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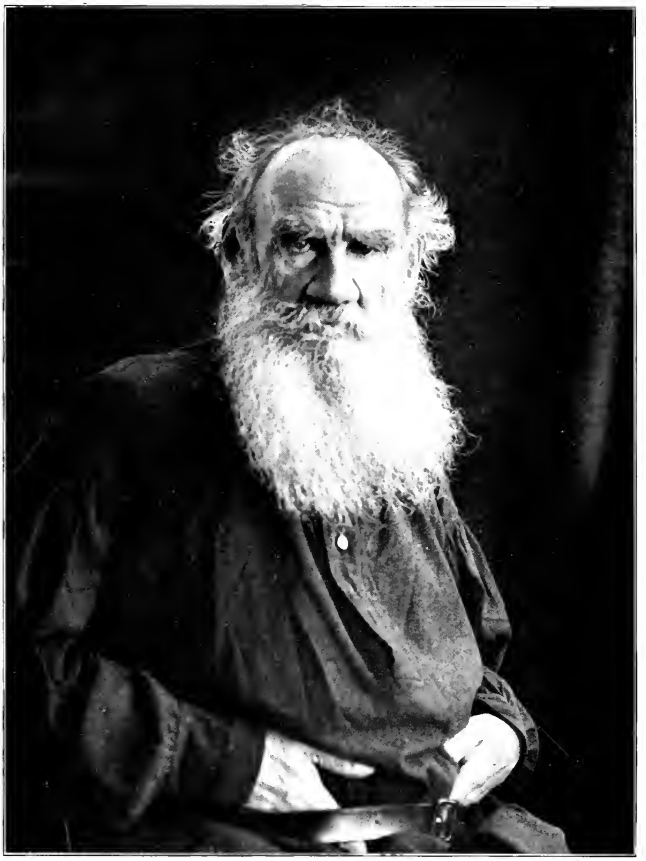

COUNT LEO TOLSTOY

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THE RELIGIOUS EVOLUTION OF TOLSTOY

BY J. V. NASH

WHILE the echoes of the Tolstoy centenary of 1928 still linger in the air, it is a timely moment to compare, or rather contrast, the religious evolution of the great Russian seer with that of his illustrious English contemporary, Charles Darwin; for these two thinkers stand out today as the ones who most profoundly, in their day, impressed world thought; the one from the standpoint of physical science, the other from that of social science and religion.

The study will be interesting for another reason. In my article, "The Religious Evolution of Darwin" (*Open Court*, August, 1928), I pointed out that Darwin is a striking example of the human type described by William James as the "once born," by which he meant those whose outlook upon the world is one of healthy optimism, who are never shaken by emotional crises, and who enjoy, in a spirit of quiet thankfulness, the good things of this life. Tolstoy is an equally typical representative of the "twice born," i.e., those who are torn by an inner conflict, who experience severe emotional disturbance, and who attain equilibrium and interior peace only through a process of "conversion," by which their disharmony is resolved into harmony through the establishment of satisfying relations with God, the universe, or some spiritual power which gives support and purpose to their lives.

In terms of modern advanced psychology, Darwin was an extravert, Tolstoy an introvert.

A preliminary glance at Tolstoy's ancestry will throw light upon the turbulent heredity which formed his background. His ancestor, the first Count Tolstoy, was Peter the Great's ambassador to the

Sublime Porte. He received his title, which he passed on to his descendants, for his service in enticing the Crown Prince, Tsarevich Alexis, back from Italy to Russia, that he might be killed. Leo Tolstoy was this Machiavellian diplomat's great-grandson.

The father of Tolstoy's mother was Prince Volkonsky, who rose to the position of Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Army under the notorious Empress Catherine; he was summarily deposed and disgraced for "refusing to marry the niece and mistress of Potemkin, the most powerful of Catherine the Great's favorites."

Leo's father, Count Nicholas Tolstoy, entered the army before he was seventeen, to help resist Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812. Falling into the hands of the enemy, he was taken as a prisoner of war, first to Germany, and later to Paris. Returning home after the peace, he found the family estates heavily encumbered, and his mother—a woman of luxurious tastes—dependent upon him for support. Well wishing friends helped the young man out of his difficulty by arranging a marriage for him with the extremely wealthy but plain featured Princess Mary Volkonsky, several years older than himself. The lady was highly educated, had many accomplishments, and seems to have made a good wife and mother.

The couple had five children: four sons in succession, of whom Leo was the youngest, and then a daughter, Mary, in giving birth to whom the mother died. Leo Tolstoy, born on August 28 (new style, September 9), 1828, was only a year and a half old when his mother died. Naturally, he had no recollection of her, but he idealized her to such an extent in his imagination that, as he tells us, he used to pray to her for guidance amid the temptations of life, and "such prayer always helped me much."

Nicholas, the oldest of the four sons, seems to have been of a highly imaginative nature. When Leo was five, Nicholas informed his three little brothers that he was in possession of a wonderful secret, "by means of which, when disclosed, all men would become happy: there would be no more disease, no trouble, no one would be angry with anybody, all would love one another, and all would become 'Ant-Brothers.'" The little boys organized an "Ant-Brotherhood," cuddling together under chairs and in large boxes. But the great secret was not revealed to them. Nicholas told the neophytes that he had written the secret on a green stick which was buried at the roadside on the edge of a certain ravine.

Leo, in after life, said that he suspected that Nicholas had heard something about the Freemasons, their ideals of human brotherhood and their secret initiatory rites, and also of the Moravian Brothers (the religious sect deriving from John Huss), the Russian word for *ant* being "muravey."

The impression made upon Leo Tolstoy by this playful fiction of Nicholas was so profound that he never outgrew it. His whole life ultimately became centered upon the quest for the secret of the miraculous "green stick," which would banish evil from the world and usher in the millennium. When an old man of over seventy, he wrote:

> "The ideal of Ant-Brothers lovingly clinging to one another, though not under two arm-chairs curtained by shawls, but of all mankind under the wide dome of heaven, has remained the same for me. As I then believed that there existed a little green stick whereon was written the message which could destroy all evil in men and give them universal welfare, so I now believe that such truth exists and will be revealed to men and will give them all it promises."

The family estate where Tolstoy was born was called Yasnaya Polyana, meaning "Bright Glade." It was located about 130 miles south of Moscow, in a pleasantly undulating country, well wooded and with many avenues of lime and birch trees. Tolstoy's extraordinary confidence in himself was no doubt partly due to his family having been for generations the only people of education and authority in a wide territory. The absence of free public discussion in Russia further encouraged a dogmatic attitude toward his own opinions.

Outwardly, Tolstoy's childhood seems to have been happy. As a member of a numerous household, in easy economic circumstances, he had no environmental encouragement to isolation and introspection. Even the game of the Ant-Brothers and the mystification of the green stick would have been treated as fun and quickly forgotten by a child of different temperament. As it was, there were dogs and horses, hunting, and all sorts of outdoor amusements to divert his attention. The result was that, notwithstanding his sensitive spirit, these years of childhood were filled with healthy pleasures that only the most fortunate children are privileged to enjoy.

If there was ever a man who, from a purely selfish point of

view had no reason to rebel against the economic and political *status quo*, which guaranteed him all these good things, it was Tolstoy. Yet such is the unaccountability of human nature, that he was destined to become the deadliest enemy of existing institutions, religious, economic, and political. But this was all hidden in the future, and meanwhile life flowed on happily in "Bright Glade." While still a young child, Tolstoy became a skilled horseman, and horseback riding remained for life a favorite form of exercise.

At the age of thirteen, Leo, with his brothers, went to Kazan, where they entered the university, making their home with an aunt. It is said that the atmosphere of Kazan was not such as would inspire an enthusiasm for learning. Leo Tolstoy registered with the faculty of Oriental Languages; although he made good progress in French and German, he failed in his final examinations at the end of the first year—possibly because of the social distractions in the town—and transferred to the faculty of Law.

Tolstoy at this time was noted for his fine clothes and the care he paid to his personal appearance. A fellow-student speaks of his snobbishness, being driven to his classes by a "fast trotter," while the poorer students went on foot. It appears, too, that he joined a narrow clique of "aristocrats" at the university.

In May, 1847, before he was nineteen, Tolstoy left the university without completing his course or receiving a degree. His failure seems to have caused him deep humiliation; at any rate, after returning to Yasnaya Polyana he compiled a formidable program of subjects for private study.

We get a touch of Benjamin Franklin in the statement of Tolstoy's English biographer, Aylmer Maude, who lived in Russia for many years and knew Tolstoy intimately, that he "was always forming good resolutions and writing them down, but they were never carried out fully, and often not at all." In the same spirit, while at the university, he began the keeping of a diary in which he carefully noted all his derelictions, particularly offenses against the Seventh Commandment, so that he might repent of them and correct them. The truth is that Tolsoy was burdened with a strongly sensual physical nature, which in these years only too often overmastered his powers of resistance.

While at the university, Tolstoy had met an idealistic fellow-student named Dyakov, with whom he formed a close friendship.

The effect of this friendship, he tells us, was "an ecstatic worship of the ideal of virtue, and the conviction that it is man's destiny continually to perfect himself. To put all mankind right and to destroy all human vices and misfortunes appeared a matter that could well be accomplished. It seemed quite easy and simple to put oneself right, to acquire all the virtues, and to be happy."

A pretty large order, as Tolstoy was soon to realize.

This moral enthusiasm was accompanied by a loss of his religious orthodoxy. Years later he wrote:

> "I was baptized and brought up in the Christian Orthodox faith. I was taught it in my childhood and all through my boyhood and youth. But before I left the University, in my second year, at the age of eighteen, I no longer believed anything I had been taught."

It was characteristic of him, however, that although he had become intellectually an Agnostic, his diary reveals that he continued to pray frequently and with earnestness, turning to God for help in time of trouble.

The deepest influence upon Tolstoy at this time seems to have been Rousseau.

> "I read the whole of Rousseau. I was more than enthusiastic about him, I worshipped him. At the age of fifteen I wore a medallion portrait of him next my body, instead of the Orthodox cross. Many of his pages are so akin to me that it seems to me that I must have written them myself."

Having gone to school to Rousseau so assiduously at such an early age, it was perhaps inevitable that Tolstoy should some day turn his world upside down.

Next we find Tolstoy at St. Petersburg—as it then was—arranging to matriculate at the university there in Law. Then he changed his mind and wanted to enter the army to see service in the campaign against the Hungarian rebels, whom Russia was helping Austria suppress. But the balmy breezes of spring altered his plans. "Spring came," he says, "and the charm of country life again drew me back to my estate."

So he settled down at Yasnaya Polyana and, under the tutor-

ship of a convivial companion, a German named Rudolph whom he had picked up in St. Petersburg, he became a skilled pianist. His life during the next three years was a strange alternation of piety and debauchery. Aylmer Maude considers these years "among the wildest and most wasted years of his life." But the point is that he never yielded without reserve to vice. His conscience gave him no peace. The entries in his diary speak on in terms of self-reproach and penitence. In an access of contrition and resolve he drew up schedules of labor and study; but the schedules were neglected. "Gusts of passion again and again swept away his good resolution." In one of his periods of reformation he established a school for the peasant children of the district; at the end of two years, however, he had to close it because of financial embarrassment arising from losses in gambling.

Years later he told a friend that neither drinking nor gambling, nor any other vice, had caused him such a terrific struggle to overcome as did that of lasciviousness. It must not be imagined, however, that in this matter young Tolstoy was any different from the average young Russian aristocrat of that day. Even his aunt, whom he considered "the purest of beings," had amazingly loose views concerning what was allowable to a young man in the matter of his relations with women.

Head over ears in debts contracted at the gambling table, Tolstoy swore off from cards and decided to accompany his brother Nicholas, now an officer of artillery, to the Caucasus.

An interesting illustration of the spiritual *Strum und Drang* through which he was passing is found in the following entry made in his diary on June 11, 1851, during this sojourn in the Caucasus:

> "Yesterday I hardly slept all night. Having posted up my Diary, I prayed to God. It is impossible to convey the sweetness of the feeling I experienced during my prayer. . . . I desired something supreme and good; but what, I cannot express, though I was clearly conscious of what I wanted. I wished to merge into the Universal Being. I asked Him to pardon my crimes; yet no, I did not ask for that, for I felt that if He had given me this blissful moment, He had pardoned me. I asked, and at the same time felt that I had nothing to ask, and that I cannot and do not

know how to ask; I thanked Him, but not with words or thoughts. I combined in one feling both petition and gratitude. Fear quite vanished. I could not have separated any one emotion—faith, hope, or love—from the general feeling. No, this was what I experienced: it was love of God, lofty love, uniting in itself all that is good, excluding all that is bad. How dreadful it was to me to see the trivial and vicious side of life! I could not understand its having any attraction for me. With a pure heart I asked God to receive me into His bosom! I did not feel the flesh. . . . But no, the carnal, trivial side again asserted itself, and before an hour had passed I almost consciously heard the call of vice, vanity, and the empty side of life. I knew whence that voice came, knew it had ruined my bliss! I struggled against it and yielded to it. I fell asleep thinking of fame and of women; but it was not my fault, I could not help it."

So the conflict goes on, God on one side calling him, and Mephistopheles seductively beckoning on the other. A few days after the entry just quoted, he reflects at some length on suffering and death; then the lure of the flesh seizes him again. The entry concludes:

"How strong I seem to myself to be against all that can happen; how firm in the conviction that one must here expect nothing but death; yet a moment later I am thinking with pleasure of a saddle I have ordered on which I shall ride dressed in a Cossack cloak, and of how I shall carry on with the Cossack girls; and I fall into despair because my left moustache is thinner than my right, and for two hours I straighten it out before the looking-glass."

While he was not technically in the army, but only a sort of gentleman observer, his intrepidity in an expedition against the Tatars so favorable impressed the Commander-in-chief that he urged Leo to secure a military commission. While waiting in Tiflis to pass his examination, he composed his first story, "Childhood," which was sent to the editor of *The Contemporary* at St. Petersburg and promptly accepted.

