered a corner of Heaven and settled themselves in it? We must seek to get nearer to those Germans.' . . . And they did come nearer. Meanwhile, these same Germans began, a little later, to take much pains to rid themselves of that milkyway-like luster. They themselves were well aware

that they had not been dwelling in Heaven, but in a cloud."

However, romanticism of frenzy or romanticism of milky sweetness, we term romanticism, as Goethe expressed it very well, that art which is not quite healthy. Romanticism always proceeds from a weakness, be it a nervous or a neurasthenic one. One might say that classical art and romantic art are both dreams, since they are arts, but that one is a strong man's dream and the other a weak man's dream. "The minds, in the classical sense, as much as the minds in a romantic sense,—both kinds will ever exist—carry with them a vision of the future; but the first category causes that vision to spring from the *strength* of its time, and the second from the *weakness* thereof."

This *strong art* is of course, first of all realistic. It clings to reality as much as the properly and exclusively dreamy art shuns it as if it were repulsive. But it must not forget that every art is a choice, and take great care not to love *all* that is real, or to wish to seize, imitate and reproduce all that is real. Style, which itself is an art, shows us here the measure in which art must be realistic and *appropriate* the real: "*In the same manner as the good prose writer only uses words pertaining to conversation but is careful not to use all the words thereof—and thus precisely is the select style formed—in that manner shall the good poet of the future represent nothing but the real things, altogether neglecting all the vague and obsolete objects, which are made up of superstitions and half-sin-*

cerities — in which the ancient poets showed their virtuosity. Nothing but reality; yet not at all the whole of reality! Much rather a selected reality."

This true art, strong and sincere, does not exclude flexibility. Better, it should be flexibility itself, as much as the other art, sensing its own weakness, whatever its nature, will always starch itself and will always show something stiff, or somewhat stiffened, and, even in sweetness, something grimacing. . . . Do you wish to know in what consists flexibility? Flexibility is freedom. The most flexible writer is the freest. Take Laurence Sterne for instance: "How could I, in a book for men of free minds, fail to mention Sterne, whom Goethe revered as the freest mind of his century? Let him receive here the honor of being called the freest writer of all times. Compared to him, all the others appear starched, devoid of *finesse*, intolerant and of a truly peasant-like gait. . . . Sterne is the great master of the equivocal. That word is, of course, taken here in a far broader sense than one is accustomed to do when one is merely thinking of sexual relations. The reader is at a loss, when he wishes to ascertain, with any certainty, Sterne's own opinion, and to know whether the author is assuming a smiling or saddened air, because he knows how to give both expressions to the same lines of his face. He knows also, and it is his aim, how to be, at the same time, right and wrong, how to intermingle depth and buffoonery. His digressions are, at the same time, continuations of his narrative and developments of the subject. His sentences con-

tain, at the same time, an irony of all that is sententious. His aversion for all that is serious is linked to a desire to be able to consider everything flat and from the outside. In that way he does produce upon the genuine reader a sensation of uncertainty. One knows no longer if one is walking, standing or lying down. This shows itself in a vague impression of planing (applicable to Renan and also to Nietzsche himself). He, the most flexible writer, transmits to the reader also something of that flexibility. Sterne goes so far as to change parts unwittingly. He is, at times, reader as well as author; his work resembles a play within a play, a theater audience in presence of another theater audience. . . . Is it necessary to add that, of all the great writers, Sterne is the worst possible model, the writer who should, least of all, be taken as a model, and that Diderot himself must have paid the penalty for his servility? . . . Unfortunately, Sterne the man seems to have been too near a relation of Sterne the writer. His squirrel-like soul was always bounding from branch to branch with an unrestrained vivaciousness. He was ignorant of nothing that could exist between the sublime and the rascally. He had perched everywhere, ever making saucy and tear-veiled eyes, and ever assuming his sensible air. Were it not that the tongue balks at such an association of words, one could assert that he was possessed of a 'good hard heart' and, in his method of enjoyment, of a *baroque* and corrupt imagination that was almost the gracefulness of innocence. Such a sense of the equivocal, settled



in the soul and blood, such a freedom of the mind, filling all the fibers and muscles of the body — perhaps no one has possessed these qualities as he did."

This flexibility of the *strong art* bears very frequently the hall-mark of what has been aptly termed the gracefulness of carelessness. This carelessness must not be an affected one. It must exist in the natural movement of a being that does not put into an action of his all the strength at his disposal: "*A work that is intended to produce an impression of health must be executed with no more than three quarters of the strength of its author.* If the author has given his extreme measure, the work will agitate the audience and frighten by its tension. All good things allow a certain *laissez-aller* to be apparent, and spread themselves before our eyes like cows in pasture." In art there must be something akin to bread: "Bread neutralizes the taste of the other foods; it tones them down; that is why bread is an item of all our meals. In all works of art there must be something like bread, in order that it may link different effects, effects that would, if they followed each other immediately, without one of those spontaneous pauses and stops, rapidly exhaust and provoke repugnance;—that would make a long 'meal of art' impossible."

It is even a question, but a more personal one, peculiar to philosophers and even more particular to Nietzsche, to what length one must be clear, or rather in what way one must be clear, and in what matters one must be more or less clear. In this, Nietzsche is not suspected. He worshiped the Greek

clearness, and the French clearness. He considered clearness to be the honesty of the philosopher. He was himself, most of the time, sovereignly clear because he enjoyed a high intellectual probity. He exclaimed with ravishment, thinking of Schopenhauer, and especially of himself: "At last we are becoming clear!" But Nietzsche knows also the shades, the measures and the varieties, and he knows that there was a deceptive clearness and a clear-obscure suggestiveness, that there existed cases when a little penumbra was suitable and others when a flash of sharp but rapid light was seemly. The page in which he wrote all this, which pertains at the same time to the philosopher, the artist and the humorist, and which Renan and also Sterne might have written, is one of the truest and also one of the prettiest he ever wrote. It shows but a grain of paradox, and even that was in the fair measure: "When one writes one wishes not only to be understood but also not to be understood. It is no objection against a book that some one finds it incomprehensible. It may have been part of the author's intentions not to be understood by everybody. Every man of distinguished mind, with a distinguished taste, thus selects his audience when he wishes to communicate himself. In selecting those he sets himself out of the way of the others. All the subtle rules of a style have their origin in this. They remove at the same time, they create a distance, they forbid entrance, while they open the ears of those that are our kinsmen by the ear. Between ourselves, in my own particular case, I do

not wish to be prevented by my ignorance, nor the vivacity of my temperament, from being comprehensible to you, my friends, albeit my vivacity compels me rapidly to approach a thing if I want to be able to get near it. Because I tackle deep problems as I would a cold bath — in quickly and quickly out. To think that, in this wise, one does not reach the depths, that one does not get deep enough, is the superstition of those that fear water, of the enemies of cold water. They speak without experience. Great cold makes one prompt. And, by the way, does a thing remain incomprehensible and unknown because it is but touched flying, caught with one glance or a flash? Is it really necessary to begin by firmly sitting on it, to hatch it like an egg? At least there are certain truths that have special modesty and susceptibility, that can only be possessed in an unexpected manner, that one must seize unaware or else leave alone. . . . My brevity is based upon yet another reason. I have to explain many of the questions that engross my mind in a few words in order to be ambiguously understood. For one should avoid, as immoralist, to pervert innocence; I am referring to the donkeys and the old maids of both sexes whose one life profit is their innocence. It were much better that my works should arouse enthusiasm in them, uplift them and urge them towards virtue. I know nothing on earth that is more joyful than the spectacle of old donkeys and old maids moved by the sweet sentiment of virtue, and 'I have seen that,' as Zarathustra said.

This much concerning brevity. It becomes more serious when it is a matter of my own ignorance, which I do not wish to hide from myself. There are hours when I am ashamed of it; yet it is true enough that there are hours when I am ashamed of that shame. It may be that we philosophers are today in an unpleasant attitude towards human knowledge. Science grows, and the most savant among us are ready to perceive that they know but little. True, it were even worse otherwise, if they knew too many things. Our duty above all others is to avoid creating confusion with ourselves. We are something else besides being savants; although it is unavoidable that, among other things, we be also savants. We have other needs, another growth, and another digestion; we need more; we also need less. There is no formula to define the quantity of food required by a mind. If however, its taste is pre-disposed to independence, to sudden arrivals and rapid departures, to travels, perhaps to the adventures that alone are suitable to the quickest, it will prefer to live free on a frugal diet than choke full and in constraint. Not fat, but a greater nimbleness and a greater vigor does a dancer seek in his food, and I know of no more suitable desire for a philosopher's mind than that of being a good dancer. Because dance is its ideal, its particular art and finally also its only piety, its cult. . . ."

Yes, Sterne would have said the same thing, with more carelessness, Renan more discreetly, and Heinrich Heine almost in the same words, even though with more dash. There is here nevertheless a sort

of parlor wherein Sterne, Renan, Heine and Nietzsche are smilingly chatting.

After all, Nietzsche is of that race — an international one — fine, lively, humoristic and ironical. In spite of his passion for “force,” he is also a sworn enemy of brutality, which is not at all the same thing. In his dream of a superhuman *élite* which would be deliberately conquering and oppressive, he always includes the refined manners. The vulgarity and the violence of a part of present day art inspired him with horror. Yet it also caused him pleasure in this, that it might well have its repercussion upon the very foundation, upon manners themselves, and gradually create a people of savages over whom a strong and polished *élite* would rule. He compared the three centuries in this light, as he did in so many others, and he acknowledged a decadence which, for the reasons I have stated, both repel and tickle him: “If one ceaselessly forbids one’s self the *expression* of the passions, as something that must be left to the vulgar, the coarser ones, the bourgeois and the peasant-like natures; if one, then, wishes to restrain, not the passions themselves but their language and gestures, one reaches nevertheless, *at the same time*, that which one did not dream of attaining, that is the repression of the passions themselves, or, at least, their weakening and their transformation — as happened (an instructive example) with the Court of Louis XIV and all that depended from it. The following period, brought up to use restraint with regard to the exterior forms, had lost the passions themselves, and as-

sumed, on the other hand, an elegant, superficial and playful gait. That period was so incapable of 'ungentlemanliness' that even an offence was never received and returned without courteous words. Perhaps our own epoch offers a strange counterpart to that. Everywhere, in real life or on the stage, and, not least of all, in everything that is written, I see the feeling of comfort caused by all the coarse irruptions and all the vulgar gestures of passion. People insist nowadays upon a certain convention of the passionate character; but, at no price, would they accept passion itself. Nevertheless, it will be reached in time, and our descendants will possess a true savagery, and not merely the savagery and coarseness of manners."

These matters of good deportment and of *allure* were extremely engrossing to Nietzsche. He rightly recognized the born artists or writers, for instance in this, that they know how to "find the ending," to stop just where they should, with precision, surety and gracefulness (it was not often that Nietzsche could do that himself): "The masters of the first quality are to be known by this. In great as in small things, they know how perfectly to find the ending, be it the end of a melody or of a thought, be it the fifth act of a tragedy or a Government's Act. The second rate masters always become nervous towards the end. They do not incline towards the sea, with a simple and quiet rhythm, as does for instance the mountain near Porto-Fino, over there where the bay of Genoa sings the concluding song of its melody."



Manners and gait are matters of race and heredity almost as much as of culture, and that comes to saying that they are matters of very long culture: "There exist manners of the mind through which even men of great minds lead one to surmise that they came from the populace or the semi-populace. . . . They do not know how to walk. . . . Napoleon did not know how to walk in public ceremonies. . . . People will certainly laugh when looking at those writers that make the ample clothing of the period rustle about them — they wish to hide their feet."

Nietzsche gave as little attention to the modern theater as he gave much to the antique theater, wherein he saw, rightly perhaps, so many things. Nevertheless, we must record his theory of the theater, considered as the starting point of literary decadence and as symptom of incipient social decadence. His is a theory of the *amorality* of the theater. We must record also deep remarks of his upon the Cornelian genius which he marvelously penetrated, and which he analyzed — that can be well enough understood — with a sort of loving passion.

Nietzsche thought that "the theater has its own time" which already ceases to be that of the full imaginative vigor of a people. The time of the full imaginative vigor of a race is the period of the Epopee. But so soon as the people needs to have materially *represented* its heroes and its legends, that means that the people imagines, thinks and *represents to itself* things in a much less energetic fashion: "When the imagination of a people is

relaxed, there is born in it an inclination to have its legends re-presented on the stage. It *bears*, it can bear the coarse substitutes for the imagination. But in the epoch to which the epical rhapsody belongs, the theater and the comedian, disguised as a hero, would prove a fetter instead of an aid to the imagination. They are too near, too definite, too heavy, too little dream and bird-flight like." This, in my opinion, is absolutely just, and it explains how literatures, I would not say, end in the theater, but in a way have their culminating point in the theater. First of all comes the epopee that affords satisfaction to a still lively and strong popular imagination. It collaborates with the poet, and has a neat and powerful vision of what the poet narrates. Then comes the theater, when the crowd, now less imaginative, is more passive, needs no longer to collaborate and fails to be shocked at the coarse materialization of its dreams. Finally, the theater itself declines, becomes still more material, and turns into an exhibition, a museum, a furniture and drapery shop-window. Literature applies itself elsewhere, but is itself no more than a recreation for an *élite* and for *dilettantes*, and popular literature simply ceases to exist.

As to the morality or the *amorality* of the theater, Nietzsche is convinced that the great dramatists have no care whatsoever for morality and only think of depicting life. It is we ourselves, people or bourgeois public, without unrestrainable tendency, to wish that morality invade everything and that all art consist in asserting morality and in tending to

it as its last goal — we it is that introduce a moral character and a moral meaning into the masterpieces of the stage with much show of nonsense. “*Concerning the morality of the foot-lights.*” He is mistaken who thinks that the effect produced by the theater of Shakespeare is moral and that the sight of Macbeth deters for ever from the evil of ambition. He is again mistaken when he fancies that Shakespeare had the same feeling about it that he has himself. The man that is truly possessed with a furious ambition contemplates with joy that image of himself, and when the hero perishes through his passion, that constitutes precisely the most biting spice in the warm drink of his joy. Has the poet then felt any other sentiment? His ambitious character royally rushes to his goal, and without anything of the rogue about him, as soon as the crime is accomplished. It is only from that moment that he exercises a diabolical attraction and urges to imitation natures similar to his own. Diabolical — that means this: revolt against advantage and life to the benefit of an idea and of an instinct. Do you think that Tristan and Isolde act as witnesses against adultery because of the fact that adultery causes both their deaths? That would be making the poets stand on their heads. Poets, especially those like Shakespeare, are in love with passion in itself, and not at all with the disposition to death that it generates. The heart does not cling to life in that disposition any more than a drop of water clings to a glass. Not the fault and its unpleasant consequences interest them — Shakespeare any more

than Sophocles (Ajax, Philoctetes, Œdipus). Albeit it would have been easy in the cases indicated, to make of the fault the lever of the drama, that was expressly avoided. Thus the tragic poet, with his images of life, does not wish to warn against life. On the contrary he exclaims: "It is the charm of all charms, this agitated, changing, dangerous, dark and often ardently sunny life. To live is an *adventure*. Take this or that decision, it will always preserve this character. Thus does he speak in a restless and vigorous period, almost intoxicated and stupefied by the superabundance of blood and energy, in a period much worse than our own. That is why we need, *commodiously*, to *accommodate* ourselves to the purpose of one of Shakespeare's dramas, as we might say, *not* to understand it."

The theater does not cause one to hate the faults it represents. It causes them to be loved by those that are inclined to them, by idealizing them even through misfortune, even through death. It only causes them to be hated by those that already hate them and that can only derive a moral lesson from the great poem on condition that they are not moved by it. The theater therefore moralizes only for those whom it bores.

Coming to Corneille, one can well imagine that Nietzsche would adore him. He found his "super-human" or his "superman" at every page, and if he had been of a jealous disposition, he would have hated Corneille, exclaiming: "How many ideas this man has stolen from me!" A hundred passages of

Nietzsche allude to Corneille's drama. Vice versa, and this does honor to both, one could make an excellent steady commentary upon Corneille with some of Nietzsche's texts. I shall give here but the two essential passages of Nietzsche on Corneille, one that characterizes the Cornelian genius in general, and the other evidently inspired by a reading of Cinna, showing what a profound psychologist of the great souls and what a historian of the "superior race" Corneille was:

"I am told that our art appeals to the men of to-day, greedy, insatiable, weary and tormented, and that it offers them an image of beatitude, elevation and sublimity by the side of the image of their ugliness, in order to make it possible for them to forget, for a time, and freely to breathe, perhaps even to bring back from this forgetfulness an incitement to flight and conversion. Poor artists, who have such a public! With such by-thoughts, which pertain to the priest and the alienist! How much happier was Corneille, *'our great Corneille, as Madame de Sévigné exclaimed in the accents of a woman in the presence of a complete man,* how far superior was Corneille's public, to which he could do good with images of chivalresque virtue, stern duty, generous sacrifice and heroic self discipline! How differently they both loved existence, not as one created by a blind and unpolished will that one curses because one does not know how to destroy it! They loved existence as a place where greatness and humanity are *possible* at the same time, and where even the severest constraint of the forms,

the submission to a princely or ecclesiastical pleasure can stifle neither the pride nor the chivalresque sentiment, nor the gracefulness nor the minds of all individuals, where they are rather considered as an added charm and a spur for one to create a *contrast* to hereditary sovereignty and nobility, to the hereditary power of will and power of passion!"