As a lieutenant in the army Tolstoy saw much action and won

repeated recognition. In his leisure time he wrote more stories, and still further varied his program by falling in love with a charming native girl; but she discouraged his attentions because he did not sufficiently measure up to her "cave man" ideals.

In his diary at this time Tolstoy notes his chief weaknesses as gambling, sensuality, and vanity. Sensuality, as usual, he finds the most deadly of his temptations; "it increases with abstinence and therefore the struggle against it is very difficult. The best way is by labor and occupation."

Meanwhile, the Crimean War broke out. Tolstoy distinguished himself brilliantly in the defense of Sebastopol. Then he yielded again to the lure of gambling, and in the fit of penitence following the debauch he busied himself with the idea of establishing a new religion. He writes in his diary:

> "A conversation about Divinity and Faith has suggested to me a great and stupendous idea, to the realization of which I feel myself capable of devoting my life. This idea is the founding of a new religion corresponding to the present state of mankind: the religion of Christianity, but purged of dogma and mysticism: a practical religion, not promising future bliss but giving bliss on earth. I understand that to accomplish this the conscious labor of generations will be needed. One generation will bequeath the idea to the next, and some day fanaticism or reason will accomplish it. Deliberately to promote the union of mankind by religion—that is the basic thought which, I hope, will dominate me."

But the military campaign drew him back into more practical matters; in the following August he participated in the battle of Chernaya. The great fortress of Sebastopol was now about to fall, and Tolstoy was given the task of clearing two of the bastions before they were abandoned, as well as assembling the reports from the artillery commanders. His military service ended with his dispatch as courier to carry the reports to St. Petersburg.

In St. Petersburg Tolstoy fell in with a circle of literary men and led a Bohemian—indeed a somewhat disreputable—existence. One day the poet Fet, calling on Turgenev, saw a sword hanging in the hall, and a young officer, whose name he learned was Leo

Tolstoy, sprawled out asleep on the sofa in the sitting room. It was then ten o'clock in the morning. "He is like this all the time," Turgenev remarked. "He came back from his Sebastopol battery, put up here, and is going the pace. Sprees, gipsy-girls, and cards all night long—and then he sleeps like a corpse till two o'clock in the afternoon. At first I tried to put the brake on, but now I've given it up and let him do as he likes."

Yet Turgenev saw in Tolstoy even at this early period something more than a dissipated young officer. Some time later, writing from France to a friend in Russia, he said: "I hear that you have become very intimate with Tolstoy. . . . I am very glad. When that new wine has finished fermenting, it will yield a drink fit for the gods!"

Tolstoy, however, managed to keep sober long enough to turn out many stories; and, as usual, we find him bitterly reproaching himself for his many falls from grace. Some years later, in looking back on the hectic days of his youth, he wrote:

> "I cannot think of those years without horror, loathing, and heartache. I killed men in war and challenged men to duels in order to kill them; I lost at cards, consumed the labor of the peasants, sentenced them to punishments, lived loosely and deceived people. Lying, robbery, adultery of all kinds, drunkenness, violence, murder—there was no crime I did not commit, and people approved of my conduct, and my contemporaries considered and consider me to be a comparatively moral man."

All in all, this period seemed to him a "terrible twenty years of coarse dissipation, the service of ambition, vanity, and above all of lust." Probably he exaggerates the picture, in the impetuosity of his penitence, just as Paul in the New Testament excoriates himself as the "chief of sinners." And then Tolstoy characteristically adds, "With all my soul I wished to be good; but I was young, passionate, and alone, completely alone, when I sought goodness."

When nearly thirty, Tolstoy went abroad, staying for a time in Paris, where he was deeply moved by seeing a criminal guillotined. But he was soon back in Russia. After a visit to St. Petersburg, where he found that he had been quickly forgotten, he went on to Moscow, where he lived in a furnished apartment with his only

sister and his brother Nicholas. He became interested in athletics, or rather gymnastics, which were in fashion at the time, and we find him spending much time at the principal gymnasium, performing various feats. Unlike most introverts, Tolstoy was an expert in many forms of physical exercise, such as horseback riding, swimming, and skating.

In 1858 one of his aunts, the Countess Alexandra A. Tolstoy, who was influential at Court, came to Moscow to live; a close bond of sympathy sprang up between them, and this aunt in later years was able to secure for Tolstoy considerable protection from annoyance by the government. In this same year Tolstoy, when out with a hunting party, missed fire at an enormous bear, which knocked him down and bit him savagely in the face before being driven off and killed.

In 1859 Tolstoy, now thirty-one years old, was deeply depressed by his brother's ill health. He wrote in his diary: "The burden of the estate, the burden of bachelor life, and all sorts of doubts and pessimistic feelings agitate my mind."

Another trip abroad was decided upon; in July, 1860, accompanied by his sister, now married, and her children, he left for Berlin. After wandering through Germany, the party joined Nicholas, who had been ordered to the Mediterranean for his health. At Hyères, in September, Nicholas died. Leo, stunned with grief, found himself unable to work or to make plans for the future. He conceived the odd idea of writing a sort of agnostic *Life of Christ*. "At the very time of the funeral," he jotted down in his diary, "the thought occurred to me to write a Materialist Gospel, a Life of Christ as a Materialist."

Writing to a friend concerning the death of Nicholas, he said:

> "Nothing in my life has so impressed me. It is true, as he said, that nothing is worse than death. And when one realizes that *that* is the end of all—then there is nothing worse than life. Why strive or try, since of what was Nicholas Tolstoy nothing remains his?"

Having finally pulled himself together, Tolstoy went to England; he spent six weeks in London, studying English educational methods and visiting the House of Commons, where he heard Palmerston speak. "At that time," as he quaintly expressed it, "I knew

English with my eyes but not with my ears." He was suffering frightfully with the toothache; but he had a prejudice against dentists and never in his life allowed one to tamper with his teeth. A toothache, he declared, always subsided if given time enough; moreover, primitive man had no dentists and got along very well without them.

Stopping in Brussels on his way back to Russia, Tolstoy met Proudhon, the pioneer Socialist, and wrote "Polikushka," one of his best stories. April, 1861, just as the American Civil War was breaking, and a month after Alexander II's liberation of the Russian serfs, found Tolstoy back in the homeland, which he was destined never to leave again during the remaining half century of his life. In his later years it was intimated to him that if he left Russia the government would never allow him to return.

Settling down once more on his estate, he assumed the duties of a local Arbiter of the Peace. He began experimenting in the neighboring schools with the educational principles he had learned while abroad, and started a monthly magazine, *Yasnaya Polyana*, as an organ of his educational work. Tolstoy's own model school greatly astonished visitors. There was no discipline whatever, no memorizing of lessons, and no home work; the children sat wherever they liked, and a generally jolly atmosphere prevailed. "A child or a man," Tolstoy asserted, "is receptive only when he is roused; and therefore to regard a merry spirit in school as an enemy or a hindrance is the crudest of blunders."

On September 23, 1862, Tolstoy married Sophia Andreyevna Behrs, the daughter of Dr. Behrs, a Court physician of German origin. A loyal wife, and a devoted mother to his numerous children, her sound, practical business sense again and again saved Tolstoy's affairs from shipwreck. It was characteristic of Tolstoy that, before his marriage, he handed his private diary to his intended wife for perusal. The contents of it proved a terrible shock to her, but after a night of weeping she assured him of her forgiveness of all that was past. The bride was but eighteen years of age; Tolstoy was thirty-four. Countess Tolstoy never fully shared her distinguished husband's views as a reformer, but for many years she rendered efficient service as his secretary.

The responsibilities of marriage had a stabilizing effect on Tolstoy, and for the next fifteen years he lived happily and busily on

his estate. He suffered somewhat from indigestion, however, as a result of his former riotous living and the hardships of army life. During a period of twenty-six years, the Countess bore thirteen children, eight of whom grew up. Naturally loving children, Tolstoy was an indulgent father, entering joyfully into the children's games and interests. The development of his estate, the raising of live-stock, butter-making, tree-planting, fruit-culture, and even bee-keeping figured among his activities. He found time, too, for diversion as a sportsman. And this was not all.

Within two years after his marriage, Tolstoy began work on the greatest of his novels, *War and Peace*, inspired by the Napoleonic invasion of Russia. The writing of it occupied five years.

The desire for self-improvement seized him with renewed vigor. He became convinced that "without a knowledge of Greek, there is no culture." And so, during the winter of 1870-1, when nearing forty years of age, he began to learn Greek; with so much diligence, that he was soon reading the classical Greek authors without difficulty. An interlude of ill health, spent on an estate which he purchased in the province of Samara, was followed by the compilation of a *Reader* for the school-children, and the writing of his next great novel, *Anna Karenina*.

His affairs prospering, and his literary work received everywhere with acclaim, it might be supposed that Tolstoy should be happy and contented, looking forward to a serene old age in the midst of the delightful family group which was now growing up around him. But just at this time the religious problem began weighing upon his mind as never before; he fell into the depths of melancholy and began brooding over the deep mysteries of life and death. Writing to a literary friend, he said: "It is the first time you have spoken to me about the Deity—God. And I have long been thinking unceasingly about that chief problem. Do not say that one cannot think about it! One not only can, but must! In all ages the best, the real people, have thought about it. And if we cannot think of it as they did, we must find out how to." And he wants to know whether his friend has ever read Pascal's *Pensées*.

In truth, Tolstoy was rapidly approaching the great religious crisis of his life. The mental struggle lasted four years, culminating in 1878, when he was fifty years old. He began attending

church regularly, and closeted himself in his study morning and evening for private prayer. The high spirits for which he had been noted gave way to a deep humility. Considering it sinful to harbor an enmity, he wrote to Turgenev, from whom he had been estranged, begging for forgiveness and reconciliation. He was passing through the pangs of his spiritual rebirth.

On November 8, 1878, his wife wrote to her sister: "His eyes are fixed and strange, he hardly talks at all, has quite ceased to belong to this world, and is positively incapable of thinking about everyday matters."

The next year, when writing his *Confession*, Tolstoy himself described the process of his "conversion."

> "Five years ago something very strange began to happen to me. At first I experienced moments of perplexity and arrest of life, as though I did not know how to live or what to do; and I felt lost and became dejected. These moments of perplexity were always expressed by the questions: 'What is it for? What does it lead to?' . . . These questions began to repeat themselves frequently, and more and more insistently to demand replies. They seemed stupid, simple, childish questions; but as soon as I tried to solve them, I became convinced that they are not childish and stupid, but that they are the most important and deepest of life's questions. . . .
>
> "And I could find no reply at all. My life came to a standstill. . . . Had a fairy come and offered to fulfil my desires, I should not have known what to ask. . . . The truth seemed to be that life was meaningless. I had, as it were, lived, lived, and walked, walked, till I had come to a precipice and saw clearly that there was nothing ahead of me but destruction. It was impossible to stop; impossible to go back, and impossible to close my eyes or avoid seeing that there was nothing ahead but suffering and real death —complete annihilation.
>
> "It had come to this, that I, a healthy, fortunate man, felt I could no longer live: some irresistible power impelled me to rid myself of life one way or other. I cannot say I *wished* to kill myself. The power which drew me away

from life was stronger, fuller and more widespread than any mere wish. . . . And it was then that I, a man favored by fortune, hid a cord from myself lest I should hang myself from the crosspiece of the partition in my room where I undressed alone every evening. . . .

"And all this befell me at a time when all around me I had what is considered complete good fortune. I was not yet fifty; I had a good wife who loved me and whom I loved, good children, and a large estate, which without much effort on my part improved and increased. I was respected by my relations and acquaintances more than at any previous time. I was praised by others, and without much self-deception could consider that my name was famous. And not only was I not insane or mentally unwell, but on the contrary I enjoyed a strength of mind and body such as I have seldom met with among men of my kind: physically I could keep up with the peasants at mowing, and mentally I could work continuously for eight or ten hours without experiencing any ill results from such exertion. . . .

"The question which brought me to the verge of suicide was the simplest of questions present in the soul of every man, from the foolish child to the wisest elder: it was a question without answering which one cannot live, as I had found by experience. It was, What will come of what I am doing today or shall do tomorrow—What will come of my whole life? . . . .

"My position was terrible. I could find nothing along the path of reasonable knowledge, except a denial of life; and in faith I could find nothing but a denial of reason, still more impossible to me than a denial of life.

"Finally I saw that my mistake lay in ever expecting an examination of finite things to supply a meaning to life. The finite has no ultimate meaning apart from the infinite. The two must be linked together before an answer to life's problems can be reached.

"It had only seemed to me that knowledge gave a definite answer—Schopenhauer's answer: that life has no meaning and is an evil. On examining the matter further,

I understood that philosophic knowledge merely asserts that it cannot solve the question, and the solution remains, as far as *it* is concerned, indefinite. And I understood, further, that however unreasonable and monstrous might be the replies given by faith, they had this advantage, that they introduce a relation between the finite and the infinite, without which no reply is possible.

"Faith still remained to me as irrational as it was before, yet I could not but admit that it alone gives mankind a reply to the questions of life: and consequently makes life possible. . . . Faith is the strength of life. If a man lives, he believes in something. If he does not see and recognize the illusory nature of the finite, then he believes in the finite; if he understands the illusory nature of the finite, he must believe in the infinite. Without faith he cannot live. . . .

"What am I?—A part of the infinite. In those few words lies the whole problem.

"I began dimly to understand that in the replies given by faith is stored up the deepest human wisdom.

"I understood this; but it made matters no better for me. I was now ready to accept any faith if only it did not demand of me a direct denial of reason—which would be a falsehood. And I studied Buddhism and Mohammedanism from books and, most of all, I studied Christianity both from books and from living people. . . .

"During that whole year, when I was asking myself almost every moment whether I should not end matters with a noose or a bullet—all that time, beside the course of thought and observation about which I have spoken, my heart was oppressed with a painful feeling which I can only describe as a search for God."

Yet his intellect refused to allow him to believe in the God described in the Church's creeds; on the other hand, he could not live without God. "Not twice or three times, but tens and hundreds of times," he writes, "I reached a condition first of joy and animation, and then of despair and consciousness of the impossibility of living."