Here is now a portrait of Augustus, after Corneille, a singularly sharp and subtle analysis, of which one might contest a few points, but an extremely right one in its essence and ensemble, one, moreover, which is applicable to a good half of the Cornelian drama, and which gives us something like Corneille commented upon by La Rochefoucauld: "*Generosity and the like*. Paradoxical phenomena as sudden coldness in the attitude of a sentimental man, such as the melancholy *humor*, such, above all things, as *generosity*, taken as a sudden renouncement to vengeance or the satisfaction of envy, are presented by men that possess a great centrifugal force, by men that are taken with a sudden satiety and a sudden disgust. Their satisfactions are so rapid and violent that they are immediately followed by antipathy, repugnance and escape into the opposite taste. In these contrasts the crises of sentiment are solved, in one man through a sudden coldness, in another, through an access of hilarity, in a third one, through tears and the sacrifice of self. To me the *generous man*—at least that kind of generous men that have always most impressed us—*seems to be a man with an extreme thirst for revenge, who sees quite close by, the possibility of*



*quenching it*, and who, emptying the cup to the last drop, is already satisfied *in his imagination*, so that a rapid and enormous disgust follows that debauch.<sup>1</sup> He then rises above himself, as one says; he forgives his enemy. He even blesses him and respects him. In that violation of his own self, with that mockery of his instinct for vengeance, a minute ago still so powerful, he does but give way to a new instinct that has powerfully manifested itself in him (disgust), and this with the same impatient debauch he had previously experienced in *drinking beforehand* in his imagination, in exhausting, in a way, the joy of vengeance.<sup>2</sup> There is, in generosity, the same *degree* of egotism as in vengeance, but this egotism is of another *quality*.<sup>3</sup>

The literary and artistic ideas of Nietzsche are not connected. He did not make a system of them, nor a general theory. Yet they are very original, as

<sup>1</sup> Cinna. V. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Cinna. V. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Let us add this also (and one could go on quoting) obviously inspired by the *Cid*, or *Nicomède* or by *Sertorius*: "It is the women that pale at the idea that their lover might not be worthy of them; it is the men that pale at the idea that they might be unworthy of their mistresses. I am speaking of complete men and women. Such men, who usually possess self-confidence and the feeling of power, feel a state of passion of timidity and a sort of doubt of themselves. Such women, on the other hand, always consider themselves as weak creatures, ready for the abandon; but in the sublime exception of passion, they have their pride and their feeling of power and they ask: 'Who then is worthy of me?'"

he often is, very penetrating, as most of his ideas are, and they all pertain, as is natural with this great aristocrat, to the conception or the dream of a sane, virile, strong and noble art. They are energetically contemptuous of the sensibility of romance, of the sickly and consumptive elegiac art, also of the art that is overburdened, complicated, violent, tortured and vehement through a sentiment of its intimate weakness, and again of the art that is basely comic and trivial, in fine of all the forms of the popular and bourgeois art.<sup>1</sup> They uplift mind and soul towards the vision of an art made by a superior kind for a superior kind. They express in their fashion the great master-idea of the author: "Man is a being who is made to overcome himself."

<sup>1</sup> This is illustrated in almost every volume of Nietzsche but it is especially interesting to recall at the present time his views on French, English and German literature scattered throughout disconnected chapters of *Beyond Good and Evil*. Nietzsche always taxed his own countrymen with the lack of many things, especially of that *presto* which is the hall-mark of the French.—(Translator's Note.)

## CONCLUSION.

NIETZSCHE is certainly not a very original philosopher. He could be easily enough reconstituted wholly out of La Rochefoucauld, Goethe and Renan. The originality of his talent is, on one side, very beautiful and inspires an admiring jealousy. On the other side, it is vulgar and breeds a desire to scorn it; it is shown in his exaggeration, his insolent impudence and his cynicism. He has so little discretion there, and so little taste that he becomes ridiculous, as in his analysis of the coition, which is of a rare unconscious burlesque, or in his heavy paradoxes of the last manner: "In every great action there is a crime."—"Superiority of Petronius over the New Testament. Spiritual superiority of Petronius. Not a buffoonery in the Gospels. That alone refutes a book." Had Renan fallen into a second childhood he might have reached this point; but that would not have made it more bearable.

To come back to Nietzsche, minus his talent and minus his foolish ways, he was not very original. But he was intelligent, sharp, subtle; he dislocated and dissolved his matter in a masterly fashion, set it up again with no little audaciousness, and with an ardor in his violent and dark convictions that com-

pels one to think and that, at least that far, therefore, is efficacious and fecund.

He is crammed with contradictions. M. Fouillée has pointed them out with much  *finesse* , but he has admitted also that these contradictions are all soluble. They are and all of them, more or less precisely, but all of them, were solved in Nietzsche's own mind.

Nietzsche said that all things had an equal value, and yet he ended with an authority, a hierarchy for men. First of all, he very rarely said that all things had equal value; his effort consisted especially in the establishment of a new classification of values. Then, in Nietzsche's mind, all things have an equal value in themselves and there is neither good nor evil; but things are very far from having the same value in relation to the aim and as means to that aim, the latter being a greater, nobler and more beautiful humanity, or, to use Renan's words, realization of the divine.

Nietzsche said that there was no purpose and no sense in things, and yet he wanted his Superman to be or to make himself the "sense of the Earth." As a matter of fact, things have no meaning whatsoever but the man that overcomes himself gives one to them. They have no purpose (which would seem elementarily evident) but the man that gets beyond them and beyond himself, suddenly endows them with one.

Nietzsche said that nothing was true and that we must, nevertheless, find or invent true valuations. It is precisely because nothing is true that we should

give things some valuations, not true ones but beautiful ones, valuations according to beauty. That is the very reason why no one can impose valuations of truth on the man who has created—not discovered but created æsthetic valuations, valuations according to the beautiful.

Nietzsche said that everything was necessary, that everything passed away and also returned, and that we should, nevertheless, create something that has not been. It did not seem to me that he said quite that. He said that everything was determined but that eternal determination had it that all things pass away and return; he said that some men created anew states of society and of humanity *that have once existed*, that will be new only in the sense of being renewed, perhaps more beautiful in their latest form, which is possible and therefore to be wished.

Nietzsche said that Egotism was the foundation of life, and that we should, nevertheless, practice the great love which is that of complete life—that is to say, he gave egotism its true definition: to put one's love for one's self into the love for all things. That is the true way to satisfy the love of self in a royal, integral and thorough fashion. It is a truth of common sense and almost of common place.

According to Nietzsche, hardness was the law and we should, nevertheless, have the "great pity."—That was not quite what he said and pity was not his fault. But if he did say it somewhere, he must have merely meant that the hardness that saves the species is the true pity, a total and not a sottishly

individual pity. However I do not know that he says it; although it is his general tendency.

Nietzsche said that desire was the spring of the vital instinct but that we should nevertheless desire pain. He meant that man can but want his own good, and that he is right in wanting it, but that he learns or should learn that the good, even the material good, can be acquired and bought only with accepted pain, even with pain that has been sought out and that, therefore, we must desire pain.

Nietzsche said that all passions are beneficial and that we must nevertheless know how to curb them and submit them to a severe discipline. He meant that the passions, which are the various forms of our egotism, are as good as egotism itself but that they are good (1) if we govern them, if we direct them. In the same way are all natural and mechanical forces good. (2) They are good especially owing to the occasion they offer us to fight them in order to tame them, since the finest thing in man is the will — and that is all in Descartes.