At last, the solution burst upon him in a blinding flash of light. The phenomena accompanying his illumination will be familiar to those who have read Bucke's *Cosmic Consciousness*. Tolstoy, in describing the great event, writes:

> "I remember that it was in early spring: I was alone in the wood listening to its sounds. I listened and thought ever of the same thing, as I had constantly done during those last three years. I was again seeking God.
>
> " 'Very well, there is no God,' said I to myself. 'There is no one who is not my imagination but a reality like my whole life. He does not exist, and no miracles can prove his existence, because the miracles would be my perceptions, besides being irrational.' . . .
>
> "But then I turned my gaze upon myself, on what went on within me, and I remembered that I only lived at those times when I believed in God. As it was before, so it was now; I need only be aware of God to live; I need only forget him, or disbelieve in him, and I die. . . 'What more do you seek?' exclaimed a voice within me. 'This is he. He is that without which one cannot live. To know God and to live is one and the same thing. God is life. Live seeking God, and then you will not live without God.' And more than ever before, all within me and around me lit up, and the light did not again abandon me."

Tolstoy had begun to feel a strong kinship with the peasants. They somehow had solved the deep problems of life and death; and, notwithstanding the hardships of their lives, they were happy. He, the cultured aristocrat, held long conversations with these simple souls. Count Keyserling, in his recent book, *Creative Understanding*, remarks that Tolstoy's being driven to communion with illiterate peasants is a striking commentary on the shallowness of "Being" among the Russian upper classes with whom he should have had most in common. And Edward Garnett adds: "By his analysis of the emotional poverty of the life of the privileged classes, who, divorced from the knowledge of actual struggle and real interest in the facts of life, fill up the void with pride, sensuality, and weariness of life, Tolstoy drives the herd of aesthetic impostors and dilettanti before him like sheep."

To be sure, Tolstoy realized the mixture of truth and superstition in the religion of the peasants, but he considered it a lesser evil than the hypocrisy and materialism of the Church rulers. Still, he clung to the Church itself as long as he could. "I attended the services, knelt morning and evening in prayer, fasted and prepared to receive the Eucharist." But most of the service was meaningless to him; he felt that he was acting falsely, and "thereby quite destroying my relation to God and losing all possibility of belief."

It seemed to him that he must choose between Orthodoxy and truth. "Questions of life arose," he said, "which had to be decided; and the decision of these questions by the Church, contrary to the very bases of the belief by which I lived, obliged me at last to own that communion with Orthodoxy was impossible." He thought of the rivalry of the different Christian communions, of the spirit of sectarian hatred denying Christ's rule of love, and of the support which the Russian Church gave to war and militarism. The Russo-Turkish war of 1877 and the execution of youths for political offences at home gave him special food for reflection. "I took note," he tells us, "of all that is done by men who profess Christianity, and I was horrified"; the Church's spokesmen were "all living a lie." He resolved upon a thorough study of theology and of the Bible at first hand. "I must find what is true and what is false, and must disentangle the one from the other."

Meanwhile, as a result of his new experience of God, the whole direction of his life was violently turned about; there was (to borrow the Nietzschean phrase) a complete "transvaluation of all values." Fame, honor, riches, were forgotten forever; in their place he substituted poverty, humility, self-sacrifice, and the service of others. And with the change there came an unspeakable happiness. In May, 1879, he is rejoicing in the beautiful spring and writes to a friend: "It is so long since I enjoyed God's world as I have done this year. One stands open-mouthed, delighting in it and fearing to move lest one should miss anything."

His religious experiences and his investigations in the field of theology and Biblical criticism were set forth in a series of books, which occupied his attention during the next few years: *Confession, A Criticism of Dogmatic Theology, Union and Translation of the Four Gospels,* and *What I Believe,* or *My Religion.*

As preparation for his examination of the Old Testament, Tol-

stoy took lessons in Hebrew from a Moscow rabbi, and mastered the language with such success that he was enabled to read the Hebrew Scriptures and understand the precise meaning of important words and passages. His previous study of Greek enabled him to perform the same operation upon the New Testament.

These laborious studies led him to the conclusion that the dogmas of the Church are based upon misinterpretations, that they are supported by evidence which will not stand the simplest tests of logic, and are defended by arguments that are an insult to human intelligence. Nothing but the authority of the Church, he declared, prevented the exposure of the fraudulence of its theology. The Church itself seemed to him nothing better than "power in the hands of certain men," an obstacle to moral progress and to a right understanding of life and religion.

Many statements in the Bible, he points out, upon the literal interpretation of which is built the superstructure of theology, must now be read in a purely figurative sense. For modern astronomy makes it impossible to believe in a literal heaven above the earth and a literal hell beneath it. So the idea of the Ascension cannot be taken literally, when it is realized that the earth is rapidly revolving on its axis, so that there is no absolute "up" or "down," and only empty space, in freezing cold, outside the earth. It is utter nonsense, Tolstoy insisted, to talk about such dogmas as statements of fact; faith in them, he added, is not a virtue but the vice of credulity. He was a pioneer Modernist.

But along with all this destructive criticism, Tolstoy emphasized more passionately than ever the moral grandeur of the teachings of Jesus. The dogmas of the Church, he believed, had merely the effect of distracting attention from the things which Jesus cared most about—love, pity, repentance, the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. As H. G. Wells, in our own day, once observed, in a witty epigram: "Repentance is the beginning and essential of the religious life; and organizations, acting through their secretaries and officials, never repent."

Tolstoy went on to point out that Jesus never mentioned Adam or Eve, the Fall of Man, the Holy Trinity, and so on; nor did he assert that he was the Son of God in any other sense than that in which all men may become so, as when he taught the disciples to pray to "Our Father," and again when he said, "I am in my Father,

and ye in me, and I in you." He believed that if mankind would accept the simple teachings of Christ in the gospels, it would revolutionize society.

This naturally led to an exhaustive examination, by Tolstoy, of the teachings of Jesus, divorced from theology and dogmas. He found five great rules. (1) The commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," is not enough; one must not even be angry with one's brother. (2) The commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," is not enough; one must not even be lustful mentally. (3) One must not take any oaths, because it destroys freedom of future action. (4) The old law of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" must be replaced by the rule: Resist not him that is evil. (5) "Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemies. . . . that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven. . . . Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

The observance of these rules, without reservation, constituted for Tolstoy the essence of religion. He did not consider it important to make any assertions about the personality of God or the creation of the world; such things might be inherently unknowable, and in any event discussion of them leads only to confusion and conflict. It is only by recognizing a moral order in the universe and adjusting ourselves to it that life can have a real meaning and purpose; this moral order, said Tolstoy, is summarized by the teachings of Jesus, which the churches have obscured with their clouds of metaphysical dogma.

On the one hand, Tolstoy repudiated orthodox religion, and on the other hand the scientific materialism which would explain away the human soul in terms of the flux of atoms.

The Old Testament he considered much like the sacred scriptures of other ancient peoples, in which spiritual and poetic elements of much beauty are mixed with crudeness and immorality. In the New Testament he was antagonistic to the teachings of Paul, whom he considered a politician and opportunist. The words of Jesus were all that really mattered, especially the Sermon on the Mount. Whatever was obscure or contrary to reason, he simply ignored. The miracles he would explain naturalistically where possible, and draw from them whatever moral lessons they might contain. But he held that a miracle such as the feat of walking on wa-

ter had no religious significance. In fact, he dropped the miracles altogether from his own translation of the gospels.

As to immortality, for a long time Tolstoy considered it improbable and took no interest in it; later, however, his sense of oneness with the infinite became so intense that it seemed inconceivable that his spirit should cease with death. Nevertheless, the subject was so baffling that he felt it wise not to dogmatize with reference to the nature of the future life, but rather to look forward to it, whatever it may turn out to be, with confidence. The great thing, meanwhile, was to do everything possible to make this a better world. In spiritism and psychic research he took no interest whatever; he considered such tamperings with so profound a mystery an impertinence.

Tolstoy's conception of religion was purely individualistic—a matter of getting into and keeping in right relations with one's conscience and with God. He believed that if every individual would strive to solve the problem for himself, then all would be well with society as a whole. Similarly, it will be recalled, the laissez-faire school of economists held that if each man were allowed to promote his own welfare in his own way, without hindrance by the government, then the welfare of society would follow automatically. The theory sounded logical, but unfortunately it did not work, and the worst horrors of the industrial system resulted from its application. Tolstoy's disregard of the claims of society was one of the most serious defects of his system.

After having exhausted the study of the Christian Scriptures, Tolstoy passed on to an examination of the sacred books of India and China. This led to a notable broadening of his outlook; he felt that the fundamental spiritual truths are common to all the great religions. And although he insisted to the end of his life on the necessity of a literal application of the teachings of Christ, as he interpreted them, we learn with some astonishment that as time went on he became indifferent to the historicity of Jesus. The principles were more important to him than the man. He seems to have regarded with entire complacency the possibility of its being proved that Jesus never lived. In a letter to a friend, discussing a recent book which took this position, he said:

> "In this book it is very well argued (the probability is as strong *against* as *for*) that Christ never existed. The

> acceptance of this supposition or probability is like the destruction of the last outwork exposed to the enemy's attack, in order that the fortress (the moral teaching of goodness, which flows not from any one source in time or space, but from the whole spiritual life of humanity in its entirety) may remain impregnable."

This letter was written in 1900, when Tolstoy was seventy-two years old. Apparently it marks the culmination of his religious evolution. The very next year he was formally excommunicated by the Russian Orthodox Church, as "a new false teacher." To the edict of excommunication he sent a spirited reply; and with reference to the edict he said to friends who visited him at this time, "I positively decline to accept congratulations!"

The three foundation stones of Tolstoy's religion in its final phase were universal love, the rejection of private property, and non-resistance. He insisted that there must be no compromise in the application of these principles to everyday life. His attempt to give away his own property, including the copyright of his books, involved him in insoluble difficulties, for there was the question of the support of his wife and children to be considered. His wife was successful to some extent in preventing him from completely dissipating his property. This was the root of the painful estrangement which finally parted Tolstoy and his wife and in the end brought unspeakable misery upon them both.

In the matter of non-resistance, even the most devoted of his friends were appalled by his uncompromising attitude. For instance, W. T. Stead once asked him whether he would not use force to prevent a drunken man kicking a child to death. After careful thought, Tolstoy said that even here he could make no exception. Elsewhere he wrote: "A true Christian will always prefer to be killed by a madman, rather than to deprive him of his liberty." He even intimated that the rule should be extended to animals. The most passive Hindu could hardly have gone farther than this.

But Tolstoy honestly was convinced that if he allowed the least compromise with his principles on this subject, it would create a loop-hole through which, eventually, all the horrors of tyrannical government, oppression, war, and militarism would somehow creep back.

Again, paradoxically enough, Tolstoy's exaggerated doctrine of non-resistance was the best weapon that he could have employed for his own self-defense against force. In the eyes of the Czar and his government, Tolstoy was undoubtedly the most dangerous man in Russia. But how could they justify forcible measures against a man whose philosophy of absolute non-resistance acquitted him of even the thought of committing or encouraging any overt act of violence against the government? To have sent Tolstoy to the gallows, to prison, or to Siberia on some trumped-up charge of conspiring against the government would have shocked public opinion throughout the world and would have brought down upon the Russian government a torrent of international protest which even the most callous autocracy did not dare to face. The Czar, when urged to imprison Tolstoy, replied, "I have no intention of making a martyr of him, and bringing universal indignation upon myself." But many of his most important writings were suppressed by the government and had to be smuggled out of Russia for publication.

There were, nevertheless, many inconsistencies in Tolstoy's theories and practices. For instance, he transcended the idea of a personal God, and disapproved of prayer in the sense of petition. Still, he prayed constantly, and admitted that he found himself using a more personal note in his prayers than he could defend philosophically. But he continued the prayers, because he found great help in them—thereby becoming unconsciously a Pragmatist. During one of his last conversations, he said, "I speak of a *personal* God, whom I do not acknowledge, for the sake of convenience of expression." Some time before, he had observed that there are really two Gods: a non-existent God who serves people, and a real God—the Creator of all that is—whom people forget but whom all have to serve.

But inconsistencies never disturbed Tolstoy. He probably would have agreed with Emerson's dictum about inconsistency being "the bugbear that frightens little minds."

Perhaps the most extraordinary of all the apparent paradoxes in Tolstoy's program for the improvement of mankind was his advocacy of celibacy. As already indicated, he was a man of strong animal passions and in his youth he had, according to his own admissions, indulged in much promiscuity. After his marriage, these irregularities ceased, but his virility may be inferred from the fact

that the last of his thirteen children was born when he was sixty years old. For many years he defended the ideal of monogamous marriage. Finally he dumbfounded his friends by coming out as an advocate of absolute celibacy. Some scoffers raised the cry of "sour grapes," suggesting that Tolstoy was now old and feeble and wanted to deny to others what he could no longer enjoy himself. But this was not true; for when on the verge of seventy years, Tolstoy naively admitted that he himself had not succeeded in realizing his ideal of celibacy; but, he remarked, "that is no reason for abandoning the struggle." And he still hoped that God would aid him to attain the goal.

When his friends expostulated with him, in the matter of his advocacy of celibacy as a universal rule, pointing out that such a policy if adopted would depopulate the earth in one generation, Tolstoy calmly replied that he could not help this; that perhaps the ideal could never be widely achieved, but that this was no reason why it should be abandoned as an ideal to be striven for.

Tolstoy's attempt to put his social and economic program into practice alienated many of his friends. And it appeared that, in practice, many of his extreme policies—such as the absolute prohibition of private property of any kind—were unworkable. Tolstoy colonies sprang up, not only in Russia but in England and other countries, which were anything but successful. Count Keyserling says that Tolstoy's own estate became the worst managed in the country.