Nietzsche said that there was no ideal, and yet that we must sacrifice everything to it, that we must sacrifice ourselves to the life that is highest, fullest, richest and most . . . idealistic. This word must be used since it sums up the others.—He said it with truth because, for any man who does not believe in a revelation, it is tautologically evident that there is no ideal. But it is also almost evident that it is because there is no ideal that we should know how to create one in order to have an aim, and that an aim is necessary to us is practically established.



Nietzsche also said that this sacrifice itself was vain because we can never change things. If he did say this, he was uttering a sublime thought because it amounted to saying that man, in sacrificing himself for the sake of an unrealizable ideal, was but fulfilling his function which was to despise things and to persist in changing them even when they were immutable and when he knew them to be immutable. Man derives, nevertheless, a great profit from this, that of *having changed himself* and of having made a man out of himself instead of the thing which he was.

Thus could all the contradictions of Nietzsche be solved, without much trouble. If there were any left, we have long since given up the notion that we could reproach for his contradictions a man who has been thinking for twenty years, and whose office is to make us think, by setting forth to us his successive ideas, a man who, if he had always thought the same thing, would probably be a fool and who, had he one day attempted to wipe out all his contradictions, would have only been trying to appear like the fool that he was not.

Let us give up this somewhat futile dispute and seek Nietzsche in the two or three general ideas to which he clung and upon which he left his mark, and let us examine them with impartiality and coolness.

Leaving aside a few evasions on his part, he has instituted two moralities, one vulgar and unfruitful, given up to the mob, the other superior and productive of great things, immoral in appearance,

contrary-wise to the first and reserved for the *élite*.

This contradicts the idea, held dear by humanity for so long a time, of a *universal morality*. Let us examine this point first. Is morality then not universal; is it not the same for all men and all countries, etc. . . . as Cicero said long ago? I do not think that it is. People easily think that morality is universal because they see that all men have it, and the latter fact I hold to be correct. But the conclusion derived is erroneous. All men have a morality in this sense, that all feel themselves compelled to something. They feel themselves compelled to something because they are all "geared" to a society (association, aggregation or company) and this gear constitutes, of itself, an *ensemble* of duties. A brigand's association has a morality, and a very strict one. A pirate's association has a morality, and a very severe one. A pimp's association—this has been unearthed in Paris—has a morality, even a legislation and even a tribunal judging the conflicts. An association of conquerors, a feudality or an aristocracy has a morality and a very harsh one. And so on. Now, considering this that all men have a morality and that there is no man but has one, people conclude that *they have the same one*. Therein lay the error. The fact that all men have a morality does not constitute a universal morality. It merely establishes the fact that there is morality everywhere and that is not at all the same thing. The universality of the moral fact is not the same thing as identity of morality. It would amount to saying that, because all men are religious,

there is but one religion in the world. From the fact that there is perhaps no man who feels himself compelled, we should never conclude that there is but one obligation under different forms. In granting me these last words "under different forms" you would be already granting me much, almost everything, to wit, that there is no identity of moralities. But I say even this, that there are feelings of obligation which are so different, so contrary, that one cannot, even by spending very much time over it, bring them back to a common foundation. There are moralities that command to kill and others that forbid it. There are moralities that command to respect one's parents and others that command to suppress them when they reach a certain age. There are moralities for the foreigner and against the foreigner. There is no identity whatsoever of human moralities.

There remains, nevertheless, this fact, that all men have a morality. What does it prove? Simply that all men are associated, some to one group, others to another group. What does it prove? Simply that all men are sociable.

— But even an isolated man would have a morality.

— Yes, or at least, he would have a self-discipline; but he would not have any sense of *obligation*. He would not at all feel compelled to practice the discipline he made for himself. (Unless he had previously belonged to an association and remembered it, in which case we are back to the common case. The man in question does not consider himself as

being isolated but as separated for a time from the association that compels him.)

Therefore we must not conclude, from the ubiquity of morality, that it is universal. There is one everywhere, but *it* is not everywhere; it is not at all the same for all men. Every man feels himself compelled; yet there is no moral obligation of any kind which be the law of humanity.

Nietzsche was then right when he imagined his two moralities?

— Yes, but he was, nevertheless, also wrong. There are not two moralities; there is an undetermined number of them. A morality for the *élite*, another one for the crowd; there you have what is quite arbitrary, capricious, rash and as little scientific as possible. Where does the mob end? Where does the *élite* begin? That is what cannot possibly be determined. What man among us may say: "The morality of the noble men is meant for me and not for this other man"? I do not need to point out that if the morality of the great ones admits or excuses certain vices or violent actions, it will always be the most abject of "slaves" who will declare themselves elected for the morality of the "masters." The words of a friend of mine, who is a humorist, will be right: "Nietzsche, is the morality of Tropmann."<sup>1</sup> The conception of a

<sup>1</sup> A diligent search for more explicit particulars concerning Tropmann which I could place before the readers led me nowhere but to a faint recollection of a series of crimes by some German anarchist in France. Faguet was not given to riddles and the humour seems to be on

masters' morality and a slaves' is a truly coarse one, I mean one that is without shades, primitive, recalling the caste régime and blind to the multiple differences of degree between men.

The truth is that there are very many, multiple and multiplied moralities and that they are all unlike each other. As one goes up from the lowest to the highest of humanity, one demands, quite naturally, things which one had not previously insisted upon, and also, I am willing to admit it, one ceases to demand certain things upon which one had previously insisted.

We are stern towards the man who, rendering to his kind the mere minimum of services, is yet hard upon those upon whom he can bring his hardness to bear, or is dissolute, etc.

If a man is intelligent, gifted and active we demand of him that he render services to the community; first of all that he remain not idle, then that he be not satisfied either with earning a living or making money. We want him to do something for the common good; we consider that to be his duty, and he himself is conscious of it. On the other hand, we shall be indulgent for a few sensual weaknesses on his part; we shall bear him no malice if he treats himself to a good dinner or a pretty girl, in moderation.<sup>1</sup> You can very well see that here is

the humorist. But then did not Mrs. Camp insist that there was a Mrs. Harris? —(Translator's Note.)

<sup>1</sup> Is not this an illustration of Faguet's insistence upon the fact that there are many codes of morality? Many Anglo-Saxons will consider him an "immoralist" after

a man, who yet is "average," and who has not at all the same morality, and to whom you do not apply the same morality that you did to the *minus habens* and the *minus potens* of a moment ago. One shows him more exacting on the one side and more indulgent on the other.

If, finally, a man has rendered eminent services to his country or to humanity, the whole of mankind exacts enormously from him, does not admit that he abdicate, or relax or even almost rest; on the other hand people freely forgive him some vices. Especially do they instinctively forgive him for being autocratic, imperious, harsh, and for causing his grasp and weight to be felt.

Have you noticed that, as we come, I would not say to the most deserving, but to the most useful man, to the man who rightly or wrongly is considered the most useful and (for one has to use the word) the strongest, we give him more money and we unanimously believe — exception made for the Socialists — that he should in fact receive more? Why is that? Does he need more? We must acknowledge that it is because we admit his right to more satisfactions, either sensual, or of luxury or vanity.

— But, wretched man! you are helping his vices!

— Not quite. Nevertheless we must admit that we do excuse him for having those vices if they be not too grave, more than we would another man,

this, and many Slavs begin to think that he was after all, human, all-too-human.—(Translator's Note.)



to compensate or to balance the immense services we think he has rendered us.

Thus has humanity reasoned more or less consciously up to now. It may be that it shall not always reason in this way. That, however, humanity has persisted in this frame of mind for what is surely an appreciable period, proves that more or less confusedly and, in truth, clearly enough, it has admitted several moralities.

Do you not see that it admits professional moralities? It admits a soldier's morality, which is not that of the judge, a priest's morality, which is not that of the workingman, and a savant's morality, which is not that of the ignorant man. Does humanity allow me to cut a live dog into little pieces? Yet it allows my colleague of the *Faculté des Sciences* to do it; it encourages him to do it, and rightly too, in my opinion.

It admits a morality for women, one which is, come to think of it, essentially different from that of the men. It asks chastity from women as an essential virtue, and it has never thought of holding chastity to be an essential or even an important virtue in men. Women themselves share, most of them, this double opinion. They despise the libertine woman, while it is perhaps somewhat the contrary with regard to men. Why is this? Because it is most certain that society rests upon the chastity of its women, and evinces much less interest in the chastity of men, or rather, it is more concerned over the energy, courage, loyalty and honesty of the men

than over their chastity. It is quite true that if society wants the women to remain chaste, it should, *in consequence*, demand chastity from the men also, since it is uncontestable that the two are connected. To be sure; yet also, because of this very connection, if society were sure of the chastity of women, it would be sure also of that of the men. For this very reason, knowing man to be naturally polygamous, and being interested in man not practicing polygamy, knowing woman to be at least much more monogamous than man, it is woman upon whom society relies for the maintenance of the general chastity as much as it is possible to maintain it. Because society relies mostly on woman, and this with some reason, it endows feminine chastity with an extreme value. With ardor and authority it urges woman to preserve chastity. It makes a superior and essential virtue of chastity for woman and a duty of the first order. That is reasonable enough. Meanwhile society institutes a morality special to women and very different from that imposed upon men.

Mankind admits, therefore, diverse moralities, the severeness and indulgence of which compensate each other.

There we have the truth at the bottom of Nietzsche's theories or, at least, there we find that part of his ideas which is in agreement with the *consensus communis* of humanity such as, rightly or wrongly, it has persisted to this day.

But this is nothing like the conception of the two moralities; nothing even is more contrary to it. The conception of two moralities arbitrarily divides

mankind into two classes, while there are of course, not two kinds, but a hundred degrees. The conception of the two moralities is not exactly compensating. True, it exacts more from the great ones and allows them more; it exacts less from the small and allows them less; but in creating a sharp abyss between great and small, it paralyzes the good force that might exist in a certain degree among the small, and allows useful strength only in the great men of whom it is not sure and to whom too much license is granted.

I have been very careful not to state that the general idea admitted by mankind is true, but it is at least fairer. It says and believes that "there is a general and universal morality. All of you must abide by it. *Nevertheless*, those who will do much more than their duty on one side will be tacitly allowed to do a little less than their duty on the other.<sup>1</sup> Those who do but their duty to the letter

<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to follow Faguet upon this ground. The notion of mankind or society *allowing* anything seems preposterous when one remembers the long list of names of great men, whose work the whole world is ever pleased to enjoy, who were allowed no sympathy or support or indulgence or even the possibility of enjoying life, from Socrates to Dante and Shelley, from Archimedes to Copernicus, from Dr. John Dee to Turpin, from Coriolanus to Sir Charles Dilke, without counting the numberless lights of the English literature who had to witness the fulsome and absurd praise showered upon unworthy rivals and whose every lapse was eagerly awaited and pounced upon by the public. The greater the real lasting services as a rule the less has a great man been allowed by his contemporaries. There have

must not expect to find people blind to their weaknesses. There are privileges in the domain of morality. There are privileges but they are distributed in such a way that they balance each other and that, after all, every one enjoys some of them. There is a mass of different applications of the moral law according to the degree of power for good which each man possesses, and with compensations so that no one suffer too much or be too much deluded."

This has truly been humanity's moral law so far. It is an elastic morality. At heart, I verily believe that it is an error and that the superior man merely has more duties than the others, *without compensation*, unless it be—and an immense one it is—that he can tell himself, with a deep gratification of his been very few men whose names were blessed 200 years after their death who would have given any care for public morality when it came to a matter of *that which made them great*. Again there is proof every day that it is not the breaking of its mortal laws that society minds in a man but the flouting of these breaks. There are moral immoral men and women all around us and also immoral moral men. The greater men are child-like and do not attempt to cover their tracks. Therein lies their offence to society. It were absurd to seek in this remark a criticism of society's view on sexual problems. The matter is a very much wider one. Why was Napoleon not allowed to complete his task, for instance, the unification of Europe? Or Joan of Arc? A great man is great because he cannot help being great; an inventor cannot help inventing nor a poet avoid singing. What has Society got to do with them except to fuss over their rivals and go a muckraking into their private lives? Faguet's remark may be true of Latin or Slav nations; I doubt if it applies to any other.—(Translator's Note.)

pride, that he has more duties than the others without compensation. Such, however, is the morality of mankind. It is an elastic morality.

That of Nietzsche is rigid and arbitrarily so. Between great and small men, which it would be very much put to if it had to classify and define them, it digs a profound chasm. For those on the right it establishes a strict morality, and for those on the left it sets up a morality that is also strict and rigorous, with appearance of immorality. It rests entirely upon a fancy of the imagination, and has no solid foundation, either in the psychology of men or in that of nations. It is hardly more than a poet's brilliant revery.

I much prefer what Nietzsche said of the encroachments of morality and of the legitimate limits within which it is as necessary to confine it as it is to confine any other thing. That is true and that is right in its consequences. Morality has always had or at least has had, for a very long spell — since Socrates if you like — the pretension to gather to itself as the ultimate, or rather as being the only end, all human actions and even all human occupations. That "Philosophers' Circe" has been and has wanted to be a Circe to all men, for their own good. It has implanted in mankind the idea that it alone is respectable, that it alone is a "value," and that all the other values are valuable only as a function of morality, and so long only as they contribute towards its establishment or the confirmation of its empire.

This is really excessive, and truly an error. To enslave to itself savant, artist and politician is, on the part of morality, an encroachment, bad in itself and one which, like all other encroachments, ends by turning against the one that makes them. To tell the savant, "Science must only serve to the establishment of a rational morality and to the increase of men's morality"—to tell the artist, "Art must serve only to making men more moral." To tell the Statesman; "Politics are morality and nothing but morality."—That is to paralyze human forces that have a right to existence and that have their own independent utility; it is to sterilize and freeze the savant, the artist and the politician.

The savant will ever be saying to himself: "Is this truth virtuous; is not that truth a demoralizing one?"—and he will no longer seek the truth.

The artist will be telling himself: "Is not such an art immoral? Art itself, as Tolstoy said, is it not immoral in itself?" And he will think that his duty consists in reducing art, as Tolstoy wished it to be reduced, to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

The Statesman will always be asking himself, "Do I stand within strict morality? Must I take life, have I a right to take life when it has been said; 'Thou shalt not kill'? Must I punish, since it has been said; 'Thou shalt not judge others'; and since, even according to the simple morality of common-sense, it is obvious that to assume the right to judge others when one is fallible, amounts to an enormity?"

And so on. The enslaving of the quest of truth



to morality, the enslaving of the quest of the beautiful to morality; the enslaving of the quest of the public good to morality, are all suppressions of the quest of the beautiful, of the quest of truth and of the quest of the public good. The absolute and superstitious enslaving of humanity to morality — for morality has its superstitions like religion, from which it differs but little — would cut short the very life of humanity.

All this comes back to saying that, there also, are particular moralities: a morality particular to art, one to science and one to politics. These divers efforts of mankind *bear some relations* to morality but are *not its dependents*. They are indirectly related to morality but not as its servants or agents. They do not have to be moral; they do *not* have to be immoral. The savant is guilty when he sets out to discover alleged truths to demoralize his fellow men. The artist is guilty when he causes art to be used towards corrupting men. Politicians are guilty, if under the guise of the public good, they commit immoral acts which have not the public good as an aim, but merely their own or that of their party.

The morality of the savant, the artist or the politician, as a savant, an artist and a politician, consists in not being immoral but it does not consist in entering the service of morality and producing morality in the world. If they succeed in doing that, as moreover often happens, all the better, but they do not have to seek it. The word of Goethe is true: "I never bothered myself with the effects of my

works of art. I am inclined to think that they have been rather useful, but it was not from that point of view that I had to set out." The artist creates something beautiful, the savant discovers something true, and the politician does something for the public good. It is likely, although I do not know it but merely believe it, that all this, in the long run, benefits morality; but it is not in itself morality. If they wanted their work to be a piece of morality the artist, the savant and the politician would paralyze, sterilize and freeze themselves, and their work would be worthless. On the other hand, if they were possessed with the contrary idea and allowed themselves to be prompted by a secret and intimate immorality — and here we have identity of the contradictories — they would also be doing ignoble and pitiful work. Not the artist, the savant, nor the statesman is the servant of morality. They serve beauty, truth and the public good. If that also leads to morality it is not part of their intention.

But morality will not have it thus. It wants to find in all men servants *ad nutum* and pretends to give to all human actions a value proportionate to the place which it occupies therein. In other words, morality pretends to be the only value. There lies its error and it is this error with which Nietzsche reproaches morality furiously but rightly.