But Tolstoy had the courage of his convictions and did his best to live according to his principles. He held that each man should "work as much as possible, and content himself with as little as possible." He himself adopted peasant dress and performed heavy manual labor daily on his farms. And he found that this program, instead of detracting from his literary work, made him more efficient in it. The development of his moral principles led to his abandonment of hunting and shooting, but he still found enjoyment in horseback riding and in walking. He became a vigorous champion of temperance; many of his most powerful short stories were written primarily as propaganda to rescue Russia from the curse of drink. In his later years, though it cost him a powerful effort, he gave up the use of tobacco, and even adopted vegetarianism.

During the great Russian famine he saved countless lives through practical relief work on a large scale.

At one time he thought of abandoning home and family and going out into the world as a penniless beggar, taking St. Francis of Assisi as his model. The domestic troubles arising from his anti-property views led him to think seriously, when nearing seventy, of retiring into a place of solitude to spend his last years in meditation upon the Infinite, after the fashion of the Hindu sages. But various hindrances caused him to postpone putting the plan into execution. Meanwhile, in 1899, when he had turned seventy, he published his great novel, *Resurrection*. This book, as Garnett says, "brings into one artistic nucleus and expresses with the most adroit and passionate sincerity all the humanitarian convictions of Tolstoy's gospel of the brotherhood of man."

At last, in the autumn of 1910, when Tolstoy was eighty-two, he became involved in intrigues between certain intimate friends and members of his family over the matter of his will. His health was failing, and the domestic situation grew intolerable. On October 28, 1910, at about five o'clock in the morning, while his wife was still sleeping, Tolstoy stole out of the house, with the assistance of his daughter, Alexandra, and drove away in a carriage, accompanied only by his personal physician, Dr. Makovitsky.

Tolstoy had no definite plan or object in view, except to get away from an impossible environment. He decided, *en route*, to visit his sister Mary, who had become a nun and lived at the Shamardino Convent. After a disagreeable train journey in a third-class coach, involving exposore to cold wind and rain, Tolstoy arrived at the convent in a badly disorganized condition. The next day his daughter joined him, found him a very sick man, and decided to hurry him off to the milder climate of the Caucasus. In the early morning hours the party boarded a train for Rostov-on-Don, where it was planned to secure passports to leave Russia. But at noon Tolstoy was seized with such a desperate illness that the journey had to be broken at the next station, which happened to be a little town called Astapovo, where the station-master placed his house at the disposal of the distinguished invalid.

Tolstoy's wife, finally learning of her husband's whereabouts, hurried to Astapovo; but she was refused admittance to the house until after Tolstoy had lost consciousness. In *Reminiscences of*

Tolstoy, by his son, Count Ilya Tolstoy, there is a pathetic photograph of the Countess Tolstoy peering in at the window of the house which she was not allowed to enter. Count Ilya remarks with some bitterness: "If those who were about my father during the last years of his life had known what they were doing, it may be that things would have turned out differently." And he quotes a relative as saying, with reference to Tolstoy and his wife: "What a terrible misunderstanding! Each was a martyr to love for the other; each suffered without ceasing for the other's sake; and then —this terrible ending! It was as if Fate itself had stepped in with some purpose of its own to fulfil."

Meanwhile, the Archbishop of St. Petersburg, Metropolitan Antonius, sent a telegram urging Tolstoy to repent of his heresies and be reconciled with the Church; but the telegram was not shown to the dying man, for it was remembered that when a similar telegram had been sent to him during a previous illness, he had remarked to his son: "Tell these gentlemen that they should leave me in peace. . . . How is it they do not understand that, even when one is face to face with death, two and two still make four?"

Toward the end he was heard to murmur: "Ah, well! . . . This also is good—All is simple and good—It is good. . . . yes, yes!" And again: "It's time to knock off. . . . All is over!—Here is the end, and it doesn't matter!" The end came at seven minutes past six o'clock on Sunday morning, November 7 (November 20, Western style), 1910.

Instead of dying in solitude, after the manner of the Hindu sages, as he had wished, Tolstoy's life went out in a blaze of publicity, for the dramatic circumstances of his flight had been telegraphed all over the world, and the little town of Astapovo was soon swarming with government officials, police, reporters, photographers, moving picture operators, and curiosity-seekers of all kinds.

Crowds lined the railway as the train bearing his coffin made its way slowly back to Yasnaya Polyana. From the station to the house the coffin was borne by Tolstoy's sons and some faithful peasants. A procession almost a mile long followed, with two choirs singing "Eternal Memory." Without religious service or orations, the body was laid to rest, as he had desired, at the spot where, as a child seventy-five years before, he fancied there lay buried the magic

green stick with the formula which was to make all mankind good and happy.

Tolstoy's productivity was immense, touching practically every phase of human interest. As an artist in the novel, the short story, and the drama, he is one of the greatest glories not only of Russian but of world literature. Even William Dean Howells, the chief literary pundit of America in his day, acknowledges his great debt, as a writer, to Tolstoy's models. Yet Tolstoy never regarded literature from the point of view of "art for art's sake." In *What is Art?* he defends the thesis that the importance of all art lies in the fact that "it lays in the souls of men the rails along which in real life their actions will naturally pass." Back of the artist stood the propagandist; and had Tolstoy not been a genius the propaganda would have ruined the art.

As a religious and social reformer, his influence was mainly that of a powerful dissolvent. No other one man has ever made such a clean sweep of the inherited *status quo;* even Voltaire left many traditional institutions untouched. Nor did Tolstoy himself foresee the lengths to which his work, once started, was to carry him. It was because in Russia the Church was so closely tied up with the State and with social and economic evils of all kinds that, having questioned the validity of the Church's pretensions, Tolstoy was led on step by step, into conflict with the entire socio-political-economic organization. Because of the hideous tyranny of the Russian autocracy, he took up his pen against patriotism and force-supported government of any kind. It was a slow process; had he not lived into extreme old age his evolution could never have reached its final stages.

Within four years after Tolstoy's death, Europe became engulfed in the Great War, in the course of which the Russian throne crashed to the ground, carrying with it the political structure, the church, and the economic system. There is no doubt that Tolstoy would have regarded with utter abhorrence the program of Lenin and his associates, though his own labors probably did more than any other single factor to prepare the stage for the coming of the Bolshevist dictatorship; just as in an earlier day, Jean Jacques Rousseau, the mildest of philosophers, with his democratic and equalitarian ideology unwittingly put in motion forces that led to the Reign of Terror and the coming of the "Man on Horseback."

Yet to-day, in the perspective of more than a century, we see that the French Revolution and the Napoleonic conquests were but brief and transitory episodes, resulting from a peculiar concatenation of circumstances, in the emancipation of Europe from the shackles of medievalism.

The heart of Tolstoy's philosophy was that no good could come from the exercise of force. And in the final statement of his personal creed, Tolstoy, the introvert and religious seer, might have clasped hands with Darwin, the extravert and scientist. For Darwin, popularly regarded as a materialist and the father of the theory that all life is a ruthless struggle for existence, issuing in the survival of the physically fittest, summed up his true personal philosophy by saying, "Fame, honor, pleasure, wealth—all are dirt compared with affection."

So, too, Tolstoy came back always to Love. Visitors remarked that to hear the shaggy-haired, ruggedly masculine patriarch speaking of Love was deeply impressive. When everything was said and done, he believed that Love was all that mattered. He referred to it as "the motive power of life." And he summed up the results of a lifetime of almost fabulous historical research, personal experience, and profound reflection, in the simple words, "God is Love."

PSYCHOLOGICAL CHAOS

BY DR. D. E. PHILLIPS

EVERY now and then some science produces chaos in human thinking. Astronomy upset the old theories of the universe. Bruno bravely died at the stake in Padua, but calmly said to his persecutors, "Light the flames. I foresee that you dread this more than I do." The theory of evolution produced an upheaval in human thinking the echoes of which are still heard in every quarter of the globe. Psychology is the latest science to produce chaos in human thinking. But it differs from other sciences because it effects its own material—its own phenomena. It is as if some chemical discovery should modify all other chemical activity.

It is not my purpose to discuss the present status of psychology as a science. Even a glance at the conflicting theories in psychology spells chaos. But I propose to picture the chaos psychology has produced in certain lines of thinking. It has touched life at its very depths and is forcing us to *unmask ourselves.*

I refer specifically to the psychological chaos produced concerning the *meaning of words.* Slowly but surely the eruption is taking place. Instead of the doctrine of innate ideas by which the human soul was supposed to be miraculously endowed with the meaning of certain fundamental words, psychology now proclaims that *no word ever did or ever will have any meaning that did not come out of human feelings and experiences.* All else is as "sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." A few fundamental urges, feelings, impulses and instincts are all that are left of the old doctrine of innate ideas. But even these fundamental tendencies cannot be accepted as any indication of objective truth. In short, the meaning of words never dropped down out of heaven, nor was any individual or convention of men authorized to fix and limit the meaning

of words. Words have no absolutely fixed meanings. Especially is this true in the subjective sciences where quality predominates over quantity or where quality is the exclusive basis of judgment.

We are no longer satisfied with science in mathematics, chemistry, physics, astronomy, and biology; but its domain has been extended to literature, art, morals, and religion. Havelock Ellis would have us inject it into love making. Everything must be scientific, even our feelings and ideals. But how can a *quantitative science* be applied to those fields of human experience which depend entirely upon qualitative subjective standards. Certainly science must mean something entirely different when applied to life and conduct. Standards of good and bad, better and worse, justice and injustice, right and wrong, beauty and ugliness, happiness and misery, moral and immoral are found only in the subjective court of appeals—in the desires, needs, and cravings of the human heart, without which nothing, not even life itself, would have value.

Words are only signs of some mental state supposed at least, to be similar in the minds of those using them. But they do not give origin or birth to the mental states. They only limit and make them more specific. Everyone recognizes that these symbols of thoughts and feelings are of two kinds—subjective and objective. But even the objective signs vary in all degrees of indefiniteness. You may say: "Anyone knows what a tree is. I look out of my window and there is a tree, and yonder is another, and another." Yes, but what about the small sprout growing from the root,—only three feet high? Trees are of an indefinite variety of patterns, no two of which are exactly alike. And the meaning we put into the word *tree* always has and always will vary with our experience with trees. Only in the region of *purely quantitative* symbols can words approximate a fixed meaning. The words, *foot, yard, pound, unit of energy, kilowatt, etc.*, are relatively fixed.

In such fields as art, music, literature, morals, and religion we have no objective standards such as the physical sciences have. We can approximate sameness of meaning only in so far as human feelings and experiences are the same. It is in these lines of human activity that psychological chaos is rapidly developing. In the absense of any objective fixed standards, no one can assert his judgment as right and all others as wrong. Ibsen saw this fundamental

psychological fact when he said: "My book is poetry, and if it is not it will be. The conception of poetry in Norway shall be made to conform to the book. *In the world of ideals there is no stability.*"

I hear my readers, trained in the old way of thinking, say: "What nonsense. For what purpose are dictionaries? Do they not tell us the meaning of words?" In answer I say that no one ever did or ever will get the meaning of a word out of a dictionary. What you do is to fill an unknown term with the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of your own life. If not this, you have only two meaningless terms where before you had but one. To learn that X means Y gets you nowhere. But if you learn that X is a symbol for human suffering, you know X just in as far as you have experiences with human suffering.

Let us show further the application of this psychological chaos. Suppose you are asked to pass judgment upon the question: Is suicide ever justifiable? You examine Webster's Dictionary as to the meaning of suicide and learn that "Suicide is the act of taking one's own life voluntarily and intentionally." Still your meaning of suicide is entirely limited by your feelings and ideas concerning the words in which it is defined. Suppose you are quite willing to stand by that definition and we apply it to the experiences of life. Here is a mother and her three children in a boat. To stay in the boat is to lose all. To throw herself overboard is the only chance of saving her children. The deed is done. Did she not "voluntarily and intentionally" take her own life? Did not Mrs. Strass commit suicide when she refused to leave the sinking Titanic and went down with her husband? She might have been walking the streets of New York today and rendering service to many as was her custom. You will not concede that she, or the mother, committed suicide because there is a qualitative element here which prevents your accepting the definition. But when you have conceded this you have abandoned all hope of any fixed objective standard. Every class has its varying conditions. The standard of human values is all absolutely and completely subjective. Every act of human life which we call good or bad and on which we place value exists but a few moments and will never be performed again. Ever afterwards it exists only in the subjective thinking of men. What seems to be its duplication is another act under modified or entirely different conditions.

The physical quantitative sciences are not so limited. An experiment or a discovery in one laboratory may soon be repeated under the same conditions in a thousand others. But suppose you gave a beggar on the street a dollar this evening. Neither you nor anyone else can ever repeat *that act* under the same circumstances. Neither will the reaction ever be the same for you or the beggar. That act modifies all future acts and tomorrow finds you with modified feelings and ideas.

However, even this is not the limit of the psychological chaos which confronts us. Webster's definition of suicide contains the word *voluntarily*. The psychologist and physician proceed to show us that there are an almost unlimited number of factors that make any strictly voluntary act impossible. These are such as the strength of the original impulses and instincts, the circumstances of early life, habits of thought and action, age and physical health, the secretions of the endocrine glands, the presence or absence of conflicting emotions, the great unconscious forces both of mind and body.

Apparently the law, "Thou shalt not steal" is simple and plain enough for anyone and for all time. But when, where, and how was the meaning of the word "steal" determined? Evidently it grew out of the experiences, conditions and feelings of men, and has and will continue to vary with these experiences and conditions. Suppose I am a real estate dealer and offer you a house for $12,000, while you are in turn willing to pay only $10,000. Months later, real estate has greatly depreciated, but you are ignorant of this fact. It is now worth only $6,000. I appeal to you to buy the property. You hesitate and finally say that you will give the $10,000 you at first offered. When I close the bargain have I stolen $4,000 from you, and will I be considered a thief? Not legally, for thousands of such transactions take place daily. But may such a transaction some day be considered stealing? Certainly it may, and ten thousand others.

Public conscience has no objective quantitative basis. It is therefore flexible and may expand or contract—now here, now there. Psychologically, the meaning of the word steal is not and never can be fixed and complete. The chief occupation of Socrates was to bewilder his countrymen by showing them the purely subjective nature of art, morals, and religion.

The gap that now exists—almost a gulf—between the old generation and modern youth is due more to the fact that modern youth has become saturated with the introspective variability of all moral standards than to any other one thing. The new generation realizes as no other generation ever has the shifting sand on which they stand; while the old generation is still clinging to what they think to be solid rock—objective universal standards. No one can understand modern youth until he comprehends how far this psychological conception has spread among them.

"Thou shalt not lie" would seem to be a law about which there could be no difficulty in giving a universal application. Suppose we should ask, as Socrates did, "Is a lie ever justifiable?" To answer yes undermines the law at once. To say no involves the most serious difficulties. Such an answer would be incompatible with any justification of war, for the art of war is mainly one string of deceptions after another. A lie is a qualitative phase of human conduct with no objective standard, and only human feelings and human experiences can put a meaning into the word.

When Socrates received from Thrasymachus the positive answer that a lie is never justifiable, he presented cases such as these "At the battle of Thermopylae did not our officers lie to the soldiers and tell them that the Spartans would be there in three days? They held the pass and we were saved from slavery. Was that all right?" Again, he asked Thrasymachus if a poor widow has saved her money and buried it in the right hand corner of the cellar, and robbers should come and say: "Madam, have you any money in the house?" should she say, "Yes, in the right hand corner of the cellar?" Turning to another phase of the problem he said: "Do you think there is a physician in Athens who tells his patients the truth about themselves?"

What is true of these concepts is also true of the fundamental concepts of all subjective qualitative thinking. Some will ask and have asked if we are going to outgrow the Bible and the Commandments. Certainly, we are not only going to do so, we have long ago done so, in the sense that we have given new meanings to the old laws and formulas.

Herein lies the collapse of the so-called doctrine of the infallibility of the Pope. Suppose he is infallible. He must still com-

municate this wisdom to his hearers or readers through words which must either remain empty words or get their meaning out of experiences of the individual. The same thing is true for those who fall back on the Commandments as having been dropped down from Heaven. There is no way to escape this difficulty except on the absolutely false assumption that words not only have a fixed meaning, but that they mysteriously impose that meaning on the individual.

During the Middle Ages, Logic reigned supreme in human speculations, and the whole fabric which it created rested on the assumption of definite meanings in abstract words. In mathematics where logic deals with exact quantitative measurements all is well, but logic is only a delusion and a snare when the syllogism deals with subjective, qualitative concepts. This has been the chief blunder of theology for two thousand years. Geothe saw this difficulty and in his "Faust" he makes Mephistopheles say to a theological student:

> "To sum up all—to words hold fast—
> For there precisely where ideas fail,
> A word comes opportunely into play.
> Most admirable weapons words are found,
> On words a system we securely ground."

It is shocking to think that for a thousand years the learned world should have labored under the delusion that the meanings of words must be secured by the study of dead languages. No dead language or any foreign language possesses any hidden meanings that may be secured by learning these symbols. Dead languages do not contain the thoughts and feelings of dead people. They are only the signs and symbols they used in thinking and feeling. After long study and by a process of emptying new wine into old bottles we may come to express *our* thoughts and feelings by means of these symbols. In a few cases we may even improve our signs and symbols but the content is still *our thoughts and feelings.*

One of the most useless and even dangerous things psychology can conceive is the effort to discover truth, applicable to our needs, by chasing through dead languages. I once put this question to an advocate of the dead languages. "If I can find twenty-five words the meaning of which you do not know, will you be willing to look up the root meanings and, relying entirely upon such, write an

article for a standard magazine using these words. Yes or no?" He saw the dilemma and said, "No." Even if we could arrive at the thoughts and feelings of the Hebrews or Greeks without corrupting them with *ours,* on what grounds do we assume that they had the truth? Such an assumption carries with it the idea of human degeneration. It is a sorry trade that tends to drag us backward instead of forward. Human conduct and human values have no objective standards—at least none that can so far be discovered. Its maxims and so-called laws depend upon the subjective thoughts and feelings of a people at any one time. Consequently they are qualitative and vary not only with every age but with each thinking, feeling individual. All conduct is coming more and more to be judged as good or bad not only by these general tendencies, but by modified conditions of each individual act.

However, the difficulty is equally in evidence when we turn to the fields of art, music and literature. They all rest upon a subjective basis and belong to the *world of ideals where there is no stability.* The laws of literature and art are simply mental ways of conceiving things; they are subjective and changeable. So long as human intelligence, feelings, and sentiments vary in different individuals, in races, and at different periods of the world's progress, so long shall we be obliged to content ourselves with *approximation to any fixed universal principles.* The more knowledge increases, the more will this psychological chaos spread, and the less will we be hypnotized into formal assent to those who say they know what is best in these fields of art, music, and literature.

Suppose it be a question as to whether Shakespeare's *Hamlet* or Mark Twain's *Mysterious Stranger* is better. Suppose 10,000 people read the two and only 100 vote in favor of *Hamlet.* Suppose these are teachers and students of literature. Shall we not accept their judgment as final? But for whom have they spoken? Only for themselves. How can they speak for the 9900 unless they can bring them to see in *Hamlet* what they think they see in it? But even then must they not know what the *Mysterious Sranger* has meant to these 9900? Remember that "best" in any of these fields has no objective standard. Its value is individual and consists in building up an appreciative sentiment. In other words that piece of music, literature, or art which does not seem to be an extension of

yourself is not suited to you. *It is not best for you and no one can make it best for you by saying that it is best for him.*

The fact that certain pieces of literature have survived is often claimed to be sufficient grounds to pronounce them the *best.* But have we not evidence in other fields that teaching can perpetuate almost anything? Again, it is said that when a great number of the wisest renders a favorable judgment it is safe to accept this judgment as best for the average. Yes, certainly for the average of those who have *similar feelings and ideas.* But that judgment is subjective and cannot be made a universal law. The same is true of all principles of literature and standards of judgment in human conduct.

Certain general lines of development in all these fields of human achievement may be catalogued and formulated. This similarity and approximation arises from the fact that the human mind is so constituted that under similar conditions its manifestations are similar. But these manifestations are, and have only been similar because human feeling and thinking have varied and will continue to vary. Value is qualitative and is fixed by the human heart and its satisfaction. Even this does not establish the objective truth of these general and approximate laws. The so-called *best* may yet remain to be discovered in all these lines of human achievement. In the world of ideals there is no stability and a great genius may arise in any of these arts and overturn most of what we have thought to be eternal.

In spite of its great difficulty and the danger of being called unscientific by the behaviorists I cannot imagine how psychology can avoid dealing with this psychological chaos which it has produced. In the end it will not be a thing to be regretted any more than the temporary chaos produced by the physical sciences. But he who sees the rapid undermining of the old ideals through these psychological principles, readily anticipates the greatest change in human beliefs the world has ever seen. This movement marks the dividing line between the Fundamentalists and Modernists. The chief fortification of Fundamentalism always has been and always will be the tacit assumption of definite meanings in words. Undermine this foundation and the whole structure gradually slides into Modernism. But Modernism is involved in this psychological chaos

and must trust to the use of scientific methods for deliverance in the future.

Psychology must by its very nature deal with both the quantitative and qualitative phases of conduct—with the objective and the subjective. Its methods will vary accordingly. No mere objective description of behavior will ever satisfy the demands of human existence. In fact, the discoveries in the other sciences receive their value and are ranked on the basis of their ability to serve human needs and human desires—all of which are subjective and introspective. The discoveries of the radio and x-ray would never stamp them as *good* or *great*. No fact of the quantitative sciences is ever wonderful until it receives the stamp of the introspective, qualitative, subjective approval as meeting some of the needs and desires of the human heart.

BIRTH-MONTHS OF GENIUS

BY CHARLES KASSEL

I

THE influence of season upon the human embryo, in so far as concerns the mental and moral traits of the after-born individual, is something which appears to have received scant attention at the hands of science. It should readily suggest itself that of the numerous peculiarities of mind and body for which no explanation can be found in the family strain no few might trace back to climatic influence upon the germ. From this quarter also, in some measure at least, may flow the variations in temperament among children of the same parents born and reared under similar conditions, nor is it impossible that the tendencies in mature men and women which lapse so easily into insanity, and lesser psychological and even physical derangements, spring in some part from like causes.

In this department of speculation there is little which can serve as a guide to the student either in theory or experiment. Yet the subject is of manifest importance to humanity. Nor is it without a bearing in other directions. If climate and season leave an impress worthy of consideration it is scarcely to be supposed that this impress would be limited to mankind, so that in animal husbandry, where breeding for intelligence is an object, no less than in the field of human race-culture, where that end is always in view, the influences of climate and season may play no mean parts.

II

As a possible factor in the determination of sex the effect of heat and cold has been considered. Thus, in Geddes and Thomson upon *The Evolution of Sex* it is said: "In the human species Düsing and others have noted that more males are born during the

cold months; and Schlechter has reached the same results from observations upon horses. The temperature of the time not of birth but of sex determination is, however, more important; nor must it be forgotten that temperature may have many indirect and subtle influences."

In its larger aspects the subject has rested equally in conjecture. Weismann, in his work upon *The Germ Plasm* appears to concede an importance to the influence of season. In the discussion of climatic variations in butterflies he takes kindly to the suggestion that such variations may be due to modifications induced by climatic differences, and adds: "In many other animals and plants the influence of temperature and environment may very possibly produce permanent hereditary variations in a similar manner; but it is difficult—in fact almost impossible—to identify such cases with anything like certainty from the observations which have heretofore been made."

Even as late as 1922, when the splendid *Outline of Science,* edited by Professor J. Arthur Thomson, appeared, only the slenderest progress had been made toward a solution of this problem, although its scientific importance is clearly recognized: "If we probe a little deeper"—we quote from volume 2, page 378—"we see the possibility that stimuli of outside changes, e.g., of climate, may saturate through the organism and provoke the complex germ-cells to change. Thus, Professor W. L. Tower subjected potato beetles at a certain stage of their development to very unusual conditions of temperature and humidity. The beetles themselves were not changed, for these hard-shelled creatures do not lend themselves to external modifications. But in a number of cases the offspring of the beetles showed remarkable changes, e.g. in color and markings, and the offspring of these variants did not revert to the grand-parental type. In such a case it looks as if an environmental stimulus penetrating through the body serves as the liberator or stimulus of variability in the germ-cells."

III

The domain which science has thus neglected, the imagination of mankind in all ages has filled with illusions of its own. It is to the gifts of the fays in the birth-hour, coming from the innerland where dwell the lovely shades of things, that we owe the talents and tendencies that make us admired and loved—so we all believed

in our fairy-book days. On the other hand, as we grew older, the larger belief in an astral influence, raining down from the heavens, seized and stirred the imagination. This fancy of an earlier day was once a universally accepted belief, and not only poets such as Chaucer and Shakespeare and Milton, but astronomers such as Kepler and Brahe, and great commanders like Napoleon and Wallenstein, read in the stars the destiny of men and nations. Even yet the horoscope is a popular feature of many journals and magazines, attesting the hold upon our imagination of this inheritance from a vanished age.

Nor is it possible to deny that in the mystical literature of the subject coming down from the ages we are startled, now and then, by analyses of character according to birth-months which, as mere guesses, seem remarkably happy. That the constellations rule our lives can no longer be believed, but that a seasonal influence, wrongly attributed to the stars in the past, may tend to mold character and determine bent of mind, is not thoughtlessly to be flouted. Such a theory might explain much in the apparent predictions of astrology which challenged the respect and even the belief of great minds in the past.

In his *Man of Genius* Lombroso has not disdained to study the influence of season upon creative genius and has elaborately compiled from biography the most productive months for the various orders of talent. "It is evident," he concludes, "that the first warm months distinctly predominate in the creations of genius as well as in organic nature although the question can not be absolutely resolved on account of the scarcity of data as regards both quantity and quality." Lombroso, indeed, pushes his inquiry in directions which verge somewhat toward the subject we have in hand. Dealing with the sensitiveness of men of genius to barometrical conditions, he enumerates geniuses who loved heat and found the richest outflowering of their talents in the same stimulus to which nature so gloriously responds in field and garden, and he submits an interesting table of favorite months for the various orders of genius. The most favorable month for esthetic creations, he tells us, is May; then come September and April, the least favorable being represented by the months of February, October and December. The same may be observed, he adds, with astronomic discoveries, but here April and July predominate, while for physical discoveries,

as for esthetic creations, the months of May, April and September stand first. The advantage, he concludes, belongs to the months of early warmth rather than those of great heat, and in the same way the months of great barometric variation have an advantage over very hot and very cold months.

A study of the birth-months of eminent individuals is by no means the absurd thing it might seem on its face to be. So much has superstition through all history centered about birthdays that it is hard to adjust ourselves to the thought of a sober inquiry upon such a subject. Difficult as such an investigation is, however, and wearisome as may be the task of gathering adequate data, the effort is well worth while. We have only to shift the quest from the influences prevailing at birth to those prevailing at the beginning of life, and at critical periods of the panorama of unfoldment before birth, in order to take the subject out of the realm of fancy and into the realm of science.

"What lies beyond our reach at present, as Driesch has very ably urged," remarks Edmund B. Wilson in his work, *The Cell in Development and Inheritance*, page 432, "is to explain the orderly rhythm of development—the co-ordinating power that guides development to its pre-destined end. We are logically compelled to refer this power to the inherent organization of the germ, but we neither know nor can we even conceive what that organization is . . . . . We know no more how the organization of the germ-cell involves the properties of the adult body than we know how the properties of hydrogen and oxygen involve those of water." Our ignorance is not as abysmal, indeed, as when Wilson wrote, and the process of discovery has given us an inkling of the method nature pursues in accomplishing her great ends, but the ultimate mystery is the same as when the work of Wilson appeared.