As I said, morality hurts its own cause through these encroachments because, in the end, people turn against it. That is what happened to Nietzsche, who lost patience and finally said; "We do not want this tyrant any more"; and he wanted to sup-

press morality itself, and the whole of it, too. And if, in the matter of talent, there is but one Nietzsche, there are many under-Nietzsches who do not admit this universal despotism of morality, who challenge it and integrally eliminate it. If you want to be everything, there is always the danger for you that your wish will be contested, and that you will be denied even the right to be anything at all.

The matter is — it is not a reproach — that morality becomes a passion with civilized people and assumes the whole character, and I would say, almost the tyrannical temperament of a passion. Morality was with primitive peoples very likely nothing more than the deeply felt necessity to sacrifice personal interest to common interest. That was a right idea, then a sentiment, then a passion. The idea of *necessity* became an idea of *obligation*. Man felt himself compelled. All men felt themselves compelled. Hence an intimate union between religion and morality, whether it be morality that derives from religion or religion that derives from morality. Little by little, while doing his *duty*, man felt himself compelled to do something which had no longer a very precise object, since the necessities of the daily defense and the daily sacrifice were less present and less obvious. He took to worshipping that something which commanded without giving its reasons, and which said; "Thou shalt; thou must." He worshiped it respectfully and superstitiously, either as a commandment from some mysterious being above or as a commandment from some mysterious voice within himself. And that

was the mystical foundation of morality. As soon as morality had a mystical foundation, it became a passion, and that with extraordinary energy, because man is only moved by the mysterious and is only devoted with ardor and fanaticism to the things that he does not understand.

Hence that religious character of morality which causes morality, which has the result that morality, if it survives religion, becomes itself a religion and inspires true religious passions in those that love it.

Add to this, to keep this passion indefinitely burning in the heart of man — and far from me to complain of it — add this motive, which is eternal. Man was at first an animal for whom the struggle against wild beasts and men was a daily necessity. Man is therefore born bellicose, or if you like—I do not want to argue over it—he has been disposed and trained for fighting by thousands of prehistoric centuries. This character he has retained. Once the civilizations became firmly established, man lost the need to fight every day, either wild beasts or men, but he has preserved the taste for fighting; and he has every day some occasion to exercise it. He has his passions, which are his inner beasts, and he feels and shall feel every day the need to fight those beasts. Therefore, man will effectively fight every day against himself. He finds, in conquering himself, as much pleasure as his distant ancestor felt in downing a bear. And it is the most lively, profound and intense pleasure that man can yet devise.

Along this path also did morality become a passion. It is a passion against the passions. It

amounts to the same thing, whether it is a matter of annihilating them as being diseases and good for nothing at all, which is the opinion of some people and my own, or whether a matter of regulating, disciplining, directing, damming, canalizing and purifying them,—so long as it is a matter of fighting them. In his quality of fighting animal, man therefore worships the passion against the passions, the passion against himself, the *egophobe* passion, which affords him such delectable victories and such an exquisite loot — the loot of himself. At the root of the victories of that passion, it is of course well understood, he finds again a marvelous sweetness of egotism, a transcendental triumph of the self since it is a triumph of the pure self over the self.

By all the roads, therefore, morality becomes a passion. In it, man venerates what in its principle and at the beginning of things most truly created civilization and humanity. It is perfectly correct that if man had been merely a passionate egotist humanity would have disappeared a very short time after its birth. He worships, in morality, something mysterious — something that has become mysterious — something that commands without giving its reasons, like a god, and either he confounds it with religion and absorbs it therein, or when he makes a distinction between them, he promotes morality itself to the dignity and the mysterious majesty of a religion. Finally, he worships in it a form of his fighting instinct, of which he feels the need, and of which he feels that he will always be in need, and the victories and triumphs of which afford him the

most profoundly voluptuous and exquisite satisfaction.

What is there surprising now in the fact that morality has in the eyes of man as great an importance as anything else? Did art, did science or politics make the civilizations, did they make humanity? They have contributed thereto but they did not make it. Do science, art and politics command with a sort of sacred authority, and do they *compel*? Is there a voice in the innermost part of our being that tells us; "Thou shalt seek knowledge, thou shalt write poetry, thou shalt be a statesman"? There is not, or if something says that to us, it is precisely morality, or anything else but speaking through morality's voice, saying: "Thou shalt know in order to enlighten men upon the truths and to make them happier; thou shalt be an artist in order to link men by means of disinterested enjoyment and render them through this concord happier; thou shalt devote thyself to the State to ensure the happiness of thy fellow-citizens."

Neither science, nor art, nor politics has, in itself, this voice of commandment and this imperative accept. Whether or not morality has this character of high authority only because it took it by encroachments and usurpation, the fact is that it has had that character for a very long time, and with a sort of infallibility that has almost passed into our very nature. It is only to the words; "Thou shalt be an honest man" that we find no retort, but the words, "thou shalt be a great man" move us to laughter,



and without our feeling the slightest remorse for our merriment.

Do science, art or politics, in fine, no matter what pleasures they give us, and how great, afford us an enjoyment that can be compared to the unalloyed and absolute joy that brings us out of ourselves and above ourselves, the joy we relish when we conquer ourselves? Of course not.

Man has therefore concluded that morality was his king and he turned it into an idol. He was at bottom not wrong. But like any other passion, the passion of morality itself has its dangers. To morality itself must we still give its share, making that share the larger and more beautiful one. That is what Nietzsche said, and had he said nothing but that it would be necessary to give him the most serious approval.

His political ideas, which are very closely related to his ideas on morality, are most worthy of discussion, but also very much open to discussion. His unbounded aristocratism does not displease one any more than does that of Renan. Like Nietzsche, like Renan, like Plato and so many others, I am thoroughly convinced that everything great and good ever done by humanity is the work of an aristocracy. I think however that the question is wrongly set forth by Nietzsche and also by a few others; but let us confine ourselves to Nietzsche.

This is how Nietzsche understands aristocracy: a cultivated caste, hereditarily energetic, having culti-

vated in itself and still cultivating energy. It conceives and executes, by itself, very fine things. It conceives and executes, by itself, and constrains the lower caste to help it, great things: conquests, explorations, colonies, new cities and empires founded, etc. Under that caste there is a vile caste which loves neither the artistic life nor the dangerous life, which is allowed to understand of art nothing at all, or to have for itself a pitiful and ridiculous art, and which is allowed to understand of life dangerous nothing at all, but which is associated with that life by means of force. Some societies have lived thus; they have been the greatest of humanity and they have caused humanity to advance: Athens, the Greece of Alexander, Rome, and the France of Louis XIV. They are the models.

I hold this idea to be utterly false. The great and beautiful human societies were headed by an aristocracy, that is true, but they had an inferior caste which was not at all vile and which was as aristocratic and more aristocratic than their *aristocracy*. They were aristocratic from top to bottom or very nearly, and had an inferior caste been vile and had a society failed to be aristocratic from top to bottom, those societies would not have been in the least great.

Athens was great. I grant that it was so because governed by its aristocracy, but it was governed by the aristocracy only in so far as the mass was enough aristocratic itself to want to be governed aristocratically and intimately to associate itself to its aristocracy in an essentially aristocratic thought.

Otherwise I would like to know what the aristocracy could have accomplished. It would have erected statues. It would have neither made conquests nor achieved *hegemony* nor the *Archæ*. When the city fell it was because the people ceased to be aristocratic and left its aristocracy alone; it was when the people said: "to be governed by Philip or by a distinguished Athenian it is all the same to me." At that time the plebe did not care about its aristocracy, about the aristocratic constitution of the city of Athens. It was willing to serve anybody. It was willing no longer to draw from its own folds a government of its own race and tradition; it was no longer aristocratic and productive of aristocracy. That is what it had ceased to be.

The same reasoning or rather a similar establishment of facts would exactly apply to Rome. The Roman plebe discussed and was in dispute with its aristocracy. To be sure, but until the establishment of the Empire it remained attached to its aristocracy since it did not overthrow it. That is such an easy task for a plebe since it consists merely in denying support. The plebe remained attached to the aristocracy and to all aristocratic conceptions, to all the dreams of conquest and greatness, and to the dangerous life of its aristocracy. Like Napoleon's grenadiers they were "always grumbling but always marching" for no great national profit, for no personal profit at all, for almost none, which is an essentially aristocratic feature. When they accepted the Empire, when they gave up the Senate, it was because the aristocratic sentiment had weakened

among them. It was because it had become a matter of indifference with them to be governed, no longer by an aristocracy that emanated from them, sprung from the soil and bound together with the old roots of the race and representing the slow and regular ascent of the best that was in plebe towards the superior spheres; but by chance sovereigns, come from the four corners of the world, Ligurians, Spaniards, Africans, Syrians, Dalmatians and Arabs, who had nothing of the Roman, who cared not a whit for Roman history, who did not represent anything but success in warfare and were but the chosen ones of a few mutinied soldiers. End of a race; mentality of a race which is no longer conscious of itself, which knows no longer how to make itself ruled by the best of itself approximately selected, either by birth which is not at all a hazard or by election, or by a combination of election and birth; mentality of a race in short which has lost the aristocratic sense.