IV

In our earlier studies *Fertility and Genius, Genius and Stature, Physiognomy and Genius* and *Hair Color and Genius*, as published in the *Popular Science Monthly* for November, 1907, December, 1910, February, 1911, and September, 1912, *Longevity and Genius* as published in the *Open Court* for December, 1920, and *Heredity and Genius*, as published in the *South Atlantic Quarterly* for April, 1924, we were clearly within the limits of legitimate scientific in-

quiry. The present study, we are persuaded, does not trespass on forbidden ground.

It is true that when the first results of our inquiry appeared in the *Scientific American* for August 2, 1913, the publication marked an entry into what seemed a grotesque field. Other workers had labored with statistical studies of genius but all before appeared to shun a domain resigned to fortune-tellers and mountebanks. Since that time, however, an occasional nod of recognition in eminently respectable quarters has given the subject a standing to which otherwise it could scarcely have aspired.

In *Nature* for July 8, 1922, (Vol. 110, page 40), F. J. Allen of Cambridge, England, has spoken a brief word upon "seasonal incidence in the births of eminent people," while page 218 of the same volume of that scientific journal, under date of February 16, 1922, carries a note upon "birth days in relation to intelligence" from a discussion of the annual incidence of intelligence by Mr. M'Callum Fairgrieve before the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

In order to find, if possible, the causes underlying the production of eminent intellects at certain periods Mr. Allen collected statistics of dates of birth of more than two hundred eminent persons, and an analysis of the dates showed that the greater number were born in the colder months, February being distinctly the most prolific with December next in importance and August and June as the most productive during the warm months, and the author of this communication explains that he could find no correspondence between the distribution of general birth-months and the distribution of births of eminent persons.

It is of course apparent, as Allen clearly recognized, that the statistics of infant mortality may have a decided bearing on the question. The distribution of birth-months for the ordinary population can have no connection with the distribution of birth-months for genius where infant mortality enters as an important factor into the problem. If children born at one season of the year are subject to a high mortality they are forever lost to the ranks of genius, however favorable their heredity or the auspices ruling when their being commenced, while those born in the more favorable seasons live to swell the pages of biographical dictionaries.

Grieve, it appears, in order to determine whether the season of birth bore any relation to intelligence, experimented with 368 boys,

using chiefly the American army tests, supplemented by some of the tests used by Dr. Cyril Burt, and found that the boys born in the late spring were less intelligent than those born about October, and Grieve suggested that a test in other districts would be valuable and that the entire problem is deserving of systematic investigation.

V

The only pretentious study that has yet appeared—so far at least as our search has disclosed—is the discussion by Alleyne Ireland in *Hearst's International* for May, 1925, under the popular title of *The Month of Your Son's Birth.* On the basis of names in the *Hall of Fame for Great Americans* he found the distribution of birth-months as follows: January 5, February 12, March 3, April 7, May 6, June 2, July 6, August 3, September 5, October 4, November 3, December 5. Ireland, it appears, then made use of a list of 10,181 names selected by himself from a dictionary of international biography and by eliminating the mediocre, whose presence among the eminent came merely from royal or official station, he arrived at 2,650 names, analysis of which yielded 382 names for February as against an average of 206 names for each of the other eleven months of the year, with a low point of 149 for June.

Ireland then inquired into the distribution of births for the general population and on the basis of figures dealing with 21,695,646 births in Europe and America determined that February had fewer births than January, March, April, May and September, about the same number as August and October, and more than June, July, October and December.

Setting against the data for the birth-months of genius the "breeding months," or months of the commencement of life, Ireland arrives at April breedings for the January births, May breedings for the February births, and so on, and from the curves plotted in a diagram and published with the article it appears that for most of the year the figures for genius-breedings follow quite closely the general breedings, but between April and May and May and June the general breedings go down 1.4 per cent while genius-breedings go up 55.5 per cent, and between May and June the general breedings go up 8.4 per cent while genius-breedings go down 36.1 per cent.

Ireland, as the immediate result of his compilation, reaches the conclusion that the figures signify nothing and that the large-place of February among the birth-months of genius means no more

than that "May, when all nature renews itself, is the natural breeding-month," so that his "puzzle was no puzzle at all," and that probably mother nature was smiling indulgently upon him as he plodded through his exhaustive figures.

Ireland does not give his authority for the birth-months of the 21,695,646 individuals in Europe and the United States The present writer has found extreme difficulty in getting together dependable data upon the subject. Nor does it appear that Ireland made any effort to classify the birth-months of the general population according to geographical location. His original list, moreover, of the world's distinguished names, aggregating 10,181, and reduced by elimination to 2,650 appears to have been gathered, not by scientific methods, but from his own knowledge merely of history and geography, carrying, as with us all, predilections born of individual taste and reading. Finally, the element of infant mortality, with the differing rates in different seasons and different regions, appears not to have been considered, so far at least as is disclosed by the paper itself.

VI

The first step in a statistical investigation of this character is a catalogue of names assembled by careful methods and sufficiently extensive for use. In our own inquiries we have employed, where practicable, as appears from earlier papers, Dr. J. McKeen Cattell's tables, as published in the *Popular Science Monthly* for February, 1903, comprising the world's thousand most eminent men and women. The painstaking process by which these names were gathered, as described in the same issue of that magazine, is a proof alike of the importance of such a list and of the difficulties that surround its formulation. That no single mind, from its own resources and by subjective methods alone, is adequate to the compilation of such a catalogue becomes more than plain in the light of the discussion by Cattell. It is true that even these tables are the subject of criticism by Havelock Ellis in his magnificent *Study of British Genius,* but in default of any other existing list, world-wide in its scope, we have used Professor Cattell's thousand names in our studies, and the results, as we conceive, sufficiently attest their value and dependability for our purposes.

As affording, therefore, some basis for a study of the influence of season in the pre-natal hour, not only upon the moral and intel-

lectual but upon the physical being of the individual as well, we have investigated the birth-months of the world's thousand most famous men and women, using Professor Cattell's catalogue of names, and the results we have tabulated according to months. Of the thousand individuals the information sought was obtainable as to 431 from the authorities at our command, and of these 45 were born in January, 40 in February, 34 in March, 36 in April, 38 in May, 26 in June, 29 in July, 34 in August, 36 in September, 36 in October, 41 in November and 36 in December.

A marked falling off in number of births is apparent during the months of June and July, with the earlier months showing a higher average than the closing months of the year. Much the same variation, however, would seem to obtain in case of births at large. According to *Mulhall's Dictionary of Statistics*, fourth edition, page 92, the birth-averages by months for Europe, on the basis of a total for the year of 1200, are as follows: January 107, February 107, March 107, April 103, May 99, June 94, July 93, August 95, September 101, October 99, November 97, December 98.

Alleyne Ireland, as we have seen in an earlier portion of this paper, found as the outcome of a laborious investigation that "genius-births" were peculiar to February and so were related to May, the "natural breeding month," thus resolving the seeming mystery of the second month in the year as the favorite month for the appearance of genius. The table we have given, however, based upon the figures of a great statistician, and the results of our own inquiry with Professor Cattell's carefully assembled catalogue of names, shows the justice of the criticism we have ventured to offer against Ireland's methods and his results. The month of May, Ireland's "natural breeding month," makes a poor showing both in Mulhall's figures and ours, occupying, with December, the lowest place in our figures and, except March and April, the lowest place in Mulhall's. It is evident that the larger lists of names which Ireland used were faultily gathered and that he stopped in his inquiry too soon. Our tables and Mulhall's are consistent with each other, though arrived at by different means, and are more nearly in accord with actual human experience. Thus, the low months for the beginning of life in our data and Mulhall's are, as is apparent, March, April and May—the spring season in southern latitudes and when nature begins to awaken even in the more northerly

climes,—while October, November and December are the highest "breeding months" in Mulhall's figures, and October the highest breeding month for genius in our figures, with November among the next highest, and only December falling to a low point in contrast with Mulhall's December.

In our figures and those of Mulhall alike we fail to sense the supposed popularity of Easter through the centuries as the marriage-time. Christmas also, a favorite time, according to tradition, for the nuptial ceremony, leaves its trace rather faintly in Mulhall's list and even less markedly in ours. May, which notwithstanding its place in Ireland's figures as the "natural breeding month," has never been a favorite time for marriages, shows pronouncedly its historic unpopularity for that rite both in our data and Mulhall's. October, however, the after-harvest month, when the agricultural laborer in Europe counts his earnings and thinks of wedded bliss, emerges as the chief breeding month for genius and the general population alike.

The leading birth-months for royalty in Cattell's thousand names are February and September, which may indicate that Whitsuntide and Christmas are often chosen by monarchical houses for the marriage of their sons and daughters, but a larger proportion of births appears in June and July for rulers than for other ranks, betokening, perhaps, a greater independence of the festive seasons for the wedding rite than is true of other classes.

Viewed broadly our studies thus far seem to demonstrate that for genius as a whole there are no favorite birth-months, since the genius of the world seeks much the same month for the beginning of life as the ordinary population. In so far, too, as concerns genius at large, as reflected in Cattell's tables, the factor of infant mortality seems not to count for much, since had the contrary been the case a larger variation would have appeared between the figures for genius in our data and the figures for the ordinary population in Mulhall's. For genius, therefore, distributed over the world and throughout all historic periods, and for the general population of all Europe in our own day, the birth-months would seem to be much the same.

VII

A classification of birth-months in our list, however, by nationality shows startling variations from the general average. The

favorite birth-month, it appears, for American genius is January, with more than twenty-four percent of the total, and with April and May following in order, and February as the fourth highest with something over twelve per cent, the remaining months for Americans being almost negligible. For English genius, on the other hand, according to our tables, October is the striking month, with twelve percent, followed by November and December with something over ten percent, and March, April and February, in the order named, as the next highest. For French genius, as for American genius, January heads the list with something over eleven per cent, followed by September, August, April, May and June. German genius seeks predominantly the month of December, with May, January, February and November next in order, while Italian genius exalts the month of March with more than seventeen per cent, followed by September with fifteen per cent and June and July with over eleven per cent.

In considering these statistics, it is to be recalled that we are dealing with 431 names only out of Cattell's thousand, and due allowance for this circumstance must be made. The accidental factors may make their presence felt in a restricted catalogue of names when the contrary would be the case with a larger number. Sundry aspects of these tables suggest, nonetheless, that though actually based upon something less than half the distinguished personages in Cattell's catalogue the results would not be different if the classification could be extended to the entire list. It is chiefly, in fact, as to the genius of the earliest periods that the birth-months are wanting. As to the genius of more recent times our data is full.

It is worthy of remark that in the case of each nationality dealt with in our figures the high birth-months tend to gather into definite periods, which is precisely what we might expect upon the basis of seasonal incidence and climatic influence. Thus, for American genius the emphasis falls upon the first five months of the year. English genius spans from November to April, French genius selects the period from April to September, except that in the case of French genius, as in the case of American genius, the peak is represented by January, which stands alone in the latter case and apart from the general period of the year favorable for birth-months of French genius. German genius bridges from November to May, Italian genius favors the general period from July to Sep-

tember, with the month of March in that case standing off by itself and supplying the highest figure. With the marked proclivity of birth-months for the varying nationalities to seek special periods of the year we seem to approach the domain of law rather than the region of accident and chance.

A comparison of Mulhall's tables for the birth-months of the ordinary population in Europe, arranged by nationality, with our tables for genius birth-months, shows wide divergencies between the two. Mulhall's averages for birth-months of the general population in Europe, referred to in earlier portions of this paper, do not vary greatly, as we have seen, from the averages for genius at large—excluding America always which is not embraced in Mulhall's figures—and when Mulhall's tables are consulted for birth-months of the general population covering the various nationalities from which his averages are deduced, we find that while the birth-months for the general population in the various countries tend toward a uniform figure throughout the year genius birth-months, by contrast, show pronounced divergencies.

If we may safely rely upon our tables of genius birth-months, as seems true, then by offsetting these tables against Mulhall's tabulations for the general population we see a distinct tendency for genius-births to gather into different periods from the ordinary population. If, for example, we adopt Mulhall's figures for Scotland as serving equally for England, the births for the general population are at low ebb from March to July, with a reduced rate from July to January, and with the lowest point in February, whereas English genius appears to seek its birth-months chiefly in October, November and December, with March following closely, August, September and April next and after February the birth-months for genius falling to their lowest point in January, May, June and July. In the case of France the general population, according to Mulhall, has its favorite birth-months in February and March with January and April next, followed by May, July, August and November, and with December, October and June making up the low points, whereas French genius in our tables haunts February and March for its highest birth-months followed by January and April, with May, July, August, September and November next, and June, October and December least in favor. Germany, according to Mulhall, prefers January, February, March and Septem-

ber as the birth-months for its ordinary population, with the remainder of the year showing lower figures, excluding September, and with June reaching the low point for the year, whereas German genius, in our tables, chooses January, February, March and September as the highest birth-months, with April, May, July, August, October, November and December next, and June showing the lowest point. The ordinary population in Italy is born chiefly in February, with March close after, followed by January and April, the last four months of the year next, succeeded by June and August and with July displaying the lowest number. Italian genius, on the other hand, while selecting March as its highest month, which is likewise one of the higher months for the ordinary population, chooses next the month of September, which is one of the lower months for the ordinary population, followed by June and July, which are among the lowest months for the general population, and succeeded by February, which is the highest month for the ordinary population, after which come the months of May, August and November, then January, and with the lowest months April, October and December, which are fairly good months for the ordinary population.

VIII

In so far as concerns America we have seen that more than 24% of American genius-births in our data gather into the month of January, with April and May following and February ranking as fourth highest with something over 12%, and the remaining months of the year scarcely represented. A comparison of these figures with the general birth-statistics for continental United States is highly interesting and suggestive. Out of a total of 1,878,880 in continental United States, according to *Birth, Still-birth and Infant Mortality Statistics for the Birth-Registration Area of the United States, 1925,* issued by the Census Bureau, 161,145 occurred in January, 151,173 in February, 168,416 in March, 157,320 in April, 160,415 in May, 156,565 in June, 163,638 in July, 162,957 in August, 154,602 in September, 153,870 in October, 143,676 in November, 145,103 in December.

It is plain that the birth-statistics of the general population for continental United States, according to the census report in question, and the birth statistics of the general population of Europe, according to Mulhall, follow divergent lines. The highest month for

continental United States is March, with July and August next in the order named, followed by January and May, and which in turn are succeeded by April, June, September, October and February, in slowly decreasing proportions, and with November and December displaying low figures as marked as the high figure for March. In Mulhall's table for Europe, as we have seen, the first three months of the year are the highest, with April next, followed by September, May, October, December and November, and with June, July and August showing the lowest figures.

Whether the variations in the statistics for the United States and Europe are attributable to accidental factors, springing, for example, from inadequate data employed by Mulhall for his averages, the present writer is unable to determine, the publications of the *International Institute of Statistics* upon the subject not being available for his use, but the close parallel between his own figures for genius-births and Mulhall's figures for the general births in Europe might suggest the accuracy of Mulhall's calculations.

Since the dependability of the data for continental United States as published by the Census Bureau cannot be questioned, and as genius birth-months in the same area according to our data show a wide divergence from those figures, with a remarkable emphasis upon January as the favorite birth-month for American genius, it would follow that American genius seeks the month of April in predominant degree for the beginning of life. This is not far from the month of May—the "natural breeding month" arrived at by Ireland—nor the month of June to which the statistics for continental United States would point as the chief breeding month for the population at large, and indeed the high figures in Mulhall's tables for January, February and March would throw the breeding-months for the general population of Europe into the same general period, leaving the breeding-months for the separate nationalities of Europe to be determined from exact data and set off against the widely varying figures in our tables for European genius.

While the "natural breeding-month" does plainly evidence itself in the computations for American genius and for genius at large and for the general populations likewise of America and Europe, as might have been expected, the significance of the figures for American genius as contrasted with the figures for the general population of continental United States—where alone exhaustive

data is available—is manifest. March, the highest birth-month for the general population, occupies a low place in the table for American genius, and June and July rise to imposing heights as against the unfavorable aspect of those months in the statistics for American genius, as indeed for genius at large.

Whether the large place of January in our tables may be due to the comparatively small number of names for America present in Cattell's lists—thirty-one only—is a question which immediately suggests itself. Conceivably, too, the present day distribution of general birth-months may be different from distributions prevailing during the historic American period, when the leading names in American biography rose to note, or there may be regional variations in distribution, so that the figures for New England, for example, from which so many names in American biography are derived, might be deceptive if these figures differed widely from the figures for the great western areas of the United States, which have only lately begun their contributions to the honor-roll of American names.

As to variations in distribution throughout the American historic period the present writer is without dependable data, but for regional variations in our own day, the census report heretofore mentioned discloses no basis. From table 1, to be found at page 62 of the report in question, it appears that the distribution for states as widely separated as California and Connecticut, with their markedly different climates, follows much the same trend as the figures for the general population in the continental area of the United States.

Assuming no material variation in the distribution of the general birth-months throughout the American historic period, and waiving aside as probably untenable the idea of a regional variation in this country, the discussion as to America narrows down to the inquiry whether the highplace of January for birth-months of genius in America, according to the limited number of names involved in Cattell's list, is an illusion or an actuality.

A list of names for America alone, sufficiently large for study and carefully selected by such methods as Cattell pursued in compiling his thousand names does not exist, so far as the present writer is aware, but inquiry according to chance lists of names, found here and yonder, seems to confirm the large place of that month in the production of American genius. Using, for example,

the names in the *American Statesmen Series*, edited by Jas. T. Morse, Jr., we find the birth-months in those instances to center in January to the extent of one-fourth of the twenty-eight names. Employing *Outline History of English and American Literature*, by Charles F. Johnson, published by *American Book Co.*, in 1900, which the writer happened to come upon in his own library, and tracing out the birth-months of the 32 American literary celebrities dealt with by the author, the names, where the birth-months were given by the *Century Dictionary and Encyclopedia*, fall again, to the extent of one-fourth the number, in the first month of the year.

Who's Who in America, currently used by some workers in this field, is unadapted to our purpose. A little reflection will serve to make clear that only the smallest sprinkling of true genius could possibly be found among the names contained in that dictionary of contemporary biography. If, in Cattell's scientifically selected catalogue of names, published as lately as 1903, and comprehending the genius of the entire world for all time, so small a number of names could be found representative of America, it would be idle to expect more than a very few for a single generation among the twenty-five thousand contained in *Who's Who*. The individuals in that work, for the purpose at any rate of our present inquiry, must be ranked with the ordinary population. That this is true appears from a test of our problem by the names under the first letter of the alphabet in the 1924-5 edition. The 727 names in connection with which the birth-months appeared, are distributed over the calendar as follows: January 55, February 58, March 60, April 71, May 50, June 47, July 70, August 70, September 60, October 70, November 58, December 58. It is apparent that this closely parallels the distribution of birth-months for the ordinary population as disclosed by the report of the Census Bureau to which we have several times referred, and the results are in striking contrast with the results for the shorter lists of specially distinguished personages in American history which we have used.

IX

More than once in this discussion we have had occasion to refer to infant mortality as having a distinct bearing upon our subject and in view of the wide diversity in the seasonal advent of genius among the different nations it becomes important to consider whether the predominance of the varying periods in the calendar of

genius for the several nationalities could be due to an unusual mortality for infants at other seasons.

It is apparent that if the last seven months of the year in America are particularly inimical to infant life, genius-births and general births alike will gather to the first five months, and so our figures would be meaningless. Thus, also, if the portion of the year in England from May to October is especially deadly to infant life we would necessarily have for genius-births the very period we find in our tables. In the case of French genius, upon the same theory, the period of greatest mortality for infants would embrace the portion of the year from October to March, with the exception of January, German births upon that basis would point to the period from June to October as carrying the greatest menace to babyhood, and the figures for Italy would cast a shadow over the period from October to June as the most baneful to the lives of children with the unexpected exception of the month of March.

Exact data as to infant mortality in the various countries with which we are concerned during the several seasons we have found it impossible to obtain. If such statistics are available they are not offered by the sources we have been able to consult. The nearest approach to a dependable table is afforded by Mulhall's *Dictionary of Statistics,* dealing with the influence of season upon the death rate of infants under two years for Holland, Belgium, Nice, Genoa, Naples and Palermo in one group, and deaths under thirty days for another group consisting of Austria, Belgium, France, Florence, and other countries and localities, the irregular character of these statistics attesting the difficulty which must have confronted the author of the work in gathering the information required for his purposes. Reduced to percentages as regards the first group the mortality under two years was .234 for spring, .268 for summer, .231 for autumn, and .265 for winter, making a total of .998, disregarding the smaller fractions, and for the second group the proportion was .251 for spring, .201 for summer, .226 for autumn, and .321 for winter.

If these figures for infant mortality are typical of variations for the different seasons throughout all European countries, that factor will not serve as an important element in the problem so far, at least, as European genius is concerned, and it cannot account, therefore, for the shifting emphasis of genius birth-months through

the year with the varying nationalities. That this is true in the case of birth-months for the general population of all Europe, we have already seen, since genius birth-months and general birth-months parallel each other in the tables we have used. A test of the question by general birth-months for the various nationalities might be profitable, but those figures, as we have seen, baffle our search, such treatises upon the statistics of population as are available to the present writer being silent upon the question.

So far as concerns their bearing on American genius the statistics of infant mortality, as prevailing at present, are available in full detail in the *Census Report* for 1925 we have used in this discussion. From table 21, at page 188, it appears that infant deaths from all causes for the birth registration area in continental United States were 134,652, of which the distribution according to months was as follows: January 12,430, February 11,950, March 13,293, April 11,468, May 10,797, June 9,840, July 9,968, August 11,640, September 12,224, October 11,256, November 9,445, December 10,341. Comparing these figures with the birth-months of the general population, as disclosed by the same report, we discern a manifest tendency for high mortalities to accompany high birth-months, with only slight disturbance of the results here and there by seasonal factors especially menacing to infant life. There is nothing, however, as reflected in those tables, which would explain the high place of January in our figures for American genius birth-months.

If, as the indications suggest, infant mortality does not account for the segregation of genius birth-months and the figures in our tables are, as would seem to be the case, fairly representative so as to exclude accidental factors, we have reasonably definite periods among the different nations for the uprise of genius, which, translated into periods for the beginning of life, should give the months or seasons with peculiarly favorable auspices for genius.

X

A tabulation of the genius birth-months in Cattell's list by vocations, seems, in some measure, to disclose favored birth-months for varying *types* of genius. Of eminent personages connected with the church, 27 were born in the latter half as against 8 in the earlier half of the year, and much the same is true of poets, with whom the ratio is 25 to 15, and scientists, with whom the proportion is 30 to 24. On the other hand, 25 philosophers saw the light in the

earlier half as against 15 in the latter half of the year, and in the case of statesmen the numbers are 25 to 20, in the case of soldiers 22 to 13, in the case of composers 8 to 4, painters and sculptors 8 to 6. In the case of writers, including historians but not including those classed in the biographical dictionaries as philosophers, the proportion is only 26 to 25.

Whether these figures betoken the existence of climatic or other influences during the varying seasons inclining the child before birth to one instead of another line of endeavor is a question that instantly occurs. A test of the problem by anything less than the most exhaustive methods would be inconclusive nor would the results be worthy of acceptance until checked and rechecked by the statistics of birth-months for the several orders of genius in the different regions of the globe. The outward conditions which prevail at one period of the calendar in one region must be looked for in another at a different period and in such an inquiry a test of genius births in the Northern hemisphere by the genius births for the same season in the Southern hemisphere of the globe is logically called for.

If, however, after due consideration of all these elements, and upon the basis of a catalogue of names sufficiently large, the results show a well-defined tendency of certain types of genius to select definite periods of the year for the beginning of life, we are at the threshold of a principle of obvious importance. "Telling fortunes" by birthdays might in that case cease to be the inane thing it now is, beguiling the tedium of an idle hour, and become the sober task of the scientific eugenist.

That, in reality, whether for genius at large or for special orders of genius, favored birth-months exist, either in America or elsewhere, we do not pretend to say. The figures in these pages, with their singular challenge, we submit as we find them in our calculations. They have been gathered, as were the figures for earlier papers in the same series and papers yet to be published, during hours snatched from a busy professional life. To others, more richly blest with leisure, and better fitted by faculty and training, must be left the task of pursuing further the intricacies of this bizarre subject.

The predominance of January, in particular, among the birth-months of American genius can scarcely exist in so large a measure

as our chance figures would imply. Those figures must rest, to a large extent, upon mere coincidence. To throw one-fourth of the names in the muster-roll of American genius into the month of May for the beginning of life—even with the proverbial beauty of that month and its suggestiveness in far-flung bloom through scented fields and gardens—would require vastly more evidence than our tables supply. The whole subject of seasonal influence in the production of talent and genius awaits, in reality, the hand of its master. The present brief study makes no pretense to finality or scientific authority. To Professor Visher, of Indiana University, who is doing such conspicuously notable work in the statistical study of genius, and others like him, we must look for the exhaustive investigation which shall resolve all doubt.

That such studies, however, possess a peculiar fascination, quite apart from their real or fancied importance, is eloquently attested by their increasing popularity. In 1907, when the first of the present series of papers appeared, few individuals, either in America or England, were interested in such researches. In the interval of twenty years between that day and this such inquiries have become, not only the sober task of scores of special workers, but the pastime of hundreds of amateurs. The recent articles in *Liberty* based upon *Who's Who in America,* with their striking appeal to the man in the street, are a sufficient token that the quest for the secret of genius is on in good earnest and that whoso cares to take up and pursue the thread of these studies may be sure of a wide and interested audience, in pleasant contrast with the painfully limited public which responded to such labors in the past.

MO TSE

BY H. G. CREEL

THE thinkers of every race and every age show a distinct tendency to emphasize their differences from each other, while ignoring the most complete identities in their fundamental premises. It is said that, during the Middle Ages, many Franciscan monks would sooner show charity to the blackest heretic than to one of their Dominican brothers in Christ. The bitterest enmities grew up between medieval theologians over such questions as how many angels could stand on the point of a needle. But today, we lump all of these men together as representatives of a single, and a narrowly dogmatic, system of thought.

This tendency has shown itself to an almost unbelievable extent in the history of Chinese thought. Here we have the spectacle of various men, expounding the same philosophy with no more of difference than that one emphasizes more strongly one phase, while another places most stress on another factor, each of whom declares the views of the others to be so dangerous that their spread endangers the very foundations of the universe. These petty quarrels (they were often no more than that) mean little in themselves, but when we consider that the accusations exchanged in them have, in many cases, been written into the accepted histories of Chinese thought, it becomes apparent that they have obscured our understanding of the history of Chinese philosophy to an alarming degree.

In the cases of the thinkers already dealt with, the error is difficult to apprehend. As between Lao Tse and Confucius, there are not only mutual recriminations, but apparent differences of the widest scope. It is only when we penetrate the surface, and look, beyond grandiose generalizations, at their fundamental assumptions

and their practical programs, that we observe the similarities. But when we come to take up Mo Tse the case is quite otherwise. To be sure, Mo Tse was considered the deadly enemy of the Confucian school, and Mencius excoriates him, while he returned attacks with good will and a ready wit. Thus there has grown up the legend that Moism is one of the doctrines antithetic to "Confucianism" or Sinism. But if any student of average intelligence were given the *Analects* and the writings of Mo Tse to study side by side, it is doubtful if he could fail to see the fundamental identity of the two systems, unless he had had the "advantage" of a previous acquaintance with the tradition which denies it.

The dates of Mo Tse[294] are in some doubt. Those given by Yi Pao Mei, 470-391 B.C.,[295] are probably accurate enough for the present purpose. Mo Tse was given the usual education of a young scholar of the "Confucian" school, destined for government. *Huai Nan Tse* (chap. 21) says of him:

> Mo Tse was trained in the orthodox school and disciplined in Confucian ideas. But he felt that the code of propriety was too troublesome and annoying and that elaborate funerals consumed too much money and impoverished the people; that they were unwholesome to life and obstacles to industry. Thereupon he rebelled against the norms of Chou and adopted the regime of Hsia.