And the reign of Louis XIV — what was it? It shows us an absolute monarch, a military aristocracy, an administrative bourgeoisie, a people devoted to its king and its aristocracy, and consequently essentially aristocratic. This people does not vote nor elect; it does not govern itself, neither by plebiscites nor by means of a representation. But it collaborates, and actively to be sure, with the aristocratic government in this, that it obeys that government with ardor, dash and passion. What did it want when it fought as it did, when it worked as it did? It wanted the King to be great, the Prince

of Condé to be victorious, the Maréchal de Turenne to be maréchal, and that Versailles be an enchantment. It wanted that, since it served so well and with enthusiasm. It had no means better to show its will. If it did not want that most precisely it could by means of a simple force of inertia or of drowsiness have it that none of these things come to pass. It would let France be conquered by Spaniard, German or Englishman, saying "How can this matter to me?" An aristocratic nation, it is a nation in which the aristocracy and the people are both equally aristocratic.

And not equally aristocratic either, but rather the people much more aristocratic than the aristocracy itself. Because in the aristocrat, aristocratism may be but a matter of interest, but in the people, it has to be a passionate affair. What has the aristocrat to gain by an aristocratic constitution, an aristocratic régime, by an aristocratic life and by a brilliant and dangerous life? Very much: riches, honors, glory and satisfied pride. What does the plebeian stand to gain? Nothing at all. "Many blows, little pleasure and death at every corner." In order to be aristocratic the people must have the aristocratic passion. Strange ways of passion but which do not surprise the psychologist, it is necessary that the plebeian should enjoy his aristocratic sense in the success of others, that he be happy of Condé's victories and of the triumphs of Turenne, that he be made happy by the glorious life in which he does not participate unless it be by his sufferings and of which he has but the labors and the pain. It is

necessary that he should proudly exclaim when he sees the fine carriages passing before him, these words heard by Taine: "How rich are our lords!" To be in this frame of mind it is necessary that he should be a hundred times more aristocratic than the aristocrats themselves. An aristocratic nation is a nation in which the aristocracy is aristocratic but the plebe even much more so.

— But this is a sophism! You are mixing aristocratism and patriotism.

— Nothing of the kind. They are mixing themselves. Aristocratism is a form of patriotism and nothing else. If you like, aristocratism is a form of the instinct of hierarchy and the instinct of hierarchy is patriotism itself. A people has the hierarchic sentiment so long as it considers itself as a camp. So long as it considers itself as an army in a fortified camp it understands or it feels (and so far as the result is concerned it is one and the same thing, to feel is even much stronger than to understand it) that the only means to grow or even to subsist is to maintain with energy the hierarchy, that is to say the national frame and the national organism. Hence the energetic tendency strongly to gather around chiefs who are designated by birth, which is not at all a hazard, or by election with aristocratic instinct, that is to say, one which always seeks the chiefs in the higher class. Rome was for a long time most remarkable in this connection. When the aristocratic sentiment weakens, patriotism weakens also. Rather it is because patriotism has weakened that the aristocratic sentiment is lowering. Or bet-



ter still, these two tendencies which are but different forms of the same sentiment always go on a par and keep more or less to the same pace.

An example against my own view: the ardent patriotism of the 1792 "patriots" who were ardent equalitarians. Think a while and you will see this. Outside a motive of fact which is that those men wished to repel "the kings" whom they suspected of wishing to bring back over them masters of whom they intended to remain rid of, there was a sentimental reason. The patriots of 1792 intended to replace the masters whom they were dismissing, to prove, and to prove to themselves, that they also could fill the office of masters, and to do it better than the former ones. They wished to show, in dazzling manner, that the people of France knew how spontaneously to extract from its own midst an hierarchy as good as the one it had destroyed. This sentiment is natural to the man *who replaces another*, to the new owner of an historical castle, to the newly made noble man or to the atheist whose virtue sometimes rivals that of the believer. It is a sentiment however which does not last. Once the democracy is installed and sure of its own positions it loses the memory of what it has replaced, becomes, quite naturally, as indifferent to the patriotic idea as it is hostile to the aristocratic idea, and does not see the necessity for defending a country in which it would remain what it is, whether it belongs to that democracy or to some one else, and especially a country in which the democracy in order to defend itself to reconstitute an heirarchy which would

very much resemble an aristocracy, and, to tell the truth, would be one.

The patriotic nations are therefore always aristocratic nations, and the aristocratic nations are countries where the aristocracy is aristocratic but the people much more so.

The question is therefore very badly set forth by Nietzsche. We should not say that everything that was good and great in humanity has been accomplished by aristocracies. We should say everything that was good and great in humanity has been accomplished by nations, by nations and not by fractions of nations, which were aristocratic from top to bottom.

Thus vanishes here also, in politics as in morality, this fundamental distinction, this rigid and strict distinction between those at the top and those at the bottom. Thus vanishes Nietzsche's aristocratic system. To borrow one of his own procedures and imitate for once his customary way, I will say this: Let us blot out words of Aristocracy and of Democracy. Beyond aristocracy and democracy there exists something which is, if you like, Sociocracy. There are nations that have a very strong social instinct. With these peoples individualism is very weak and individual egotism much inclined to self-sacrifice and reduced to a sort of minimum. The citizen loves to do great common things, to do great things by means of association. According to the different ethical temperaments, *or rather according to the times* he does those great common things by uniting strongly with the State, by absorbing itself

in the State; or he does them by forming corporations or associations of citizens, all of them moreover deeply and passionately attached to the State and becoming the firm limbs and the strong and "well-gearred" bones of the State. In one or the other way, and in one *and* the other way most often, these nations practice sociocracy. They have the sense of association, the sense of the State, in a word the social sense and the sense of the people strong. They are great nations and they do great things. They conquer others or disdain to conquer them. They are the makers of the great civilizations. The others are the excrements of humanity, or rather perhaps they are the mold thereof, and, as such, they have their use, but that is not important to the man whose study is civilization and the history of civilization.

In short, there must precisely be neither aristocracy nor democracy. The ideal nation is that in which the people is aristocratic and the aristocracy demophile.

That was not the way in which Nietzsche understood things. Here lay Nietzsche's capital error, an error which like all his others, either contained much truth or was on the road to truth but which nevertheless it was necessary to straighten out.

Let us end with another general and essential idea of Nietzsche. This I should call his idea of dilettantism. After all he began with it and he ended with it, and it is fitting that, with it, we should close our study.

If Nietzsche is an aristocrat, if Nietzsche is an immoralist, and if Nietzsche is everything that he is, it is because he is an artist. It is because the pith of his thought is that humanity exists in order to create beauty. Every artist's philosophy depends upon his æsthetics. That of Nietzsche depends absolutely and altogether upon his æsthetics. He began by saying all that we have seen in his *Origin of the Greek Tragedy*, and he ended by saying in his *Will to Power*, in the Chapter of the *Criticism of the Superior Values*: "Is it desirable to create conditions in which all the advantage would be on the side of the 'just' men so that the opposed natures and instincts be discouraged and slowly perish? THIS IS AFTER ALL A MATTER OF TASTE AND ÆSTHETICS. Is it desirable from the æsthetic point of view that the most 'honorable,' that is the most wearisome, species of men should subsist alone, the square people, the virtuous people, the straightforward people, the horned animals? . . . Perhaps it were the contrary which should be desired; to create conditions in which the 'just man' should be lowered to the humble condition of useful instrument, of ideal herd-animal, or at best of shepherd."

It is a matter of æsthetics. Humanity must be led by aristocracies which are not much weakened by morality, or which have and practice a particular morality because humanity is made to create beauty.

I am not at all sure of it. Humanity does not know at all why it was made but it is likely enough that it was meant to live here below as little badly as possible in order to increase and multiply,

to subject the earth to itself and to lead thereon a life that be somewhat bearable. "Go forth, live on and fill the earth" is reasonable enough a sentence. I fail to see what there is that could very neatly indicate that its mission is to do things that are meant to "ravish with ease" the poets, the artists and the dilettantes, "*res fruendas oculis.*" Beauty is an admirable thing. But I cannot succeed in being altogether persuaded that beauty could be the only thing that we should seek, that we should find and that we should realize through effort, through sorrow, through tears and blood.