Like Confucius, Mo Tse traveled about a great deal, looking for an opportunity to serve as minister to some state, and so put his ideas into practice. He seems, however, to have found only one post, and that for a short time, in Sung. He gathered a number of disciples about him, but did not succeed in founding a permanent school. This was due in great part, no doubt, to the opposition of the "regular" Confucianists to his teachings. "It is no exaggeration to say that the neglect of Motse the man, his system, and his works since the Christian era had been all but universal until the middle of the eighteenth century A.D."[296] The recent interest in Mo Tse has been largely due to certain real or fancied resemblances of his teachings to Christianity.

[294] Mo Tse means, of course "Master Mo" or "The Philosopher Mo." His full name was Mo Ti. The character *mo* is pronounced either *mo* or *mei*, so that the philosopher may be referred to as Mo Tse, Mei Tse, Mo Ti, Mei Ti, or by the latinization "Micius."

[295] Yi-pao Mei, *Ethical and Political Philosophy of Motse* (Ph.D. Thesis, Chicago), p. 31.

[296] Mei, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

Mo Tse, like Confucius, was tremendously in earnest. He was genuinely concerned over the poverty and suffering of his people, and no sacrifice of time or personal comfort was too great for him to make for the cause of their welfare, to which he had devoted his life. Like Confucius, Mencius, and Lao Tse, he looked with the greatest abhorrence on the wholesale slaughter which characterized the China of his day, and the eradication of war waged for mere greed was his chief passion. It was this practical interest, this desire above all other things to ameliorate the condition of humanity, which was responsible for the attacks made upon him by the Confucianists, much more than any difference in basic philosophy. Had Mo Tse not preached against the ruinous funerals which often wiped out the patrimony of the poor, and against the prescribed three years of complete inaction in mourning, Mencius and others would probably have been a little more willing to see that his doctrine of "universal love" was, after all, only another way of stating the plea of Confucius for human cooperation and social harmony.

Nevertheless, it was about this doctrine of "universal love" that the fight on Mo Tse centred. Let Mo Tse state it in his own words:

> Partiality is to be replaced by universality. . . Now when everyone regards the states of others as he regards his own, who would attack the other's state? Others are regarded like one's self. When everyone regards the houses of others as he regards his own, who would disturb the others' houses? . . . Now, when the states and cities do not attack and seize each other and when the clans and individuals do not disturb and harm one another—is this a calamity or a benefit to the world? Of course it is a benefit. When we come to think about the several benefits in regard to their cause, how have they arisen? Have they arisen out of hate of others and injuring others? Of course we should say no. We should say that they have arisen out of love of others and benefiting others. If we should classify one by one all those who love others and benefit others, should we find them to be partial or universal? Of course we should say they are universal. Now, since universal love is the cause of the major benefits of the world, therefore Motse proclaims universal love to be right.[297]

This doctrine has been conceived, in modern as well as in ancient times, to strike at the very roots of Sinism and the teachings of Confucius. In this connection, four questions are pertinent con-

[297] Mei, *op. cit.*, (pt. 2) p. 96.

cerning the doctrine of "universal love": (1) Does it remove the sanction of "the will of Heaven"? (2) Does it undermine filial piety? (3) Does it weaken the political system by doing away with any special loyalty to one's rulers? (4) Does it condemn the punishment of criminals and evil-doers generally? If it can be shown that the doctrine, as interpreted by Mo Tse, did none of these things, it can hardly be held that the teaching was a menace to Sinism.

(1) "The will of Heaven" was specifically invoked as *the* sanction above all others for the doctrine of universal love.[298]

(2) It did not undermine filial piety, Mo Tse held, since it prescribed, not less love for one's parents, but only more love toward other people, and was in the end designed directly to benefit one's parents, by bettering the condition of the world.

(3) The practice of universal love, as prescribed by Mo Tse, could not interfere with the government, because of the other central tenet of Moism, that of "identification with the superior."

> All you people of the district shall identify yourselves with the lord of the state, and shall not unite with the subordinates. What the lord thinks to be right, all shall think to be right; what he thinks to be wrong, all shall think to be wrong. . . For the lord of the state is naturally the (most) virtuous of the state. If all the people in the state follow the example of their lord, then how can the state be in disorder?[299]
>
> Righteousness is the standard. A standard is not to be given by the subordinates to the superior, but by the superior to the subordinates. Therefore, while the common people should spare no pains at work, they may not make the standard at will. . . The emperor may not make the standard at will (either). There is Heaven to give him the standard. . . . The emperor gives the standard to the High Duke, to the feudal lords, to the scholars, and (through these intermediaries) to the common people.[300]

As a safeguard against incompetent officials, the moral sense of the people is trusted to cause them to refuse to identify their will with that of such persons.

All of this is very regular, Confucian, and Sinistic.

(4) We are at the heart of the testing of the Moist doctrine of

[298] *Ibid.* (pt.2) p. 167.

[299] *Ibid.* (pt.2) p. 66.

[300] *Ibid.* (pt.2) pp. 148-49.

"universal love" when we ask if its author advocated that it be carried to the point of condoning crime, or at least allowing it to go unpunished, because one must love even the criminal. To state the question generally, did Mo Tse intend, by his principle, merely to emphasize the need for an attitude of mutual cooperation within society, or was he espousing a soft sentimentalism which he would carry to the point of sacrificing the good of humanity in order to keep from harming a single human being?

It will be recalled that Confucius defined benevolence, on one occasion, as "to love men." Confucius was an outstanding preacher of cooperation, kindliness, and altruism. Yet this did not prevent him from advocating punishment when justice, and the good of society, seemed to require it. The position of Mo Tse is difficult to distinguish, here, from that of Confucius, unless one concern himself with very nice shades of emphasis indeed.

Mo Tse was greatly concerned with the problem of war, as has been noted. The arguments he used against it were the good Confucian ones, that aggression did not accord with the laws of Heaven, and brought destruction in its wake for the aggressor. However, Mo Tse advocated defensive war, and is said to have trained his scholars in the art of defensive warfare. There is a strong tradition that he was himself an engineer of some accomplishment.[301]

Mo Tse was such an opponent of offensive war that he is said to have made long journeys to try to dissuade rulers, whom he had heard were contemplating war, from carrying out their attacks. Yet he, like Confucius and Mencius, differentiated between just and unjust wars. Campaigns which were made in accordance with right and with the will of Heaven were not, he declared, to be called "attacks," but "punishment," and these he approved.[301a]

This is certainly sufficient to show that Mo Tse was not a mere sentimentalist, but held the application of universal love and mutual help within the boundaries of definite standards of conduct.

It is evident, then, that Mo Tse's doctrine of "universal love" was not calculated to remove the sanction of the will of Heaven, to undermine filial piety, to weaken the political system of graded authority, nor to make the enforcement of standards of conduct impossible by prohibiting punishments. It is true enough that Mo Tse did utter a heresy, from the standpoint of Confucius' teachings,

[301] Wieger, *Histoire des Croyances,* p. 209.

[301a] Mei, *op. cit.,* (pt. 2) p. 121.

when he said that men should love the parents of others as well as they loved their own parents. But this, important as it may have been, can hardly be considered a difference of opinion on a point fundamental to philosophy. On the contrary, the motive lying back of it, which was the desire to promote social cooperation and to reduce friction and war within the Chinese world, was decidedly a Confucian motive.

It has been shown that Mo Tse may not properly be said to have differed radically from Confucius, in his philosophy, on the basis of the Moist doctrine of "universal love."

Again, the so-called "pragmatism" of Mo Tse, his emphasis on the "usefulness" of things, may be made to seem very different from Confucius' own standard of ethics. When Mo Tse was asked whether his principle of "universal love," although it might be a good thing, could be of any use, he replied, "If it were not useful, then even I would disapprove of it."[302] On another occasion, Mo asked a member of the Confucian school why the Confucians studied music. The Confucian replied, "Music is pursued for music's sake." Mo Tse proceeded to ridicule him.[303] It is worthwhile to dwell on the incident, since one writer has declared that it makes clear Mo Tse's "departure from the Confucian approach." Such a statement is typical of the carelessness with which some scholars have interpreted Confucius. The fact is that the "Confucianist" mentioned had learned his lessons very poorly. Confucius was very explicit in holding that the study of music had a positive, normative value, as well as a definite usefulness in ceremonial.

> It is by the *Odes* that the mind is aroused.
> It is by *li* that the character is established.
> It is from Music that the finish is received.[304]
> The Master said, "If a man be without the virtues proper to humanity, what has he to do with *li?* If a man be without the virtues proper to humanity, what has he to do with music?"[305]

Further citations, of similar purport, might be made from Confucius, and even from Mencius.[306] For Confucius, as for Mo Tse,

[302] *Ibid.* (pt.2) p. 97.
[303] *Ibid.* (pt.2) p. 258.
[304] *An.* 8,8.
[305] *An.* 3,3.
[306] *An* 17,4; 17,11. *Men.* 1(2),1; 4(1),27.

the ultimate value of any practice is that it contributes to the welfare of human beings.

It must be remembered that, for all of the genuinely Sinist philosophers, the cosmic order was naturally oriented to harmonize with a flourishing human society. We are not surprised, therefore, when Mo Tse asks, "But how can there be anything that is good but not useful?" For all of these men, the ultimate measure of value is the capacity to contribute to human welfare.

The formula for Mo Tse's pragmatism ran somewhat as follows: The doctrines and practices of the ancient sage-kings were a perfect expression of the will of Heaven. The will of Heaven is that the people shall be peaceful, prosperous, and happy. *Therefore,* if (as is often the case) the doctrines and practices of the ancient sage-kings are in some doubt, it is only necessary to find out what will make the people peaceful, prosperous, and happy, in order to recover the ways of the ancient sage-kings in their pristine purity.

But there is never any doubt that Mo Tse is a confirmed traditionalist. Doctrines "should be based on the deeds of the ancient sage-kings."[307] His faith in the absolute perfection of the ways of those kings who had been approved by Sinist history is well shown in the following passage:

> Mo Tse said: "Any word, any action, that is beneficial to Heaven, the spirits, and the people, is to be carried out. Any word, any action, that is harmful to Heaven, the spirits, and the people, is to be abandoned. Any word, any action, that is in harmony with the (ways of the) sage-kings of the three dynasties, Yao, Shun, Yü, T'ang, Wên, and Wu, is to be carried out. Any word, any action, that is in agreement with the wicked kings of the three dynasties . . . . is to be abandoned.[308]

Time after time, Mo Tse appeals to tradition for support of his contentions. The citations which he thus makes have provided no unimportant source for criticism of some of the older historical documents.

But it would be a mistake to give the impression that Mo appeals to precisely the same traditions to which Confucius and his followers had recourse. There were certain practices, such as the three years of mourning, in support of which the Confucianists could cite perfectly good tradition, but which Mo Tse could not approve, since

[307] Mei, *op. cit.* (pt.2) p. 200.

[308] *Ibid.* (pt.2) p. 244.

he believed that their strict application would result in great harm to society.[309] He used the well-known method of "appealing from antiquity, to antiquity more remote." As he told Kung Meng Tse, a Confucianist, "you are following only Chow and not Hsia. Your antiquity does not go back far enough."[310] The practical conclusions which Mo drew from his appeal to antiquity were in some cases very different from the practices approved by Confucius and the Confucians, and these differences are sufficient to account for the bitter enmity between the two factions. But the underlying philosophy (in which we are primarily interested) was the same. The mere fact that Mo Tse selected his traditions does not differentiate him, for Confucius and Mencius did the same thing, and admitted that they did.[311]

The fundamental philosophy of Mo Tse is Sinism, simple, pure, and unmixed. He believes, with an unquenchable faith, in the basic goodness of the cosmos, and in the existence of a natural tendency which is always working to reinstate, for man, that good life in a good world which was the ancient and the natural state. Government was established by Heaven, for the benefit of the people. To lead them, Heaven chose the most virtuous man in the empire to be emperor. The rulers are, therefore, the recipients of a sacred trust, which they can not forsake with impunity.[312] Likewise, the minor rulers and their fiefs were ordained by Heaven, and those who use force to steal the latter are destroying the harmony of the world and making prosperity impossible.[313] With Confucius, Mo Tse holds that the most effective way to restore order and felicity is to exalt the virtuous men of the empire, and to place them in office, so that they may direct the government.

This discussion of Mo Tse could not be closed more fittingly than by a statement of his own, in which he sums up his Sinistic faith, simply and unequivocally:

> He who obeys the will of Heaven, loving universally and benefitting others, will obtain rewards. He who opposes the will of Heaven, by being partial and unfriendly and harming others, will incur punishment.[314]

[309] *Cf. ibid.* (pt.2) pp. 135-41. Mo Tse makes out a convincing case here against the mourning regulations approved by Confucius.

[310] *Ibid.* (pt.2) p. 254.

[311] *An.* 9,3; 15,10. *Men.* 7(2),3.

[312] Mei, *op. cit.* (pt.2) p. 77. Wieger, *Histoire des Croyances,* p. 210.

[313] Wieger, *Histoire des Croyances,* p. 211.

[314] Mei, *op. cit.* (pt.2) p. 149.

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A twitch of sinew, with a pu'ing wail,
  And vital force looks forth from new-born eyes,
Potential will enounced of form's travail,
  Wherein strange pow'r, a moment sleeping, lies.

A splitting nut within the sodden mould
  Of earth's wi'd wastes, whence nodding twigs invoke
The passing breeze, and from the minute fold
  Of sundered tissue leaps the mighty oak.

A tiny cone beside a vicious thorn,
  Its heart enwrapped a moment fleet in gloom—
A sudden movement, of weird essence born,
  And sweet, compelling fragrance bursts abloom.

From rended wall of spheroid strangely lain,
  The moment past a pulseless, inert thing,
Now springs with song a form, of beauty's train,
  To sweep the endless skies on tireless wing.

And thus the miracle befits the end,
  Creation's secret stays all human kind—
Hypnosis marks alone ascetic trend,
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