Is it not, as seems quite natural and that which it were foolish to evince surprise, is it not that Nietzsche felt himself in the same error or in the same excess as the moralists in their own way? I have made him say: "Morality pretends to be the only legitimate and permissible aim of human activity. Does science pretend to be the only end of human activity? Does art have the pretension to be the only end of human activity? They would be wrong and so would morality." Well, Nietzsche says precisely very often and is always thinking that art should be considered as the supreme end of humanity, and that all things should be sacrificed to it. It seems to me that his error is here as great at least as that with which he taxes the moralist with so much harshness, bitterness and haughtiness. Art is a great thing. It is one of the objects to which humanity is right in applying itself when it has nothing else to do. It were very much to be regretted if mankind had no leisure to apply to

this noble exercise. It was to have leisure that could be devoted to art, I mean to make or to enjoy art, that humanity used its wits to diminish by discoveries and inventions the amount of time necessary to secure its subsistence. All that is true. But it does not result therefrom that every human action should tend towards creating beauty and that every human action which does not tend to that be despicable, nor that every human thought be disgusting which does not have that aim.

Humanity must be led and governed by an *élite*; I agree perfectly. But it is not my opinion that it should be governed and roughly enslaved by an *élite* of thinkers, artists and energetic men — those artists in action — because those men create beauty for which the crowd does not care and which the crowd only creates when it is compelled to do so. If the *élite* does not set itself as its first aim to render services to the crowd, to make it more intelligent, wiser, saner, and finally happier, I no longer see of what use is the *élite* and whence it derives its right. That the *élite* does not bring about the happiness of the people by the same means which the people would choose, very well. That it make the people clear the bush, dry up swamps, build a Versailles, carry on defensive warfare or even wars of conquests, that it profit either of the force it has been able to concentrate in itself or of the instinctive or hereditary confidence that the people placed in it, very well. It is precisely the mission of an *élite* to see further, to foresee and to know that which after all, at the cost of transitory hard-



ships, shall make for the greatness, the strength, the security and withal the happiness of the people. But I am not sufficiently artist to believe that the end is worth the employment of those means if the *élite* were to fancy itself compelled to nothing else but to the creation of beauty through its own efforts and those of the people.

Homer has said, perhaps without knowing very well all the things that he was saying, in that sentence: "The gods dispose of the human destinies and decide the fall of men in order that the future generations could make songs." Nietzsche quotes that somewhere and finds it appalling: "Is there anything more audacious, more frightful, anything that lights up the human destinies like a winter sun as much as this thought? So, we suffer and we perish in order that poets should not be lacking in subjects! And it is the gods of Homer who settle all this in that way as if the pleasures of some future generations seem to matter very much to them but the fate of us contemporaries were altogether a matter of indifference to them. How could such ideas enter the brains of a Greek?"

— But, if you please, this idea is quite Olympian, and Dionysian enough, and excellent, made for the brain of Greeks such as you have always understood and represented them. It is also by excellence a Nietzschean idea, and it is the Nietzschean idea itself. At the cost of the greatest sufferings humanity must produce beauty and be an admirable material for epic poems. This is what we find if we dig into Nietzsche; and if one does not find that in

Nietzsche one finds nothing at all except talent. That is the thing, which albeit very Olympian, fairly Dionysian, Homeric enough and perhaps Greek, seems very contestable to me. For a great good much suffering, very well. But an immense and perpetual martyrdom of humanity for the sake of the "beauty of the thing," not at all. A little less beauty and a little more happiness.

This Nietzsche is, to say the least, somewhat Neronian. To express the whole of my thought he is quite Neronian. What surprises me most since Nietzsche is paradoxical, shameless and somewhat cynical, is that I did not meet in his books an eulogy of Nero. It must be there somewhere; my attention must have been at fault. Yes, Nietzsche is Neronian, and that is the very secret of his influence upon a section, to tell the truth, upon the most grotesque section, of his public, upon the "æsthètes," the pseudo-artists, the mountebanks, and as I am told, upon a few women. His artistic conception of the life of humanity is the enormous exaggeration of a half-truth, or even a quarter-truth. Humanity must produce beauty; it must live in sane strength and in beauty as much as it can. But to sacrifice itself, or to allow itself to be sacrificed for the sake of a beautiful vision of art, that is another thing. Humanity must sacrifice itself to humanity alone.

Do not let us leave Nietzsche, after having so much fought him, without acknowledging that his was a very high intelligence served by an admirable imagination. Had he possessed but talent I would

still hold him as a man who rendered services to mankind. Talent even unwholesome is always to my mind more beneficial than unwholesome. It becomes beneficial in the long run, when the venom has volatilized and the perfume remains. But even in himself, if we consider nothing but his ideas, I found some use in Nietzsche.

As I do not know what believer said: "There must be heretics" I would feel inclined to say that there should be sophists. That wakes one up, shakes one out of slumber; it whips one up like an angry north wind, it brings movement and a "sharp and joyful breeze" into the intellectual life. It gives tone. There should be sophists. By reaction they end in restoring the commonplaces, and in imparting to them a new luster and a new freshness. I am more of a moralist since I read Nietzsche, the immoralist, and since I found out that Nietzsche, after having furiously repulsed every kind of morality, was unwittingly led to establishing one and even two, which leads me to believe that there are a hundred of them which, superposed to each other, connecting themselves together and establishing an hierarchy among themselves, end in establishing one.

Then it is very good, it is of prime importance, that every now and then, that often, somebody should make a complete, absolute, integral and radical revision of human opinions, of human beliefs, and of the most imposing and the most deep-rooted of them all. It is very good that often some one should say, as Nietzsche did: "To accept a belief

simply because it is customary to accept it — is that not to evince bad faith, is it not cowardly and lazy? Do we want bad faith, laziness and cowardice to be the prime conditions of morality?" Nietzsche has precisely and especially rendered the world the immense service of being honest and brave, of bowing before no prejudice, nor even before any venerable doctrine, of never balking before any idea of his, however scandalous it might appear, of querying anew everything dauntlessly like Descartes, and even more so, in my opinion, more thoroughly than Descartes himself, of having had an imperturbable intellectual courage, which he carried sometimes to bragging; and that is the fault of that quality which we must always be expecting and with which we should always be prepared to put up.

The gist of Nietzsche is that we must every one of us, make our own morality, our own æsthetics, our own politics, our own science, and that education is very good provided it gives us the strength to get rid of it in order to make one for ourselves.

The gist of Nietzsche is that there is no good truth but that which we have discovered ourselves, nor any good rule of life but that which honestly and with an effort we have created for ourselves.

The gist of Nietzsche is this: "There are no educators. A thinker should never speak but of self-education. The education of youth directed by others is either an experience attempted upon something unknown and unknowable (very exaggerated), or a levelling out of principle to make the new human being, no matter which, conform to the

ruling habits and customs. In both cases it is something unworthy of the thinker, it is the work of the parents and the pedagogues whom an honest and daring man called our natural enemies (Stendhal). When one has been brought up for a long time according to the opinions of the world one always ends in discovering one's self. Then begins the task of the thinker.

The gist of Nietzsche is that man has the right to form personal ideas because only the personal ideas have the consistency which we need to support ourselves, and because one can lean strongly and firmly upon no one but one's self.

He is right in this and the lesson he teaches is good and even his example is good. For that reason — besides the often exquisite and sometimes perverse pleasure that one enjoys in reading him — one derives also a strange profit from the temporary acquaintance of this "Don Juan of Knowledge" and this adventurer of the mind.

## APPENDIX

### THE WORKS OF FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

*Beyond Good and Evil*  
*The Birth of Tragedy*  
*The Case of Wagner*  
*The Dawn of Day*  
*The Genealogy of Morals*  
*Human, All-Too-Human*  
*The Joyful Wisdom*  
*On the Future of our Educational*  
*Institutions*  
*Thoughts Out of Season*  
*Thus Spake Zarathustra*  
*The Will to Power*  
*Early Greek Philosophy*  
*Ecce Homo*  
*The Twilight of the Idols*

THE END









UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

Los Angeles

This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

UHL APR 3 1991  
REC'D JRL

APR 04 1991

K2A  
7.09



A 000 178 245 7

